

A Rebirth of Confidence

THERE'S always a tendency in this cliché-oriented World to reach too quickly for such grandiose terms as "a new era" and "revolutionary impact" in describing every change or improvement, trivial or otherwise, that comes about.

One cannot escape the feeling, however, that such dramatic terms may almost be deserved in respect to the far-reaching rejuvenation and revitalization through which the National Guard and Reserves have been passing since "Total Force" became a part of our vocabulary three years ago.

When one starts to enumerate the improvements that have been wrought, it becomes apparent that a deep and lasting rebirth has been taking place, not just in such tangibles as more and better equipment, increased funding, and innovative training but, more importantly, in the restored sense of purpose and renewed self-confidence which we are bringing to our critical assignments.

Credit can be given to the Active military services for providing greater support to the Guard and Reserves, or we can claim credit for what we ourselves have contributed to the revitalization process. In either case, credit is justified.

But it appears to me that the factor which over-shadows all the others, and makes the whole achievement far greater than the sum of its parts, is the new spirit of shared purpose and sincerity which has prevailed among all elements of the Armed Forces—Active, National Guard and Reserve—in their approach to Total Force implementation.

Strong and determined backing from the Nation's top military leadership likewise has been a decisive factor in elevating the Total Force effort far above previous moves to "improve" the Guard and Reserve.

Some of our own, self-sparked efforts also deserve mention. This year, for example, two Army Guard Divisions will train together as full Divisions—the first time this has occurred in years. Adding a new dimension to our operational capability is a new cold-weather training center operated under Guard auspices in Minnesota. Overseas training is expanding, adding depth and excitement to the training process.

Guard units also are staging beach landings, and conducting their own combined Army-Air exercises to broaden their training horizons.

CONARC has introduced the "concurrent" training concept, which recognizes the experience that higher headquarters and staffs gain while overseeing the training of subordinate units.

All of this sparks a growing belief that the Army Guard can at last break out of the Platoon-Company straitjacket and move to the higher levels of training associated with its more urgent missions.


In the Air Guard, a steady infusion of new aircraft and communications equipment, compatible with current Air Force systems, has added immensely to its value as a rapid-reaction backup force.

Out of this invigorating ferment of ideas and actions, Guardsmen and Reservists are gaining a new image of themselves as valuable, necessary members of an interlocking, inter-dependent, first-line force, in which all elements carry heavy responsibilities and have an equal call on the resources and tools with which to discharge those responsibilities.

This is an accomplishment in which every individual who has made a contribution can take much pride. ♦



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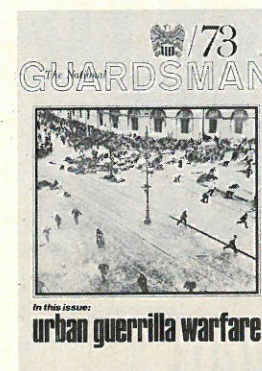
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Slaughter in Moscow's Red Square illustrates progression of urban guerrilla warfare into full-scale Revolution.
(Wide World Photos)

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