THE OLD REFRAIN:
CUT MUSCLE, GROW STRONGER

WE'd like to know what magic attraction there is in the theory that the more you cut, the stronger you get.

For some years, now, there have been annual proposals to reduce the strength of the Army's Reserve Forces and thereby to permit the active force to grow to its optimal combat-ready size.

It's here again, in Defense Secretary Robert McNamara's proposal to Congress that eight Divisions and 30,000 officers and men of the Guard and Reserve be eliminated.

A handful of the remaining units would be beefed-up to higher strength and equipment levels, but the great majority would be cut down drastically—a little simple arithmetic indicates to about one-half of war strength.

And of those, many would be held to half as many drills as they make now. The reasoning's real hard to follow.

We've been told this is the way that never again will we have time, as we had in World Wars, to build mighty forces from the ground up while others are holding-off a common enemy. So, it follows, we must have adequate forces in being, at a high state of readiness.

At the outset of World War II, we had a handful of Regular Army and National Guard Divisions. Each of these was tapped again and again for cadre of experienced officers and men to form the nuclei of scores of brand-new Divisions and the host of supporting organizations required. Each levy pulled-down readiness and defined the time when we would make a significant contribution to the ground fighting.

Today, we're in the same boat. We have 14 combat Divisions in being by the present funding, and yet the real crunch is still getting off the ground. We have 27 combat Divisions in the Guard, but the backup for the Active Army— and 10 in the Reserve. Mr. McNamara plans for six Reserve Forces Divisions and supporting forces to be on "COMMENT" basis, all the rest much lower down the scale.

In an apparent 180° switch of previous policy, he states that these would "provide a basis for a large scale mobilization," which would be "realistic," and with an inevitable drop in combat-readiness when Mr. Krushchev might decide to pull in at any moment.

This seems all the more illegal when it's known that still another major organization is pending—the switch to the "ROAD" Division form of organization, which we've been told will take place within the next few years. Putting it all together, the same Defense Secretary who has been preaching combat-readiness is deliberately building-in for the next four or five years a period of organizational, administrative and training turbulence.

We'd be the last to suggest that all tactical concepts, all matters of development which affect our operational structure, and all TOEs, be "frozen." The Guard has accepted eagerly and shown the flexibility to conform readily to all such changes over the years. But it suggests strongly that further reorganization and "realignment" be deferred until the Army is ready to apply the "ROAD" concept.

It wants and needs a period of stability. And it can see no more need in the reshuffling of number of Divisions, and training levels that are proposed. * *

Has any military authority considered the effect on motivation and unit spirit of men in one outfit who inferentially are told their role is only half as important as that of comrades in the same Army who're on a 48-drill basis?

Has anyone analyzed what the relationship between this same approach and the fate of many Army Reserve units which felled into oblivion when they were subjected to a comparable scheme not too many years ago?

Has anyone given thought to the disruptive effect of one reorganization plan following on the heels of a never-ending series of other reorganizations every few years since the post-WW II rebirth of the Guard?

Barely had the Guard got rolling well before Korea drained off eight Divisions and hundreds of supporting Army Guard units. Their return and another from the ground-up rebuilding coincided with Branch reorganization not only for most of those units, but for others, four former Infantry Divisions to Armories, major Branch-of-Service changes for hundreds of nondivisional units.

You don't "convert" a Riffenraus into a qualified Tank Gunnier overnight; a stroke of the pen doesn't automatically make a combat-ready Signal Battalion out of what yesterday was a Tank Battalion. In the peacetime situation, it's optimistic to expect full across-the-board accomplishment of such a conversion in less than a couple of years.

It's only recently that hundreds of units have shaken down from the fast of switches that followed in the wake of the 1958-59 Postwar reorganization.

Now—with scarcely a word to put the finishing refinements on its proficiency—the entire Army Guard is confronted with a refit that could be more far-reaching than any that has happened before, and with an inevitable drop in combat-readiness when Mr. Krushchev might decide to pull in at any moment.

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DEAR GUARDMEN: Every trade and profession has its lingo, and its lovers of "profund" phraseology vs. simplicity. Every once in a while, after wading through the newest Army news releases, speeches, directives and various publications, we've come to believe that this is true of the Military—only more so.

We're captivated, for example, by the way some will reach 'way out to coin a new use for an old word. We've had this with "implement," which once was used most generally as a noun, describing a tool, but now has been twisted into a long-winded verb filling the function once served adequately by the two letters: "do."

Once upon a time, "generate" counted the creation of power—but not now; one "generates" an idea of knocking-off, like for a coffee break, or he "generates" a plan, or he "generates" an idea.

We can't do something "now"—that's too short a word; it has to be done "at present"—or better yet, "at the present time."

Speakers with pet notions maintain that the importance thereof "cannot be overemphasized." Though all conceptual might get sick unto nausea of the reiterated overemphasize on the importance of some inconsequential thing. For the subject matter of the preenement generally won't make any great difference in the fate of nations.

Having got this much steam off our chest, we now will "finale" this blurb. 

AOG

OUR COVER: Here in all unweighed glory is "The Tanker"—tired, mud-bogged, young enough to take the jobs and plagues of a fast-moving, hard-hitting M48 Patton tank. Army Photographer Dick Hallstead spotted PFC Ben Torres, Tank Driver for Texas 9th Armored Division at Ft Polk, La, at the tail end of a tough day of training, and the meeting produced our cover picture.