

From The Editor

OUR TIES TO THE PAST, OUR RELIANCE ON THE FUTURE

Most of the infantry divisions and brigades that achieved victory in World War II have long since disappeared from the rolls of Active Army units, but some still exist as Army National Guard units or as training divisions of the Army Reserve. Valued members of the Army team, they train in anticipation of the day when they will once again be called upon to serve. The concept of reserve components is not unique to our nation; the citizen soldier has been evident throughout recorded history, and today reservists are an integral part of many of the world's armies. In an age when economic realities argue against large standing armies, the role of the reservist will become increasingly critical, but only if we are able to maintain the level of readiness that future contingencies will require.

In their efforts to meet readiness standards, Army Reserve and National Guard units face challenges that their Active Army counterparts are often spared. The use of training facilities—from pistol ranges to maneuver areas—can sometimes require considerable travel before a training event can take place, while competing demands for the limited amount of training time available, even locally, can demand detailed, hands-on management. Some soldiers have to drive great distances just to reach their units, while others may find that scheduled active duty training conflicts with needed Army schooling or critical events at their place of employment. But there are benefits as well; the fact that soldiers can remain affiliated with the same unit for years lends a degree of stability and continuity to the unit that active duty soldiers—facing the normal personnel turbulence—would welcome.

Some units have shown that, in spite of challenges, they can train to standard and accomplish the most demanding of missions, as is the case with the 3d Battalion, 160th Infantry (Mechanized) of the California National Guard. In this issue of *INFANTRY*, Lieutenant Colonel William V. Wenger describes his battalion's actions in the aftermath of the earthquake that shook Los Angeles in the morning hours of 17 January 1994. With operations other than war (OOTW) occupying an ever-increasing share of the Army's mission, this is an excellent example of an OOTW mission carried out at home by an Army National Guard unit. In the future, similar operations may again be performed by Active Army or Guard units, but outside of the United States, and for that reason it is imperative that commanders train in anticipation of these missions.

Some will assert that training to meet OOTW missions can be done only at the expense of training in other, more critical tasks. This is a cop-out; the two are not mutually exclusive for any commander with imagination, and soldiers who are confident that they are prepared to execute the OOTW mission will be able to get in, do the job right the first time, and return home safely.

We take care of our soldiers by training them to do the job we expect of them, and part of that training is the sharing of information. *INFANTRY* has published a number of articles by Active Army officers and noncommissioned officers on subjects ranging from long-range patrolling to supply accountability, and from the perspective of leaders from squad leader to battalion commander. Now we need to pass along the experience of their counterparts in the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve. If you have an idea for such an article, call, write, or send a double-spaced draft to *INFANTRY*, P.O. Box 52005, Fort Benning, GA 31995-2005.

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