



Major General William E. Ingram, President, NGAUS

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### CAPSTONE: AN ARMY GUARD SUCCESS STORY

All too often, the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) is perceived as dwelling only on the problems of the National Guard. That occurs because Congress appears to respond most readily to those who are willing to take the extra measure in stating their legitimate needs.

To be sure, we are capable of doing so, but it is necessary once in a while to sit back and reflect on where we are, and consider the very real progress the National Guard has made toward becoming a reliable, combat ready defense force under the Total Force Policy.

CAPSTONE, an Army program highlighted in last month's issue of NATIONAL GUARD, has been invaluable in improving that combat readiness in the decades of the 1970s and 1980s.

CAPSTONE, which assigns all Army Guard and Army Reserve units to a gaining headquarters, has had at least two distinctly beneficial effects on the Army Guard. In the first instance, it has provided a mission for all units of all sizes, from combat divisions to detachments. This is important principally because certain parts of the force structure came under attack from time to time; their missions' necessities were questioned. CAPSTONE forced the Department of the Army to ensure that units were identified clearly with the appropriate missions. Second, by validating all units' missions, those units not needed in the force structure were identified quickly for inactivation.

Perhaps more important in the long run, however, is the fact that CAPSTONE has enabled commanders at all levels to direct their training toward their missions. Many Army Guard units have European CAPSTONE missions. Such battalions can concentrate on the European scenario and not worry about desert training or jungle training while other units can direct their efforts toward the area of their deployment.

As a result, units can do a better job of planning for annual training. When the planning effort receives the attention it should, the execution of training has an infinitely better chance of success. Ultimately, the evaluation of that training will prove to be of more value since the standards to which we will train are defined more clearly.

To return to my opening statement on the progress we have made, this higher level of combat readiness that we have attributed to CAPSTONE also has its affect on when units mobilize. The Total Force Policy assumes all Guard and Reserve units will deploy to a combat zone or be employed within the continental United States. In past mobilizations, while such deployment was the goal for all units at some time, most Guard units did not foresee deploying to a combat zone in the early days or even

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weeks of a full mobilization. They simply required too much training after mobilization to be combat effective within a reasonable time.

Such is not the case today. Many Guard units are combat ready except for the issuance of complete and appropriate equipment. Further, the reduction in the size of the active Army at the end of the Vietnam War simply assured the reserve components early entry into any future war. Combat readiness is therefore something that should command the attention of Guard commanders at all

levels. Survival and early success on the battlefield will require commanders to bend every effort and mold every opportunity for realistic training in an operational environment.

This mobilization imperative brings me to the final point. Mobilization and deployment schedules are classified, but should be known to all commanders and senior individuals at the unit level. Deployment times have accelerated considerably in recent years, both because combat readiness has improved and because the defense establishment support system, training bases and airlift and sealift have improved to support them. However, that doesn't mean we don't have a long way to go to further upgrade this nation's conventional forces as a means of deterring any future threat of war, or ending such a war on terms favorable to the United States, if war could not be prevented.

It is to this end that I look forward with anticipation to the General Conference of our Association in October.

As we move toward Indianapolis, for the 105th General Conference, we should anticipate the opportunity to listen to those national defense leaders who will address us. And, we should listen critically to the means proposed to keep the National Guard headed in the right direction. We also should anticipate the opportunity for participation in the democratic procedures of our Association, particularly in the resolutions process. It is this process that drives the actions we and our NGAUS staff in Washington take in securing continued improvement to the National Guard and our overall defense posture.

It is this process, because it represents the united views of our 56,000 members, that provides us with the kind of influence we must have with the Department of Defense and the Congress in achieving combat readiness as our part of the Total Force Policy.

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COVER: On the open snow of Greenland's ice cap, a New York Air Guard ski-equipped C-130 waits to be unloaded. The New York unit has the unique mission of resupplying two Distant Early Warning sites on the world's largest island. Story: Page 20. Cover design: Johnson Design Group.

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