



MG Ansel M. Stroud Jr., President, NGAUS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

IT'S BEEN A SPORTY COURSE

At the NGAUS, we frequently like to say that our policies are driven by the resolutions adopted at our General Conferences. Those of us in the Association's leadership also will add quickly that sometimes "targets of opportunity" or the requirement to provide factual explanations or play defense on an issue becomes vital.

For example, who would have thought that 1960s service in the Indiana National Guard would become a steaming political issue in this year's presidential election? It is said that one should view challenges as an opportunity rather than a problem. If so, we have had a great national opportunity to explain the role of the National Guard in today's Total Force.

We can only hope that the "National Guard issue" in this year's campaign will have been laid to rest by the time this issue of NATIONAL GUARD reaches print. However, some comment from this Association seems in order, given our experiences in August. Rarely in recent years has so much attention by the national media been focused on the Guard. True, some of the attention we received was not exactly to our liking. However, we have been afforded the opportunity to explain our mission and role in national defense to the media and the American people in a way rarely afforded.

In this my last *President's Message* as the NGAUS' senior leader, I had intended to sum up our accomplishments during my two-year term in office. The nomination of Senator Dan Quayle (R-Indiana) as the Republican vice presidential candidate and the resultant furor over his Indiana National Guard service abruptly changed our focus during the past two months.

It seems to me that a couple of points need to be made about the media reaction to Senator Quayle's military service. The first is that his enlistment in the Indiana National Guard in 1969 is without blemish so far as we can ascertain. He enlisted in a unit with a vacancy (although many

units had waiting lists in that era). To our knowledge, he served honorably for his six-year enlistment and was discharged in due course.

It must be emphasized in discussing Senator Quayle's service that duty in the Guard and Reserve in the 1960s, and today, is honorable in all respects. The Congress many years earlier determined that enlistment in the Guard and Reserve would be one alternative for military service available to Americans. Basically, from the initiation of the peacetime draft in the early 1950s until conscription was terminated in 1973, a young American had three alternatives in his early 20s. First, he could enlist in the regular services. Second, he could enlist in the Guard or Reserve. Or, third, he could take his chances with the Selective Service System.

The Vietnam era of draft calls generally is dated from President Lyndon B. Johnson's speech in August 1965 when he announced large deployments of active component units to South Vietnam and very substantial increases in draft calls. At the same time, Mr. Johnson eschewed any mobilization of the Guard and Reserve—despite the fact that this was unanimously recommended by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Mr. Johnson's decision now is viewed as a purely political one, justified on several grounds.

The reason cited by then-Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara was that the Guard and Reserve were a "perishable asset" in the sense that once mobilized and used, they would not be subsequently available for further mobilization for the period of time necessary to demobilize them and reorganize and re-recruit the force.

These decisions in 1965 and later must be viewed through the lens of those times. President John F. Kennedy had mobilized two Guard divisions and other units in response to the Berlin Crisis of 1961. The year 1968 also saw the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and the fear among

many strategic planners that the Soviets might be on the move in central Europe. McNamara's comment about a perishable asset and the requirement for a strategic reserve have to be recalled to gain the proper context today for the decisions made 20 and 25 years ago.

Of course, there was a political context to the Johnson decisions too. Many believed then and believe today that Lyndon Johnson wanted both "guns and butter" in that he didn't want to threaten the financing of his "Great Society" social programs with a large, expensive military effort.

To say that young men who enlisted in the Guard in the late 1960s were avoiding Vietnam service begs the question. COL Harry G. Summers (ret.), the U.S. Army's distinguished military historian of the Vietnam War, noted that he was visiting the Texas Guard at its annual training at Fort Hood at the time of Mr. Johnson's Gulf of Tonkin speech. Summers recalls that the Texans were sure they would be mobilized.

The same might be said for many members of the Selected Reserve Force (SRF), two groups of Guard units that received extra equipment and training in the late 1960s with the expectation that they would be mobilized and utilized in combat.

When the mobilizations occurred in 1968 in the wake of the attack on the USS *Pueblo* off Korea and the Tet offensive, many SRFers were shocked when they weren't called.

Some were called, of course. Many of the units that were mobilized and deployed performed superbly in combat. The call-up in 1968 coupled with the maintenance of the SRF forces would suggest that applicants for Guard enlistment in the 1969-70 time frame could not be assured that they would not see service in South Vietnam. Quite the contrary.

National Guard

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FEATURES

COB Deployments to Germany

Missouri's 131st Tactical Fighter Wing, Air National Guard, and Maryland's 175th Tactical Fighter Group deployed to their collocated operating bases in Germany for their two-week annual training this year. Both came back with fond memories and practical experience to enrich their units' readiness.

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Guard Volunteers at Youth Championship

Guardsmen and their families volunteer to organize and run the annual National Guard Junior Position Air Rifle Championship, which was conducted at the Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colorado, this year. It was a rewarding experience for them all.

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New National Guard Memorial Building

The National Guard Association of the United States' Executive Council has entered into a limited partnership with Demar, Inc., construction company, to build a new National Guard Memorial building. Construction will begin in the spring of 1989 with a completion date in 1991.

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FIREX '88—Corps-Level Training

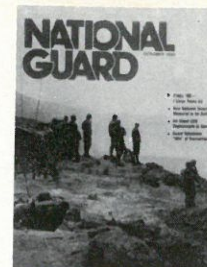
I Corps Artillery Commander BG James L. Miller, Utah Army National Guard, led 14 artillery battalions, 35 high-performance aircraft, 163 helicopters and 17,000 soldiers in the largest live-fire exercise in the United States since World War II. It was invaluable training at corps level.

30

Gallipoli

It began as a diversionary tactic to take the pressure off the Russians on the Western Front during World War I and possibly end the war earlier. It became a tragic mistake in military strategy and caused perhaps as many as a quarter of a million casualties.

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COVER:

Forward observers watch the time-on-target finale during FIREX '88 at Dugway Proving Grounds, Utah. Adding to the drama, spontaneous fires were breaking out on the desert floor surrounding the forward observation post. Photo, SGT Scott Thompson, UTARNG. Design, Johnson Design Group.

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