LET THE TROOPS ALONE!

The individual "Eller" is and from time immemorial has been a lost soul. This fact of military life is well known to anyone who has personally been through, or exposed to the product of a "copple of degale.

Whether a draftee who's been processed through a series of receiving and training stations and replacement training units, or a reservist plucked out of a pool, he "bellows" nowhere until the System finally places him in a unit. And then it's a whole before he adjusts to new faces and a new environment, finds his place in the scheme of things, and begins to feel that he has comrades and a real home.

Unfortunately, out of some 150,000 Guardsmen and other reservists ordered to active duty in response to the Communist threat, a mere handful had gripped. And their complaints—stated eagerly and stimulated avidly by a few headline-seekers—had been exaggerated, magnified, publicized and treated with an importance far beyond their real value. It was a scare of embarrassment, deep annoyance and hot resentment for tens of thousands of Guardsmen, for the grippers were identified with major National Guard units. Unquestioned in the first blast was the fact that those were newcomers—not Guardsmen.

It didn't help that a major metropolitan newspaper had reported that Guardsmen and Reservists would be held in service beyond the 12 months specified when they were ordered-up. That was hot denied by no less responsible a personage than the President himself—but denials rarely could do the damage executed by a false report.

It didn't help that a ranking officer in one of the reserve components publicly declared that the crisis was over and that the citizen-soldiers should be sent home.

What were the most general and specific complaints? They ranged from serious to silly. Equipment shortages. Depository barracks. Lack of uniforms. No TVs. No TV in the Day Room. How silly can you get?

Nothing to do? No training? To the tens of thousands who were working their tails off from morning to night, this was a silly, true, in the first week or so, with a thousand-and-one administrative details of individual processing to be completed and settled to be done, some individuals had some idle moments. With a few rare exceptions—a Base Post Office, maybe some other specialized-type units—the Nationwide picture showed both combat and support-type outfits going full blast.

Poor shows? Oh, our acting bands. Was there ever any outfit, anywhere, in any Army, in whom someone, sometime, didn't bellyache about the show? "Why don't they hire a professional guy?" What else? Listen, Bob: you were picked because you had (and have) an obligation.

The sources of the complaints—the individual fellers—and the nature of their gripes (and in particular, a root cause—their lack of understanding of why they were called)—stuck a reminder chord in the minds of Guardsmen who remembered the debates incident to various oversubscribed plans launched, and only partially accomplished, in the past decade, to build-up immense Reserve Forces. The plans for the use of masses of individuals from the Ready Reserve and, in all-out war, the standby

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