In this our annual “Yearbook” issue of NATIONAL GUARD, we like to highlight the major issue of the year for the National Guard and the National Guard Association of the United States. Readers will find that issue to be the Central American rebellion/government issue. We are offering that article, written by Brig. Gen. Lewis E. Phillips of the District of Columbia Air National Guard, and a distinguished California attorney and professor of law, to better inform all Guardsmen of the issues and considerations that pertained in 1986 when NGUSA and other National Guard leaders concluded that legislation was required for us to retain the Guard's position in the Total Force.

The Montgomery Amendment, which was the legislation introduced by Congress last year, provides that no governor may withhold his or her Guard unit from overseas deployment on account of objections to the “location, purpose, type, or schedule” of such training. This language, which was designed to fit with the Guard’s historic support for the Militia Clause, reserves to the states the command of the National Guard in peacetime, but provides that training must be to federal standards. Deployment and overtraining are an integral part of such standards.

When we met in January, the NGUSA Executive Committee reaffirmed our support of the Montgomery Amendment. That position reflected the position we adopted last summer and the overwhelming statement of policy of the Adjutant General Association of the State National Guard (AGAUSA), which supports the concept of National Guard overseas training in support of the U.S. foreign policy of this president and any future president.

Notwithstanding the opposition of a significant number of governors, who have sought to bar their Guard units from Central America deployments, we believe that such training is important for several reasons. The most obvious and easily explained is the simple fact that deployment training is the very best National Guard training there is. In today's Total Force environment, we simply cannot conduct an annual training in our home states on a foreign national or federal command. That is, the Guard is simply unable to conduct training in the same holes year after year. Or, to put it the way LTG Emmett H. Walker Jr. (ret.), former chief of the National Guard Bureau, did recently when reviewing a report, in the Mississippi Army National Guard, “Camp Shelby (Mississippi) so many times I knew the trees by their first names.”

“We had to expect that our forces would have to be part of the deterrent posture of the United States.”

Overseas deployments, wherever they may occur, provide the change of scenery that is so important to effective training. OCONUS training, particularly when it is associated with Joint Chiefs of Staff exercises, is vital to the National Guard’s role in the Total Force Policy.

A number of things are accomplished through overseas deployment training (OTT). Perhaps the most important, beyond the change of scenery, is the logistics and movement support that are acquired by the Guardsmen when they must plan and then move to a faraway location. Among these are training for rail loading, aircraft loading, and port operations. This is exactly what they would be mobilized and required to deploy their CAPSTONE or gaining-manned higher wartime headquarters.

Although U.S. foreign policy in Central America gets much of the attention when the Montgomery Amendment is discussed, the fact is that there is no military deployments in support of foreign policy. That is true for the REFORGER, where the exercise supports the purposes of NATO. It is not true for the TIP, where the United States supports policies that began during the Korean War. Deployments to Europe support the Command. But why, the Guard, you ask? The National Guard has never in its history been involved in power projection. The defense of our allies in peacetime seems to be that this is the difference between national defenses before and after the Total Force Policy. Until 1980, overseas operations were the province of the armed forces. OCONUS training was too rare. The use of the Guard as a part of our strategy of deterrence is bold.

When the Total Force Policy was implemented, reducing the size of the active components and placing reliance on the Guard and Reserve, we had to expect that our forces would have to be part as a part of the deterrent posture of the United States. That is why the Guard routinely deploys to such exercises as NORTHERN WATCH, in Europe; the joint exercises in Korea and Belgium; and in the deployment to Egypt, Southwest Asia, and South Africa.

Our support and acceptance of the principle of the Total Force Policy, and the National Guard’s role in it, reflect the Guard’s support for the Guard and the Guard’s role in it. Our support is that of the National Guard and its leadership who serve with pride and support the Guard in its role.

KJPW With Overseas Training

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President’s Message

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