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 fact that the organization with distinct 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 (Tar Heels), "Volunteers" (Tennessee) or Hawkeyes (Iowa). Ask them to be loyal to a multistate group 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.

T he state-federal connection offers us an interesting paradox at times. While we in the Guard frequently think little of our state connection and mission—as exemplified in the quotations from the California Air Guard where 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 public views 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 what 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 pay-check; 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 their headquarters. Once 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 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 National Guard. Every year the NGAUS Senior Commanders Orientation Course designed for first-time Wing and group commanders.

NURSES DEVELOP A QUALITY PROGRAM

Guard nurses spend only a small percentage of their time on direct patient care. Therefore, developing a quality assurance program that meets their requirements was a challenge the 11th Evac Hospital, Wisconsin, nurses accepted.

SONNY MONTGOMERY SPEAKS OUT

Representative Montgomery discusses legislation and issues affecting the National Guard. Montgomery has been a staunch supporter of the National Guard over the years and through his legislation has improved its position tremendously.

DEVELOPING AIR GUARD LEADERSHIP

"You are the role models," Brig Gen John F. McSherry, deputy director of the Air National Guard told a group of senior commanders gathered at the Air National Guard Support Center. The conference was attended by the Air National Guard Senior Commanders Orientation Course designed for first-time Wing and group commanders.

AIR GUARD STANDS ZULU ALERT IN EUROPE

Air National Guard units throughout the United States are sending personnel on a rotating basis to stand five-minute alert status, 24 hours a day at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. The Air Guard F-4s are filling in while the Air Force converts to F-16s.

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AIR NATIONAL GUARD F-4s fly over Germany while pulling the United States commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Photo, LTC Don Borowski, NGBP-PAO, Cover, Johnson Design Group.

Is the New GI Bill for You? Are you eligible for the New GI Bill? If so, find out how to apply, how much you are entitled to and where to get more information.