



Guardsmen going on patrol.

National Guard Bureau

The National Guard at War

By MICHAEL D. DOUBLER

During two global conflicts the National Guard mobilized and provided both ground and air capabilities to defeat totalitarian powers in Europe and Asia. Its contribution reflected the American reliance on citizen-soldiers who serve their states and the Federal Government. On the state level, the National Guard protects life and property and preserves peace, order, and

public safety. In the event of a national emergency, it provides integral components of the Armed Forces.

The Korean War saw a break with past practice. Instead of undertaking a full mobilization, the National Guard provided a limited number of units. Nonetheless, nearly 200,000 members of the Army National Guard (ARNG) and the Air National Guard (ANG) were ordered to active duty. National Guard units fought in Korea, bolstered European security, and replenished the Strategic Reserve in the continental United States (CONUS). Key reforms

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RF-80As from
Alabama ANG over
Germany.



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after Korea laid the foundation for a more capable National Guard establishment which could participate fully in the long-term prosecution of the Cold War.

After the Battle

The Pentagon began shaping the postwar National Guard before the end of World War II. One influence was General George Marshall, who believed the Guard should resume its traditional place in national defense after the war. He sought to avoid a

citizen-airmen faced an uphill struggle integrating efforts with the Army Air Forces

repetition of the bitter dispute between the Army and National Guard that followed World War I and resulted in the National Defense Act of 1920. Nonetheless, friction occurred among the War Department, National Guard Association of the United States, and state adjutants general. Finally, the War Department issued a directive in October 1945 outlining the purpose, mission, and force structure of the National Guard. It would remain an integral part of America's first line of defense and also retain its

unique status as both a state and Federal force.

The Guard received approval to organize as many as 425,000 members into 27 divisions, 21 regimental combat teams, 12 wing headquarters, 24 fighter groups, 3 light bomb groups, and hundreds of support units. Authorized manpower was twice the prewar level. Beginning in 1946, reorganization was rapid and widespread. The first unit to be activated after World War II was 120th Fighter Squadron in Colorado. By the end of 1948, 288,427 Army personnel were formed into 4,646 units, and within two years, the Army Guard reached 325,000. By 1950, ANG units consisted of 72 fighter and 12 light bomber squadrons, and nonflying assets included 36 aircraft and warning units. The ANG inventory had more than 2,400 aircraft including 211 jet fighters, and manning stood at nearly 45,000. By 1950, 21 states and the territory of Hawaii had completed National Guard reorganizations.

Citizen-airmen faced an uphill struggle integrating efforts with the Army Air Forces (AAF). Despite contributions by flying units and aviators

from the National Guard during World War II, AAF generals who favored an independent Air Force following the war put little faith in the Guard. Leaders such as General Henry Arnold were determined to build the largest, most modern Air Force possible based on nuclear-capable heavy bombers. The same leadership was convinced that citizen-airmen could only operate complex aircraft with extensive training and during a national emergency. Guardsmen had no place in the new Air Force. After considerable bickering in the Pentagon and Congress, however, these leaders reluctantly accepted a separate air arm in the National Guard. Austere defense budgets after 1945 precluded building a robust Air Force, and citizen-airmen were essential to providing the balance of air assets.

The National Security Act of 1947 reorganized the Department of Defense and resulted in recognition of the National Guard as a distinct entity. In September 1947, the Air Force became a separate service and ANG came into existence. In October 1948, the National Guard Bureau was reorganized to better fulfill its mission as the official channel of communication between the states and secretaries of the Army and Air Force. The Chief of the National Guard Bureau retained direct control over several special staff sections, but daily ARNG and ANG operations fell to two staff divisions, both headed by Guard major generals.

Despite this progress, the National Guard faced challenges. Bad relations with the Air Force and problems with budgets, recruiting, and equipment made the initial years difficult. Many active officers regarded ANG units as little more than state-sponsored flying clubs.

The Army National Guard also suffered. Equipped with heavier, more numerous weapons than before the war, it experienced chronic shortages in facilities and training sites.

But the greatest concern was that training and mobilization planning had changed little since 1940. Training normally took place during two-hour drills on weekday nights and focused on individual skills. Unit training occurred only in summer encampments. As late as 1950, the National Guard

Training at Camp Atterbury.



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was still wedded to the notion of deliberate and total mobilizations similar to the events of 1916, 1917, and 1940 when it brought trained individuals to mobilization stations and most unit training was conducted after the declaration of a national emergency.

Into the Morning Chaos

Within days of the invasion of South Korea, President Harry Truman, who had served in the National Guard during World War I, committed the Armed Forces to the conflict. The United States rushed reinforcements, but by late summer the communists backed U.S., allied, and Korean troops into a defensive perimeter around Pusan. On July 19, Truman announced a partial mobilization for 21 months that was later extended to 24 months.

The first ARNG units ordered to active service arrived at their armories August 14. By late September, thousands of guardsmen had reported for duty. The lion's share of soldiers came from 28th Infantry Division (Pennsylvania), 40th Infantry Division (California), 45th Infantry Division (Oklahoma), and 43^d Infantry Division

(Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Vermont). In addition, dozens of separate combat, combat support, and combat service support units were mobilized. By summer 1951, nearly 110,000 ARNG soldiers were on active duty. Many units lost over half of their experienced personnel, who were rushed to Korea as individual replacements. The wholesale loss of seasoned soldiers severely tested morale, and many guardsmen served as individuals rather than as members of National Guard units. The Army allocated training facilities to active duty units preparing to deploy while limiting access for Guard units. In addition, ARNG surrendered nearly a quarter of its equipment—including 748 tanks, 5,595 vehicles, and 95 aircraft—to Army units already in Korea. The Chief of the National Guard Bureau reported that these transfers resulted in training limitations for units preparing for combat duty.

Though the early crisis required a large and immediate response, the

Truman administration believed that a total national mobilization was unnecessary and that active forces would be sufficient, particularly after the spectacular Inchon landing in September 1950. Among guardsmen, views on partial mobilization were mixed. In autumn 1950, the National Guard Association asserted that the fighting in the Far East, while essentially the responsibility of active forces, might still necessitate the callup of specific Guard and other Reserve elements. At the time, no definite expectation existed that state units would eventually see combat. In fact, the association contended that a full mobilization might adversely affect the economy and that too many Guard units would be mobilized only to sit in their armories. Other Guard leaders argued for a full mobilization to ensure a complete role in national defense and protection from becoming merely a replacement pool. The entry of China into the conflict in late 1950 prompted the President to declare a national emergency, which ensured fuller participation by the Army and Air National Guard.

Florida ANG Thunderjet readying for combat mission.



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The Army eventually deployed two ARNG divisions and 41 nondivisional units to Korea. Eleven field artillery battalions and 30 support units helped alleviate critical shortages in firepower, engineer assets, and logistic support. Some units deployed quickly. The first to reach Korea was 231st Transportation Truck Battalion, an all-black

Army guardsmen performed critical missions in the United States and Europe

unit from Maryland which arrived in Pusan on New Year's Day in 1951 and remained on active duty until 1954. The first ARNG unit to enter combat was 936th Field Artillery Battalion from Arkansas. Armed with towed 155mm howitzers, the battalion entered Federal service in August 1950, and after five months of training arrived at Pusan the

following February. Its artillery first fired on March 29 during an offensive to restore the 38th Parallel. In one hundred days of support, the artillerymen fired 50,000 rounds.

Both 40th and 45th Infantry Divisions were selected for service and underwent extensive post-mobilization training in CONUS. The repeated stripping of experienced personnel for duty in Korea upset training, and these units spent considerable time drilling new volunteers and draftees. The divisions deployed to Japan in April 1951 to focus exclusively on combat training. At first, the high command in Korea wanted them to remain in Japan as replacement centers

and security for the home islands. The Army formed such depot divisions during World War I and regretted that it did not have the luxury of similar units during World War II. Prodding by the Pentagon secured commitment of the two divisions. In winter 1952 these two divisions were deployed to Korea and relieved 24th Infantry and 1st Cavalry Divisions. But within months guardsmen nearing the end of their individual tours began returning to California and Oklahoma.

Army guardsmen performed other critical missions in both the United States and Europe. One key task was bolstering the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Constabulary forces in Germany were drained of personnel for Korea, and it fell to the National Guard to deter a Soviet attack. Accordingly, 28th and 43^d Divisions moved to Europe

in April 1951 to take up defensive positions in central and southern Germany. Lastly, the Army Strategic Reserve in CONUS had been depleted, and mobilized ARNG units served as reserve and training or replacement depots for individual regulars, activated Reservists, and draftees. Four more infantry units were called up in the United States: 31st Division (Alabama and Mississippi), 37th Division (Ohio), 44th Division (Illinois), and 47th Division (Minnesota and North Dakota). In the event, 31st Division remained at Fort Jackson while 37th Division was transferred to Fort Polk and 47th Division trained at Camp Rucker. Anticipating possible duty in Korea, 44th Division was deployed to California for post-mobilization training.

Global Reach

Korea provided the first mobilization and combat experience ANG gained as a separate Reserve component. While only a third of ARNG participated in the Korean War, 80 percent of ANG became directly involved. Overall, 486 units—including 22 of 27 ANG wings and 67 of 84 flying squadrons with 45,594 personnel—were activated between October 1950 and April 1951. Members of the Air National Guard made major contributions in Korea and to a global buildup by the Air Force for a possible war with the Soviet Union. A total of 67 squadrons were mobilized: 51 remained in the continental United States, 10 went to Europe, and another 6 fought in Korea.

Like the Army National Guard, the mobilization of the Air National Guard suffered from external and internal factors. When the Air Force found that inadequate airfields in Korea could not support jet aircraft, it stripped ANG units of 296 propeller-driven F-51 fighters. Several ANG squadrons reported for duty with severe aircraft shortages. Trained pilots were in short supply in the early months, so the Air National Guard pilots with extensive World War II experience were levied to serve as replacements in active squadrons. Many ANG squadrons arrived at mobilization sites short of personnel, aircraft, equipment, and supplies. Active recruiting by the states and the assignment of draftees and Air Force Re-



Arkansas guardsmen firing 100,000th round.

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servists brought Air National Guard units up to strength. In the early stages of mobilization, citizen-airmen worked to bring their flying proficiency and aircraft maintenance up to Air Force standards. Limited access to bombing and gunnery ranges resulted in deficiencies in gunnery and bombing. In other cases, Guard units were designated as not ready for battle while they transitioned to jet aircraft.

Three ANG units, 111th Fighter Squadron (Texas), 182^d Fighter Squadron (Texas), and 154th Fighter Squadron (Arkansas) were formed into the all-Guard 136th Fighter Bomber Group, which began operating in June 1951 from a base in Japan before being moved within a few months to a base in Korea. 116th Fighter Bomber Wing—made up of 158th Squadron (Georgia), 159th Squadron (Florida), and 196th Squadron (California)—arrived in Japan shortly after. To increase flying time over Korea, Guard squadrons became the first in the Air Force to experiment with in-flight jet refueling in combat. ANG pilots flew 39,530 sorties and destroyed 39 enemy aircraft. Contrary to expecta-

tations, experience rather than youth was the most important factor in the effectiveness of jet pilots. Air National Guard pilots, almost all World War II combat veterans, performed with distinction. Four achieved the status of ace. But Guard achievements in Korea came at a high price; 101 guardsmen were either killed or declared missing in action.

After the armistice was signed in July 1953, some units remained on active duty until 1957 when the last unit returned to state control.

ANG units also contributed to the defense of NATO and strengthening the Strategic Reserve in CONUS. Ten squadrons operated from airfields in Britain, France, and Germany. Both poor weather and lack of in-flight refueling capabilities forced units to island hop across the treacherous North Atlantic. Once in Europe, ANG aircraft served as interceptors and trained for bombing and reconnaissance missions. Most mobilized Air National Guard squadrons remained in CONUS to help prepare for a global confrontation with the Soviet Union. ANG augmented Strategic Air Command and Air Defense Command. In addition to avia-



ANG pilots discussing mission.

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tion, the Guard provided control and warning, meteorological, construction, and communications support.

Postwar Transformation

The most significant strategic result of the Korean War was strengthening national defense for the long-term

the post-Korea period was one of increased capabilities and closer integration

prosecution of the Cold War. For ARNG and ANG, the post-Korea period was one of increased capabilities and closer integration with their parent services. Overall, the National Guard

became more capable by embracing reforms that both increased readiness and made ground and air units better able to respond to unexpected crises.

Even before the Korean War ended, the Armed Forces Reserve Act of 1952 enhanced the stature of the Reserve components. Congress formally organized the structure of the Reserve and National Guard and codified many previous statutes dealing with citizen-soldiers. The legislation identified seven Reserve components: the Army Reserve, Army National Guard, Naval Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard, and Coast Guard Reserve. The services were to maintain a

Ready Reserve, a Standby Reserve, and a Retired Reserve with each subject to different degrees of recall to active duty. The Ready Reserve was authorized a strength of 1.5 million personnel who were subject to 24 months of active duty in a national emergency. Of all Reserve components, the entire ARNG and ANG structure was placed in the Ready Reserve with no standby or retired elements.

Korea had an immediate effect on ARNG organization. Though the active Army expanded to 15 divisions, ARNG increased its strength to nearly 405,000 by 1956. Both combat and increasing concern over a Soviet attack

in Europe led the Army to add heavier units to its force structure. The Army National Guard activated nine additional armored cavalry regiments and also converted four infantry divisions to armored divisions, yielding a mix of 21 infantry divisions and six armored divisions. The helicopter had proven effective in Korea, and in April 1953 the first rotary-wing aircraft came into service with the Alabama Army National Guard.

Mobilization during Korea highlighted the inadequacies of a system that had endured in the Army for nearly 200 years—unit basic training for recruits. The need for combat units manned by fully trained soldiers in a crisis led the Army to introduce centralized basic training. Legislation passed in 1955 required guardsmen to attend basic training on active installations. The following year, 4,400 members of the Army National Guard attended an eight-week basic training program while another 3,600 received advanced individual training.

Free of the burden of basic training, ARNG leaders sought increased time to concentrate on unit training. In September 1955, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau authorized unit commanders to consolidate weekly drill periods in an extended training period held on one weekend per month. By 1966 weekend drill was mandatory. The term *weekend warrior* entered the lexicon.

With far more time to train, units began to hone their skills on the squad and platoon levels. In the parlance of the day, guardsmen referred to collective training as unit basic training. In October 1958, the Army declared that the focus of training would be unit level, starting at the squad or comparable level and progressing to larger units. All organizations would attain sufficient training to be combat ready with only a minimum of post-mobilization training. By 1960, the Army National Guard had determined that after mobilization the most ready brigades would require an added 10 weeks of field exercises and maneuvers prior to deployment. It was determined that ARNG divisions could be

ready for battle just nine months after mobilization and support units sooner.

At Home and Abroad

Perhaps more than for the Army National Guard, the Korean conflict was a turning point for the Air National Guard. Despite the accomplishments of individual ANG pilots and units, the war demonstrated that closer harmony was needed between the active and Reserve components. Air Force and Air National Guard leaders started initiatives to regularly integrate citizen-airmen into planning, budgeting, exercises, and operational missions. The primary aim of these reforms was to make ANG units combat-ready the moment they were ordered to active duty. In the following years, it became a valued and professional Reserve component of the Air Force.

Various training and operational innovations changed the face of ANG. It began training on weekends even before the Army National Guard. Concentrating training hours in one weekend per month allowed pilots better opportunities for extended flight periods and ground crews more time to perform maintenance. The Air National Guard soon received authorization for 36 annual flight training periods. The Air Force developed innovative means to employ citizen-airmen on short periods of active duty. ANG volunteers and aircraft were integrated into active duty missions such as airlift and air defense.

A great step forward in integrating the active and Reserve components occurred in 1953. The Air Force approved an Air National Guard proposal for the Runway Alert Program. Pilots and aircraft stood alert from an hour before daylight until an hour after sundown. The program was one of the greatest ANG successes and by 1961 included 25 fighter squadrons on alert at selected airfields around the clock. It marked the start of the integrated Air Force approach to training and employing Guard assets.

Throughout the 1950s ANG evolved into a more capable force that was increasingly woven into the fabric of day-to-day Air Force operations. By the end of the decade, citizen-airmen were involved on a near continuous

basis with airlift, special operations, and aeromedical evacuation. The Guard of 1960 numbered 71,000 personnel who flew and supported an inventory of modern aircraft. The evidence of improvements came in late 1961 during the Berlin Crisis when 11 fighter squadrons were dispatched to Europe in the largest jet deployment in ANG history. All aircraft arrived safely. During the Korean War, units had taken as long as seven months to reach the war zone, but in 1961 they were in Europe and operational only thirty days after mobilization.

Korea remains the most significant achievement by the National Guard since World War II. Guardsmen performed several important functions. They served around the globe from Europe to the Far East. Units stationed in the United States strengthened the Strategic Reserve and facilitated the expansion of the Armed Forces. In addition, guardsmen who were not on active duty remained a Ready Reserve of untapped manpower available for domestic and overseas missions.

More importantly, reforms instituted following the Korean War postured the National Guard for greater exertions and prompted closer cooperation with the active force. The Guard began the transformation away from a focus on full mobilization, in which units required extended post-mobilization training. Its ideal became service in units capable of deploying faster in the face of unexpected crises. Closer integration of the Army and Army National Guard and the Air Force and Air National Guard produced a defense establishment more capable of coping with long-term challenges. The implementation of a total force policy after the Vietnam War built on reforms that went back to the 1950s. In reality, the close integration between the National Guard and the Army and Air Force that has been evident throughout worldwide operations since the Cold War can trace its beginnings to the immediate aftermath of the Korean War. **JFQ**

The Dragon Strikes Back

As U.N. forces advanced north during autumn 1950, the United States concluded that the Chinese leadership was preoccupied with consolidating control over its country and would not intervene in Korea for fear that the fragile Chinese economy could not withstand such a major military effort. But there is evidence that Peking began preparing for war as early as July 1950. For their part, senior Chinese officers respected the experience of General Douglas MacArthur and suspected that an invasion at Inchon could precipitate a collapse of the North Korean offensive. Mao Tse-tung believed a U.S.-led invasion of the north would threaten China. In October 1950, he deployed volunteers to aid North Korea in a counteroffensive. Meanwhile the Soviets provided limited and highly secret air defense and support.

The message below was sent from the Soviet embassy in Peking to Stalin on October 14, 1950:

Our leading comrades [Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party] believe that if the U.S. troops advance up to the border of China, then Korea will become a dark spot for us [the Chinese] and the Northeast will be faced with constant menace. Past hesitations by our comrades occurred because questions about the international situation, questions about the Soviet assistance to us, and questions about air cover were not clear to them. At present, all these questions have been clarified.

Mao Tse-tung pointed out that now it is advantageous for them to dispatch the Chinese troops into Korea. The Chinese have the absolute obligation to send troops to Korea. At this point, they are sending the first echelon composed of nine divisions. Although it is poorly armed, it will be able to fight against the troops of Syngman Rhee. In the meantime, the Chinese comrades will have to prepare the second echelon. . . .

In conclusion, Mao Tse-tung stated that the leading comrades in the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party believe that the Chinese must come to the assistance of the Korean comrades in their difficult struggle.



Mao Tse-tung.

AP/Wide World Photos

Chinese entry into the war dramatically changed the course of events, though it did not result in the course Mao anticipated. He had concluded that intervention would result in a brief conventional war that would lead to victory. He believed that the skill, tenacity, and tactics of Chinese forces would overwhelm U.S. advantages in artillery and airpower, but his commanders underestimated the logistical demands and the ability of U.N. forces to recover from their initial defeat. **JFQ**

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