

In the quarter-century since post-World War II reorganization, the Army National Guard has been reorganized, restructured and/or converted too often. If all of the effort that has gone into planning and carrying out these too-frequent reorganizations, or even some part of it, had been directed to more constructive aspects of increasing readiness, it is likely the Country's military reserve would in fact be as ready as the Pentagon insists it should be and National Guard leaders want it to be.

Some restructuring over a given period of time is necessary and to be expected, since the organization of the ARNG must conform to that of the Active Army for which it is the principal reserve. Too-frequent reorganizations have counter-thrust which results in periods of reduced readiness.

Consider that Pentagon planners developed and put into effect a plan for a post-World War II ARNG of 25 Infantry and two Armored Divisions, with an array of non-divisional type organizations and that, over the years, this basic plan has had multiple revisions. This created much personnel and unit turbulence, loss of readiness for long periods of time, loss of thousands of competent Service-schooled and, frequently, combat-experienced officers and non-commissioned officers and under-utilization of expensive armories and other facilities.

In the period 1946-1970, the Division structure of the ARNG was reduced by 19 and hundreds of non-divisional type units were eliminated, for a net loss in that period of 2,610 units.

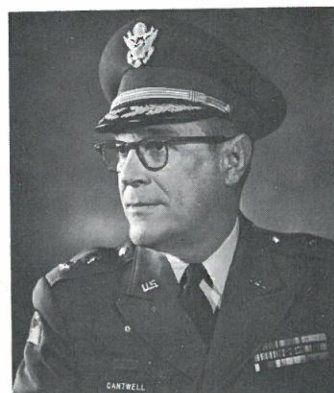
The Pentagon planner generally is not one who has a real understanding of the dual mission concept, nor is he apt to have concern for the State and community ties of the National Guard. He is not normally aware of the turbulence and frustrations that accompany major conversions or reorganizations. The planner too often moves ahead unaware of or ignoring the impact that his plan may have upon a community-based and community-supported organization.

And now, the Army National Guard is on the verge of yet another restructuring. The States shortly will be receiving a revised troop basis. Speculation over this forthcoming change has tended to rekindle disenchantment, frustration and agitation. On the basis of generalizations that were the fallout of early briefings on the proposed reorganization, it has been assumed by many that, as in the past, reorganization would mean a further loss of command and control headquarters and further reduction in the ARNG structure.

The new ARNG troop basis indicates that the forthcoming conversion, made necessary by the reshaping of the Active Force, is in its final form the result of considerable sound staff work by the staff of LTG William R. Peers, Chief, Office of Reserve Components, and the National Guard Bureau. The plan evidences reasonable staff attitudes and a genuine desire to implement the restructuring in a manner to create the least possible unit and personnel turbulence. There are indications that those responsible for developing the plan did indeed consider the unique State and community ties of the National Guard.

The plan in its final form is a substantial refinement of its draft. There will be disappointments and, in some instances, turbulence. There will be loss of a few headquarters. There will be some Branch changes and some new missions. But these are minimal when related to the plan as it was first proposed and before it was taken in hand for final drafting by the staffs of the two agencies mentioned above. This is probably the first restructuring in which the ARNG has gained (178), not lost units.

In the flexible modern Army, given the technological advances in weaponry and changes in tactics, restructuring is inevitable. Certainly the Guard has learned that the hard way. In this instance, at least, a real effort was made to produce for the Guard a reorganization the States could implement with the least adverse impact. ♦



James F. Cantwell
President

National Guard Association
of the United States

Sound Staff Planning



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From the two Militiamen/balloonists of 1861 to the several thousand Army Guardsmen who fly planes and choppers today, the Guard has played a continuing role in the development of Army Aviation.

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