

Major General William E. Ingram, President, NGAUS

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### NEEDED: ASSISTANT DoD SECRETARY FOR RESERVE AFFAIRS

The proposal to create an assistant secretary of Defense exclusively for National Guard and Reserve affairs is not a new one, but it is an idea whose time may have come. Congress has displayed an increasing interest in the subject this year, and obviously its support is essential.

What difference, you may ask, would it make having an assistant secretary of Defense for reserve affairs rather than a deputy assistant secretary? The answer is "quite a bit," but the subject is sufficiently bureaucratic to merit a full explanation.

As any middle-level manager knows, how effective he is at influencing his organization's decisions depends in large part not only on how well he does his job himself, but on his access to the reaches of authority where decisions are made. It is no different with the civilian official who supervises the reserve components at the Department of Defense (DoD) level.

It is the problem of access and quality of time that the upgrading of the senior civilian position on reserve components seeks to solve. Currently, Guard and Reserve matters are under the general purview of the assistant secretary of Defense for manpower, reserve affairs and logistics. Assistant secretaries report jointly to the secretary and deputy secretary of Defense.

Most under/assistant secretaries have deputy assistant secretaries reporting to them, as is the case for the assistant secretary of Defense for manpower, reserve affairs and logistics, who in the Reagan Administration is Dr. Lawrence J. Korb. The deputy assistant secretary for reserve affairs is Dr. Edward J. Philbin, an Air Force Reserve colonel who was a San Diego lawyer in civilian life and whose expertise in Guard and Reserve matters is generally acknowledged as top-notch at the Pentagon. But, regardless of his expertise, he is at this point at least one level removed from the decision maker.

The difference between an assistant secretary and a deputy assistant secretary is more than just what

could be perceived as one level of management, however, and that brings us to the quality of time available for Guard and Reserve matters at the secretary of Defense level.

That quality of time suffers not because of any lack of interest on the part of the assistant secretary for manpower, reserve affairs and logistics, but rather because his agenda is simply too broad. Consider Dr. Korb's areas of responsibility: the manpower issues of recruiting, retention and all other personnel functions in all the services; logistics for all the services to include all procurement (except for research and engineering managed by an under secretary of Defense); maintenance and transportation.

It should be obvious to even the most casual observer that after Korb finishes making himself an expert on all manpower and procurement issues, all bonus, military pay and allowances, every weapons system and every piece of equipment in all four services, there just isn't enough time in the day to become an expert on the Army and Air Guard, to name only two of the seven reserve components.

That is the sum and substance of why there must be an assistant secretary of Defense responsible for reserve affairs. The reserve components need an individual with the authority to serve as an advocate for officials of the Defense Resources Board (DRB), who make the decisions that execute the secretary of Defense's general policy. Because the assistant secretary for reserve affairs would be a full-time expert in Guard and Reserve matters, the quality of time he would bring to the DRB and the quality of his time directly with Weinberger would be much higher.

As mentioned at the beginning, the idea of an assistant secretary of Defense exclusively for reserve affairs is hardly a new one. In fact when the current DoD structure was revamped by Congress in 1967, the House of Representatives voted to create such a position. The Senate disagreed, however, and the joint conference committee specified a deputy

assistant secretary for reserve affairs. Two key elements in that decision make it clear the Senate understood the requirements for a reserve component spokesman and wished to allow some latitude for adjustment.

First, the committee report language published in the Congressional Record on November 16, 1967, stated: "...he (the deputy assistant secretary) will be looked to as the responsible spokesman for reserve matters at the Department of Defense level. This means that we expect him to see to it that the needs are met in order for the reserves to be an effective team of our national defense in terms of manpower, equipment and other essentials."

Second, the Senate said that if downgrading the position to the deputy level didn't work out, it would review its inclination to resist creating another assistant secretary position.

It appears some key members of Congress agree that the reserve components need their own assistant secretary of Defense. Although creation of this position has enjoyed this Association's support in the past, we have made it a higher priority this year because of our changed perception of its importance.

That perception for the first time got a full airing at a congressional hearing a few months ago when Guard and Reserve leaders testified before the House Armed Services subcommittee on military personnel and compensation. Two prominent congressmen who support this proposal are Congressman Bill Chappell (D-Florida), a longtime supporter and the second ranking Democrat on the House Defense Appropriations subcommittee, and Congressman Frank McClosky (D-Indiana), an Armed Services committee member.

Considering the interest in Congress and this quality of apparent support, the position upgrade proposal has a better chance of either being enacted as a bill or being included in some other defense measure on a related subject. It is an idea whose time has come.

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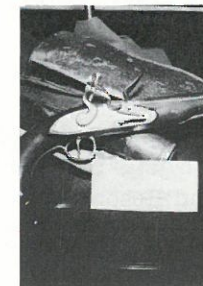
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14



17



25



28

## Features

### 14 HERITAGE GALLERY

The Heritage Gallery at the National Guard Memorial in Washington, D.C. is a must for all Guardsmen vacationing in the national capital this summer.

### 25 WEARING THE GREEN

A summary of recent uniform changes and proper wear of the Army uniform.

### 17 DO YOU SAVE MONEY AT THE PX/BX?

Careful shopping, including smart use of the AAFES sales, saves you money at the post/base exchanges.

### 28 ABSENTEE FATHER

How one Guard family explained why dad was on Guard duty so much; a tribute to Guardsmen on Father's Day.

## Departments

President's Message	Inside Front Cover
Washington Tie-Line	2
Views From the Field	4
View From the Hill	7
Newsbreaks	8
Guard Stars	12
People	31
Posting the Guard	35
Notebook	40



COVER: Scouts from the Alaska Army National Guard's 5th Battalion, 207th Infantry participated in BRIM FROST. The M-113 armored personnel carriers feature Arctic camouflage. Photo, Cpt. Fred Pe-Leate. Design by Len Johnson & Associates.

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