



Major General Edward R. Fry, President, NGAUS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

THE CHAIRMAN JCS: HAIL AND HELLO

It would be unseemly to permit so distinguished an "old soldier" as the outgoing chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) to pass from center stage without some acknowledgment in these pages. General David C. Jones represented a new type of "joint" service leader, and he was associated with the JCS longer than any other U.S. officer.

The lofty matters that are the routine matters of purview for the JCS are far removed from the day-to-day world of the National Guard. Nevertheless, as a significant part of the U.S. military force, we are profoundly affected by JCS requirements.

In a recent interview with the *New York Times*, General Jones commented upon the view of the JCS as "a committee of four Service chiefs and a Chairman." He noted: "Committees are useful in providing advice and even in a few policy decisions. But committees are notoriously poor at running things."

In preparation for his departure from the chairmanship after four years (plus four as a service chief on the "committee" while he was chief of staff of the Air Force), General Jones took many Pentagon insiders by surprise when he openly circulated a far-ranging series of proposals for improving the JCS system.

These proposals appeared, slightly truncated, in an article, "Why the Joint Chiefs of Staff Must Change," in the February 1982 issue of *DIRECTORS AND BOARDS*, a management publication. We hope all serious students of military matters will read it. The bottom line comes down to what General Jones sees as an urgent need to reduce the spectrum of interservice rivalry that impedes an effective decision-making process at the top of the defense pyramid.

It is—as General Jones notes—the "fifth member" of the Joint Chiefs, the chairman, who is the only member of the top rung of the JCS who devotes all of his time to joint affairs.

The service chiefs are also the leaders of their respective services, and each is considered by his service to be "the guardian of his professional interests, standards and traditions."

What General Jones seeks to gain support for is charted in three specific areas: *strengthening the role of the chairman, limiting service involvement in the joint process and broadening the training, experience and rewards for joint staff duty.*

We suspect he has stepped on some raw nerve ends in the Pentagon and elsewhere. But the debate his opening shots will provoke could be one of the most valuable and courageous contributions that this distinguished military leader has made. It is certain that his comments will be a subject of intense discussion in service, media, congressional and even academic circles. We welcome the onset of the discussion as we say *bon voyage* to General Jones, going into retirement after 40 years of an extraordinary military career.

* * *

When Captain Fletcher K. Ware approved the enlistment of the 17-year-old John W. Vessey in his Headquarters Battery, 59th Field Artillery Brigade in Minneapolis, it is probably safe to say that there was little to distinguish this young man from others joining the National Guard in the late spring of 1939. Even now, the only difference is that Ware had recruited for his nation's service—a future chairman of the Joint Chiefs. It rather boggles the mind, and it says a good deal about the democracy—frequently misunderstood—of the U.S. military system.

First Sergeant Vessey was destined to win a battlefield commission during the action at Anzio, in the Italian campaign in WWII, and the rest of the story is the sort of thing that legends are made of.

When confirmed by the United States Senate, Vessey will become the na-

tion's tenth JCS chairman and a member of an exclusive fraternity that numbers Generals Omar N. Bradley, Lyman L. Lemnitzer and Maxwell D. Taylor among its members. We think President Reagan put it aptly when he described Vessey as "a soldier's soldier."

Soon it will be Vessey's turn to grapple with the complex problems of joint military service. His grooming for this task includes almost three years as the top U.S. commander in South Korea, a job that involved all of the U.S. military services and one of our staunchest allies, the Republic of Korea. More recently, of course, he has been the Army's vice chief of staff.

Now inevitably, it will also be Vessey's lot to fall heir to the discussion General Jones has initiated. Perhaps more than anyone else in government, Vessey will find himself reading and re-reading the Jones essay. But it will be the new chairman who will have to "keep the system going" to insure that while the merits of the matter are argued, that the collective fighting capabilities of the U.S. armed forces are maintained at their present high levels.

Over the past decade, Vessey has learned much of the modern-day Army National Guard. For a number of years he regularly sat as an Army staff representative on the Army Reserve Forces Policy Committee. He is not unfamiliar with the Air National Guard and is said to have expressed great respect for the "gaining command" concept that was a pioneer effort by the Air Guard and the United States Air Force.

His understanding of what the Guard is all about—and what it can do—will bring a new dimension to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. For it is in the JCS environment that the forces which the National Guard can muster translate to the combat power essential to carrying out JCS plans and programs. We congratulate him and wish him well.

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COVER: West Virginia Air National Guard C-130s cross the Egyptian desert to airlift Sudanese paratroopers in desert exercise BRIGHT STAR '82. Stories on Pages 20-23. Design by Geo. W. King Company. Photo by TSgt Michael Pitzer, WVA ANG.

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