

“... a source of great satisfaction ...”



MG James F. Cantwell  
President

National Guard Association  
of the United States

**B**ECAUSE my nine years of service as President of your Association approaches an end, this will be the last time that I will have the opportunity and the privilege to address a “President’s Message” to the readers of “THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN”. It has been the great privilege of my lifetime to have served the Association in its highest office for such a long period of time. This service has been a source of great satisfaction, for I believe that there have been accomplishments which have benefitted the National Guard as an organization and which, likewise, have benefitted individual Guardsmen.

As I lay down the reins, I want to express once again my deep and sincere appreciation to the members of the NGAUS for their continuing support of the Association and of my efforts to make it an efficient and effective organization. Beyond that, I am grateful to so many members for personal courtesies and kindnesses extended as I travelled about the Country visiting with National Guardsmen at State Association meetings and other activities.

One cannot serve in the position of high responsibility in a National organization such as ours without learning a great deal. Certainly I am no exception to that. Particularly in the area of legislation, I have learned that one must have patience, because the legislative process is a mill which grinds slowly and the passage of a Bill, no matter how worthy, takes a great deal of time. We look to the Congress for support in nearly every area of our program. By and large, general support for the Guard has been forthcoming and generous. I have learned that we cannot expect to get action on every request, even though we may be convinced of the merits of the request.

Our track record in the area of legislative interest is good. The evidence of that is that the Guard is better supported today than it has been in the past and that individual Guardsmen have attained added benefits in recent years.

There is still much to be done. At this writing, there are several important pieces of legislation pending. It is

essential that we have incentives for retention and recruiting if we are to maintain our authorized strengths in a zero-Draft situation.

We are urging members of the Congress, particularly members of the appropriate committees, to act in this Session on a Bill to authorize enlistment and reenlistment bonuses for the Guard and other Reserves.

We are urging passage of a Bill which would extend Servicemen’s Group Life Insurance to Guardsmen and Reservists on a full-time basis. By enactment of a Bill several years ago, such coverage was made available to members of the Guard and other Reserve Forces when in training status.

There is every indication that this year the Congress will provide add-on funding for Air National Guard construction in approximately 50% more than the amount of the original Air Force request.

We have strongly and actively supported legislation to provide full retirement credits for Technicians, and that Bill is on the brink of final action in the Congress.

We sometimes tend to overlook the many other areas of activity in which the NGAUS is involved. The publication of “THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN” magazine is a major operation. We have devoted a great deal of time to improving it in content and design in a continuing effort to provide our readers with a quality publication.

We maintain daily working relationships with the many agencies of the Department of Defense that have authority and responsibility for the National Guard program. Likewise, we have liaison with other agencies of the Government and with other associations that share mutual interests. In the years during which I have been privileged to be President, our insurance programs have grown, making available to our members low-cost insurance coverage. The administration of these programs demands considerable time.

The routine of operating the NGAUS, which is a \$600,000-a-year business, takes much time of the Staff.

I am particularly proud of the manner in which we have maintained the National Guard Memorial. It is nearly 13 years since the Memorial was dedicated and it is in better condition today, in my judgment, than on the day its doors were opened.

I recite all of this in no selfish vein nor as a claim for credit. The NGAUS is a team made up of the body of its members, its leadership and its Headquarters Staff. Each of these is deserving of credit, for without the combined support of all three elements, the NGAUS could not function.

I look to the future of the NGAUS with much confidence. The National Guard is assuming greater responsibilities on the National defense team. As the Active Army and Air Force are reduced in size, the Guard’s tasks will become more demanding. There will continue to be need for the kind of services that the Association furnishes. It will be just as important in the future that there be a strong and active Association as in the past.

My final request to the membership is that it continue to support the Association with the same zest and zeal it has evidenced for nearly 100 years. ♦

# The National GUARDSMAN



AUG./SEP. XXVI 8

THE WAR AGAINST WATER 2  
*Thousands of National Guardsmen—from Florida to New York, and from the Eastern Seaboard to California—answered their State’s and community’s plea for help in the wake of widespread flooding.*

THE DEFENSE DEBATE: 1972 10  
*A veteran military writer presents an analysis of the debate over a proposal for a drastically-reduced defense budget.*

AS THE CAMERA SAW ANNUAL TRAINING 22

WHAT’S ON TELEVISION TONIGHT? 28  
*A “ground-pounder” shares his impressions of a “routine” Air Guard flight.*

WHERE MATTERS STAND 32  
*A status report on Resolutions adopted by the 1971 NGAUS General Conference.*

## DEPARTMENTS

WASHINGTON REPORT	16
YOU OUGHT TO KNOW	24
PENTAGON PARAGRAPHS	31
POSTING THE GUARD	39
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	47



Cross-section of typical Guard action in wake of Hurricane “Agnes” is shown photographically on front cover. (L to R, reading down): Residents of Harrisburg suburb evacuated in ARNG trucks (photo by CW12 Arthur Kramer). . . VAARNG sentry bars sight-seers from debris-strewn Richmond bridge. . . Cargo flown into Elmira, NY, by 109th Tac Alft Gp is loaded into truck of 1st Bn, 108th Inf. . . At Williamsport, PA, flood victims discuss ration distribution with helicopter Pilot, CPT Jerry Robbins, of 104th Armd Cav (photo by Vanucci Foto Services). . . Pennsylvania Guardsman helps a senior citizen into an evacuation center at Sunbury (photo by SP4 Gregg Kowatch). . . Richmond citizens draw water purified by Virginia Guardsmen.

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