

Voice from the grass roots

NO greater honor has ever come my way than being elected to serve as President of the National Guard Association of the United States. The Association has occupied a very special place in my heart for a good many years, both for its accomplishments on behalf of the Guard, which are considerable, and for the opportunities it has offered me to associate and work with dedicated, selfless Guardsmen from every part of the nation.

I feel an especial pride because I am the first blue-suit Guardsman to occupy this position. I got my start as an artilleryman in the Army National Guard, however, and as a state adjutant general have enjoyed and benefited from my close relationship with the Army Guardsmen in my own state of South Dakota and elsewhere. Besides, I consider a Guardsman to be a very special person, whether his uniform is Army green or Air Force blue, and the Association itself stands as a symbol of our submergence of separate goals in the overriding importance of our shared loyalties and objectives.

The voice of this Association is a strong and effective one. It's a voice that is heard and respected at the highest levels of national leadership. Our voice is strong because we have a great Army and Air National Guard—trained, responsive, fully manned, dedicated to the ideal of serving our nation and our states. It's a voice that comes from the grass roots of America and it will continue to be heard and heeded as long as we continue to depict to the Army, the Air Force and the Congress a picture of full-strength, combat-ready units.

The strength and sense of purpose of our Association also has rested on the caliber of the leadership it has enjoyed. In his final report as President, General McMillan of Florida, my predecessor, reminded us of the Association's basic purposes—to enhance and promote the security of this great nation, and to maintain the National Guard as an effective, combat-ready component of that security. He himself is the best example I know of a wise and able leader striving with immense energy and intellect to carry out that purpose. It will not be easy to live up to the example he and his predecessors set, but I pledge to the members of this Association the very best effort of which I and the other new officers are capable.

We in the Guard can count ourselves among the most fortunate people in the world. We are Americans, citizens of the greatest nation on earth, a nation that symbolizes liberty and freedom for people around the world, that provides its citizens with more privileges and rights than any nation in history. As Guardsmen, we are among a privileged few who can give our beloved nation the attention and support it deserves, both as citizens and as soldiers and airmen.

This is a dual role in which we can take great satisfaction. It implies a total commitment by each of us, to the National Guard and to the defense of the United States. Inherent in our mission and our unique dual status is another responsibility, to tell the people in our communities how well they are served by their military establishment—Active, National Guard and Reserve. In many communities across the nation, we are the sole visible symbol of the armed forces. We owe it to our fellow citizens to be not just a symbol but an articulate spokesman for all the services, keeping less-knowledgeable Americans informed on what we need to assure the security of the United States.

As Guardsmen, we can be the nation's most effective advocates for an adequate national defense. I hope every Guardsman will accept this as one of his most basic responsibilities as we get on with the job of building proud, competent, combat-ready military organizations.

And as an Association, our course is easy to discern though not always easy to follow. We must continue to work forthrightly and with vigor for a strong, secure America and a better-than-ever Army and Air National Guard. ♦



Duane L. Corning
Major General, SDANG
President,
National Guard
Association of
The United States



/74

The National GUARDSMAN

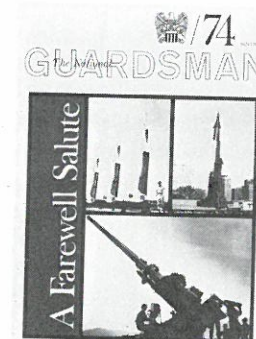
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Twenty years of on-site air defense protection by the Army National Guard is depicted on this month's front cover. With this issue, we pay a farewell salute to the three major phases of that program (clockwise from the bottom): the AAA gun program, depicted by a 120mm gun of Washington's 770th AAA Bn in the Seattle Defense Area; three Nike-Ajax surface-to-air missiles, first of the Army's on-site SAMs, and a Nike-Hercules second generation missile in firing position against a Chicago skyline.

Official publication of the National Guard Association of the United States. Published monthly except in August. **Publication office 1 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington D.C. 20001.** Second class postage paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices. *All correspondence and address changes should be addressed to 1 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.* "THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN" welcomes original articles bearing on National defense, with emphasis on the Army and Air National Guard. Manuscripts must be accompanied by return postage, and no responsibility is assumed for their safe handling. Domestic subscriptions for home delivery: \$2 per year. A year's subscription is included within NGAUS members' annual dues. Subscriptions to foreign addresses, \$3.00 per year. Single copies, 25¢. Copyright, 1974, National Guard Assn. of the U.S. All rights reserved.

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