



Affiliation

Readiness on the Upswing

In 1973, only about 20 per cent of the Army's Reserve Component units, National Guard and Army Reserve, were considered ready for combat. Today, the figure is over 50 per cent. What caused this remarkable improvement?

The Army reorganization in the summer of 1973 has produced the closest and most effective working relationship between the Active Army and its Reserve Components ever achieved and this relationship is the major reason for the improvement. The Army's leadership believes that the development of the Affiliation Program as part of this new close relationship is perhaps the most noteworthy achievement to date.

This program involves both Reserve and National Guard combat, combat support, and logistical support battalions. Some 92 such battalions are "affiliated" with Active Army units today and the number will be increased to 97 in the near future. Under the program, the Active Army units involved more or less adopt the affiliated Reserve Component units and make every effort to improve their readiness so that, if necessary, they can fight on short notice as part of the Active Army unit. The active unit assists in and supervises training of the affiliated units and, where possible, the reserve unit actually trains with its active counterpart.

For example, the 39th Infantry Brigade, Arkansas National Guard is affiliated with the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) and is being prepared to go to war with the 101st if necessary. This provides a strong incentive to both units to ensure that the 39th Brigade is as combat ready as possible. Experience has made it clear after only two years of affiliation that the officers and men of both units are enthusiastic about the idea. The 39th is anxious to learn, and the 101st is equally anxious to teach and provide any other support it can.

The program is so effective that four brigades and 11 separate battalions are already earmarked to "round out" Active Army divisions in FY 77. In other words these units definitely will go to war a part of the divisions.

Army plans call for further expansion of the Affiliation Program as circumstances permit. In any case, Reserve Component readiness is on the upswing and to a degree considered impossible a few years ago.