



Major General William J. McCaddin, President, NGAUS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

DECENTRALIZED MANAGEMENT UNDER STATE CONTROL—IT WORKS!

Two characteristics set the National Guard apart from the other reserve components, Lieutenant General LaVern E. Weber, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, recently reminded a Guard audience. Those features, which give the Guard its distinctive dual character, are its State mission, helping cope with State and local emergencies, and its decentralized management under State control.

Those characteristics are the "cornerstones" of the Guard system, declared General Weber, "which still is the best system in the world for the peacetime management of a reserve force."

"Curiously enough," the Chief continued, "the other reserve components probably benefit from the Guard's continuing demonstration that immediate control through a direct chain of command paralleling the Active force is not necessarily the answer; and we benefit by the same comparison every time we demonstrate that we can do it better despite—or because of—a management system that boggles the mind of the theoreticians."

General Weber's comments need to be read in every Washington office where State/Federal issues are debated and decided. In far too many, the automatic response whenever a choice must be made between State and Federal management of a program is to keep it out of State hands.

For Guardsmen, State control is an article of faith based on the historical record and on the Guard's own repeated demonstration that our system "best suits the American genius," as a non-Guardsman explained it to a Congressional committee many years ago. In the earliest days of our national existence, the founding fathers drew on their own experiences to put limits on the power of the central government. One step was to provide for a State-controlled militia that would be the main bulwark in our defense structure.

The decentralized Guard system has been proven times over, yet no issue has provoked a greater rancor and more frequent controversy between the Guard and the Federal hierarchy down through the years than that selfsame topic, State control. And ongoing developments suggest clearly that the issue still hasn't been laid to rest! It is merely pursued with greater civility, and by more subtle means these days.

Item: Last year the government's General Accounting Office revived a scheme which aroused such a storm of controversy 15 years ago that the reverberations are still heard—merger of the Guard, Army Reserve and Air Force Reserve.

Item: Attempts have been made several times in recent years to establish strong centralized Pentagon control over all Guard officer career actions—appointments, promotions, retention decisions, and mandatory separation—even though the Constitution and Federal laws clearly intend that such authority remain with the States.

Item: There is a strong tendency in the Pentagon to give short shrift to requirements that relate to the Guard's State mission when decisions are made on such matters as force structure, equipment, armory construction, and manning.

Item: Decisions on how resources may be used have been taken almost entirely out of State hands through the workings of a priority system known as "force packaging methodology."

THIS ISSUE

This issue of NATIONAL GUARD is devoted almost entirely to coverage of the 101st NGAUS General Conference in Cleveland. Please note that the Annual Reports of the President and the Executive Vice President appeared in the November, 1979 issue. Please see page 30 for an important correction to an editorial error in the President's Report as previously published.

ogy." That process, which assigns priority for resources to units that would be deployed earliest in some future conflict, is being applied so rigorously that many Guard units are being shut off from recruiting/retention incentives, modern equipment, armory funding and other essential assets.

A greater degree of Federal involvement in Guard management probably became inevitable when Total Force funneled more Federal resources into the Guard. Federal control tends to follow Federal resources. But many of the controls now being imposed, or debated, seem to cross that fuzzy, indistinct line between legitimate Federal oversight and mere interference. We are convinced that this runs counter to a growing national sentiment opposing the continued growth of big government.

The Guard system with decentralized management under State auspices, *must* be maintained, as General Weber so clearly told his fellow Guardsmen recently, because it gives the Guard leaders at a local level the ability to decide most questions on "how best to maximize the unique asset represented by the citizen-soldier or airman."

The Guard inevitably must come under closer scrutiny as it consumes a greater share of defense resources and shoulders a greater share of the burden of national defense. We understand that necessity. We accept the need for Federal oversight.

But we deplore and condemn the philosophy held by many in the Federal power structure, that Federal power is inherently good, while State power is bad—that Federal control is productive and efficient while State control invariably is fumbling and unable to produce intelligent decisions.

We will defend our system, as General Weber points out, "because it works best, and because it is important to national defense" that it not be weakened or destroyed.

1878



1979

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NATIONAL GUARD, December 1979 (Special Issue). The National Guard Magazine (ISSN 0163-3945) is published monthly, by the National Guard Association of the United States, with editorial and advertising offices at One Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. Telephone (202) 789-0031. Second class postage paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices, Copyright 1979 by the National Guard Association of the U.S. All rights reserved. All members of the NGAUS receive NATIONAL GUARD. Nonmember subscriptions: \$3 per year domestic; \$4 per year foreign. Bulk rate for 100 or more copies to the same address: 25¢ each. Single copies 50¢. The Editor welcomes original articles bearing on national defense, with emphasis on application to or implications for the National Guard. Manuscripts and artwork must be accompanied by return postage; no responsibility is assumed for safe handling. Opinions expressed by authors do not necessarily represent official NGAUS positions or policy. Likewise, publication of advertising cannot be deemed an endorsement thereof by this Association or its members.

SPECIAL ISSUE 1979

NATIONAL GUARD

Official publication of the National Guard Association of the United States (Formerly THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN MAGAZINE)

SPECIAL ISSUE 1979

VOLUME XXXIII, NUMBER 11

STATE/FEDERAL CONNECTION

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COVER: The 101st Conference theme "The State/Federal Connection" as depicted by Tom Powers of Bill Duffy Associates.

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