

## A New Support System

WHEN the Army announced recently that it was going to completely overhaul the structure through which training support is channeled to the Guard and Reserve, the first reaction of many Army National Guard and Army Reserve officers probably was: "Will this realignment of headquarters structure and functions produce the solid substance, and not merely the appearance, of improvement?"

*(Details of the realignment are provided elsewhere in this issue).*

Guardsmen and Reservists can be pardoned for exhibiting some degree of skepticism. They have seen many past reorganizations and all-too often, the results were more cosmetic than real.

My own view at this stage, before any actual changes are made, is that there is a good chance that the results may live up to the advance billing. There appear to be some indispensable ingredients that were not always present in past attempts to improve the lot of the Reserve Components.

Army leaders are faced with such serious reductions in the Active Army that improvements in Guard and Reserve capabilities are absolutely essential. That knowledge was uppermost in the minds of those who devised the present plan.

This time, too, Guard and Reserve representatives not only participated in a meaningful way in every phase of the planning, but made major contributions.

The Army's top leaders closely monitored every stage of the planning. GEN Creighton Abrams, the new Chief of Staff, in the final planning stages was insistent that the realignment make real and substantial improvements possible and that Total Force thinking be sincerely applied.

Among the various details of the plan, one stands out. This is the provision that the three remaining CONUS Army Headquarters and nine new Army Readiness Region Headquarters will have as their dominant mission, support of Guard/Reserve training and readiness efforts; it will not be a secondary responsibility.

In announcing the plan, Army Secretary Froehlke and General Abrams also said pointedly that they will endeavor to assure that assignments to Guard/Reserve duties will be regarded as significant and important in the career sense for Active Army officers. Hopefully, this will prompt some of the Army's better officers to seek such posts.

All of this does not mean that the new system will provide a sure cure for all Guard/Reserve problems, nor does it mean an easier life for Guard and Reserve leaders. Quite to the contrary, greater Active Army attention inevitably will bring heavier demands for energetic, first-rate performance. It will turn a brighter spotlight on any weaknesses that may appear in our units.

But on the whole, the new system can produce some substantial gains for the Guard and Reserve, if all of us—Active Army, National Guard and Reserve—accept it and carry it out in the spirit which has prevailed during the planning.

One final observation: it will be tempting from time to time to water-down the structure for the sake of economy. If this occurs—if the specialist teams do not materialize in the promised numbers; if the Active Army manning is thinned-out, or if other responsibilities are piled onto support headquarters—we may find that the gains do not offset the losses. For the sake of a few nails in key places, the shoe, the horse and the battle may easily be lost. ♦



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