

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Legislative Process for NGAUS Starts at the "Grass Roots" Long Before the Staff Hits the Street

When the NGAUS Executive Council met in Washington several weeks ago to weigh Guard-related issues and establish legislative objectives, two aspects of its work were worthy of note.

One was the depth and diversity of issues with which they dealt, ranging from such weighty matters as SALT II and revitalization of Selective Service, across the spectrum to such mundane but important bread-and-butter topics as recruiting incentives and potentially harmful Guard/Reserve pay proposals. The other was the degree to which most Council members had made themselves familiar with the concerns and views of their "constituents" in the remote outer reaches of the Guard structure.

At the recent meeting, the Council performed its annual chore of identifying Guard-related issues, establishing NGAUS positions compatible with those expressed in General Conference resolutions, and transforming non-specific policy declarations into firm legislative objectives for 1979. Then, in a final action, it determined the year's legislative priorities.

The council meeting was only the last step in a process that commenced many months ago, when the numerous State Associations held their annual conferences. It is at those sessions that the concerns and ideas of young company and battalion level officers come to surface to be reflected in policy resolutions sent to NGAUS for national consideration.

A 106-member Resolutions Committee, representing the ARNG and ANG of every State, subjected them to scrutiny during the 100th General Conference in St. Louis, then sent them to the conference floor for a decision-vote by delegates representing Guard forces of every State. Those that survived became NGAUS policy statements.

In another phase of the decision-making process, the NGAUS professional staff researched a broad array of major Guard programs. All of it is



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in the 1979 NGAUS RED BOOK, which was recently distributed to 2,000 commanders.

This year, the system produced a set of legislative objectives and priorities that made clear the major concern of Guard leaders at every level. It is personnel—manpower, womanpower, people to fill the empty holes in almost every unit. Guard and Reserve units are scores of thousands of people short of the numbers needed should a mobilization be ordered. There are not enough trained people in the long-ignored IRR (Individual Ready Reserve) to fill up the empty ranks on M-Day and replace anticipated combat casualties. Selective Service is virtually defunct.

Should an emergency arise and a mobilization be ordered before the manning situation is improved, many Guard and Reserve units will find that overnight, they have become the IRR!

Therefore, priority objectives of NGAUS will include such legislative initiatives as:

- Revitalization of Selective Service, to include registration and classification of U.S. youth as a minimum, plus authority to draft for the IRR if other means fail.

- Defeat of such obvious disincen-

tives as elimination of paid military leave for Federal employees, commanders' administrative pay, and uniform allowances.

- Adoption of a 2x4 enlistment (two years in a drilling unit, four in the IRR) if an on-going Active Army test shows it to be feasible.

Also high on the NGAUS priority list, the Council decreed, will be a continued effort to obtain modern new aircraft for both ANG and ARNG flying units. Add-on procurement of new fighters and tactical transports has been authorized on several past occasions for the ANG as a result of NGAUS efforts. Now the effort will be expanded to seek modern attack helicopters for ARNG aviation units.

Another high priority goal will be amendments to the law to guarantee credit for 20-year (Title II) retirement for both officers and enlisted Guardsmen, medical care for dependents and re-employment rights for Guardsmen who perform full-time duty in military status under Title 32. This will enhance the attractiveness of the slots that are to be filled by full-time Guardsmen this year.

Other priority targets for 1979 will include restoration of construction funding to levels that will help reduce the backlog of construction needs, and indemnification of Guardsmen against tort liability.

Those are our priority objectives for 1979. Now the task becomes one of convincing Congress and the Administration that the resources and policies we seek are indeed essential—they are "must's" and are not merely "nice to have's".

They illustrate better than anything else what NGAUS is all about. Each of them, if attained, will contribute directly and importantly to the Guard's ability to train effectively, mobilize and deploy rapidly in an emergency, and fight proficiently if necessary.

Which all adds up to the Guard's primary goal—readiness!

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1979

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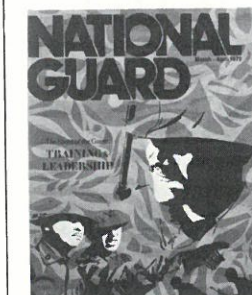
VOLUME XXXIII, NUMBER 3

Features

"MUKTUK"—A LEGEND OF ALASKA	4
<i>In his own way, he's the "Godfather" of the Alaska National Guard.</i>	
THE LONG, HARSH WINTER OF 1979	8
<i>For the National Guard it was one of those seasons when Mother Nature called the tune—and the troops!</i>	
LEADERSHIP	13
<i>Principles for successful commanders as set forth by General Bruce C. Clarke.</i>	
COMMANDER: A SOVIET VIEW	14
<i>The responsibilities of Command in a People's Army are not so different after all!</i>	
COMMAND AND THE DOCTRINE OF FM 100-5	16
<i>Little did Department of the Army know it had a "best seller" in latest Operations manual.</i>	
STAFF: WHERE GOOD TRAINING HABITS HATCH	16
<i>An Army Guard Division Chief of Staff offers thoughts on the training of a Staff—at all levels.</i>	
SOME SECOND THOUGHTS ON THE ARMY'S BLUEPRINT FOR FUTURE LAND WARFARE	18
<i>Martin Blumenson looks at FM 100-5 through the eyes of a military historian—and raises several questions.</i>	
JACK FROST 1979	28
<i>Guardsmen again involved in a Joint Exercise in the frozen "Far North" country</i>	

Departments

President's Message	Inside Front Cover
From Washington	2
Newsbreaks	7
View From the Hill	21
Views From the Field	22
National Newsmakers	24,26
Posting the Guard	31
People in the News	32
Editorially Speaking	40



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