



Major General Edward R. Fry, President, NGAUS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A REFLECTION ON THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD— IN THE PENTAGON

An interesting byproduct of the 103d General Conference at Biloxi was the opportunity to see a working demonstration of the U.S. system of government. Since we met at Las Vegas in 1980, there has been a national election and a new Administration has been installed in Washington.

The conferees had an opportunity to meet a number of the key members of the new executive hierarchy that calls the shots in the field of national defense. These included—we are delighted to report—some who will be most involved in the decision-making that is of great importance to the National Guard.

The Secretary of the Army, the Honorable John O. Marsh, Jr., was the highest ranking of those who represented the Reagan Administration. Although his opposite number, the Honorable Verne Orr, Secretary of the Air Force, was in Europe, the Air Force was well represented by the Honorable Edward C. (Pete) Aldridge, Jr.

The senior Defense Department representative was the articulate and candid Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics, the Honorable Lawrence J. Korb. The principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Reserve Affairs, Dr. Edward J. Philbin, was another active participant in the conference. He addressed the audience during the second annual President's Recognition Awards Luncheon.

Interestingly, almost to a man these gentlemen have military experience—including reserve component service.

The Secretary of the Army, Mr. Marsh, for example, was a longtime member of the 116th Infantry in the Virginia Army National Guard. He was a lieutenant colonel sporting airborne wings at the time of his retirement from the Guard in 1976.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense (M,RA&L), Dr. Korb, flew as a Navy pilot from 1962 to 1966. Since his departure

from active duty, he has remained an active member of the United States Navy Reserve. He now holds the rank of commander. His principal deputy, Dr. Philbin, was active in the United States Air Force Reserve.

The Air Force Deputy Assistant Secretary for Reserve Affairs, George Forschler, is a brigadier general in the Air Force Reserve. His opposite number in the Army, Kenneth P. Berquist, soldiered in Vietnam as a company commander in the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile).

The Honorable Edward C. (Pete) Aldridge, Jr., the Under Secretary of the Air Force, gained important insights for his assignment during two separate prior tours as a civilian with the Defense Department. As the Director of Planning and Evaluation, he was a principal adviser to the Secretary of Defense in the planning and program evaluation of U.S. military forces and support structure.

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We think they represent an impressive team.

But the best thing about these gentlemen—and something we have to believe bodes well for us—is their readily evident familiarity and keen interest in the role of the National Guard. It has been almost an article of faith for new appointees to start with a dismal lack of information. A commonly heard phrase around the National Guard Bureau and the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) is the somewhat frustrating comment that a newcomer in a vital spot in the Pentagon “doesn't know how to

spell National Guard.”

Not so with any of these gentlemen—and especially the two whose day-to-day work will bring them into the very closest association with us—Messrs. Korb and Philbin. To borrow a Naval phrase, we like “the cut of their jib.” We look forward to working with them.

Since all relationships are two-way conduits, we, for our part, hope they can reflect with satisfaction upon their first formal association with NGAUS. Most of our association, needless to say, will not be under such formal circumstances nor in public view. Much of it will be routine phone calls, correspondence and rubbing shoulders during congressional testimony.

We hope these gentlemen left Biloxi with an understanding of what we do and how we attempt to do it. We hope they came away with the realization that they were, above all, among friends. There is no adversary relationship between us. Even friends sometimes disagree as to how common goals and objectives should be reached. And so it is logical to conclude they and we will not always agree on tactics or methods.

But we do hope they saw in us a firm ally in the cause of improved U.S. national security, for this is what NGAUS is all about. We are proud of the fact that from the earliest origins of the NGAUS in the troubled years of the late 19th Century and right down to the modern era, we have always put the interests of the nation ahead of our parochial interests. We fight like tigers for the things we believe the National Guard needs—to make it more effective and more efficient as an element of national defense.

To sum it up for the readers of this column, we have met the new civilian leaders of the Pentagon and we came away with the feeling that we were among friends... and among skilled professionals, who know what has to be done.

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COVER: The 140th Tactical Fighter Wing of the Colorado Air National Guard was the winner of Gunsmoke-81, the all-Air Force bombing competition held for the first time since 1962. Air Guardsmen like the one on the cover put on an impressive show in the all-Air Force contest.

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