

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# Fiscal Reality Limits Scope of the New Bonus Package — But It's a Start

Certain National Guard and Reserve units may now offer membership incentives to help boost ailing recruiting and retention programs—cash bonuses or educational assistance for first-time enlistments, and cash bonuses for reenlistments.

Incentives were a long time coming. Guard and Reserve leaders have said from the beginning of the all-volunteer debate that monetary inducements were required. The same draft that kept the Active forces filled for more than 30 years also induced large numbers to enlist in the Guard or Reserves. When the draft ended, in 1972, the Active forces couldn't attract enough volunteers without offering some worthwhile cash incentives. Why then should the National Guard and/or Reserves be expected to perform that modern-day miracle?

It simply was not to be, especially with the shadow of Vietnam helping shape public attitudes. It needed the passage of seven years and sharply sagging Reserve Component strengths, however, to demonstrate that fact to a skeptical Department of Defense and a cost-conscious Congress.

Not that the incentives finally authorized are equal to those provided for the Active forces. They're not, by a very long ways. Far less do they satisfy the real need. The Selected Reserves are currently short of stated requirements by something like 130,000 depending on where you obtain the figure on requirements. Therefore, the problem we face is not just *maintaining* strength at the prescribed level, but in halting the steady stream of losses, then *regaining* the required manpower level.

What the Guard and Reserves finally were given was a half-loaf. It was a substantial achievement to get anything at all, however, in view of Congressional and public attitudes. And this most certainly is a case where, a half-loaf is better than none. It will help those relatively few units permitted to use it. For the rest, it has a symbolic value because it offers hope for the future.



Major General  
William J. McCaddin  
Virginia National Guard  
President, National Guard  
Association of the United States

It's worthwhile to briefly review how we came to the present position. After extensive effort by this and allied associations, aided by Guard and Reserve leaders from all parts of the country—and aided, most importantly, by a few discerning members of Congress—authority for reenlistment bonus and educational assistance (to encourage initial enlistments) was enacted in 1977. Congress decreed, however, that only \$5 million be appropriated for the program, that the funds be applied only to the bonuses (none to educational assistance), and that the program be considered a test.

In 1978, after an additional outpouring of effort by advocates like this Association, Congress extended the incentive authority, added enlistment bonuses to the other two, and boosted the appropriation substantially, to slightly more than \$25 million. Of that total, \$10.7 million has been earmarked for the Army Guard and \$7.8 million for the smaller Army Reserve unit structure in the largest allocations. The Air National Guard is to receive \$1.6 million.

Thus, it was obvious right from the outset that there wouldn't be nearly enough money to cover all needs of all

units. The incentives would have to be paid on a selective basis. That fact was recognized by spokesmen for this Association, who acquiesced because it was made plain that it would be selective incentives—or none at all!

The Army, not surprisingly, decided to use a unit priority system for determining who'd receive incentive funds. As explained in an unclassified document sent by the National Guard Bureau to all State Adjutants General, "It is anticipated that Congress will allocate insufficient funds in any given year to pay bonuses to all eligible people in all units. As a result, a unit priority scheme based on mobilization priorities and other factors was approved by the Secretary of Army."

No further explanation was given because to do so would have compromised classified information on military deployment plans.

Although the Guard recognized the inevitability of a selective means of allocating incentive funds, what it couldn't foresee was just how small a percentage of the Guard would qualify when the criteria were finally determined. We don't know just what proportion of the Army Guard qualify, but we suspect that it is a very small percentage of the total ARNG.

Nevertheless, the incentives represent a positive step in an area where we hitherto have seen mostly inaction. The program, limited though it is, deserves the support of Guard and Reserve commanders, whether or not their units will benefit directly. Only if we demonstrate that such incentives are cost-effective and productive can we hope that authority will be granted to expand them in the future.

For regardless of glib repetitions of the current Washington catch-phrase, that "you can't solve all your problems by throwing more money at them," we think the time has come to see just what difference the dollars *might* make. How can the purveyors of that over-used slogan be so sure? In this particular problem area, the Guard and Reserves have never been given the funding to put it to the test!

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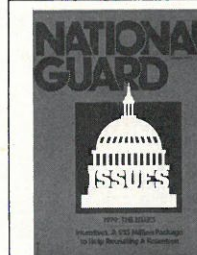
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COVER: Symbolic of "the Issues" which Capitol Hill finds awaiting it in 1979, cover design by Bill Duffy.

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