
Defense Report

AUSA



The Army National Guard and Army Reserve — We Say They Are Vital but We Don't Support Them

One of the ways our national leadership justified shrinking the size of our active military forces at the end of the Vietnam war was to put more reliance on our reserve forces and to expect them to play a larger role in fulfilling our international obligations. These expanded expectations are reflected in the term *Total Army*.

We all know how the lack of pressure from selective service has resulted in substantial personnel shortages in the Army National Guard and Army Reserve, but few of us are aware of the glaring equipment shortfalls and inadequacies that exist in our reserve structure. Both Army Reservists and Guardsmen lack the proper amounts of equipment and much of what they do have is obsolescent. A substantial portion of their communications gear is not even compatible with that being issued to the active Army.

The National Guard, for example, has just 75 percent of the equipment it needs for peacetime readiness and only 70 percent of what it would need in a mobilization. The Guard is 386 tanks short of its requirements and almost half of the tanks it has are M-48s, two generations older than the active Army's new M1 tank (it is ironic that our present primary tank, the M60, is being sold overseas before our own forces are even equipped with it). The Guard is also almost 1,000 aircraft short and lacks almost 3,000 trucks, 600 artillery pieces and 3,600 armored personnel carriers. Parallel shortages are also found in the Army Reserve.

There is no vast parking lot full of equipment that could be drawn upon if our reserves had to go to war. While it is true that some Reserve and Guard units would inherit equipment left behind in the United States by active-Army elements deploying to fight with equipment stockpiled in Europe, this would not be true if the regulars were sent to fight anywhere else in the world because they would have to take their equipment with them.

If we are to continue to put heavy reliance on our Army Reserve and National Guard, expecting them to be ready to fight in the early stages of any conflict, we must give them more and better equipment. The Army annual procurement budget must reflect our commitment to *every* element of the Total Army.