



“READINESS”: CATCHWORD OR ACTUALITY?

“READINESS” has a nice, catchy ring to it. It implies the ability of a military force to grab weapons, mount-up, move-out and start shooting on a moment’s notice.

Some elements of our Nation’s defense forces fortunately can qualify under that definition. Others—even in the full-time service—can not, for perfectly good and understandable reasons: being in the midst of a reorganization; being levied-upon for individuals to meet special requirements; being short of 100% of the up-to-date weapons and equipment which Tables of Organization & Equipment call for.

We subscribe to maximum readiness without question as the ideal for all elements of the National Guard, Army and Air, just as we do for the Regular Forces.

But we sometimes feel a sense of uneasiness, due to the glib facility with which the term all-too-often is being used these days. The distinction between “readiness” as a goal, and as an actuality, is being blurred due to the PIO’ish urge to present the most favorable possible “image” to the American public.

Thus, the *objective* of “greater readiness” has been emphasized in connection with the Reserve Forces “realignment” which the Defense Dept, at this writing, announced as having been completed on 1 May. But the important qualifications which would put true readiness in sharp focus have been slighted.

It is interesting to note a growing awareness of this trend among people with diverse backgrounds—all of them concerned over the danger of lulling ourselves into a false sense of security through constant parroting of a comforting word.

In this issue of THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN have converged—purely through coincidence—a number of articles which deal with this subject. There is the article by Gen Bruce C. Clarke, spotlighting certain conditions without which true readiness can not be achieved. There is the accompanying commentary by Maj Gen William H. Harrison, Jr, NGAUS President, expanding upon some of the same points. There are the comments of Illinois’ Gov Otto Kerner, expressed in his behalf by Maine’s Gov John H. Reed, in connection with proposed Guard appropriations, and reinforced by Gen Harrison’s views. And just before press time, a Pentagon press conference was built around a release announcing completion of the current Reserve Forces “realignment.” Several newsmen came away with the feeling that it was intended to convey the impression that reorganization means that the Civilian Components now are red-hot, ready-to-go. They didn’t “buy” that slant. They know that though greater readiness may result *eventually*, there is inevitably an immediate drop right after reorganization. The reason is simple: units and their people, whose missions, equipment, assignments and training are changed, need time to get squared-away in their new roles. The military writers know, too, the nature and effect of manpower shortages, and equally important, shortages of modern equipment.

They may know that every one of our ROAD Divisions is bob-tailed—through none of their own doing, short several vital units.

Like good soldiers anywhere, we’ll do the best we can with what we have. We’ll come as close as we possibly can to personal readiness. But we don’t want Madison Avenue usage of a catchword to lead the public into an expectation of a degree of readiness which circumstances beyond the Guard’s control will keep it from achieving for a long time to come.

VISIT TO CONARC

ALONG with representatives of other Service journals in the Nation’s Capital, the Editors of THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN spent a day at Ft Monroe, Va, recently as guests at Headquarters, US Continental Army Command, and as we listened to the straightforward answers our questions brought from Gen John K. Waters and some of his officers, it struck us that their frank, cooperative, uncondescending attitude has become so characteristic of ConARC that it deserves especial mention.

What Gen Waters and his staff had to say at the recent meeting was less important than the clear indication they gave that ConARC’s policies toward “the troops” would not change. It would listen to suggestions from “the field”; its officers would sit down willingly with troop leaders—Active, National Guard or Reserve—to thresh-out the problems that invariably arise when you’re training a force as large as the US Army.

That was what we read into our one-hour meeting with the new ConARC chief. It was implicit, too, in the simple and obviously sincere answer he gave when asked whether the so-called “One Army” policy would continue to represent ConARC’s approach to Reserve Component matters. The “One Army” spirit will not be permitted to flag, he said, but rather than the sloganized “One Army,” he thinks it more suitable at this point in time to simply refer to it as “our Army.”

In the foregoing statement and in his other remarks on future Reserve Component policies, there was a refreshing lack of affectation and the same willingness to lend a sympathetic ear to Guard-USAR problems that we’ve come to expect from this all-important Headquarters where so many decisions are made that vitally affect us. From the days of ConARC’s first Commander, Gen Willard G. Wyman, down through the regimes of Gens Bruce C. Clarke and Herbert G. Powell, to the present, ConARC has been a place where Guard representatives habitually are consulted *before* policies toward the Guard are shaped; where representatives of *all* components work with mutual goodwill toward the solution of problems that affect them all.

To ConARC’s new Commanding General, then, we’ll say in terms equally as sincere and straightforward as his own: “Welcome. We’re looking forward to working with you because the Guard, too, believes it should be ‘our Army.’” ♦

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DEAR GUARDSMEN: Pentagon policies change; realignments and reorganizations switch Guard units overnight from Infantry to Signal, Artillery to Engineer, with increasing frequency; modern equipment for training comes to us in dribbles, if at all. Yet withal, the Guard’s potential ability to hold its own on a Atom Age battlefield continues to climb. Much of this is due, of course, to the initiative, ingenuity and dedication of individual Guardsmen, Army and Air, officer and enlisted. It’s due, too, to the willingness of men who’ve found a way to “build a better moustrap” to “export” their best ideas to other Guardsmen, frequently through the pages of THE NATIONAL GUARDSMAN. To cite just a few of the features that will appear during the Summer months, a selected group of Company Commanders who took their units to active duty for the Berlin Crisis will swap ideas, in a printed roundtable, on “What to Do Before the M-Day Order Comes”; Delaware Guardsmen will explain how they staged an aerial trooplift, and worked-in some valuable tactical training besides, during a one-day drill; and Guardsmen of Minnesota’s 47th Inf Div will tell how they’re utilizing the Army’s Cold Weather School in Alaska to train themselves to defend that frigid region. If you’re a non-commissioned officer and are not yet on our subscription list, you’re overlooking a “training aid” that many a fellow Guardsman already is taking advantage of. —WDM

OUR COVER: Modernization piled on top of modernization, and change upon change, will become almost a way of life for the Guard as it fits itself into the increasing tempo by which mid-Twentieth Century military forces must live. That was the underlying theme when the State Adjutants General held their annual conference in Puerto Rico a few weeks ago, and it’s our cover theme for the month. Artist Lou Nolan dramatically illustrates the long way we’ve come from the Minuteman of 1775 to the Globe-ranging, missile-armed Guardsman of 1963.