

THE January callup of a fragment of the Air Reserve Forces was small as mobilizations go, but from a military point of view, it had a significance far greater than the mere numbers of men and units would suggest.

- It demonstrated, like nothing else could, the critical *need* for trained, ready Reserve Forces units in an increasingly dangerous world.

- It once again provided hard, incontrovertible proof, if any was needed, that the National Guard can turn in a smooth, professional *performance*, under pressure.

- It offered a convincing demonstration of the Guard's capability for *rapid response* when needed, with units properly trained, motivated and prepared.

- It gave military leaders an opportunity to observe the high level of *combat-readiness* which Guard units can develop before mobilization, even with demanding missions and sophisticated equipment.

- It gave ample testimony to the *availability* of National Guard and Reserve units. This nullified an argument heard recently in military circles that the Active Forces might be deprived, in some future emergency, of backup from the reserves by the reluctance of political leaders to order them to duty.

It might seem that the *need* for trained Reserve Forces has been proven by time and experience, but this is not the case. Many persons have chosen to interpret our Viet Nam experience as evidence that larger fulltime forces and fewer reserves are the best answer to today's Communist-fomented "wars of national liberation."

Trained Guardsmen were needed in January, just as they have been needed time and again in the past, and they just as surely will be needed in future emergencies.

As to performance, rapid response and combat-readiness, the Air Guardsmen got their orders, instantly dropped their civilian activities, and stepped into their military roles with hardly a hitch. There was little or none of the waste motion, confusion and administrative bedlam of earlier mobilizations. Units and individuals long since had prepared for just such an eventuality and it went off with precision.

The decision to order the units to duty was made, in Washington, early on 25 January. By noon, Teletyped orders were on the way. By midnight the following day—a scant 36 hours later—all units were fully operational at home bases, with a fantastic 99.6 percent of their people present for duty. A mere 34 person were not on hand by then, and even those were accounted for officially.

All eight of the Tactical Fighter Groups were fully effective military entities by the midnight deadline—fully-manned, fully-equipped, fully-ready for immediate deployment overseas and ready to fight, if required, shortly after their arrival. They could boast this level of readiness because, as components of the top priority "COMBAT BEEF" force, they had enjoyed full Air Force support in manning, equipping and training.

The three Tactical Reconnaissance Groups, on the other hand, had been limited by official orders to 83 percent manning, and comparably reduced equipment inventories. This prevented them from attaining full readiness before callup. It would take only a few weeks to boost them to a fully ready status, though.

The superb performance of the mobilized units deserves the highest praise. It has given every Guardsman, Army and Air, additional cause for pride. Likewise, it validates all that the Guard has been saying and doing to prove that the level of readiness attainable before mobilization can be equated almost directly with the level of support provided by the Active Military Establishment. Guard units possess the desire, the esprit, the professional ability and all the other less tangible prerequisites to full military effectiveness. With the material assets which can be provided only by Federal sources, it can produce any reasonable level of readiness the Nation's security demands. ♦



JAMES F. CANTWELL
President
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of the United States

The Guard Was Ready!



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