

# The Ready Ones



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A NATIONAL magazine devotes several pages to a feature which suggests that favored persons use the National Guard as a "safe haven" from the Draft.

A Nationally-known columnist inserts a gratuitous jab at the National Guard in an article on the Army's fine performance in Viet Nam.

The U.S. Senate approves a proposal to draft men out of Guard units, thus challenging the concept of unit integrity, a fundamental premise on which we have built a highly-responsive military force.

One Senator, in a speech, even makes uncalled-for and inaccurate reference to Guard units "which neither train nor guard."

Men who serve their States and their Nation with dedication and professional competence hear these unfair, unmerited criticisms and wonder how it can happen.

We know that the slighting comments are not deserved. We have watched the Guard improve through the years, keeping pace with the increased professionalism of the Active Army and Air Force.

We know that the Guard fought valiantly and well in every war up to the present, and that it was the President himself who decided not to order the Guard into Federal service for the Viet Nam conflict, for good and valid reasons.

We also know that the leaders of our Military Establishment have expressed full confidence in our ability to mobilize and deploy our units to a combat theater more rapidly and more smoothly than in any previous emergency.

And finally, we know that even now, the Guard performs a wide range of important—even critical—defense missions on a week-by-week basis, maintaining standards comparable with those of fulltime Active forces even though Guardsmen must fit these tasks into busy civilian lives.

But we can't make our accomplishments and capabilities known merely by nursing hurt feelings. We've got to sound off more forcefully than ever, to give Americans a wider knowledge of the Guard and all that it is and does.

February offers an excellent time to start telling our story. This is the traditional time of National Guard Muster Day, and the National Guard Bureau will provide every State with enough background material to document our case.

Guardsmen make up 78% of the Selected Reserve Force, itself a major element in the strategic reserve of the Nation. This force possesses a degree of combat readiness which no Reserve Force in our history has attained previously.

Air Guardsmen are making more than 2,000 overseas flights a year hauling cargo and people to foreign bases.

Other Guardsmen stand 'round-the-clock watch in the air defense system of the Nation, with jet fighters, NIKE-HERCULES missiles, and surveillance radar.


Other Guardsmen repair aircraft and vehicles for the Active Army as well as the Reserve Components, install complex electronics equipment at U.S. missile test centers and remove sophisticated communications equipment from abandoned U.S. bases in France.

Guardsmen train in the jungles of Panama and Puerto Rico, the frigid snows of Alaska, and the desert wastes of our own West. This training is identical with that of the Active Army and Air Force—in fact, merged in with theirs.

It's a dramatic, proud story we have to tell that should satisfy even those who might ask: "But what have you done for us lately?"

It's time to start dinning it into every ear we can catch—telling it proudly, repeatedly. It's a job not just for Commanders or Information Officers, but for every Guardsman.

We are The Ready Ones, and it's time to let fellow-Americans in on the news!

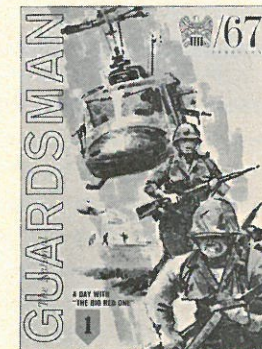


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