

# Why a dues increase?

IT is absolutely essential, if the National Guard is to remain strong, ready, and able to perform effectively in both state and federal missions, that it have a powerful, unified, unfettered voice in Washington. That's where the key decisions are made on *funding, training, equipping* and *manning* the National Guard of every state.

Historically, that voice has been provided by the National Guard Association of the United States. For 99 years, NGAUS has been giving expression to the Guard's concerns and needs at the seat of government. Had NGAUS not spoken out so vigorously down through the decades, the National Guard would have long since ceased to exist in its cherished state/federal partnership form.

All of which leads up to the main thrust of my editorial: that inflation has taken its toll, making it necessary to develop more income for our Association if it is to remain effective as the Guard's voice. At the present time, our major source of income is the dues paid annually by members. Membership dues add up to 67 per cent of our total revenue. Thus, any attempt to increase our income almost inevitably must rest on asking members to pay increased dues. That was the conclusion reached by a representative committee of National Guard officers which I appointed several months ago to seek solutions for our funding problems.

That Special Fiscal Review Committee was chaired by my predecessor as president, Maj Gen Duane L. Corning. It spent a good many hours in a thorough review of the Association's financial posture on three occasions. It sought the thinking of Guard leaders in every State. It then came to two significant conclusions:

— That above all the Association must not reduce the scale of its activities in Washington; there's too much at stake for the National Guard, and for national defense generally.

— That the many activities in which NGAUS is engaged can be continued at the present pace for a relatively small increase in the dues each officer will have to pay each year.

NGAUS is in the business of communicating. It attempts to communicate information, concepts and ideas

— upward, downward and laterally. By communicating effectively, it influences policy decisions, legislation, and programs to increase the Guard's military effectiveness and well-being. Over the years, our Association has developed an enviable degree of credibility. That means its information is believed. Its ideas are listened to.

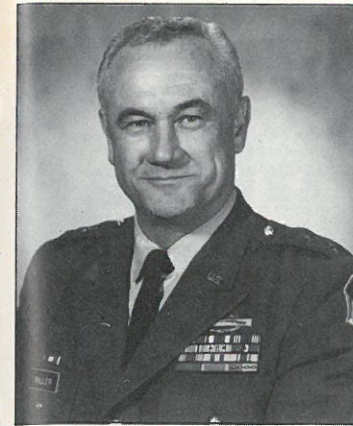
It is performing that function, at present, with a total staff of 26. That's one of the smallest staffs in Washington for comparable organizations and performance. That number includes executive, clerical, secretarial, research — even the operation and maintenance of the National Guard Memorial building.

With that staff, NGAUS:

- Conducts a vigorous and effective effort to keep the U.S. Congress well-posted on Guard/Reserve issues.
- Carries on continuous liaison with the Pentagon and the services.
- Maintains regular contact with an extensive array of other associations and organizations with similar interests.
- Coordinates the extensive effort conducted by the States to keep public officials informed on National Guard needs and problems.
- Publishes an excellent professional magazine, THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN.
- Carries on a small but effective public relations program.
- Sponsors an internal awards program.

Historically, NGAUS has been one of the most effective organizations in Washington at achieving its objectives. There isn't space to enumerate all — or even a brief cross-section — of the Association's accomplishments here. It probably isn't necessary, because there are enough dedicated, life-long officers in each state to tell younger officers how important NGAUS has been to the Guard. It is from them — the confirmed, long-term Guard officers — that one can obtain the best answer to a question sometimes asked by newer members: What do I get for my dues?

We have always been proud that the "What's in it for me?" attitude hasn't taken hold in the Association. We exist and labor to improve and strengthen the Guard and



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

its units. If in the doing, we sometimes produce a personal benefit, it is a by-product of our *real* objective.

Factors that make a dues increase necessary are outlined in an article elsewhere in this issue (See page 14). Accompanying that article are "pie charts" that graphically depict the income/outgo ratios.

As president of NGAUS, I give my strong personal endorsement to the proposal to increase dues. I urge you to support the proposal when votes are cast this September in New Orleans. If our plan to revitalize and improve the Association's group insurance program is successful (see story elsewhere in this issue), it may never again be necessary to seek an increase in dues.

The Executive Council, with representation from every part of the Guard and every section of the country, likewise has given its unanimous endorsement to the proposal.

In the weeks ahead, we will be distributing detailed information to Guard leaders in every state, to explain the need for higher dues. We urge you to review that information thoroughly, weigh it carefully, and ask questions if something needs clarification. Call members of the Executive Council representing your area. They're listed immediately below this editorial.

When you have followed these suggestions, I feel fully confident that you will agree with me and the other leaders of NGAUS. A dues increase is justified in this age of persistent inflation, and likewise is warranted by the critical role that NGAUS is playing in the most important arena of all — the security of this great land of ours.

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