

GUARDSMAN

The National

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Dust, heat, night-and-day effort, of "Desert Strike" put Guard participants years ahead in training, aver commanders on the scene. Cover photo shows 40th Armored Division tank moving out to meet the "enemy."

MOBILIZATION-readiness—or combat-readiness (the terms have come to mean virtually the same)—of the Army National Guard is being tested this Summer. Although not announced, or conducted, as a formal test, that in effect is what the Guard's participation in Exercise DESERT STRIKE has been, and what its Operation GUARD LIFT will be, before the Summer is out.

As is related at some length elsewhere in this issue of our magazine, DESERT STRIKE gave two Brigades and various smaller but no less important combat and service support units of the Guard—Air as well as Army—an unparalleled opportunity to see how quickly and how well they could fit into large-scale combat exercises with the Active Army under truly realistic conditions. It was a far cry from the Squad and Platoon exercises and the relatively leisurely pace of "normal" field training.

It must be extremely gratifying to Guardsmen everywhere, as it was to me and other members of the Army General Staff Committee on National Guard and Reserve Policy, to learn that the very highest Active Army observers had watched our troops' performance closely, and had sincere, highest praise for their performance. General Paul Adams, Commander of U.S. Strike Command, was most complimentary in his remarks about the manner in which the Guard organizations meshed with their Active Army comrades. He cited specifically, for example, the valuable cross-training that was received by attachment of a National Guard Engineer unit to a Regular Army Division, in exchange for a Regular unit to a National Guard organization.

By the same token, those Army Guard units which already have been or will be airlifted by their thoroughly-competent comrades of Air National Guard Heavy Transport Squadrons, to and from training sites far removed from their familiar training grounds, will have benefited enormously from the change of scene and from the necessity of planning and of meeting new and unfamiliar personnel, logistical, and training problems.

To do these things in a period of mobilization is one thing; to fit them into the environment of purely part-time soldiering is a far different and more difficult matter.

Those of us who know from long service what the Guard is capable of doing are not surprised by the favorable reports that have come in thus far. We are confident that the Guard can—granted the necessary funding, equipment, and general logistical support that are needed—use this Summer's exercises as a springboard for more of the same in future years. This is the most practical, possible way to develop true mobilization- and combat-readiness.



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The Guard Meets The Test

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