

Déjà vu all over again

As Yogi Berra of Yankee Baseball fame once said, "It's Déjà vu all over again." Once again the Army, that's "THE ARMY" has once again turned on and attacked one of its own, the Army National Guard. During the early 1990's the Army stated that Army National Guard Divisions were no longer relevant. In my article, "The Silent War: The Relevancy of Army National Guard Divisions" I sought to disprove this claim. It is a disgraceful and wasteful pattern that when faced with deep budget cuts following our latest wars in Kuwait/Iraq, second Iraq war and Afghanistan, the Active Army turns to congress and berates its combat backup as not accessible, poorly trained, and should be orientated to support to civil authorities. Since World War I, the Army National Guard has been designated the combat reserve of the Army. Following the war, Secretary of War stated that the Army would be a homogenous force composed of the Active Army, the National Guard of the United States and the Organized Reserve.... Sadly, we're not there yet!

In the past, when the Active Army wanted assistance from the Army National Guard, it did not hesitate. Two examples, during the 1990s the Army came to senior aviation leaders of Army National Guard Aviation and asked if they would work with congress to keep the critical OH-58D production line open. If we were successful, OH-58D helicopters would be provided to the Army National Guard. Again during the mid-1990s the UH-60 production line was going to shut down. The California Army National Guard, NGAUS, and collective support of numerous States convinced congress to keep the line open. It was the right thing to do then and it is a prime example of the "One Army" working together to make the Army stronger.

This time, when the Active Army is faced with severe budget cuts, instead of coming to the National Guard to find solutions, they went to congress and preemptively questioned Army National Guard readiness and accessibility. Despite proven success in combat, they questioned the Army National Guard's need to have attack helicopters. They eliminated inexpensive TH-67 primary training helicopters and gave them away, and replaced the TH-67 with a much more complex and expensive helicopter, the LUH-72. They retired all Scout OH-58D helicopters to create the crisis which required the transfer of Apache's away

from the Army National Guard and decided the Army National Guard “needs” less capable UH-72’s and aged UH-60 helicopters for support to civil authorities.

Congress needs to look at what ARI is...as an easily understandable comparison it would be the same as a city fire department faced with budget cuts taking fire trucks away from local volunteer fire departments, who are readily available to the city department in emergency and replacing their critical volunteer backup with pickup fire trucks and water buckets! What the Army doesn’t understand, or, chooses to ignore is they are telling congress that is a smart policy to completely eliminate Army National Guard Attack Helicopter battalions which are as good, if not better than active army battalions that rely on new aviators directly out of flight school to replace normal or combat losses. This policy is absurd. This then is ARI in a nut shell.

This brings me back to my article, “The Silent War: The Relevancy of Army National Guard Divisions, “which is attached, written by me in the early 1990s regarding the Army’s last major attempt to denigrate and reduce the Army National Guard. The article speaks quite clearly to the issues impacting the Army and Army National Guard then. Sadly, once again today’s present Army leadership has decided to reduce the Army National Guard to a force devoted primarily to supporting civil authorities and ignoring the Army National Guard’s long and proud history of supporting the Army’s war fighting mission. By the way, the Army National Guard considers support to civil authorities, just another military operation.

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“Silent War: The Relevancy of Army National Guard Divisions”

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For more than five years, the United States Army has been engaged in a "war." The conflict has been largely overlooked by the media, for it has not been a "war" of bullets and sophisticated weaponry fought on the battlefields of some distant land. Instead, it has been, and continues to be, a relatively silent "war" fought in Pentagon offices and the halls of Congress a “war” of innuendoes, deception, unfair allegations, and outright distortions of truth against the relevancy of National Guard divisions. Sadly, in this conflict which has shaken "America's Army" to its roots, rhetoric has replaced logic, and the lessons of history have been largely ignored.

In order for the reader to better understand the relevancy of Army National Guard divisions, the writer will first briefly review their proud history then focus on the intent of the Total Force policy. Next, the writer will contrast the inequitable standards established by the U.S. Army for Army National Guard units with the more enlightened total force policies of the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps. Finally, the writer will present a summary, conclusion, and recommendations to make "America's Army" more than just the hollow term most Reservists consider it to be today. Army National Guard Divisions are critical to this nation's defense; a cost-effective "insurance policy" for America that has paid dividends five times this century. Army Guard divisions have also served as a significant, integral element of this nation's deterrent military power during the height of the Cold War. Even so, the question is often asked within the Pentagon, "Do we need eight Army National Guard divisions?" Critics claim that these divisions are useless holdovers from the Cold War. The argument is made to Congress and the American public that Army National Guard divisions are no longer relevant and are an expense that the defense establishment, and ultimately American people, can no longer afford. Yet, the briefest review of the history clearly fails to support this narrow minded proposition. To the contrary, the experience of this nation in the military conflicts of this century plainly warns us that, as the world seeks a new political and military order, now is not the time

to cancel this nation's dependable, proven "insurance policy,"--National Guard divisions.

Mexican Border Service

In 1916, in response to raids on the border towns of the Southwest by the Mexican bandit Pancho Villa, the entire National Guard was called to active duty by President Wilson, and within four months 158,000 Guardsmen were in place on the border. (National Guard Bureau Historical Services Division, 1994)

World War I

In 1917, the Active Army was a professional but small and dispersed force. When Congress declared war in April 1917, the Army found itself with a pressing requirement to expand itself rapidly far beyond what had been reasonably anticipated by pre-war planners. Although at its core the Army was professional and competent, it was not trained nor prepared for battle on the scale of the war being fought in France. How was an army of less than 200,000 going to meet the requirement to expand overnight to an army of several million? Army planners turned to the Army's traditional primary combat backup force: the Army National Guard with its 379,000 soldiers and 17 divisions.

Without those organized and readily available Army National Guard divisions, the United States could not have entered the war in France as early as the Spring of 1918. (Weigley, 1977) American troops in large numbers on the battlefields of France were clearly critical to salvaging the military fortunes of Britain and France. By the time the United States elected to enter World War I both Britain and France were "on their knees," in desperate straits in a stalemated trench war of attrition. The only hope our European allies had for a successful conclusion to the war was for the United States to enter the conflict with a military force powerful enough to tip the balance against Germany. Two million American soldiers were desperately needed to fill the depleted ranks of the decimated and demoralized French and British Armies.

General Pershing insisted that all U.S. Forces in France would remain

organized into U.S. Divisions under his command, employed in an American Sector of the Western Front. His policy would have been insupportable without the Army National Guard divisions. At the time, it was questionable whether the United States Army could enter combat in France in time to prevent Germany from defeating France and Britain. However, with the arrival of the Army National Guard and Active divisions what remained of German morale began to collapse. Forty percent of the American Expeditionary Force was comprised of Army National Guard divisions. In fact, three of the first five divisions to enter combat were Guard divisions. (National Guard Bureau Historical Services Division, 1994) Following hostilities, the German General Staff named the eight toughest United States Army Divisions they faced. Six were Army National Guard divisions. There were no question in the mind of any American at home or abroad in uniform, that National Guard Divisions were very relevant to the Allied victory in France.

Interwar Years

After World War I America demobilized and the Active Army again returned to its traditional role of a small professional force. (Brown, 1923) The Army National Guard remained this nation's primary backup combat force. The Army of the 1920s was designed to be an expandable Army one that could be filled out rapidly, hopefully avoiding some of the hardships encountered during mobilization for World War I. However, congressional defense budgets as they are prone to do became leaner and leaner, and by the period immediately prior to World War II, neither the Active Army, nor the Army National Guard was able to maintain manpower objectives. The record reflects, however, that on the eve of our entry into the war there was one Army National Guard soldier for each Regular soldier.

World War II

World War II began, and in 1940 the U.S. Army again faced the challenge of an explosive expansion to meet the demands of a global war: a war on two fronts three if one counts the China-Burma Theater. The United States., confronted with the largest mobilization in history, once again clearly would have been at a loss without the Army National Guard. The mobilization of the 18 Army National Guard divisions doubled the size of the Army overnight, and the

cadre necessary to provide the required military leadership for this expansion was provided by Regulars and Guardsmen alike. Again, the Army National Guard divisions were an essential strategic hedge which allowed this nation to pursue its military objectives during a very critical period.

The first Army divisions to deploy overseas in both Europe and the Pacific during World War II were Army National Guard divisions. Could the Active Army have accomplished their mission without the Guard? Possibly, but it is unlikely that it could have provided an Army trained and ready in time to reinforce Australia and England without the National Guard divisions. At the time, the majority of British combat forces were in North Africa, the Mid-East and the Pacific. Those British forces in England were the remnants of an army ejected from France in 1940.

By 1944, the United States had raised an Army of 89 divisions, but the bulk of those divisions were not yet committed to combat. Meanwhile, Army National Guard divisions had been fighting for over two years in the Pacific and the Mediterranean theaters. What if those Army National Guard divisions had not been available? What divisions would have defended Australia and began the long road back in New Guinea? At the time there were no questions about the relevance of Army National Guard divisions to the ultimate allied victory in World War II.

Following WWII and the introduction of the Atomic Bomb into modern warfare, once again America saw little need for a large standing Active Army.

Conventional military wisdom of the day held that the Air Force and the Navy alone could handle any potential enemy. Nuclear weapons delivered by American airpower was the key element in America's strategic military planning.

Korean War

In 1950, on the eve of the Korean War, the Active Army stood at 591,000 soldiers and was formed into ten under-strength divisions. Three of these divisions stationed in Japan were authorized a war-time strength of approximately 18,900 soldiers. In practice, defense budgets were such that each of these divisions was authorized a maximum of 12,500 soldiers (actually they were even below this strength). (Schnabel, 1972) Army National Guard divisions

were also authorized a wartime force structure of 18,900 soldiers, but were restricted to a peacetime strength ceiling of 55 percent of wartime strength.

This held the Guard divisions to an authorized strength of approximately 10,000 soldiers –or only slightly less than the strength of each of the three Active divisions initially committed to Korea in June and July 1950. Prior to the outbreak of the Korean War, Army National Guard divisions did not have a wartime mission. In fact, the only time in this century that Army National Guard divisions were assigned wartime missions during peacetime was during the 1970s and the early 1990s.

Korea had caught this Nation and its Army unprepared.

As General of the Army Omar N. Bradley aptly observed, "[we are fighting] the wrong war, at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and with the wrong enemy." The Army once again found itself in the difficult position of having to rapidly expand. Russia was threatening Europe, communism was advancing throughout the world, and the United States was involved in a war (Police Action) in Korea! The combat dynamics of the Korean conflict required the replacement of an average of one regiment per month -over 3,000 soldiers every month for the first year!

That number of replacements was required just to fill the gaps, due to soldiers killed, missing, wounded, injured, and sick. And the 3,000 replacements per month only maintained the status Quo it did not provide for increased combat power. Not surprisingly, many of these replacements were, of necessity, members of the National Guard. The theater replacement policy manpower demands increased even more dramatically after the first year of the war.

We were engaged in a shooting war in the Pacific, while the Russian Bear at our throat in Europe. The Army needed to expand -fast. Again the call went out for the National Guard. Four Army National Guard divisions were called to active service on September 1, 1950, and another two were called to active duty in January 1951, after the Chinese entered the war.

Still another two divisions were called to active duty in January 1952. (Schnabel, 1972) The Army National Guard's 40th and 45th Infantry Divisions deployed to Japan in 1951, and, in 1952, replaced the Army's 24th Infantry Division and the 1st Cavalry Division in Korea. The 24th Infantry and 1st Cavalry divisions then returned to Japan. The Army was able to rapidly expand from 10

to 18 divisions thanks to the National Guard divisions.

Those eight Army National Guard divisions provided an invaluable strategic hedge for the United States Army.

Berlin Crisis

When the Berlin Crisis arose, this Nation and the Army once again turned to the Army National Guard and mobilized two divisions. The mobilization of these divisions had a profound effect on the Soviets. Mobilization of the large Army National Guard organizations signaled to the Soviets that it's nation had the political and military will to face down any threat to Western Europe and NATO. Clearly, the Army National Guard Divisions continued to be an important and relevant strategic hedge when unexpected international threats surfaced.

Vietnam

During Vietnam, when the Army leadership approached President Johnson for permission to mobilize Army National Guard and Reserve units for Vietnam, it was, for the first time, refused that option! There would be no Guard or Reserve call ups at least until 1968 when the "Pueblo Crisis" demanded a show of commitment and show of force in Korea. Although no Army National Guard divisions were called to active duty, they clearly existed and were available. They continued to be a strategic hedge.

Total Force Policy

Following the Vietnam War, Army force levels fell from 1.5 million soldiers to 750,000; one out of every two soldiers released from active service. To shore up America's weakened defense posture, Secretary of Defense, Melvin Laird and General Abrams, then Army Chief of Staff, developed the Total Force Policy. This policy provided the means for maintaining a large, credible deterrent army through the expanded use of the Army National Guard and the Reserve. This objective was accomplished by rounding out Active divisions with Army National Guard brigades (ROUNDOUT). Also, for the first time, real wartime missions were assigned to Army National Guard divisions. Assigning wartime missions to the Army National Guard changed the National Guard in a very positive way. For the first time, Guard soldiers felt they were accepted as Army professionals. At

last, the elusive "One Army" concept appeared to be coming true. It is fair to assume that General Abrams considered Army National Guard divisions to be a relevant part of America's defense. Potential enemies of the United States certainly calculated these divisions as relevant components of the combat power of the United States Army through the 1970s and 1980s. General Abrams believed it, and the Russians, Chinese, and North Koreans also believed it.

National Guard divisions continued to be an important strategic hedge.

Although the mid-1970s to 1990 was the only time when the Army finally came close to achieving the "One Army" concept, the original idea is most properly attributed to Secretary of War, John W. Weeks, and General of the Armies, General John J. Pershing . In 1921 they directed that the Army would be composed of the Regular Army, the National Guard, and the Organized Reserve. This force was to be "organized into one harmonious force."(Brown, 1923) Many dedicated National Guard soldiers felt that the preceding years of discrimination and, in many cases open scorn, were finally a thing of the past. Unfortunately, this was not to be the case.

Desert Shield/Desert Storm

Immediately prior to Desert Shield/Desert Storm, a new Army strategic policy was articulated. Refusing to recognize that a large standing military force was an anomaly of the Cold War, the Army struggled to justify a plan to continue to maintain a larger Active Army. It proposed to "balance the budget" by drastically reducing the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve; in fact, two-thirds of the force structure cuts proposed by the Army would come from the Army National Guard and Reserve!

Inequitable Standards

Desert Storm is a disturbing story. While the Active Army focused critical media attention on the lack of readiness of Guard and Reserve units, it quietly deployed active units to the desert that were not combat ready. For example, the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Air Defense Artillery Regiment, Fort Lewis, Washington, left its Air Defense weapons behind and deployed to war as a transportation truck battalion! The Army declared them instantly "combat ready."(Interview

with 3d Battalion, 2nd Air Defense Artillery, 1991) At the same time, mobilized Guard and Reserve transportation truck companies were undergoing rigorous post-mobilization inspections and testing to "revalidate "unit status reports which reflected their combat readiness. ROUNDOUT was ignored! Active divisions were filled with active brigades and deployed. Concurrently, Army leadership openly criticized the readiness of Guard and Reserve units. This political posturing on the eve of a war can only be described as "incredible!" But, then again, if Army National Guard combat units were allowed to perform well in the desert war, the result could be a shift back to this nation's traditional defense policy: a smaller Active Army backed by a large Army National Guard. The Army's chief concern appeared not to be that National Guard units would fail -but that they would succeed!

Congress Misled

During the Cold War, Army National Guard divisions had been expected to mobilize and deploy in less than 180 days. Literally overnight the Army announced to congress that National Guard divisions were incapable of being ready for combat operations in less than 360 days! Army National Guard brigades, the Army said, could not be ready in less than 180 days. Furthermore, the Army claimed that it could organize, train and deploy a division from scratch in less time than a full strength Army National Guard division could be mobilized, conduct post-mobilization training, and deploy! At least, that is what the U.S. Army told Congress. This position was, and remains, insupportable. Either the Army misled Congress during the 1970s and 1980s, or they are misleading Congress now.

With a stroke of a pen, Army National Guard divisions lost their assigned wartime missions; and were declared by the Army leadership to be no longer relevant to America's defense. Incredibly, ROUNDOUT was dead! Debate continues to rage over the question: Is it faster and more economical to form a division from scratch, or is it smarter and more economical to maintain divisions in the Army National Guard? The Army simply cannot have it both ways. The correct answer appears obvious. It is estimated that the annual cost of one division in the Active Component is approximately the same as all eight Army National Guard divisions. (40th Infantry Division Annual Training Conference Notes, 1996)

Contrasting the Military Services' Treatment of Reserve Components

It is interesting to contrast the Total Force policies of the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps during budget cuts with that of the U.S. Army. The Air Force fights with Air Wings, and, when faced with budget cuts, it readily transfers those missions it can to the Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve. The Navy fights with carrier battle groups. When budget cuts are implemented, the Navy places its excess carriers and support ships into Reserve status where they can quickly be returned to active service. The Marine Corps has eliminated the designation "Reserve" from its vocabulary. "From now on," the Marine Corps states, "we are all Marines," and the Corps is not about to eliminate its Reserve division. The U.S. Army, on the other hand, fights with divisions. Yet, it proposes eliminating its only primary combat backup force -the Army National Guard divisions -claiming that they are no longer relevant!

As long as the world's armies measure combat power by the number of divisions an army can field, Army National Guard divisions will remain relevant. The question is: Will eight-to ten Active divisions provide a sufficient deterrent, or will a lesser number of Active divisions backed by eight Army National Guard divisions provide a more affordable, credible deterrence at a lesser cost?

History has shown that we have rarely foreseen the future with a high degree of accuracy. If history is to teach us anything about military preparedness, or the lack thereof, it is apparent that now is not the time to eliminate Army National Guard divisions. Their wartime mission has been and should continue to be this nation's strategic hedge in a very uncertain world. Army National Guard divisions are this country's dependable, proven, economical insurance policy.

The silent "war" between the U.S. Army and the Army National Guard presents a dangerous "turf war" that not only threatens Total Force as a policy, but the very defense of our nation, as well. We must set aside such parochial pettiness! Army National Guard divisions must once again be assigned wartime missions and provide the combat backup force for the Army which will result in a stronger, more effective Total Force. History repeatedly has proven the wisdom of this proposition.

The relevancy of National Guard divisions is abundantly clear: National Guard divisions must continue to exist as a vital element of America's national defense.

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