



Major General William J. McCaddin, President, NGAUS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

THE PORTLAND RESOLVES: A STATEMENT, NOT A GRIPE

A number of people who consider themselves among the National Guard's best friends were visibly upset when premature—and grossly inaccurate—statements attributed to the Adjutants General Association made the news wires early in May.

As so often happens in such cases, the most sensational (and most misleading!) story was the one which drew the attention of the media. The substantive and productive results of the meeting of the Adjutants General were, publicly at least, overshadowed by the furor of the first headlines.

What was the crisis of "The Portland Resolves?" What, after all, is wrong with the Adjutants General seeking support for a National Guard to be "adequately equipped, effectively trained, fully manned and administratively prepared...to move quickly when and where needed to defend America, its democratic way of life and its people?"

Our fellow Adjutants General would be remiss, we believe, only if they failed to perceive such requirements for the support of the Army and Air National Guard within the context of the nation's needs in the Total Force environment.

"The Portland Resolves," as the AG's titled their paper, represents the sum total of their annual conference resolutions. It is through resolutions that an organization sums up the sense and the mood of a conference and through which it charts its program. There was nothing radical or wild-eyed about "The Resolves," although such conclusions might have been gained by the way the story was initially treated.

Most damaging was the accusation, penned by a writer for the *Chicago Tribune*, that the "Resolves" were developed to enable the Adjutants General to articulate their anger at the Carter Administration "for having allowed the National Guard to 'de-teriorate'."

There were several things seriously wrong with this story. For one thing, the "Resolves" had not yet been written when the article appeared! Second, the "Resolves" contained no vilification of the present Administration. Third, the article said the "Resolves" had been signed by all 53 Adjutants General. The fact is, the article appeared before the Resolutions Committee even tackled the "Resolves" and appears to have been based on an early set of working papers obtained by the reporter. Far from being critical of the Carter Administration, the "Resolves" pointed out that the Adjutants General had sought support for the National Guard's equipment shortcomings from four successive Administrations—and now it (AGAU) felt the time had come to take its case—the National Guard's case—to the public and to the Congress.

The full scope of the "Resolves" will be reported elsewhere in this issue of NATIONAL GUARD magazine. We think the position of the United States in a troubled world justifies the concerns expressed by the Adjutants General that U.S. military forces "must regain needed strength and be kept strong in training, manpower and equipment if our nation's security is to be achieved economically and quickly." We agree that time is of the essence and that our national defense has become a matter of "now or never."

We are not dismayed by those who are upset that the Adjutants General have spoken out. There is nothing controversial or partisan in nature about the resolutions which came out of the due process of the Portland meeting.

We hope that those who appeared to be horrified will read "The Portland Resolves"—carefully and fully. We would challenge them to find in the "Resolves" any words which reflect discredit upon U.S. goals and objec-

tives. We would challenge them, in the "Resolves" to find any words which downplay the ability of today's Army and Air National Guard to carry out their assigned missions.

The "Resolves" express broad-based concerns for tomorrow. They ask for renewed dedication to credibility. They ask for recognition of the realities of having placed increased reliance upon the Guard and Reserve as an expression of national policy.

Is it talking out of both sides of one's face to say, in the same breath, that the Guard has never been in better shape—and yet that so much needs to be done to insure that it remains a respectable and combat-ready force? Not at all.

What the "Resolves" have recognized is the coming danger—to the Guard and to the security of the nation—in the growing relationship of "cost-effective" to "combat-ready." If, for example, the Force Packaging Methodology concept continues to predominate — and to provide manpower incentives, equipment and armory construction funding—only for National Guard forces in the very early deploying category, this means consignment of all of the later deploying forces to slim rations indeed.

Over a period of time we will have two classes of National Guard forces—haves and have-nots. The dangers of this are clear. We cannot afford it; the nation cannot afford it. The Portland Resolves have clearly articulated the need for a change to policies which may have already begun to influence our capacity for national survival.

What, after all, is wrong with the Adjutants General seeking to obtain support for a National Guard to be "adequately equipped, effectively trained, fully manned and administratively prepared...to move quickly when and where needed to defend America, its democratic way of life and its people?"

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COVER: The Washington and Oregon National Guards face the anger of Mount St. Helens. Photo taken by the Columbian newspaper, Vancouver, Washington.

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