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Benefits of Dual Status

HURRICANE "Camille" recently spread death and destruction across much of the Southeastern United States, and subjected several thousand National Guardsmen to an exhausting and hazardous disaster operation.

"Camille," like so many earlier disasters, brought into sharper focus the National Guard's critical importance as an arm of State authority, just as mobilizations for war or near-war have emphasized its value as a military reserve for the Army and Air Force.

More than that, Guard operations in areas hit by "Camille" confirmed once more the direct and important relationship between the two missions, State and Federal.

The Guard's major assets in coping with major disasters—or, for that matter, with civil disorders—are the training, discipline, organization, equipment and leadership that accrue from its status as the primary backup for the Active Services. No State could hope to match these solely from its own resources.

These, moreover, are instantly available to State authorities, without the time-consuming routing of requests for assistance through several levels of "higher headquarters."

Thus, in the Guard, American ingenuity has contrived an ideal means of satisfying two urgent needs for the price of one. This is not a small matter when one recognizes that the National Guard currently is a \$1-billion-per-year operation.

A closer look at the "Camille" operation illustrates the interdependence of the Federal and State involvements in the Guard.

Guardsmen hauled hundreds of storm victims to safety in amphibious LARCs and DUKWs, issued to them by the Army for military readiness training. Rugged tactical trucks, manned by Guard drivers, coursed back and forth through flooded areas on vital mercy missions, operating where non-military vehicles could not hope to go. Guardsmen bulldozed paths through storm debris, operated radio networks to keep emergency forces in contact with each other, policed damaged areas to prevent looting, and fed and housed refugees in facilities that had been built jointly by State and Federal Governments.

Air Guardsmen airlifted food, medicine and other critically needed supplies into the stricken area, flew hospital patients to safety, and performed other emergency tasks.

Thus, the prodigious effort and vast sums of money expended to train and equip the Guard as an arm of the National Military Establishment once again proved to be of incalculable local benefit. This represents a Federal-State partnership at its finest.

Despite the obvious advantages, though, Federal-State relationships in respect to the Guard have been marked by intermittent controversy. This usually has been generated by attempts to pare down Federal support of the Guard, or to shift the emphasis in mission orientation.

Today, there are signs that new efforts will be made to alter the careful balance that exists. While none of these have yet taken firm shape, they may become more apparent as debate is initiated on the all-volunteer force concept, on reduced Defense spending, and on new Guard reorganization proposals.

When these questions surface, the Guard and its spokesmen must be prepared to make these salient points clear:

—That the Guard's unique status as both a State and Federal military force has important advantages for both levels.

—That the Guard's effectiveness in either mission area is enhanced by resources it draws from the other.

—That the greatest gainer of all is the American citizen, whose tax dollar must support whatever forces are required at whichever level, and to whom both savings and effective mission performance are important. ♦



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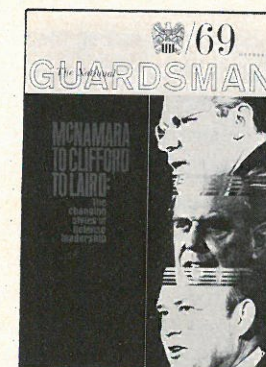
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