

Improving communications— an active Council role

THE National Guard Association of the United States is a "grass roots" organization. Its strength resides in its members, who are scattered through 2,600 American communities.

Its influence in national affairs is heavily dependent on members keeping themselves well-informed, and personally involved in Association affairs. Its effectiveness likewise rests on those at the leadership levels conducting a constant exchange of ideas and information with grass roots members, so that both parties to the exchange are better-informed.

Moreover, any progressive organization must frequently review its mode of operations to insure that it is meeting the changing needs of its members.

Both objectives can be attained, I believe, if NGAUS officers and Executive Council members carry on a continuing dialogue with those at state and lower levels.

The NGAUS' mission is communicating — communicating information and views, up, down, and laterally. It has notably improved its use of the written word for that purpose in recent years. Now, through more intensive involvement of Executive Council members in the communications role, we hope to improve our use of the spoken word to enhance our performance.

Council members are elected to represent their geographical areas in the leadership stratum. There are six such areas, each encompassing seven to 13 states, and each represented by three Executive Council members.

Obviously, state and regional views are more certain to be reflected in leadership decisions if Council members consult frequently with the grass roots elements in their respective areas.

We will take steps to make Council members more visible. They will start attending state National Guard

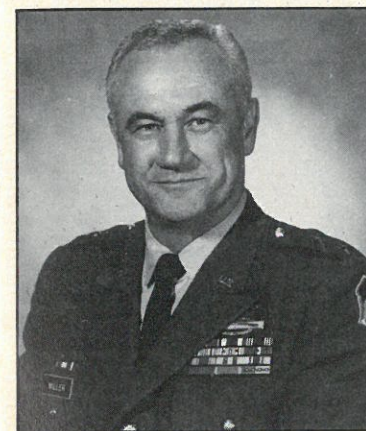
association conferences in their respective areas as NGAUS spokesmen. Those visits will produce dual results. First, the Council members will be able to brief members at state meetings on what is taking place at the national level. Second, they'll listen for opinions and facts on matters of concern at state level and bring them up for consideration at national level, during Council meetings.

In addition to conveying area needs and views to the entire Council, Council members also will be asked to make recommendations to the president on committee assignments that arise.

Finally, Council members will talk more frequently with state National Guard association presidents, to share thoughts on desirable short- and long-range goals.

Another means of more clearly establishing the identity of Council members will be to provide them with a distinctive badge or device for wear at various functions where they'll be representing the NGAUS. It also is my intention to recognize achievement and/or past service on the Council by means of an appropriate award or certificate.

Since the NGAUS' reorganization several years ago during the tenure of Maj Gen James F. Cantwell, it has taken some giant strides under Maj Gens Henry W. McMillan and Duane L. "Duke" Corning. It has one of the most efficient full-time staffs of any similar organization in Washington, which contributes greatly to its effectiveness. It has expanded and improved its communications with grass roots elements. But these are not yet enough. Neither the officers and Council, nor the full-time staff, can do the whole job. The steps I have outlined will give Council members a larger role, but individual members must help, as must sister associations at state level.



Maj Gen Richard A. Miller (Oregon Army Guard), President, National Guard Association of the United States

Those at the helm of our Association want your ideas and your views. We will want to know how you feel about the various issues that confront us this year. We also want to hear your suggestions on how we can make the NGAUS more meaningful and productive for you and your units. Convey your views through the Council members from your area. (Council membership list, with addresses, may be found on inside back cover.)

At the 98th General Conference a few months ago, misinterpretations of the NGAUS Constitution and By-laws led to confusion and embarrassment. To prevent a reoccurrence, I intend to appoint a biennial Committee on Parliamentary Procedures. This will be a four-member committee that will meet in conjunction with the next Executive Council meeting, to examine the Constitution and By-laws and evaluate the validity and applicability of its procedural guidelines.

This Committee also will meet during the next General Conference, where members will sit with each Caucus and Conference Committee session to provide parliamentary guidance. Its chairman will be a non-technician Guard officer, and all members will be lawyers in civilian life.

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Maj Gen Thomas K. Turnage (CA)

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Cover: Georgia turned the trick for a full house by dealing with ace recruiters. Holding the over-size campaign symbol are Sp4 Sandy Lewis and Sp4 Curtis Hopkins. Although not part of a recruiting program per se, Wisconsin's basic training orientation for newly enlisted Army Guardswomen is getting rave reviews. It includes an introduction to the protective mask.

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