



THE STRENGTH OF THE GUARD IS IN THE STATE-FEDERAL CONNECTION

In our zeal to make the Total Force Policy work, get along with our wartime chain of command and train for the mission as we see it, members of the National Guard can sometimes lose sight of the factor that has been the underlying source of our success for 350 years. That is the role of state control in peacetime—indeed, the fact that the National Guard is as much a state organization as it is federal.

We were reminded of this recently while reading the quoted comments of some California Air Guardsmen who were accompanied to Central America by a Los Angeles Times reporter, who was discovering the National Guard for the first time.

After calling the governor their "titular head," these Guardsmen said:

"The governor? I heard that stuff on the radio about whether the governor was going to let us go (to Central America), and I was thinking to myself 'What the hell does he have to do with it?'"

"Some of the real old-time members of the unit can remember when we got paid from Sacramento, but I can't. I get paid by the U.S. Air Force. That's who we work for."

Unfortunately, this kind of thinking probably is more common than many National Guard leaders would like to believe. In our enthusiasm to become a fully operating partner in the Total Force, we have tended to concentrate on our federal mission, and think only when necessary about our state mission.

But to the extent that such thinking pervades the Army and Air Guard, leaders at every level need to redouble their efforts to educate their personnel about the differences between the National Guard and the other reserve components. Guardsmen need to know that the National Guard is larger than all the other reserve components combined, better equipped and more combat ready than they are

because of state control, not in spite of it.

There are a variety of reasons why this is so. One cited most frequently is the fact that a Guardsman, as a part of an organization with distinctly state-level ties, has a different quality of loyalty to and identity with his Guard organization than the member of another reserve component. With occasional exceptions, units have state integrity and distinct state identities. Guardsmen at every level know that promotions, appointments and the like are controlled at state headquarters and that state headquarters is commanded by the state adjutant general.

Loyalty to a state organization also is much easier to feel than loyalty to some other regional entity, such as a continental U.S. Army (CONUSA) or some other regional grouping. Men and women will instinctively feel themselves North Carolinians (Tarheels), "Volunteers" (Tennessee) or Hawkeyes (Iowa). Ask them to be loyal to a multistate grouping and you're likely to get a querulous look.

Our state control in peacetime allows the Guard to be influential in ways that other reserve components have never succeeded in being. As Guardsmen who are members of a state organization, we are encouraged to be an active part of the civic life of the communities where we live.

The fact that Guardsmen become so directly and intimately involved with their communities and states is what makes our national effort, as exemplified by the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS), so effective. It is one reason why the NGAUS has an unparalleled success record in its advocacy of the Guard's cause in the national capital.

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The state-federal connection offers us an interesting paradox at times. While we in the Guard frequently think little of our state connec-

tion and mission—as exemplified in the quotations from the California Air Guardsmen—the fact is that many ordinary citizens with little or no contact with the Guard view the Guard as a strictly state organization. They are amazed to learn that we fly modern fighters, are issued M-1 tanks and are combat ready and capable of deploying into combat within a few days. Of course, this occurs because most of the publicity the Guard receives in peacetime is associated with state call-ups for floods, storms and riots. The training we do for our wartime missions, routine training in many cases, is not newsworthy in that sense, so it makes little impression on the public.

However, if you ask the average Guardsman where his priority is, he will quickly tell you that 98 percent or more of his attention is on the federal mission; that he gets a federal paycheck; that his uniform says "U.S. Army" or "U.S. Air Force" and that his equipment is marked the same.

Commanders at all levels should undertake to balance this situation at both ends. If the Guard is to remain the distinctly state (in peacetime) force that it is, we must make sure our troops have a specific and keen understanding of why the Guard is a state organization and why this is an advantage to them. The *vive la difference* between the Guard and the other reserve components should be explained and stressed.

At the same time, the general public must become better educated about the importance of the federal mission, and why the Guard and the public have an interest in permitting and supporting overseas training for the federal mission.

We in the Guard know how much things have changed for the better since the Total Force Policy made its appearance 16 years ago. However, our younger troops and the general public don't know, or frequently haven't kept up. It's time we told them.

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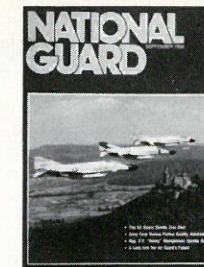
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COVER: Air National Guard F-4s fly over Germany while pulling the United States commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Photo, LTC Don Borowski, NGB-PAO. Cover, Johnson Design Group.

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