

ARMY SUPPORT AND IMPLEMENTATION  
OF THE RESERVE FORCES ACT

by

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I am particularly interested in obtaining maximum benefit from the Reserve Forces Act of 1955 as a means of improving our military posture. The necessity to strengthen our Reserve Forces has never been more vital than it is now, within this era where "time-compression" prevails. By "time-compression," I mean that in the event of national emergency or war, days may count more than weeks or months did in our past conflicts. Therefore, our Reserve Forces must be pre-trained and prepared for immediate action when and if necessary. The Army is doing its utmost to help create this readiness.

As the President's signature was affixed to the Reserve Forces Act of 1955 on 9 August, Department of the Army action to implement this legislation was already underway. Formal action had been taken to obtain the Army's quota for the enlistments within the six month's training program. On 1 August, Department of the Army representatives met with the commanders of the XI armies at Headquarters, Continental Army Command, to discuss the Army's implementing directive. On 3 August the Department of the Army communicated its pre-enactment alert and issued instructions on recruiting and training.

Immediately following issuance of the Executive Order (16 August 1955), which authorized enlistments under the Reserve Forces Act, the Department of the Army directed subordinate commands and agencies to make maximum effort toward recruiting. Reserve unit commanders were given virtually unrestricted latitude in recruiting young men for their organizations.

No military plan can be successfully implemented unless it is thoroughly understood. Each of the XI army commanders, or a senior officer representative, met with me in Washington on 14 October 1955 to discuss the implementation of the Reserve Forces Act. Through the media of command channels and staff conferences the Department of the Army is insuring that all commands have a clear understanding of the Reserve Forces Act and a sound appreciation of its objectives.

However, Army effort to insure success in this specific program, as part of the Army's over-all Reserve program, has not been limited merely to the military field. Public understanding and support of both this legislation and the whole Reserve program are essential to preparedness, peace -- and if necessary, our survival. Both individual and community responsibilities in respect to preparedness must be understood and appreciated. Therefore, the Army has solicited the support of civic and business organizations to further this understanding and insure our preparedness. An all-out Army effort is underway to assure a vigorous and sustained public information and recruiting program. The Army will continue to inform the public through all means at its disposal so that there is a clear understanding of the purpose, provisions, and benefits of the Reserve Forces

Act. Adequate information has been provided so that young men may be able to make proper personal decisions in respect to choices in military service.

These initial actions provide the foundation from which other efforts must proceed.

From the processing, equipping, and training of individuals to the melding of combat-ready units, the active Army will assist and support the creation of a stronger Army Reserve in all respects. The first stage is to provide Army Reserve units with trained individuals, whether they are recently discharged from the active Army, or are the special products of training under this new act. The next step is to provide these units with improved facilities and additional military equipment so that they can begin team training. The Army plans to equip Reserve organizations with adequate weapons and the modern military machinery pertinent to the function and mission of each particular unit. However, this equipment must be cared for, and proper maintenance requires trained personnel.

The active Army's big task is that of training. Individuals on active duty for both short and long terms will be carefully trained by modern military methods. In providing the facilities for active duty training of young men destined for Reserve units, Army commands in the United States are well prepared and ready to assist. Military planning has insured accommodation and logistical support by the active Army for Reserve units during summer training. In addition, instructor teams from the active Army will be made available to the maximum extent possible. The standards to be achieved in all training

must remain high. The attainment of these standards is a responsibility of both active and Reserve elements of the Army.

Numbers alone do not produce military strength. Soldier quality is essential to our strength. This quality is achieved by good leadership and instruction. The men who volunteer for six months training, as well as those beginning longer terms, will be trained under capable leaders. Care has been used in the selection of commissioned and noncommissioned officers in order to provide high quality leadership for the 17 and 18 year old men who comprise the most youthful portion of our Army strength.

Army Reserve units are generally in need of much better facilities within home town areas than they have at present. The Department of the Army recognizes this requirements, and it is recommending an appropriation of 62 million dollars in Fiscal Year 1957 for the construction of Army Reserve facilities. This sum of 62 million dollars for one year is greater than the amount provided for such facilities over the past five years.

It is the ultimate product that counts. The responsibility for achieving combat-ready units transcends all categories of military duty. Officers on active duty and in the Army Reserve must bear their responsibilities and work hard toward the goal we seek. The young Reservists must come to recognize the Army as their Army and not consider themselves separate from it. We cannot join quickly in crisis and be successful unless we have worked cooperatively in the peace we are endeavoring to insure.

The Army Reservist is a soldier. He stands in uniform among thousands of other American citizens on active and Reserve duty who comprise a single military team for defense. The Reservist, regardless of category of service, may be assured that he will be taught and treated as any other soldier, respected in his dignity as an individual.

Support is not a one-way proposition. It is incumbent upon every Army Reservist to support our preparedness program with hard work, loyalty, adherence to discipline, and cooperation. In return, the Army assures the Reservist of opportunities for promotion and recognition. Army support of its Reserve program ranges from material resources to moral support and leadership. The Army recognizes that its strength as a deterrent to war, or as a victor in any conflict, rests strongly on all Reserve components as an indispensable part of the total military strength of the nation.