NGAUS Constituency: 100% Membership plus Retiree and Junior Officer Active Support

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In his welcoming remarks to the delegates and guests at the opening of the 1978 General Conference of NGAUS, the Hon. James F. Conaway, Mayor of St. Louis, noted that the founding meeting of the Association had been conducted under exceptional circumstances in the years following the Civil War.

Within a few years before, we had experienced the Great Railroad Strike and what later became the first general workers' strike across the nation... Those were difficult times, and the miliad of various States were called upon to keep order in our nation's largest cities.

It was a grim reminder of the serious purpose which influenced the founding of NGAUS and the continuing role for the National Guard in peace-time as well as for national defense in time of war.

But as we look to the future, we proceed on a course unimpeached by some of the obstacles encountered by the founders. We do not have any sectional or regional differences in the Guard. We do not have any divisiveness to contend with as we did during the Civil War. We do not have to "sell ourselves" to an army of doubting Thomases.

The 1980 General Conference will be fully reported to the membership in the December issue of NATIONAL GUARD MAGAZINE, the official organ of the Association. It will provide ample evidence of the cooperative relationship which we enjoy with the Congress and with both the civilian and uniformed leadership of the Army and Air Force.

What, then, are the things which the founders of 1878 and 1879 would find hard to believe. But if there is anything we have learned from the lessons of the past, it is to be ready to anticipate the needs of the future. The requirement for anticipation is very much on my mind in assuming the presidency of the National Guard Association of the United States.

The National Guard has never been a static institution. We have not been confined stability with standing. Good leaders are at one milita and at the same time a slice of civilan society we are a reflection of that society.

The last quarter of the 19th century appears to be destined to record for posterity in ever more the increasing movement and change. We complain about the deception, the reorganizing, the regrouping — but we seem to thrive on it!

In the months ahead we will be the role of president of NGAUS, to help carry out the program and the policies which the Association develops from the results of the 1980 General Conference and the direction of the Executive Council.

It is my intention, in the best tradition of past NGAUS presidents, to do my best to represent the national interests of the National Guard.

This means the continuing determination to look at the National Guard as a community of interests. These interests include a spectrum of thinking from young people just coming into the system and setting out on their military career in the Guard, to the great but largely untagged pool of retired and former officers of the Guard who surely must represent one of the most dedicated "alumni associations" in the entire world.

During the months ahead we will be seeking new ways and casting out new lines for innovative ideas to increase both junior officer and retiree participation in the affairs of the NGAUS.

Earlier, the fact was mentioned that for some time, if ever, we have to "sell ourselves" to Washington officials. Thus we are considered a mark of complacency it should be made clear that we understand the essential things which we regard as guiding principles. We feel required to share them with you.

The National Guard today is an essential part of the State and national security system. This was highlighted by Mayor Conaway of St. Louis when he noted, during his speech that, "Now... 100 years later... we still find ourselves needing the National Guard."

We are indeed a part of the U.S. system for peace and security. U.S. war plans confirm this. The public in front of the nation's offices and further reaffirmation.

But we are under no illusion as to the continuing and ever-increasing need for our Association to play a vital role in legislative and information matters.

Since the voice of an Association hinges, to a great extent, on its ability to represent a given constituency, it appears more important than ever that NGUS has the support of every officer and warrant officer in the National Guard. Towards this end, the goal of 100% membership among those interested in the Guard, is something we regard as an essential ingredient in achieving the goals.

Thank you.

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