
Defense Report

AUSA



Part-Time Soldier Readiness—A Requirement for Full-Time Support

When and if this nation is next required to bring its full military power to bear in a major war, the President and Congress will be faced with the absolute necessity for early federalization and call up of many elements of the Reserve Components.

The Army decided six years ago to limit personnel costs by holding active duty military strength at 781,000 soldiers and to assign priority for use of available funds to pursue its post-Vietnam modernization program. This, in turn, made it necessary to transfer additional missions to the Reserve Components—the National Guard and the Army Reserve. The increased commitments of the Total Army place tremendous responsibilities on our Reserve Components.

By now, 683,000 Reserve Component soldiers are providing more than 50 percent of the Army's combat forces and more than 70 percent of its support forces. Five of our first-line combat divisions now have two active and one National Guard brigade, meaning that those divisions could not go to war without the reserve elements being mobilized. Not only must the reserves be fully manned and be provided the same modern weapons and communications equipment as their regular Army counterparts, but they must also maintain levels of proficiency and readiness never before attempted in peacetime.

With so many Guard and Reserve units linked with early-deploying active Army units for wartime assignment, it is obvious that part-time commanders need help in the form of full-time people to meet their greatly increased training and readiness responsibilities. Today's reserve commanders can no longer expect to have three or four months to train between mobilization and combat. To be able to move directly from the local armory to the combat zone, they need help—and soon—in the form of experienced full-time soldiers to enable them to reap full benefit from the limited training time their status as part-time soldiers affords.

To assist the Reserve Components to achieve and maintain the unprecedented level of readiness that is now expected of them, we must increase full-time support to train and prepare them for immediate action in war.