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# RETURN FIRE

## THE CITIZEN-SOLDIER: THE NATIONAL GUARD'S GREATEST STRENGTH

Many years ago, I was approached to join the Air National Guard. My service in World War II and an enlistment in the Army National Guard gave me another four years of enjoyable camaraderie. I had really thought that my days in the armed services were over. Nevertheless, the invitation to look at the Oregon Air National Guard spurred my interest and I visited the local organization.

I was amazed at what I saw. The state organization was commanded by the treasurer and also major stockholder of an internationally respected knitting firm. Group and squadron commanders were of equal footing—owners of car dealerships, national sales managers, attorneys, principals of schools.

In those early days, the organizational aircraft was the P-51. The aircrews assigned found time from their busy civilian schedules to maintain their proficiency.

However, those simple days of drills on Tuesday nights and two weeks of active duty are gone. That is not to say that both combat readiness and mission weren't extremely important then. The passing of the annual inspections was a constant goal. Only 16 percent of the assigned strength was of "air technicians."

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Today we are faced with a different reality—a reality that poses the question: "Is there room for 'non-full-timers' in the Air National Guard to advance to senior and command positions?" I believe the answer to this question may hold the future of the Air National Guard in decades to come.

Instead of 16 percent, in 1986 fully 50 percent of my state's Air Guard personnel derive their primary income from Guard activities. They are participants and beneficiaries of any one of many programs, which today make up the full-time Air National Guard

force. The attraction to these programs comes from various sources.

First is the mission itself. Demanding of time and skill, it is a jealous mistress in terms of commitment.

Second is the attractiveness of the programs themselves. By and large, these are well-paying positions with good benefits, ones that often allow earlier and more lucrative retirement than can be obtained in the private sector.

As the programs grow in authorized full-time strength and avocations change to careers based on full-time commitment, a highly skilled as well as motivated full-time work force emerges—a work force that can complete any assigned mission and pass with outstanding records the challenging inspections levied by the Air Force. It would be impossible today to accomplish all this without the dedicated, professional full-time force.

But let us take a look at the other side of the ledger. What is happening to the "weekenders" or "part-timers" as Guardsmen are often, in today's world, referred to?

If he or she is an aircrew member and faced with a day-to-day flying mission, chances are that by now they have given up their full-time civilian job and are dedicating their working life to the flying mission. Or, they have been forced through personal decisions to leave the program.

Promotions, as well as command positions, are unfortunately disappearing for the part-time officer. The question arises when command vacancies occur and part-time as well as full-time records are reviewed and individuals are interviewed: "Who will be chosen for the command position?" The answer always is, "The most qualified man or woman." Good answer on the surface, but when analyzed in depth, it almost always means the full-timer who has had the opportunity to attend special schools

and workshops and who has proven himself/herself in the eyes of the commander (who, most likely is also a full-timer). So the system continues to force the part-timers with fine educations and outstanding professional and business careers out of the program because the level of responsibility for their Air Guard careers will not match the level of competence they enjoy in their civilian sector.

We lose appreciation of the citizen-soldier by his or her superiors not sharing the difficulties of maintaining a civilian occupation or profession while jointly wearing the uniform on duty days. We may develop a parochial view on military matters without leveling influence from those who also have an obligation within the civilian sector. We become calloused to the press of time demanded by a civilian career. We become calloused to the needs of family, because our own paycheck is delivered as an air technician without any concerns that are often shouldered by the "weekend warrior."

The career-oriented officer and NCO must now ask: "Do I give up my civilian career in order to progress in the Air Guard?" This never was a contention in previous years and should not be a contention for promotion or advancement today. However, it is.

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The citizen-soldier has served this nation well in war and peace. It speaks to the very philosophy that our founding fathers expressed in 1776. The citizen-soldier is an honorable concept, and should not be relegated to a secondary position. The nation's defense is of the utmost concern with all of us who wear or have worn the uniform. Let us not limit that participation now for those of us who take great pride in serving our country as civilians as well as soldiers.

National Guard

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### COVER:

One F-4D from the 113th Tactical Fighter Group, District of Columbia Air National Guard, refuels to continue on its way to Iceland to participate in CORONET KIOWA, one of the many Checkered Flag overseas training deployments of the Air National Guard. Photo, DCANG. Cover, Johnson Design.

## FEATURES

**145th TAG Wins Worldwide Contest 16**  
For the first time in the eight-year history of the Military Airlift Command's VOLANT RODEO competition, an Air National Guard C-130 unit took top honors. The 145th Tactical Airlift Group, North Carolina Air National Guard, placed first in maintenance and second in C-130 aircrew operations to win this year's contest.

**LTG Emmett H. Walker Jr. Says Goodbye 18**  
For the last time as chief, LTG Emmett H. Walker Jr. talks with NATIONAL GUARD Magazine about his life in the National Guard, the National Guard as it developed through his tenure as Chief, National Guard Bureau, and where he hopes the National Guard will go in the future.

**Annual Training '86: Training for the Future 24**  
Another Annual Training period for the National Guard has come to a close. This pictorial review highlights some missions accomplished by the many Guard units of the states.

**The New Jersey Guard and Miss Liberty 34**  
The special Liberty Weekend also was a highlight for citizens on the New Jersey shoreline, which overlooks Miss Liberty's island. The New Jersey National Guard was instrumental in providing support to the State of New Jersey for the celebrations.

**One Man's View of Training in Honduras 36**  
As a civilian reporter and photographer, Frank Jordan took a little trip to Honduras to get his own views of National Guard overseas deployment training in the small Central American country. It was the humanitarian missions that caught his eye.

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