



Major General Edward R. Fry, President, NGAUS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

ISSUE FOR THE EIGHTIES: EQUIPPING THE FORCE FOR WAR

This year's NGAUS RED BOOK is the seventh annual edition and is, by now, in the hands of all intended recipients. We should quickly point out that while distribution is limited (only 2,000 copies are printed) it is sent to every state headquarters, to all state National Guard associations, to all commanders down to the battalion level in the Army National Guard and to the squadron equivalent in the Air National Guard.

It would be unduly rash and presumptuous to suggest that the 1981 NGAUS RED BOOK is going to challenge any of the works of literature on the best-seller list. This is not its purpose. Its purpose is to provide a situation report and a blueprint for action to achieve NGAUS goals.

A word about "NGAUS goals". These are, of course, your goals, the objectives of NGAUS membership as expressed within the context of the resolutions of the 102d General Conference (1980) at Las Vegas, and prioritized by the NGAUS Executive Council, the elected leadership of this Association. The RED BOOK is the physical evidence of the Association's view of the National Guard within the overall framework of United States defense force strategy and structure.

This "view", which is most clearly evident in 1981, is a shift in emphasis which rather starkly identifies "equipping the force" as the major issue for the decade of the 1980's. Thus, do we confront what is most often the most difficult aspect of preparedness or deterrence in a nation whose aspirations have long been expressed in the biblical expression (*Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3*), "...and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks."

The cold, hard facts are that our national survival is dependent upon our ability to defend ourselves. The long-term issue of peace or war may well be decided by the potential enemy's assessment of whether we do, or do not, possess the means with which to

protect our national interests. When the battle is joined, as was pointed out some time back by General Omar N. Bradley, "there is no second prize for the runner-up."

We may quarrel with the implications of what has been referred to as "the come as you are war" theory. But we are also practical enough to appreciate that it has been foisted upon the nation's soldiers, airmen, sailors and marines because of a long-standing policy of what is, at best, benign neglect in equipping U.S. forces.

The cumulative effect of this benign neglect—when coupled with the effects of curtailed production, foreign military sales, equipping of surrogate forces and the skyrocketing costs of modern hardware—has brought us to the point of "what you see is what you got" for possible mobilization. The sad truth is that "come as you are war" is the only kind of war that U.S. forces are likely to fight.

The 1981 RED BOOK contains, in this section on equipment, a major five-year procurement plan to build the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard toward full, wartime equipment levels. Admittedly, it is an ambitious—and costly—proposal. It spells out potential costs of \$2.6 billion for the Army Guard and \$7 billion for the Air Guard. We should hasten to add that these reflect 1981 dollar factory costs for the primary equipment components. It does not even start to take into account the whole gamut of spare parts, tool kits, tech manuals or fulltime personnel to maintain the equipment.

It is *not* a dream list; it is not a "blue sky" flight of fancy. It is a prescription for carrying out the full meaning of a phrase which we all toss about quite freely and interpret rather loosely, the Total Force Policy. From the very first announcement in the summer of 1970, the total force idea was not only "increased reliance" upon the Guard and the Reserve, but that Guard and Reserve equipment had sufficient compatibility to function alongside that of the active

service counterparts in the event of a future mobilization.

In the long run, it is going to be the equipment, which can be made available to Guard (and Reserve) forces, which will determine their ability to carry out the missions which are now entrusted to them in the nation's war plans. It is not enough to say that units have sufficient equipment with which to train. That is only one side of the coin: *training*. The other side of the coin is the availability of the equipment with which to carry out the purpose for which military forces exist: *fighting*.

We are not so removed from reality that we believe all units need—or should receive—100 percent of wartime equipment in peacetime. Obvious exceptions are the Air Guard and several Army Guard units in the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF), or in early deployment contingency plans.

But the basis of the NGAUS equipment procurement proposal is that the services must seek—and Congress should be influenced to provide—the funds to ensure a number of things:

- Modernization of on-hand equipment to ensure that while it is sufficient for training it is also deployable and compatible with the equipment in the hands of the active forces.

- Identification of modern equipment (i.e., the current "family" of the equipment item) to be immediately available to mobilized National Guard forces to bring them to 100 percent wartime equipment levels.

- Over a period of five years make the transition from "come as you are" to "ready...now!"

Having said all of this about our "shift in emphasis" to equipping the force, let us hasten to add in closing that we have not lost sight of the continuing requirement for building manpower toward the needs of a 101,000-man Air Guard and a 426,000-man Army Guard. Again quoting General Bradley, we are reminded that, "Men without weapons in modern war are helpless—but weapons without men are nothing."

1878



1981

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COVER: The Guard needs more and newer equipment to be fully ready for combat. Photo by U.S. Air Force. Cover design by Tom Powers of Duffy and Associates.

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