WHY ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBERS CANNOT BE ASSIGNED TO REPLACE AGRS

Unfortunately, one issue the NGAUS opposed in 1990 survived in a somewhat belated version in the FY91 Defense Authorization Act. That was the proposal to assign regular officers and NCOs directly into Army National Guard units to replace 30 percent of our active Guard/Reserve (AGR) personnel. It not only is a bad idea, but if directly assigned may be unconstitutional.

This debate started at least a year ago, if not earlier, in the pre-DESERT SHIELD era, and it seems likely to reappear once the Middle East crisis is settled. The idea comes naturally to those who viscerally believe that regulars are automatically better soldiers than Guard or Reserve members. And the threat of reductions in force (RIFs) is very much on the minds of congressional leaders.

It was said that the Defense drawdown of the 1990s would be the first one in American history in an all-volunteer, no-draft environment. Many of us have lived through Middle Eastern conflicts who suddenly found themselves out of the service.

Many of those officers and NCOs genuinely wanted to remain on active duty. Many of them were high-quality soldiers and airmen who deserved a better chance at their choice of career. Some of those people joined the National Guard in that era.

However, it is well to remember that many of the personnel RIFed between 1973 and 1987 came from either draft-motivated junior enlisted men or junior officers who never intended to remain on active duty more than two or three years.

Today, with everyone in the military having volunteered in the beginning, and with many senior NCOs and most middle-level officers regarding military service as their career, at least for the first half of their adult lives, reductions in force are more painful and more of a breach of contract between DoD and the individual. On the other hand, those of us who have come into the Guard from civilian occupations also know that when times change, the situation often changes.

This is just one reason why we in the Guard should feel no obligation to become the safety net for active duty personnel who face a RIF. Further, if we know anything, we know it will not be the Army and Air Force or the senior officers and NCOs who are about to be forced out. It would be only natural for the active services to keep their best personnel.

We should not let our active duty colleagues assume that our irreplaceable officers and NCOs are somehow better than our best. Nor should we permit them to argue that the Guard and Reserve can somehow improve its personnel management by accepting RIFed active duty personnel.

Two courses of action suggest themselves in this situation, short of actually assigning regular flying or tank crews to our units. First, many senior Guard leaders have regretted the drawdown in active Army and Air Force active Guard in our units in recent years. Many of these officers and senior NCOs provided excellent support, advice and assistance to local commanders. Not too many years ago, in the Army Guard, we had at least one field grade officer per battalion and one senior NCO per company. Now, about the only active Army advisors we have remaining are those at state headquarters.

Of course, a second option would be to increase the rostering of our active Guard/Reserve (AGR) program to full strength from approximately 20 percent today. Then, we could permit prior service officers and NCOs to compete for these new positions; some would undoubtedly be selected for such jobs.

We oppose the proposal to reduce our AGR funding by 30 percent and assign regular officers and NCOs to these slots.

The Army is required by Congress to implement this program, it probably will be forced into some curious methodology for such assignments because of the spirit, at least, of the Constitution. There seems no doubt that an adjudant general would refuse to have an active Army officer assigned to his units based on Article II, Paragraph 18 of the US Constitution, which states, "...reserving to the states respectively, the appointment of the officers..." Many legal scholars extend this simple language to listed personnel.

The suggested solution to the problem is to "detail" active Army NCOs to guard units. The resources pay the AGR Guard member would be withheld; the active duty person would be offered in lieu of the Guard position. The adjudant general would have the choice of accepting the detailing or leaving the full-time position vacant, although given his choice, not many would turn down the offer.

However, we would conclude our ever-detailing active duty personnel situation by returning the Guard's full-time positions relative to the spirit of the Constitution.

On the other hand, we could add full-time members to our active Guard Guard in order to achieve average readiness levels to which we are committed. Inserting active component personnel into our system is not a new idea. We should be smart enough to welcome many of them if they are active duty and apply to job ranks. But acceptance should be based on proven performance, not rank. That will provide the Guard a full-time year as part of the active component;

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FEATURES

Military vs the Media

The media's negative view toward the military during the Vietnam war is having an impact on how it is allowed to cover the Truman Guard. We have to remember how the bad press affected the corps, patriotism, loyalty and core values.

Sandbagged in Washington

When a storm system dumped nine inches of rain on Peaget Guard, Washington, in less than 24 hours, the National Guard came to the rescue, literally. A force of 345 Washington National Guard members took part in more than 300 missions, including search and rescue, victim evacuation, supply delivery, and sandbagging.

Planning for the 113th NGAUS Conference

The site for the 113th NGAUS General Conference, September 4-6, promises to be one of the most exciting in a lifetime of world events and their impact on the National Guard. The Hawaii National Guard Association and Brig Gen Edward V. Richardson, adjutant general of Hawaii, are planning an exciting agenda.

Medal of Honor Gallery Designated

Franklin D. Roosevelt Jr., NGAUS president, announced the dedication of the Medal of Honor Hall of Fame Gallery to be built in the new National Guard Memorial. The gallery, which will provide a tribute to Medal of Honor recipients in the National Guard who were mobilized.

 NGSAUS Position Statement Lists Priorities

The NGSAUS Position Statement reflects the original article bearing on national defense, with emphasis on opportunities for the National Guard. Postmaster: Send Form 3579 to NGSAUS, One Manchester Ave, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001.

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