



Major General Edward R. Fry, President, NGAUS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

"REFLECTIONS"

To me, it seems less than two years have passed since I assumed the presidency of the National Guard Association of the United States in Las Vegas. This supports the idea that time passes swiftly when you enjoy what you are doing. I can emphatically state that the time has flown. Nevertheless, the reins of the presidency have now been turned over to my elected successor, and I have assumed the position of Immediate Past President of our great Association.

Instead of addressing a specific issue for this edition of the *President's Message* I take this occasion to reflect on various impressions I have gained during the biennium of my tenure as your president.

Two topics quickly surface in this review of the past two years—membership and our legislative programs—for these items did represent a large share of our efforts.

Our membership program is healthy but that claim is not without cause. We are well-supported in this regard in each of our states through the efforts of the adjutants general, the leadership of our effective commanders and the actions of the state National Guard associations. We take none of these for granted for we cherish each individual membership for its value to the total effort as well as to each of our sustaining members. Several alterations have been made in the administrative handling of the membership program to improve its effectiveness and for this we owe a debt of thanks to the states and the NGAUS staff.

The legislative program, a real "bread and butter" item, has thrived and produced valuable benefits in the enhancement of the National Guard in its Total Force role. Again, this does not occur without intelligent and total effort. As a guiding element in this regard, I recognize the efforts of our fine staff members who diligently and professionally apply the collective efforts of our member-

ship. But, I hasten to add, that the NGAUS staff alone would be unable to achieve our current levels of performance without our "grassroots" activities. The adjutants general and the legislative task forces which are active in many of the states have performed most effectively on both the local as well as the Washington scenes.

While mentioning the staff of NGAUS I would be remiss if I failed to pay special recognition to its accomplishments. While it is one of the smaller association staffs in Washington, it is acknowledged that few can claim to be as effective. This is often heard from members of Congress, from other association staffers, from the Pentagon leaders and from the state officials. We owe much to these dedicated few, recognizing the need for smart professionals in each of the staff positions.

The NGAUS Executive Council, your elected representatives from each of the six National Guard areas; from the retired and separated officers; and from the Company Grade officers also earn my sincere thanks and appreciation for their diligent participation.

The insurance program we sponsor and which is administered through the NGAUS Insurance Trust is flourishing. Through this activity we are providing valuable products and service to our individual National Guard members—a first priority. We try to stay aware of your changing needs and strive to offer solutions which will well serve your individual and family needs. The monetary gains that NGAUS derives from the administration of the insurance program are astutely applied to support several of our programmed objectives.

I am greatly impressed with our Heritage Gallery activities, especially pleased to note the rotating state displays in the Reckord Lounge as a method of telling their particular historical tale. I encourage all states

to avail themselves of this opportunity for they are meaningful and productive ventures.

I consider as my greatest personal benefit the opportunity to visit with a large number of our Association members—to learn of their concerns and for me to learn from their experiences. Too, I appreciated the opportunity to carry the NGAUS Washington message to the people in the field to report on our successes, and on occasion, our failures, to secure targeted actions for the enhancement of the National Guard. My participation in National Guard conferences of the various state associations, the Adjutants General Association conferences, ANG commanders and ARNG management conferences, ANG senior NCO conferences and the general conferences of both the EANGUS and NGAUS were all highlights that will live in my memory as valuable communicative experiences, as well as being enjoyable.

At one of the meetings a NGAUS member asked me the salary of the NGAUS president. Even after responding that it was an unsalaried position the ensuing response stated, in essence, that in consideration of my obvious enjoyment when visiting the field perhaps I should reimburse the Association for those pleasant experiences! My "cover had been blown," but the observation contained certain elements of credibility, for I truly did enjoy those memorable occasions.

To conclude, I encourage each of you to consider increased participatory roles in the National Guard Association activities, whether it be at state association or NGAUS levels. Not only will you enjoy the rewards of your efforts, but, more importantly, your active efforts are vital to the future of the Guard. Our states and our nation can ill afford to settle for a National Guard any less capable than we, in our united efforts, can possibly produce.

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COVER: The leader of the Ohio Air National Guard's STAR team demonstrates proper technique for rappelling while carrying UZI weapon. Design by Leonard Johnson.

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