

MG Robert F. Ensslin Jr., President, NGAUS

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A GUARDSMAN: THEN AND NOW

We were fascinated to read recently some remarks made by MG Ellard A. Walsh, long-time NGAUS president, to the Adjutants General Association of the United States (AGAUS) in 1954. What General Walsh said nearly 30 years ago could have been written last week.

Basically, General Walsh was saying that even in the post-World War II era when the Guard's force structure seemed to be settled, Guard officers had to be ever vigilant. This was in the aftermath of General Walsh's and MG Milton A. Reckord's "victory" in the immediate postwar period in restoring the Guard to its rightful role after the War Department had sought to abolish the Guard as a federal component. Specifically, General Walsh said it probably is the role and the lot of Guard leaders to spend their military careers fighting for the Guard's right to serve the nation.

The NGAUS spent most of 1991 fighting in Washington to preserve the Army National Guard's force structure until the nation can get a better fix on where international events are headed. We argued successfully with our friends in Congress to put off the 33 percent cuts in the Total Army's structure pending such an analysis. Congress, we believed, sent a very specific and very understandable message to the leadership at the Department of Defense. This was that the Guard and Reserve should be preserved more or less intact until the nation, speaking through their elected officials, determines the requirements of national defense for the beginning of the 21st century.

As 1992 began, we got the word from several directions that this message was not received at the highest levels of the Pentagon. Instead, these leaders merely are angry at us, the Guard's leadership, for fighting for our beliefs. As reported by *Army Times*, in its article, "Pentagon persists on reserve cuts," those in

charge of submitting the FY94 DoD budget are unwayed in their determination to cut the Guard and Reserve down to the size these men believe is appropriate.

Eventually, we believe, the taxpayers and the voters are going to get a different message. Some already are, as is reflected in the sentiments routinely reflected in Congress. Because members of Congress are as close to the grass roots as it is possible to be, the fact these sentiments are percolating to the top is interesting and instructive.

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The demise of the Soviet Union in 1991 both as a superpower and as a cohesive nation changes the complexion of the United States' national security needs in ways not yet defined by the authors of the base force strategy or the theory of crisis response and reconstitution. To oversimplify, these planners postulated an Atlantic force including Europe, a Pacific force including Korea, a contingency force and a reinforcing force.

But before this concept could be implemented, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. Something very different from it was put on the ground in Saudi Arabia. This was a seven-division, two-corps force using some elements of the contingency corps and a grouping of organizations from NATO's soon-to-be deactivated force structure.

Several conclusions can be extrapolated for the future out of this experience, either specifically or inferentially. First, lift is such that light forces on active duty can reach the theater fairly promptly, but are vulnerable to annihilation if a heavily armed adversary attacks. Why Hussein didn't in the fall of 1990 still is a mystery.

Second, heavy forces are slow to arrive in large numbers because tracked vehicles go by sea, and sealift

is inadequate in the United States and the U.S. Navy.

Which gets us to our bottom line. Even assuming that such light forces as the 82d Airborne Division, the 101st Air Assault Division and the 7th Infantry Division will remain on active duty, what follows? What follows is the fact that any Guard unit—given the experience of our roundout brigades—can be mobilized, trained in 30 to 45 days and deployed to the theater before all its equipment arrives. Thus, meeting the rebuttable presumption, such forces should be in the Army Guard, where many of them tend to be today.

Such units should not be on anyone's hit list.

Finally, there is the taxpayer argument. Today, we can field an Army Guard unit for about 25 percent of what it takes to keep the same unit on active duty. Equipping such units costs the same. But with the downsizing of the military, there will be plenty of equipment to modernize everything that is likely to survive the end of the Soviet threat. Thus, procurement isn't the issue. The issue is this 25-percent factor, which mainly is pay and allowances and operations and maintenance money.

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It is clear that there are those some of them in positions of authority—who do not wish to hear our argument because it confounds the conventional wisdom. Briefly, this is the notion that "as active component force structure draws down, it is important that proportionate and appropriate reductions in Guard and Reserve units occur." Here we part company with our active component friends; we believe this is dangerous for the war-fighting capabilities of the services—and, consequently, for the nation.

*National Guard*

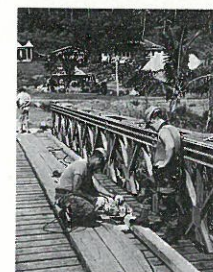
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While there are many stories of bravery to be told from the hot sands of Southwest Asia, there is one story of SSG Robert Collins of the 286th Supply and Service Battalion, Maine National Guard. This story started at Log Base Echo and ended with more than familiarity with Walter Reed Army Hospital.



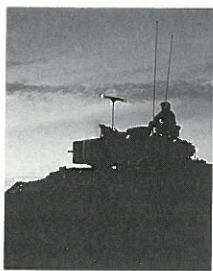
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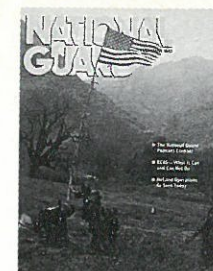
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## COVER:

Members of the 20th Special Forces Group proudly raise the U.S. colors in northern Iraq, at the outset of their military duty for Operation PROVIDE COMFORT. After having been called to active duty, many volunteered to aid the Kurds. Photo by MAJ John E. Cantrell. Design, Johnson Design Group.



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