

# President's Message

Maj Gen John L. Matthews, President, NGAUS

## The Air Guard Is Low-Cost Insurance In A High-Risk World

Not long ago, when the focus was on "Quicksilver" and Army Guard cuts, the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) began pointing out at state association briefings that the National Guard would be faced with an Air Guard challenge as well in the future. At that time, the Air Force was approaching its downsizing challenge differently. Down sizing was driven by a restructuring—almost paralleling what we have seen in many corporations—making the Air Force leaner, more efficient, but just as lethal.

The senior Air Force leadership also understood the leverage of the Air Guard and hence maintained structure and numbers in the Guard. It was understood that the Guard and Reserve were a value-added insurance policy. Our warning then was that if pressures to down size the Air Force continued, we would be faced with similar tough choices that the Army Guard was facing. Today, the Air Guard has reached that point.

The FY95 Defense budget, which was delivered to Congress in February, was followed in March by a public announcement of Air Guard force structure cuts for FY94 and FY95. After several years of the active Air Force absorbing the majority of the cuts, Air Force leaders believed they could no longer cut active forces without jeopardizing the response capabilities required by the Bottom-up Review (BUR).

In 1990, the Total Air Force had 36 fighter wings (24 active/12 Guard and Reserve). The Base Force Plan proposed 26 1/2 fighter wings, with the ratio being

15.3/11.3. The BUR settled on 20 fighter wings (13/7). The determination of 20 was based on several assumptions—assumptions that have led senior leaders to question the capability of 20 wings to meet undefined world threats.

The BUR assumes that 20 wings can handle two nearly simultaneous contingencies, using DESERT STORM as the building block. Yet, DESERT STORM required 10.6 fighter wings. Two overlapping contingencies would require 21.2 wings, and there would be no residual capability to maintain

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other operations. The BUR also assumed that technology would improve the effectiveness of the Air Force. But, the chief of staff of the Air Force has publicly stated that requirements will exceed capability in the near future. Sufficient precision-guided munitions will not be available until the turn of the century to compensate for force structure shortfalls.

An unstated assumption is that the United States is the remaining super power and, therefore, no one will challenge its military strength. However, with this assumption of sole power, why is it that today the Air Force is flying more missions than ever. Though the clear majority of these sorties are nontraditional

missions, the threat of combat still exists along the Iraqi border and the Korean peninsula. As the mission requirements continue to rise, and as personnel and aircraft availability decrease, additional stresses will be placed on the Total Force.

We understand that budgetary concerns are the driving factor for the nation.

However, when these cuts are looked from a different perspective, the retention of at least two additional Air Guard fighter wings would be a cost-effective solution in helping the Air Force compensate for a smaller active force, while still controlling overall costs. Also, it would allow active and tanker units to remain at a more efficient and accessible level.

So, if current proposals become reality, Air Guard units will have lost, (depending upon PAA levels) 17 to 40 percent of current capability, while saving only 7 to 10 percent of unit costs. Maintaining two additional fighter wing equivalents in the National Guard would increase fighter power by 10 percent but would only increase the total Air Force fighter force by 3 percent. In our view, this is an insurance payment well spent.

Also, retaining fighter units would allow tanker and airlift units to maintain cost-effective PAA operating levels.

There's also a training dimension to the equation. Fighter pilots are not grown overnight. The training is intense and long. A higher fighter-wing equivalent would allow us to retain many highly trained pilots being lost to the draw down.

When the Adjutants General Association of the United States passed a resolution during its midwinter conference urging that the Air Force maintain current force levels and a fighter wing equivalent, the AGs were reacting in part to a moral responsibility.

The AGs clearly understand that eventually, if the current trend continues, the United States will be challenged, because we will be perceived as weak. And, more, we will be repeating mistakes of the past. The adoption of a win-win strategy is admirable. However, the retention of strong and visible will to defend American interests worldwide, will be even more important than just winning.

This proposal, if adopted, will save American lives by preventing war.

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## Features

### Guard Member and A Veteran Too? 16

What benefits are eligible to you? Can you apply for benefits without losing any Guard pay? Can you purchase a home with a VA loan? You have physical problems from Vietnam in the Persian Gulf. Can you go to a Veterans hospital for treatment? What benefits are eligible to you? Guard men and women are eligible for national support and benefits from the federal government. Read on to find out more.

### Guardman Extraordinaire 22

Many Guard members retire from active careers feeling justifiably proud of having devoted 30 years to the Guard. Few can boast a longer commitment. But at 92 years old, Brigadier General Cornelius Kraissl is tried and true with 66 years of service. An aviator, a published author, a gentleman, an accomplished horseman, a physician and for 66 years, a dedicated citizen-soldier, General Cornelius Kraissl, New York Air National Guard, still serves today.

### Warrior Maidens of Vicksburg 26

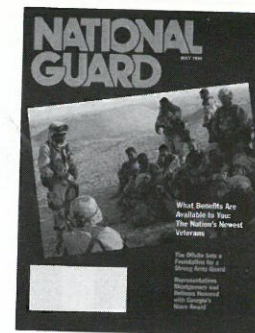
If I were asked...to what the singular prosperity and growing strength of that people (the Americans) ought mainly to be attributed, I should reply; To the superiority of their women." This quote from Alexis de Tocqueville is in essence a tribute to the spirit and great will of American women since the Civil War. Particularly, this quote is befitting to the "Valkyries of Vicksburg."

### A Stable, Balanced and Ready Guard 28

Since 1990, Army National Guard force structure has been annually subjected to proposals for force structure alternatives and realignments. Since then, world events and the Bottom-Up Review have redefined the national military strategy and set aside the Base Force Plan. Simultaneously, these events have reaffirmed the nation's need to rely on a stable, balanced and ready National Guard.

### A Tribute to Senator Sam Nunn 35

The Georgia National Guard Association members paid a living tribute to their senior senator and champion of the National Guard by establishing the Sam Nunn Award. The award, a lifetime casting of the Georgia senator is kept at the state Capitol Building and is presented yearly to dedicated men and women in service of the nation. Congressmen Sonny Perdue and Ronald V. Dellums are the first recipients.



## Cover:

Members of the 48th Infantry Brigade, Georgia Army National Guard, set up supplemental training in Kuwait for their active duty counterparts from the 24th Infantry Division. The Persian Gulf War has established yet another category of veterans. Photo, SPC Greg Holley, GAARNG. Cover, Dennis and Sackett Design.

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MG Robert F. Ensslin Jr. (ret.)

Publisher

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Director of Communications

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R. Glenn Ross

Advertising Sales

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Controller

Dennis and Sackett Design

Artwork

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