

President's Message

Maj Gen John L. Matthews, President, NGAUS

The National Guard and Grass Roots America

Last week, we took a trip into rural Utah to visit some new armories under construction and review some family programs. We stopped in the small town of Spanish Fork, Utah. It was named for the arrival of Father Escalante, a Spanish priest, into the beautiful valley in which the town resides.

Guard and family members were meeting in the new armory, which recently had replaced the 1930s-vintage armory, because Utah units had outgrown it years ago. The city fathers had donated the land for the armory. They also paid for a hardwood floor in the drill hall so that city recreation could use the hall for evening youth programs. As is customary, the state legislature had contributed 25 percent of the cost of construction of the facility.

The armory is home to a number of units, including an engineer company that is part of the contingency force pool of the National Guard—early deployers.

The National Guard armory is a community center. During the floods of the previous decade, the unit soldiers were major contributors to the fight to save homes and property. In town, young men are trained in the tradition of their fathers to join the National Guard. Guard members have helped with city cleanups, fought floods, volunteered their own time for youth programs, assisted the Boy Scouts in the Scouting for Food Program to feed the homeless and were mobilized for DESERT STORM.

Their lives and their armory are examples of the principal of pooling our

strengths and our dollars for national defense and community support. These Guardsmen and women love their work and the community loves them.

Next, we visited Blanding, Utah, a smaller town on the fringes of Canyonlands National Park in southern Utah. Blanding is home to an engineer company with a sizeable percentage of Navajo Indians among its ranks. Their new armory is designed to fit into the spectacular scenery and native heritage of the area. It provides a place for Native Americans and whites to share the opportunity of service to the State of Utah and the United States.

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During DESERT STORM, the company members, who were mobilized and sent to Germany to backfill for units in the VII Corps, shared the Navajo language with young German students who were fascinated by their visit with Native Americans. As the armory nears completion, the entire town is watching with anticipation the tremendous addition the armory will make to the lives of the town's people.

In towns and cities all over America, the National Guard, with its armories and its airmen and soldiers, is making a tremendous difference in the American culture.

From drug demand reduction programs to medical assistance, the National Guard is adding value to America. It is literally impacting on the very fabric of society.

In these small towns, young men and women, through National Guard military training, learn what the republic is all

about. They learn to respect the flag for what it stands. They learn a trade, and through the impact of the Montgomery G.I. Bill, they are given a chance to educate themselves and improve their own families and the American society as a whole.

The impact that Army and Air National Guard units have on their communities ally must be seen first hand to be appreciated. Every time we are reminded of the citizen-soldier's impact, as we were during our trips to Spanish Fork and Blanding, we cannot help but feel that here is a concrete example of the energy and the vision of forefathers crafted into the Constitution. The National Guard, as the nation's military citizen, is one of those cords that binds our nation with its states, their communities and their citizen. We have always benefited by the binding. Our experiences and examples are only a small fraction of what actually happens between Guardsmen and women and their local communities. The efforts in Spanish Fork and Blanding are multiplied in many other units to be fielded in the Army National Guard is how many Guard armories and bases are located throughout this great nation.

The removal of a National Guard unit flag or the closing of an armory is a deeply traumatic experience for rural America. It profoundly influences the fabric of the society in that city or town. The closing of an armory or base breaks, usually, the conduit of communication between the Army or the Air Force and the American community. It slams a door in the face of young, eager men and women who want a chance to grow and contribute to America.

Throughout this great land, the United States stands a lot taller because of the public founders' wisdom, who created the Militia of the states that make up the National Guard. Each and every Army and Air unit adds value to the community in which it exists, as well as the state and the nation. The National Guard is alive and well, and making a difference in home and America.

NATIONAL GUARD

July 1994 Volume XLVIII, Number 7

Features

The Taking of Saint Lo

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Allied troops landed on the Normandy beaches on June 6, 1944, they began the push toward Paris. They slowly pushed in and the going was tough. The Germans were dug in and the hedgerows presented natural barriers during the advance. The 163d Air Refueling Group converted from RF-4Cs to KC-135Es last year, and the unit members are excited about their new mission. During a recent training mission, the Grizzlies' KC-135Es refueled the Air Force Thunderbirds over the Grand Canyon.

California Grizzlies Go Refueling

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The Air National Guard takes on new roles and missions during the drawdown, more support missions are being assumed by Air National Guard units. The 163d Air Refueling Group made the switch from RF-4Cs to KC-135Es last year, and the unit members are excited about their new mission. During a recent training mission, the Grizzlies' KC-135Es refueled the Air Force Thunderbirds over the Grand Canyon.

National Guard Fields More MLRS Units

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The Oklahoma Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 158th Field Artillery (FA) (MLRS), was so successful during DESERT STORM it paved the way for more MLRS (Multiple Launch Rocket System) units to be fielded in the Army National Guard. Another Oklahoma unit, the 1st Battalion, 171st FA, has been fielded; the 1st Battalion, 182d FA, Michigan Army Guard, is in the conversion process, and two more battalions are slated for transition.

Buffalo Bill Cody Earned Medal of Honor

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A well-known fact about William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody is that he served as the aide-de-camp for Nebraska Governor John M. Thayer. This Wild West legend was also the recipient of the Medal of Honor. He served as an Army scout in between stints

AGAUS Told Hard Times Continue

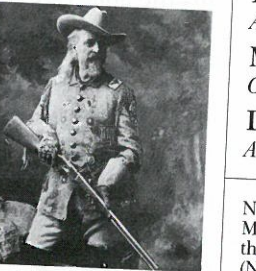
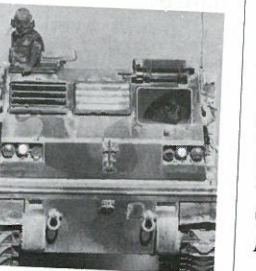
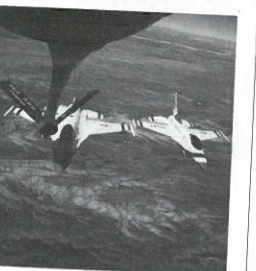
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The National Guard Association of the United States (AGAUS) gathered in Des Moines, Iowa, for its spring meeting. Attendees heard from Secretary Deutch, the deputy secretary of Defense, and Deborah R. Lee, the assistant secretary of Defense for reserve affairs. Secretary Deutch said that he saw a National Guard end-strength of 1.2 million and an increased emphasis placed on combat support, combat support and state missions in the National Guard's future.



Cover:

A California Grizzlie KC-135E refuels the Air Force Thunderbirds during an in-flight refueling proficiency training mission over the Grand Canyon. The 163d Air Refueling Group converted from RF-4Cs to KC-135Es last year. The unit has seen several changeovers since it was created 48 years ago. Photo by Ted Carlson. Cover, Dennis and Sackett Design.



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NATIONAL GUARD, July 1994. The NATIONAL GUARD Magazine (ISSN 0163-3945) is published monthly, by the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS), with editorial and advertising offices at One Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. Telephone (202) 789-0031. FAX: (202) 682-9358. Second-class postage paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices. Copyright 1994 by the National Guard Association of the U.S. All rights reserved. All members of the NGAUS receive NATIONAL GUARD Magazine: \$8 of the membership dues are allocated to a magazine subscription. Nonmember subscriptions are \$20 per year. The bulk subscription rate for orders of 100 issues or more continues to be \$10 per issue. The editor welcomes original articles bearing on national defense, with emphasis on application to or implications for the National Guard. Postmaster: Send Form 3579 to NATIONAL GUARD, One Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.