A RESPONSE TO "TIME" MAGAZINE

It is nearly unbelievable that a major news magazine, after the most successful mobilization and combat record of the Guard and Reserve since World War II, would publish an article that degrades the National Guard. If American readers believe what they read in Time magazine, which we hope they won’t, they might think that the Army National Guard is the most rag-tag outfit in the Total Force. We want the National Guard community across the nation to know that the NGUAS National Guard is the most well-trained, ready, and capable force in the country. The author who wrote the article was just as offended by the author of the article published June 10 as you were.

The article contained several factual errors that will be discussed below. It also contained a number of extrapositions to erroneous conclusions from situations over which the Guard community has no control. For example, lack of readiness is implied for a unit that receives insufficient TOW ammunition. We all know that such problems are not in the near future short supply for training because of its cost.

Moreover, a major thrust of this article is the allegation that the Army Guard harbors large numbers of ‘‘ghost personnel’’ who are carried on our rolls and paid but who rarely or never drill or go to annual training. Commanders know this is false and a lie about the Guard.

This writer was interviewed by the same director, Kristina Rebeo. Although the article doesn’t say so specifically, she said at the time that she had about 100 such reports of ‘‘ghosts.’’ We could only observe that the Guard is composed of 575,000 men and women. Even if there were 100 such individuals, this would represent only 0.02 percent of the total 575,000. The author goes on to drill and annual training 7.3 million times more than the National Guard. How this lends some perspective to this problem.

Time says: ‘‘…Some Guard officers believe that a determined drive to raise attendance and training standards could lead to massive disgruntlement in the ranks and a wave of resignations. ’’ All of us who know Guard commanders across the nation appreciate that they work hard to eliminate nonperformers from their units. AWOL Guard members are routinely discharged for less-than-honorable reasons or court-martialed if feasible. This is the real National Guard. Further, most commanders emphasize both technical and tactical training because this is what soldiers want; it is why they enlisted.

As a chief of staff of the 40th Infantry Division (Mech) in California once noted, ‘‘If they wanted to go to the beach, they’d be in Santa Monica, not here with us at Camp Roberts and Fort Irwin.’’

Depending on how one counts, there are 14 major points in the article that deserve refuting:
• No-shows and poor training kept some units out of the war. Fact: Out of 75,000 mobilized, there were two no-shows. Post-mobilization training has always been assumed for virtually all Army Guard units. Indeed, the units mobilized underway such training with great success.
• Several thousand had not attended basic training. Fact: The active Army controls basic training quotas and its schedule.
• Some soldiers had dental problems. Fact: Members of the Guard and Reserve are not eligible for military medical care in peacetime. In any event, dental problems were quickly fixed by dentists during post-mobilization training.
• Roundout brigades that had been rated C-2 before the mobilization were declared not ready by regular officers after mobilization. Fact: This is exactly what it meant. What it left out, however, is the fact that the C-2 ratings were signed by the roundout brigade’s parent division commanders, regular Army major commanders. What also is apparent is that the combat readiness rules were changed for our infantry and armor units after mobilization. They were not changed to keep active Army units that were deep to the Persian Gulf no matter their readiness condition. Active Army units were deployed that were far combat ready than our roundout groups.
• Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney is quoted as saying he wants to deploy units ‘‘before they are ready.’’ Fact: But the Army did not deploy active Army units before they were ready. Active Army general officers testified to this on more than one occasion.
• Units were not ready because of lack of chemical equipment. Fact: Equipment is issued by the active Army.
• Some members of the Guard were listed solely for the pay and benefits and not to go to war. Fact: True enough. But, in 1990, did many members of the active Army, many of whom complained to reporters in the desert that they were enlisted to qualify for the Montgomery GI Bill, not to go to war. Life is tough all over.
• There is no problem in order to be appointed, secretaries general must be masters in graphics. Fact: Most adjutants general are appointed by their governors and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the chiefs of staff of the Army and Air Force are appointed by the president.
• On the average, it costs one soldier as much as a Guard soldier or an active duty soldier. Fact: Even Time is trying to do us a favor but they got it wrong. It costs about three to six times the active duty soldier.
• The C-4 is as much as the active duty C-4, but the sustainment training of units in the Guard can produce more ready battalions and brigades than the one-fourth the cost of the active Army.
• It makes little sense to (on units) that cannot be readied. (Continued on page 3.)

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FEATURES

BATTLEFIELD COMMUNICATIONS TAKE WING

Piggyback were used, even as recently as the Korean War, to carry communications when modern methods were incapacitated during battles. In World War II, countless lives were saved and battles won because of messages carried by radio bearers.

During World War II, the Army Signal Corps created the 280th Signal Company (Pigion) for this very purpose.

FIGHT SURGEONS ON THE CUTTING EDGE

Surgeons now have the opportunity to experience the stress being pilots in high-technology fighters. Thanks to a new course, Top Knife. The two-week course, the first of its kind, is taught by the 114th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron, Kingsley Field, Oregon.

KEEPING COMMUNICATIONS ON LINE

Knowing who is responsible for keeping your communications up and running can save a commander critical downtime and maximize its tactical effectiveness. Use of the backpack radio, radio remote and telephones are common soldier skills and should not require the support of signal personnel.

MAY MEETS WEST, UNITED STATES THAT IS

AquaA Conducts Spring Meeting

The Adatant General Association of the United States met in Grand Rapids, Michigan, for its spring meeting. Force structure also is apparent is that the combat readiness rules were changed for our infantry and armor units after mobilization. They were not changed to keep active Army units that were deep to the Persian Gulf no matter their readiness condition. Active Army units were deployed that were far combat ready than our roundout groups.

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