AFTER a couple of false starts, the 110th National Guard General Conference in San Antonio last September attracted a large audience to the Association’s Palms that changes the way delegate strength is computed. This change already has attracted the attention of many states; several have sought an “exception” from the General Conference for this year.

We took up this matter at the NGAUS Executive Council meeting of December 10, but quickly concluded that the Council has no authority to grant any relief because the specific provision being objected to by some states is now written into the Bylaws. This can only be changed by the General Conference. Thus, paid membership as of December 31, 1988, will be utilized as the basis for delegate allocation for the 111th General Conference in Detroit this September.

Before addressing how all this will play in Detroit, it seems fair to begin at the beginning to explain our current situation with membership, where we have been in recent years and where I hope we are headed. Prior to about 1980, the NGAUS routinely stated in testimony and in other forums that the Association represented nearly 100 percent of the officers of the Army and Air National Guard. In those days, this was an absolute fact.

Memberships were not computed through the computer, of course, with command emphasis beginning at the top from the various adjutants general down through commanders to lieutenants. In those days, it was not unusual for a company commander to be told he should consider paying for any lieutenants he had who resisted paying their NGAUS dues. Usually, he did if he couldn’t persuade a recalcitrant junior to see the light. In earlier times, when annual training pay was a cash, officers going through the pay line at field training sites were stopped at a “NGAUS collection station” and produced their dues with the comment from the S-1 that if they hoped to be a member of this fine organization this time next year, they should pay.

Obviously, we do not utilize these techniques for dues collections these days. We have become more refined in accurately reflecting what the NGAUS does on the state and national level. State associations are active with state issues. We have become more efficient in assisting the dues collection process by explaining what has been done in recent times to benefit the Guard and Guardsmen.

In the early 1980s, we saw the ef- fects of any number of changes on the Base collection of a series of allegations suggesting coercion in a few states. Although the obvious suggestions of pressure involved only a handful of individuals, the series of episodes had a profound effect on the collection process. Some states have more than 50 percent figure, while others routinely exceed 100 percent. Leaders in states where membership is low face the problem of explaining to dues payers why they should continue to pay their dues when nearly half the other Guard officers in their state do not pay and suffer no penalty. This is a problem for which there is no ready solution.

At least, there wasn’t any solution until the Bylaws were changed in San Antonio. Previously, delegate strength at the General Conference was based on the total National Guard strength in a given state as of June 30 of the year of the Conference. This policy had been adopted because the NGAUS historically represented the needs of the entire National Guard. The NGAUS, at age 111, is by far the oldest military association on both the national level and in the states. The new delegate-allocation process is far more appropriate and we believe the Association will move into the 1990s. That is because we are accurately reflecting the effect of the individual states to support the NGAUS at the national level. Representation will be based on participation. States that maintain full paid membership will have optimum voting strength at the General Conference.

What are the implications for the diminution of delegate strength for a state? That depends. If there is a closely contested election, a state’s influence diminished if it doesn’t have nearly the membership. Delegate strength is a factor in any roll call of the state. Such a call could occur on such matters as membership in the national group to the Association coming forward or special Committee on membership. We won’t see an election of officers in 1989, but that will occur in 1990, and states will need to represent what that really is.

Full membership from all states is important to our success in the future. It is important to note that changes in the current 110 percent and full paid membership will provide the very important dues income to the Association. This income will provide the services to the members that you indicate you need. The new Bylaw is just one tool in that goal. And finally, we again will ask that we speak for all the officers of the National Guard.

Today’s Black Guard Leadership
There are five black generals in today’s National Guard, Air and Army. NATIONA GUARD Magazine talks with these leaders about their careers and what they see for the future of blacks in the National Guard.

1607-1865: The Ups and Downs
The tale of black Militiamen during this period of time in U.S. history had its ups and downs. They apparently were good enough to fight during times of war but during peace went unwanted, not even allowed to serve in Northern states. Even those that blacks that volunteered to wear Confederate grey during the Civil War were turned away.

1965-World War I: The Forgotten Years
After the Civil War many black states, as well as their white counterparts, were disbanded. This provided many officers with the ability to exclude blacks from their state militias in years to come.

World War II: Reaching toward Desegregation
In the year before World War II, the National Guard saw its decline in black participation because of state laws. The Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1940 required that nearly every training and service location be open to young men of all races, with no color discrimination. This opened the door, albeit a crack, for total integration in the armed forces.

Senior Air Commanders Conference
The Senior Air Commanders Conference, conducted this fall in Kentucky, was the debut for Gen Philip G. Murphy, Jr., National Guard director. Budget cuts and force structure were the central topics of discussion.

MG Charles M. Kielner, President, NGAUS

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE
THE EMERGING IMPLICATIONS FOR 100% NGAUS MEMBERSHIP

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