



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 purportedly make them more combat-ready.

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—and it makes sense—that never again will we have time, as we had in two 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 cadres 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 delayed the time when we could make a significant contribution to the ground fighting.

Today, we're in the same boat. We have 14 combat Divisions in being in the Active Army—two more just getting off the ground. We have 27 combat Divisions in the Guard—the major backup for the Active Army—and 10 in the Reserve. Mr McNamara plans for six Reserve Forces Divisions and supporting forces to be on "priority" basis, all the rest much lower down the scale. In an apparent 180° switch of previous policy, he states that these would "provide a base for a large scale mobilization in the event of general war;" that "for this purpose we need a large *but not necessarily highly ready Reserve Establishment.*" (Italics ours—Ed.)

What has happened to make it no longer necessary—though for years we've been told the contrary—to have *any* units that aren't "highly ready"? How are the many, many more units that will be needed, to be formed except by cadre-ing time and again from the existing, under-ready units in the mobilization base?

How is effective *unit* training to be conducted at half-strength?

After years of head-shaking over the minimal training adequacy of 48 armory drills and 15 days' field training, does any *military* authority honestly agree that some units can get by with only 24 drills?

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

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

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 many of those outfits, but for others: four former Infantry Divisions to Armor, major Branch-of-Service changes for hundreds of nondivisional units.

You don't "convert" a Rifleman into a qualified Tank Gunner 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 a conversion in less than a couple of years.

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

Now—with scarcely a chance to put the finishing refinements on its proficiency—the entire Army Guard is confronted with a reshuffle that could be more far-reaching than any it's undergone before, and with an inevitable drop in combat-readiness when Mr Khrushchev might drop the other shoe at any moment!

This seems all the more illogical when it's known that still *another* major reorganization 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 Dept that 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 materiel developments which affect organizational 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 sense in the reductions in total strength, number of Divisions, and training levels that are proposed. ♦



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Publication Office

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DEAR GUARDSMEN: Every trade and profession has its lingo, and its lovers of "profound" phraseology vs. simplicity. Every once in a while, after wading through the never-ceasing flow of press releases, speeches, directives and various publications, we're convinced 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-stemmed verb filling the function once served adequately by the two letters: "do."

Once upon a time, "generate" connoted the creation of power—but no, not now: one "generates" the idea of knocking-off, like for a coffee break; or he "generates" a plan, or "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 concerned might get sick unto nausea of the reiterated overemphasis on the importance of some inconsequential thing. For the subject matter of the preachment generally *won't* make any great difference in the fate of nations.

Having got this much steam off our chest, we now will "finalize" this blurb.
—AGC

OUR COVER: Here in all his unwashed glory is "The Tanker"—tired, mud-bespattered, young enough to take the jolts and plunges of a fast-moving, hard-hitting M48 Patton tank. Army Photographer Dirck Halstead spotted PFC Ben Torres, Tank Driver for Texas' 49th Armored Division at Ft Polk, La, at the tail end of a tough day of training, and the meeting produced our cover picture.