

Chronological: Role of Reserves, Fort DeRussy, Hawaii

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news from

Senator DANIEL K. INOUE

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ROLE OF RESERVES

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As I gaze back over my life I am well aware of the strong influence that the United States Army has had upon me...not as a professional soldier, but as an American Citizen who was honored to serve our great Nation during a period when our national security and the freedom of the world were at stake.

Today, I stand before you as Chairman of the Senate's Select Committee on Intelligence. In that capacity I am privy to terrifying secrets known sometimes to only a handful of persons at the very highest levels of government. Fortunately, at this moment our country and most of the world is at peace. But I am reminded on an almost daily basis of the need for national preparedness.

Thus, it is appropriate that once again we recognize that the military strength of our Nation lies truly in the hands of the Citizen-Soldier -- the Reservist.

Now as never before our National Defense rests on the shoulders of the men and women who train month in and month out in the Reserve Centers -- such as this magnificent building -- located in all of the states and Territories of the United States.

In the past it has been the Active Army that bore the brunt of the initial assault of an enemy...and the Active Army that held our ground for months until the Reserve Components could be mobilized, trained and equipped. This is how it used to be, but no longer is this the case. Today we have what is called the Total Army -- a combination of the Active Army and the Reserve Components which have been wedded into one fighting force with the greatest reliance in our history being placed upon the Reserves to be ready for mobilization almost instantly.

Survival of the active army forces will depend directly on the immediate use of Reserve forces, especially the support elements necessary to sustain the active forces in battle and to provide reenforcements. In fact, you may be surprised to learn that fully two-thirds of the total army's combat support -- the maintenance, supply and medical people needed to keep the combat troops on the line -- is provided by the Reserves and National Guard. I hope this figure helps bring home to you the magnitude of this country's dependence upon the Reserves and how crucial it is that the Reserves be ready to go on little more than a moment's notice.

It is because the Army's "total Army" or "total force" concept relies so heavily upon the Reserves that I am particularly concerned at recent reports that our Reserve forces are understaffed and not sufficient to meet our needs. The Army estimates, for example, that it would need 276,000 Reservists under wartime conditions. As of last September, paid drill strength was nearly one-third below that, at 192,000. Further, in testimony presented to a Congressional committee just this past week, General Bernard W. Rogers, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, noted that the number of enlisted personnel in the Individual Ready Reserve--that large pool of trained personnel who are members of the reserves but not organized into units--has fallen dramatically from 977,000 in Fiscal Year 1972 to 156,000 today. He said further that under current plans it would be seven months from the start of hostilities until the first trained Reservists would be available. In plain terms, what these figures mean is that we cannot today meet the manpower requirements needed for a rapid mobilization and deployment of our active and Reserve forces.

I hope, therefore, that you here today will use this occasion as a time to reflect on the enormous faith and trust we are placing in our Reserves and will join with me in offering all possible support and good wishes to the technicians and unit members of Headquarters, IX Corps (Augmentation) under the command of Brigadier General Forrest C. Murphy as they work to meet the problem of maintaining an adequate reserve force and to turn this impressive new structure here at Fort DeRussy into an efficient tool, used by Citizen-Soldiers of today and tomorrow.

As they work to meet these goals, I am sure that they will be inspired by the example set by Master Sergeant Kalani, whose name we memorialize today. Master Sergeant Kalani, in the tradition of Hawaii's military sons, was a decorated hero of the war in Vietnam. Twice he received the Bronze Star Medal for Valor and four times he was wounded and received the Purple Heart with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters. As a wearer of the Combat Infantryman's Badge, which he received twice, a Master Parachutist, Master Sergeant Kalani served primarily in the Elite Special Forces Units. It was here that his unfailing "can do" spirit and leadership was so often applied in training and combat situations where mission accomplishment was largely due to his efforts. Time after time he volunteered for many extremely risky and hazardous missions until finally he suffered wounds which eventually disabled him. All in all, Master Sergeant Kalani served in the Army for 23 years with 13 of those years spent overseas and five years in actual combat areas. Finally, this true American hero succumbed to an unseen enemy called hepatitis which he picked up while serving in Vietnam. During his final years of life Master Sergeant Kalani devoted many of his off-duty hours to train members of the 40th Special Forces Detachment, then a unit of the U.S. Army Reserve, Hawaii, in the specialized skills which he had mastered. It is, therefore, most appropriate that this Reserve Center from this date forward shall carry his rank and name as a tribute from a most grateful nation.

It fills me with pride to recognize the thousands of Americans who are members of the U.S. Army Reserve, because it reminds me -- as it should every American -- that the Army Reserve is rooted not only in the country's history and military structure, but in its contemporary life as

well. For men and women of the Army Reserve come from every sphere of community activity in all 50 States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the Canal Zone. They show by their interest in military matters that they wish to preserve for all time the way of life they enjoy as Americans, and they show by their interest in community involvement that they are truly concerned about the welfare of their neighbors.

As you know, the Army Reserve's primary mission is to join the Active Army in case of national emergency. Towards this goal, the men and women training here epitomize the dedicated spirit of Army Reservists everywhere. Throughout this great land of ours, wherever they assemble to keep themselves militarily proficient, there can be sensed the verve and vigor of determined Americans.

The Army Reserve is a federal agency, but all members are also citizens in the community where they train. This is why when the manpower and machinery of the Army Reserve can be utilized to work on community-minded projects, while still accomplishing the primary mission of maintaining a state of readiness, such projects are happily undertaken.

I am continually impressed by the attitudes of the members of the Army Reserve. In their dual capacity -- as citizens and soldiers -- men and women of the Army Reserve come from every walk of American life -- business, industry, and the professions. Some are young, just beginning their civilian pursuits; many are already walking the path of success in civilian environs. All of them are keenly aware of the role they play in our Nation's defense structure. They are aware that the reduction in size of our standing army requires that the USAR be depended upon, more than any other time in history, to meet and overcome any expanded threat to security of the United States. They also know that the sacrifices they make to maintain their proficiency contribute to the strength of our Nation.

Members of the Army Reserve dramatize the realities of the responsibilities which face all of us today. This Nation has learned that freedom cannot be purchased for time and eternity. Every generation of Americans must be ready to make sacrifices if we are to remain free. As long as a threat to freedom exists, the Army Reserve must stand ready to serve the Nation.

With these things in mind, I hope the units here at Fort DeRussy enjoy this new facility.

This center is an example of the increased recognition, better equipment, and greater involvement in Army planning being accorded the Army Reserve. Take advantage of it. Make it a part of the surrounding communities. Remember that it is one of many hundreds throughout this great land dedicated to -- and standing for -- the American ideals we hold so high. With the dedication of this building, let us all strive to keep American strong, and keep it free, now, and for generations to come. Thank you.