



Major General William J. McCaddin, President, NGAUS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

POSTING WASHINGTON'S DEVELOPMENTS WITH YOU

There is a familiar old saying among military people, to the effect that there's always someone who doesn't get the word!

It's the Murphy's Law of membership organizations like NGAUS too! If NGAUS is to represent the Guard effectively in the Washington legislative arena, it must be able to communicate quickly and well with its members—with *all* its members! It must be able to transmit information, ideas and guidance down to the farthest reaches of its membership—to the lieutenants and captains who lead the Guard's smallest elements as well as to generals and field grade officers at the intervening command levels.

If we fail to communicate well—if too many members at the working level don't get the word—then they can't give NGAUS the support it needs, and NGAUS can't give them the kind of representation they deserve in Washington.

It became obvious several years ago that NGAUS needed to open new lines of communication with various parts of its membership, and a program of improvement was launched. The NGAUS RED BOOK was devised, and distributed down to battalion/squadron level, as a complete summary of information on the Army Guard/Air Guard, and on Washington issues affecting them. The distribution of our legislation-oriented WASHINGTON LETTER was broadened to reach to the company commander level. We began using red-bordered ACTIONGRAMS to seek grassroots action on legislation.

In addition, we created new links with retired and former Guard officers, and with the company grade elements of our membership, with the goal of getting them more involved in NGAUS affairs, and keeping them bet-

ter informed on key issues. Spokesmen for the two groups attend Executive Council meetings, caucuses are held at general conferences, and representatives are on the list of those we attempt to keep posted on Washington developments.

That's why a recent breakdown in the printing and distribution of such key publications as the RED BOOK, the WASHINGTON LETTER and NATIONAL GUARD magazine caused us such deep concern. An unfortunate combination of a painfully small staff, missed deadlines, broken presses and a greatly accelerated Congressional schedule all worked to seriously restrict our communications with members.

As so often happens, the breakdowns occurred right when they would hamper us most, at a crucial point in the legislative year. But they also produced some positive results for the future. In an effort to counteract a long gap between NATIONAL GUARD magazine mailings, we used the costly but effective technique of sending each member a legislative status report at his home address, in the form of a WASHINGTON LETTER. It was the first time we had sent our legislative newsletter to every member, and it brought such a positive, enthusiastic response that we have decided to make such mailings a regular feature of our communications effort.

We also intend to renew a once-popular element of our program that was discontinued several years ago—a regular press service primarily oriented to an internal Guard audience and distributed to State and unit publications. Members of the NGAUS professional staff will contact information officers and editors in the very near future to ask what kinds of ma-

terial and formats will best fill local needs.

What this all adds up to is a greater emphasis on the communications aspect of our complex business.

We have been assisted a great deal in deciding what needs to be done by the unusually heavy reaction we received from members, both to the breakdowns and to the all-member WASHINGTON LETTER we distributed in partial compensation. One Louisiana ARNG captain, for one, described the huge stack of paper that confronts him each time he goes into his company orderly room and said, in effect:—Sure, you probably were sending me the WASHINGTON LETTER at the armory, but I could never get down through all the must-read official stuff to read it—until you sent it to me at home.

I'll make one final point. The RED BOOK contains our basic "battle plan" on important issues as well as providing commanders with the best available source of factual information on Guard programs. It contains basic information for speeches, reports, fact sheets and news releases as well as for legislative action. But, I am always disappointed during visits to various states when I find many commanders who are only vaguely aware that such a publication exists.

Because it is costly and difficult to produce and ship, we distribute the RED BOOK only down to battalion/squadron level. However, captains and lieutenants constantly tell us how productively they could use such a compilation of information at community level.

I began this message by quoting an old military maxim, and will bring it to a close with another:

"Pass it down—pass the information down!"

1878



1980

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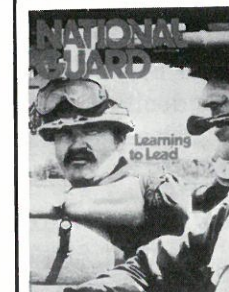
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COVER: Sergeant Michael S. Considine (left) and Staff Sergeant John C. Kaleyandis, tankers in Company C, 1/110 Armor, are looking for good leadership. Read about Guard leadership learning opportunities on pp. 8 and 12. Photo by Sp4 Ruth Stranahan and design by Tom Powers of Bill Duffy Associates.

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