

Major General William E. Ingram, President, NGAUS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

PRIORITY ON MAINTENANCE AND PROPERTY ACCOUNTABILITY

The December issue of NATIONAL GUARD provided a brief 1983 review from a Guardsman's viewpoint and projections for 1984. With this issue, I would like to pick up where I left off in October and November: leadership and management. One major item associated with management and managership is equipment—we all know we need to be equipped properly.

Being equipped properly is a factor of two requirements: "Having what we need, and taking care of what we've got." The first point, "having what we need," should not require a detailed discussion since the requirements have been well stated by the various states and the National Guard Bureau. If the mission of a National Guard unit in wartime requires it to destroy enemy tanks it needs antitank weapons now; if its mission is to provide close air support, it needs appropriate aircraft now. We have been given a mission and we have identified requirements that need to be filled if we are to have a reasonable chance of successfully accomplishing this mission. Now it is time for the decision makers to fill the requirements or to modify the mission.

Laying that aside, I will provide some comments on "taking care of what we've got." This is nothing more than proper maintenance and property accountability. The significance of these two subjects is that they are fully responsibilities of the individual Guardsman, from general officer to the newest private. And our record in meeting these responsibilities is not as good as it could be. We have not always properly maintained our equipment, and, what is worse, many of our soldiers and their leaders do not know how to maintain the equipment. The Army Guard's MATES and OMS facilities do an excellent job for us but in one sense they are part of the problem. They have helped create the "Hertz" complex, the concept of maintenance that consists of "park it at

MATES, their job is to fix it." This will not happen in wartime so we should not tolerate it now. I realize our training time is very limited, and we must give priority to combat skills; however, if we don't learn now to maintain our equipment in peacetime, we will not have it during wartime.

To help resolve this problem, I have several recommendations. First is education. We must insure that our junior officers and NCOs are taught proper maintenance procedures in our state-run military schools; that we take advantage of the USAR schools program; and, where possible, we use appropriate TRADOC schools. Officer and NCO development programs should include maintenance as subject matter. Our captains and majors should have some maintenance-ori-

"Having what we need, and taking care of what we've got."

ented job experience. And, finally, commanders at all levels must be held accountable for the maintenance in their units, and they must find the time for maintenance operations. This can be done by all units. The proof is that a lot of units do have good maintenance, just not enough units do.

The second item, property accountability, is an area that definitely needs to improve. Every year, the National Guard must replace millions of dollars worth of equipment that has been lost or damaged. The impact is tremendous. The unit loses access to the equipment until it is replaced, be it a tool, a tent or a tank. This hampers the

unit in accomplishing its training and/or operational mission. Manpower must be diverted to conduct reports of survey and to process them which, in turn, replaces other priorities.

The most serious aspect of this situation is that every year the National Guard Bureau must dedicate millions of dollars to buying replacement equipment when these monies could be spent for improving our equipment posture. I recognize that there will be losses no matter how well we manage this area, but I am confident that we can do better with more emphasis by commanders and better management by those responsible for the equipment.

To improve our property accountability record, I strongly urge each general officer to review the record of his units. Find out, in total dollars, which units have been submitting the most significant reports of survey and what type of items they are surveying. One or two units may be accounting for more than their fair share, or losses of a particular item may be excessive throughout the organization.

Look for system shortfalls. Are there high dollar losses in POL because of poor documentation procedures? Are there numerous break-ins because of improper security measures in the armories? Can losses be attributed to poor key control procedures or vehicle accidents because of poor driver training? Are joint inventories being conducted by the incoming and outgoing company commanders?

Let me summarize the key points in this series:

- Companies and battalions must train and they must train to standard.
- Brigades, groups and above must free the companies and battalions of administration and other detractors so they can train.
- We must maintain what we have.
- We must account for what we have.

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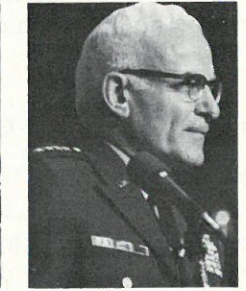
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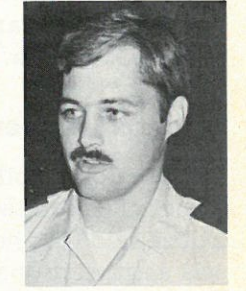
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COVER: Congressman G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery earns the Harry S Truman Award, the highest NGAUS award for outstanding leadership and influence in the national defense of our nation. Key-note speakers, General Bernard W. Rogers and Congressman Samuel S. Stratton, outline the Guard's future as part of the Total Force. Photos, 120th Public Affairs Detachment, Indiana Army Guard. Design: Johnson Design Group.

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