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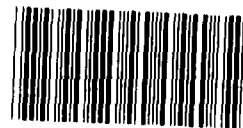
Report To The Secretary Of The Army

Problems In Alerting And Preparing Army Reservists For Mobilization

The Army's system for alerting members of National Guard and Reserve units in the event of mobilization needs improvements. The primary document the Army will use to notify reservists--the unit alert roster--is inadequate for locating many reservists quickly. Approximately 22 percent of Army Guard and Reserve personnel with early mobilization schedules may not be notified and assembled promptly because of missing or incorrect phone numbers and addresses.

In addition, some reservists may not be prepared because they have not received information needed to help put their personal affairs in order.

GAO recommends specific improvements the Army should make to correct these problems. The Army has agreed and is taking positive steps to address our concerns.



123526

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UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

NATIONAL SECURITY AND
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

B-214108

The Honorable John O. Marsh, Jr.
The Secretary of the Army

Dear Mr. Secretary:

This report discusses the adequacy of the Army's system for alerting reservists of a mobilization and whether reservists are provided information to help put their personal affairs in order before reporting for duty.

The report contains recommendations to you which should improve the likelihood that reservists will respond to an alert notice in a timely manner. As you know, 31 U.S.C. 720 requires the head of a federal agency to submit a written statement on actions taken on our recommendations. This written statement must be submitted to the House Committee on Government Operations and the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs not later than 60 days after the date of the report. A written statement must also be submitted to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations with an agency's first request for appropriations made more than 60 days after the date of the report.

We are sending copies of this report to the Chairmen, Subcommittees on Defense, House and Senate Committees on Appropriations; the Chairman, Subcommittee on Manpower and Personnel, Senate Committee on Armed Services; the Chairman, Subcommittee on Personnel and Compensation, House Committee on Armed Services; the Secretary of Defense; the Director, Office of Management and Budget; and the Chairmen, House and Senate Committees on Appropriations and Armed Services, House Committee on Government Operations, and Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Frank C. Conahan".

Frank C. Conahan
Director

D I G E S T

To accomplish its wartime mission, the Army must depend heavily upon its approximately 685,000 reservists in over 6,000 Guard and Reserve units. In the event of a war or other national emergency, many Army National Guard and Reserve units are expected to mobilize with little or no advance warning so they can deploy with active forces. Because of the crucial role Army Guard and Reserve units will play in the early days of mobilization, it is important that reservists be promptly notified and be personally prepared. GAO made this review to determine whether (1) the Army's notification system is adequate for alerting reservists and (2) reservists are provided information to help put their personal affairs in order before reporting for duty.

While radio and television are possible means of notifying reservists to mobilize, there are certain risks associated with complete reliance on the news media. Accordingly, the Army plans to notify reservists using its alert roster, which contains the names, telephone numbers, and addresses of unit members. GAO selected a random sample of 10 units and compared names on alert rosters with names on other unit records to determine whether the alert rosters contained all names of current members. GAO also contacted 83.6 percent of the 250 members (25 from each of the 10 units) who were randomly selected to verify the accuracy of their names, telephone numbers, and addresses. Results of GAO's evaluation are projectable to 140 units having an estimated assigned strength of about 24,000 personnel and required to mobilize within 72 hours. (See pp. 1 to 3.)

UNITS' ABILITY TO MOBILIZE
ON TIME MAY BE HAMPERED
BY INADEQUATE ALERT ROSTERS

Because of deficiencies in the Army's alert rosters--for example, incorrect telephone numbers and addresses--approximately 22 percent

of Army Guard and Reserve personnel with early mobilization schedules may not be notified and assembled promptly. Units that are experiencing personnel shortages will be even more seriously hampered in accomplishing their mission if some members cannot be contacted and do not report for duty on time.

Unit training and management could be affected because some who may not be contacted are non-commissioned officers (NCOs) who must train reservists and perform various administrative duties during the early days of mobilization. About 7 percent of the NCOs at the units GAO visited may not be contacted due to alert roster inaccuracies.

Army Guard and Reserve units also were not using annual tests of their alert procedures to verify their alert rosters and some units did not conduct their annual tests in accordance with established Army requirements. Unit officials said that this condition existed because (1) higher commands did not emphasize the importance of maintaining accurate and complete rosters and (2) Army guidance in several areas, such as the verification procedures that should be followed, was unclear. (See pp. 4 to 10.)

ARMY MUST DO MORE TO ENSURE THAT
RESERVISTS RECEIVE PERSONAL
READINESS INFORMATION

GAO found that many reservists had not received required annual briefings and other written materials concerning personal readiness topics, such as wills and power of attorney forms. Moreover, the Army did not follow up to ensure that personal readiness information was provided to members who had not received it. The purpose of providing this information is to minimize any reporting delays that may occur if reservists believe they are not personally prepared to leave their families in the event of mobilization. (See pp. 12 to 14.)

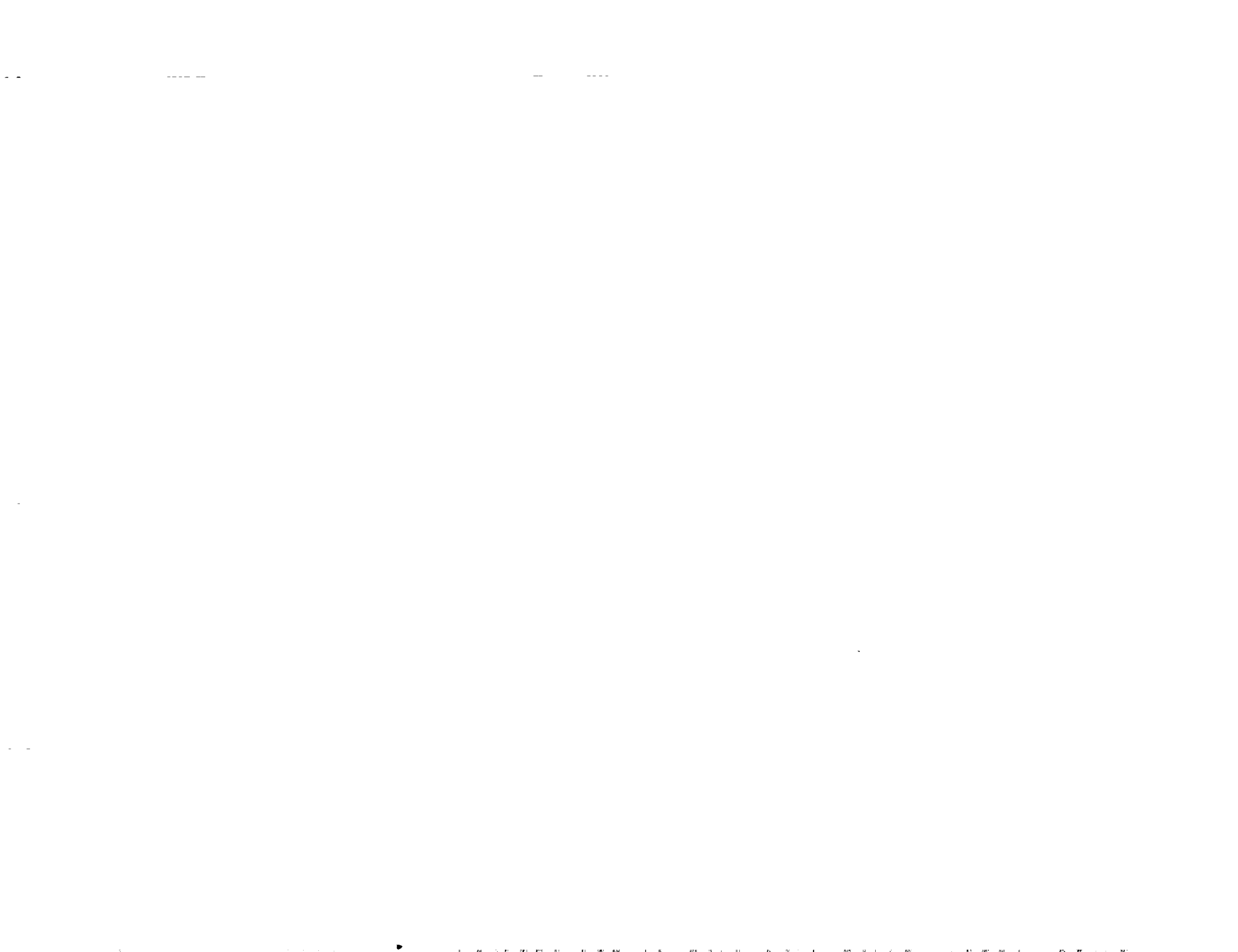
RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE
SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

GAO recommends that the Secretary

- ensure that appropriate emphasis is given to maintaining accurate alert rosters and require periodic feedback on progress made in keeping alert rosters accurate;
- revise the unit commander's handbook to state that testing of alert roster procedures should be conducted annually, and used to update and correct information on the alert roster;
- ensure that commanders comply with applicable directives requiring units to provide annual briefings and other written information on personal readiness to unit members;
- develop follow-up procedures to ensure that members absent from briefings are afforded make-up sessions; and
- require periodic feedback from command reviews on how well units are helping reservists get their personal affairs in order.

AGENCY COMMENTS

The Department of Defense generally agreed with GAO's findings and recommendations, and stated it will explore various means to (1) increase emphasis on maintaining accurate and complete alert rosters and (2) ensure that members receive required personal readiness briefings and other written materials. Agency comments are discussed in detail in chapters 2 and 3.



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ABBREVIATIONS

DOD	Department of Defense
FORSCOM	U.S. Army Forces Command
GAO	General Accounting Office
NCO	noncommissioned officer

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Total Force Policy, adopted by the Department of Defense (DOD) in 1973, integrates active, National Guard, and Reserve forces into a homogeneous whole. In the event of a conflict, DOD planning now calls for the National Guard and Reserve to mobilize with little or no advance warning and to deploy with the active force. To accomplish its mission, the Army heavily depends upon its approximately 685,000 reservists in over 6,000 Guard and Reserve units. Critical combat, combat support, and combat service support missions have been assigned to the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve. For example, these units now comprise one-third of the Army's combat divisions and provide approximately two-thirds of the Army's tactical support capability.

Key roles assigned to the Guard and Reserve include (1) providing units needed to bring some active force combat divisions to full strength, (2) providing medical care to casualties, and (3) maintaining and repairing sophisticated equipment. About one-fifth of the deployable Army Reserve units would be committed within 30 days of mobilization, and some units have such critical deployment times that they would move directly to their points of embarkation when called to active duty. Because of the Guard's and Reserve's crucial role in the early days of mobilization, it is important that all reservists be promptly notified so that they can report to their duty stations and begin performing assigned duties.

The unit alert roster--a listing of unit members' names, telephone numbers, and addresses--is the primary document that the Army will use to notify reservists in the event of mobilization. Although all units should maintain accurate and complete alert rosters, it is most critical that units scheduled to mobilize early do so because they have so little time to respond to an alert notice. We recognize that there are other means of communications, primarily radio and television, that could be used to alert reservists. However, Army officials cited several shortcomings associated with complete reliance on the news media, including possible sabotage of the communications network and lack of control over verification that all reservists learned of the alert notice.

It is also critical that units which mobilize early ensure that members have their personal affairs in order. For example, important documents, such as wills and power of attorney forms, should be readily accessible in case family members need them during the reservist's absence.

The U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) at Fort McPherson, Georgia, is primarily responsible for mobilizing Army Guard and Reserve forces. FORSCOM has provided Army Guard and Reserve unit commanders a handbook that contains procedures and instructions for mobilization planning.

In peacetime, various State National Guard Headquarters command Army Guard forces. The National Guard Bureau in Washington, D.C., provides communications between the Department of the Army Headquarters and State National Guard Headquarters. Also during peacetime, FORSCOM's three subordinate continental U.S. Armies (First, Fifth, and Sixth) supervise and monitor Army Guard and Reserve unit training and readiness.

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

Our objectives were to determine whether (1) the Army's alert roster is adequate for notifying reservists upon mobilization and (2) reservists are provided information to help them put their personal affairs in order before a mobilization. To accomplish this, we selected a random sample of 10 units with a structured strength¹ of 2,035 personnel and assessed the adequacy of their alert rosters by comparing and reconciling roster information with other unit records, such as the payroll listing, to determine whether alert rosters contained the names of all currently assigned members. Additionally, we randomly selected 25 members from each of the 10 alert rosters to telephone and verify the accuracy of names, telephone numbers, and addresses contained on the roster.

We attempted to contact the reservists using the home or work numbers listed on the unit alert roster. If these attempts failed or there was no listing on the roster, we used local operators, telephone books, or other unit records to obtain a current listing. We used a structured interview to verify the accuracy of the information and to question reservists about receiving required personal readiness information. We successfully completed 209 interviews--83.6 percent of our sample.

We restricted our universe for random sampling to units within the continental United States (1) with a structured strength of between 100 and 400 personnel and (2) required to mobilize within 72 hours. Using FORSCOM's Mobilization Troop Basis Stationing Plan, we identified the universe of units meeting this criteria--140 units having an estimated assigned strength of about 24,000 personnel. We focused on units scheduled to mobilize early because of the apparent importance of accurate and complete alert rosters to the prompt assembly of unit personnel. Appendix I provides (1) a more detailed discussion of our statistical sampling methodology and (2) the

¹"Structured strength" is the total number of persons needed to make up the organization of a unit.

upper and lower limits defining the range within which we are 95-percent certain that the actual percent of errors lies. The percent of error shown in the body of the report reflects our best estimates. Appendix II contains the questions asked during our interviews as well as the projected results.

At Army Headquarters in Washington, D.C., and at FORSCOM, we obtained information provided unit commanders concerning mobilization planning, and discussed with these officials procedures followed for ensuring adherence to established policy and guidance. We also held discussions with unit officials regarding procedures followed for maintaining and testing the completeness and accuracy of alert rosters and providing guidance to unit members on the importance of having their personal affairs in order.

In addition, we reviewed related reports prepared by the Army Audit Agency and others, and have summarized their findings in appendix III. We performed our review from May 1982 to April 1983 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

CHAPTER 2

UNITS' ABILITY TO MOBILIZE ON TIME MAY BE HAMPERED BY INADEQUATE ALERT ROSTERS

Because of deficiencies with the Army's alert rosters, Army Guard and Reserve units may not be able to promptly notify and assemble their personnel in accordance with mobilization schedules. In reviewing a random sample of units scheduled to mobilize within 72 hours, we found that the unit alert rosters (1) listed incorrect telephone numbers and home addresses for 20 percent and 30 percent of the reservists, respectively and (2) omitted the names of others who were currently assigned while containing the names of some persons no longer assigned to units. Additionally, units were not verifying the accuracy of their alert rosters or testing their alert procedures in accordance with established Army requirements.

Reasons given by unit officials for alert roster deficiencies varied; however, among the most common were that the higher commands gave low priority to maintaining accurate and complete rosters and the Army's guidance is unclear in several areas, such as verification procedures that should be followed. Without complete and reliable alert rosters, unit training and management could be seriously affected because some who may not be contacted are noncommissioned officers (NCOs) who must train reservists and perform various administrative duties.

ALERT ROSTERS DO NOT REFLECT ACCURATE DATA

Unit alert rosters contain substantial inaccurate information on reservists' home phone numbers, work phone numbers, or home locations. For 10 percent of the reservists, all three items were inaccurate. We based our findings on information obtained from reservists randomly selected at each unit. (App. I provides specific information on our estimated error rates and the number of reservists actually contacted.)

Home telephone number inaccuracies

The telephone will be the primary means of contacting reservists in the event of mobilization. We found, however, that about one out of every five (or 20 percent) of the reservists' home telephone numbers on the alert rosters was in error or was not listed.

Unit alert rosters are to contain a home telephone number if the member has one. In the absence of a home telephone, the Army requires that a relative's or a neighbor's number be listed.

Specifically, home telephone numbers recorded on the alert rosters were incorrect for 14 percent of the reservists and were not listed for an additional 7 percent. Over one-half of the reservists with an incorrect or unposted home telephone number said they had had their current home number for at least 7 months.

Work telephone number inaccuracies

At the time of our field work, members had the option of providing a work telephone number to be listed on the alert roster. A revision to the unit commander's handbook in September 1983, requires members to provide a work telephone number if they have one. (See p. 11.) Work phone numbers are important if the alert notice is received during the day and the reservists have to mobilize quickly.

We found that work phone numbers for 18 percent of the reservists were incorrectly listed. For an additional 17 percent, the work phone numbers were not listed at all. According to the reservists, they did not object to having their work numbers appear on the roster. Over one-half of the reservists with an incorrect or unposted work number said they had had their current number for at least 7 months.

Home addresses are inadequate for locating reservists

Although the telephone will be the most important method of communication in a rapid mobilization, some reservists will not be reached that way. Therefore, to notify members, units must send a messenger to members' homes. We found, however, that home addresses on the alert rosters were inaccurate or inadequate for over 30 percent of the members in our sample. Our review showed that 21 percent of the home addresses were not accurately listed on the alert roster and another 10 percent were insufficient because they would not be useful when personal contact must be made. For example, the listing of post office box numbers and rural addresses would not provide enough information if a reservist had to be contacted quickly and could not be reached by phone. The following hypothetical example illustrates our point.

John Doe P.O. Box 313
Lampoi, La. 71411

Mary Smith Rt. 3, Box 243
Fentin, La. 71411

Additional information would be necessary to locate these reservists quickly. For example, the alert roster should provide the following specific directions.

John Doe P.O. Box 313
Lampoi, La. 71411

(N.W. Corner of Lebrun and
Marshall Streets)

Mary Smith Rt. 3, Box 243
Fentin, La. 71411

(From armory, take Hwy 162 east
to Fentin; go south on Lake St.
for 3 miles. Second house on
right after Harman Rd.)

Although six units annotated their alert rosters to show the locations of rural residences of members or attached maps to provide directions to the homes of these members, the other four units had not adopted either of these techniques. Officials of two units told us they did not have maps or directions with the rosters because they were not required by the Army.

UNITS ARE NOT MAKING TIMELY
CHANGES TO ALERT ROSTERS

The listing of members on the alert rosters was outdated. To determine whether the alert rosters contained the names of all the reservists in the unit, we compared the names on the unit's payroll listing and the unit's manning table¹ with the names on the alert roster. Initially, we found about 270

¹Manning tables identify the positions authorized for a unit and the individuals who are filling those positions.

discrepancies out of 1,600² names on the rosters. Unit officials, however, indicated that it takes up to 4 weeks to process a person into a unit. Thus, we provided for a grace period of 30 days from the effective date of a person's enlistment or transfer into the unit to recognize processing time, reducing the number of discrepancies to 220.

Of these 220 discrepancies, 165 members' names were not on the roster but should have been, and 55 individuals were on the roster even though they were no longer members of the unit. Projecting our sample results to the applicable universe indicates that (1) about 11 percent of the current members were missing from the alert roster and (2) about 3.6 percent of the names on the alert roster were of individuals who were not members of the unit.

TESTS ARE NOT BEING USED
TO VERIFY ALERT ROSTERS

The Army requires units to test their alert notification plan annually. FORSCOM officials informed us that the purpose of the annual test is to verify information on the alert roster. We found, however, that units were not using annual tests to verify their rosters. In addition, some units had not tested their alert procedures annually.

Unit testing generally consisted of determining the number of reservists who could be contacted within a certain time period. Army guidance does not require or even imply that the tests be used to validate the work and home information appearing on the rosters, nor does it require that all members be contacted in a practice alert. FORSCOM officials agreed their guidance is not explicit, but they believe unit commanders should know that annual tests are to be used for verification purposes without it having to be specifically written in the guidance.

Three of the 10 units visited had not tested their alert procedures annually. In one unit's case, the State National Guard Headquarters had waived the test requirement because of funding restrictions. Officials of this unit advised us that their procedures had not been tested since the 1970s. Officials at the second unit said that they were away at annual training

²Approximates the assigned strength of the 10 sampled units which, because of personnel vacancies, is less than structured strength (see p. 2).

when the higher command called for its subordinate units to conduct their annual tests. The third unit did not explain why it had not annually tested its alert procedures.

The remaining seven units visited tested their procedures annually. Of these seven, six prepared a memorandum showing the date and time of the test and the percentage of the members contacted, even though the Army does not require it. None of these units used the test results to update their alert rosters.

REASONS WHY ALERT ROSTERS
WERE INACCURATE OR INCOMPLETE

Unit officials said their alert rosters were inaccurate or incomplete primarily because

- Army guidance was unclear about verifications of, and who should be listed on, the rosters and
- the commands did not emphasize the importance of maintaining accurate and complete rosters, so the officials also assigned a low priority to the task.

Three units cited unclear Army guidance as a major cause of alert roster deficiencies. The Army's guidance in the unit commander's handbook states that "Changes to the notification roster will be posted . . . as they occur and will be verified quarterly." Unit officials informed us that, as written in the handbook, it is not clear whether unit commanders are to verify the entire roster quarterly or only the posted changes. FORSCOM officials responsible for developing the guidance, however, informed us that the entire roster should be verified quarterly.

Despite Army guidance that all unit members should be listed on the alert notification roster, unit officials attributed some of the discrepancies to a lack of Army guidance on who should or should not be maintained on the alert roster. For example, one unit's officials said they were not sure if members who are away at basic training should be listed on the roster because they will not mobilize until they complete such training. Another unit believed members should be listed because, officially, they are a part of the unit.

Unit officials acknowledged that they were not timely in adding new members and removing separated members from the alert roster. They also said they had removed some members' names prematurely. Officials at six units visited did not consider the accuracy of the alert roster a priority item. At one unit,

officials informed us that, since alert roster accuracy and completeness are not emphasized by higher commands, they were not giving any special attention to this area either.

We discussed with FORSCOM officials the lack of emphasis given to alert rosters at the unit level. These officials said that the Army needs to give more attention to the accuracy and completeness of alert rosters. Further, they said that our findings will be considered for updating the unit commander's handbook and will be discussed in future meetings with Continental United States Army commanders.

NOT NOTIFYING RESERVISTS
MAY HINDER UNIT OPERATIONS

Because of inaccurate or incomplete alert rosters, units may not be able to contact some personnel in the early stages of mobilization. Units are already experiencing personnel shortages, and they will be even more seriously hampered in accomplishing their missions if some unit members are not contacted and do not report for duty on time. Also, since some of the members who may not be contacted are NCOs, valuable training and management skills will not be available when needed.

The following table shows that about 22 percent of the reservists in the 140 units sampled may not be contacted in the early stages of mobilization.

Estimated assigned strength of the 140 units	24,400	
Less: Members not listed on roster (11% error rate)	<u>2,700</u>	2,700
Members who were listed on alert rosters	21,700	
Less: Members listed but home and work telephone numbers and addresses were either incorrect or missing, or otherwise insufficient for locating reservists (12% error rate)	<u>2,600</u>	<u>2,600</u>
Total number who may not be contacted initially		<u>5,300</u>
Percent of total strength who may not be contacted		22%

Most Army Guard and Reserve units will not be able to deploy immediately in the event of mobilization and must undergo some period of training before they become fully ready to perform their missions. The amount of training time taken depends upon several conditions, such as equipment availability, access to training facilities, and the availability of unit personnel needed to perform or provide required training.

Some of the members who may not be contacted are NCOs. We found that 39 of the 574 NCOs at the 10 units we visited may not be contacted due to alert roster inaccuracies. As a result, valuable training and management skills will not be available when needed. In one instance, the alert roster for a unit that will mobilize within 1 day after being alerted contained incorrect or missing information for 6 of its 41 NCOs. Therefore, these personnel may not be contacted and, thus, not report to the training site in a timely manner. The unit commander said that the absence of key NCOs, even for a few days, will adversely affect the training of members and the administrative duties that must be performed, such as processing payroll and insurance forms, counseling members on dependent care, and carrying out security classification interviews.

CONCLUSIONS

Although many Army Guard and Reserve units must assemble quickly in a mobilization, unit commanders have been lax in maintaining accurate and complete alert rosters. In our view, this increases the probability that units will have difficulty promptly notifying and assembling members. As a result, the Army will waste valuable time trying to locate reservists during periods when little time is available to ready the units for their missions. The Army should take several actions to remedy this condition--one of which is stressing to unit commanders the importance of maintaining accurate and complete alert rosters.

The Army must clearly instruct unit commanders to (1) verify all the information on the alert rosters each quarter, (2) use the annual test of alert procedures to verify and/or correct information on the alert roster, and (3) comply with the requirement to annually test their alert procedures.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure that alert rosters contain enough information to locate reservists quickly, we recommend that the Secretary of the Army

- ensure that appropriate emphasis is given to maintaining accurate alert rosters and require periodic feedback on progress made in keeping alert rosters accurate and
- revise the unit commander's handbook to state that testing of alert roster procedures be conducted annually, and be used to update and correct information on the alert roster.

AGENCY COMMENTS

DOD agreed with our first recommendation. It said that in fiscal year 1984 the Army will explore various means--including command readiness and annual general inspections, command staff visits, and mobilization planning meetings--to increase emphasis on alert roster accuracy and to provide feedback on progress made.

DOD also agreed with our second recommendation. DOD said that the Army will revise the unit commander's handbook by adding specific guidance on the purpose of and actions to be completed during annual tests of alert rosters.

In a draft of this report we proposed the following revisions to the unit commander's handbook: (1) add language that requires unit commanders to ask members to provide work telephone numbers for the alert roster, (2) define specifically the quarterly verification that should be performed on alert rosters, and (3) require that maps or adequate directions be included with the alert roster for members with post office boxes or rural addresses. DOD said that as a result of discussions we had with FORSCOM officials at the conclusion of our field work, the Army incorporated these provisions in a September 1983 revision of the handbook. We verified this information, and accordingly, have deleted the proposals from this report.

DOD disagreed with unit officials' views that they lacked guidance on who should be listed on the alert roster, pointing out that the guidance specifically states that all unit members should be listed on the alert notification roster. Accordingly, we have revised the report to recognize the Army guidance. (See p. 8.) This does not change our finding, however, that unit officials were uncertain about how some situations should be handled.

CHAPTER 3

ARMY MUST DO MORE TO ENSURE THAT RESERVISTS RECEIVE PERSONAL READINESS INFORMATION

Although Army policy stresses the importance of providing reservists with information needed to enhance their personal preparedness for mobilization, little emphasis is given to implementing this policy. The Army requires that all members receive two personal readiness briefings each year, but a substantial number of reservists told us that they had not received these briefings. Furthermore, most units do not follow up to determine whether all members have been briefed. The Army also prepares written materials designed to assist reservists in arranging their legal and personal affairs. However, about two in five reservists told us that they had not received these materials.

Accordingly, the Army needs to do a better job of ensuring that reservists receive available information to help put their personal affairs in order and, thereby, minimize disruption to the reservists and their families. This is particularly important for units having early mobilization missions because of the tight time constraints associated with requirements for the unit to become fully operational.

MANY RESERVISTS ARE NOT RECEIVING REQUIRED PERSONAL READINESS INFORMATION

Many reservists in units that must mobilize early are not receiving required briefings or other information needed to assist them in preparing for a mobilization. Because little time is available for these reservists to arrange their personal affairs once alerted, it is essential that they prepare in advance to minimize any potential delays in reporting for duty.

Reservists are to receive two briefings annually. One briefing is conducted by officials in the Judge Advocate General's Corps and concentrates on legal matters, such as the importance of a will, a power of attorney, reemployment rights, and the benefits of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act.

The second briefing--called the unit commander's personal mobilization briefing--is given annually and goes beyond the legal aspects of personal preparedness. This briefing is to inform members about all aspects of mobilization and includes additional information on personal readiness, such as those tasks reservists should do to arrange for dependent care.

On the basis of our interviews with reservists, we estimate that 18.3 percent of the 21,700 reservists in the 140 units represented by our sample had not been briefed on the financial, legal, or personal complications that could arise if their units were mobilized. About 50 percent of these individuals had been reservists for at least 1 year.

At 4 of the 10 units visited, the annual legal briefing had not been provided during the year preceding the date of our visit. At one unit, whose members had not been briefed for 3 years, officials explained that their legal briefing had not taken place because the unit did not understand that it had to arrange for one. Officials at the other three units could not explain why their members had missed the required annual briefing.

In the annual mobilization briefing, the unit commander is to discuss the amount of warning that the reservist can expect if reserve forces are mobilized. The commander should advise members of the number of days they will be at their assembly station before departing to a mobilization area. Although members of the units we reviewed were all required to assemble within 72 hours, we estimate that 51.8 percent of the 21,700 reservists in our sample did not know they had to assemble within the preassigned time.

Officials of nine of the units advised us that the units provided the required annual commander's mobilization briefing to the reservists, but officials at two units said that personal readiness was either not discussed or was only briefly discussed. One unit had not held its annual mobilization briefing. At seven units, unit officials told us that the Army does not pay enough attention to personal readiness. Officials of three units, however, told us that giving appropriate attention to the topic of personal readiness for war could cause some of their members to resign or decline to reenlist.

In addition to the annual briefings, reservists are to receive written materials from the Army to assist them in personal readiness preparations. Reservists are to be provided DOD Form 1543, which aids them in arranging their legal and personal affairs, and a copy of the personal mobilization guide or its equivalent.

The personal mobilization guide highlights the importance of maintaining adequate records and documents on such matters as (1) a member's spouse and dependents (for example, marriage license, birth certificates, and proof of citizenship) and (2) real estate and personal property (for example, deeds, registrations, tax receipts, and records).

Based upon the results of our interviews with reservists, we estimate that 39.3 percent of the 21,700 members in our universe had not received any written information, while 26.3 percent had only received DOD Form 1543. Officials of four units explained that they either did not hand out any written information or they were not sure if such information was distributed. Two units gave out only the personal mobilization guide and two other units gave out only the DOD Form 1543. The lawyer who gave the last legal briefing at one of the units told us that many members were observed not taking the form after the briefing.

ARMY DOES NOT FOLLOW UP TO
ENSURE RESERVISTS ARE PROVIDED
PERSONAL READINESS INFORMATION

Although the Army has attached great importance to the need for a reservist to be personally ready, follow up to determine whether members are receiving personal readiness briefings is virtually nonexistent at the unit level. Accordingly, the Army has no assurance that units provide, and members receive, necessary personal readiness information.

Officials at seven units visited explained that the payroll roster, which shows a member's absence at drills, was adequate for determining who did not attend the required briefings. However, officials of only one unit said they scheduled make-up sessions for nonattendees at both briefings. Officials at three units said they scheduled a make-up session for the annual mobilization briefing only. Some unit officials told us either there is no requirement to have make-up sessions or that unit members will receive the information informally during the year.

FORSCOM officials said that personal preparedness is a problem area needing more attention and that it is vitally important for the Army to communicate the importance of this message to the reservists. FORSCOM officials acknowledged that the Army needs to develop a strategy to ensure that required briefings and written materials are being provided and used at the units. They explained that a family assistance handbook will be distributed to all units in fiscal year 1984 which provides much better information on personal readiness matters than is currently available.

CONCLUSIONS

Despite the Army's policy that personal readiness is vitally important, many reservists are not getting the required minimum information that is available to assist them. We agree with the Army that personal readiness is very important and

necessary to increase the likelihood that members will report on time. This is especially important for those members who must mobilize rapidly. The Army, however, needs to take appropriate follow-up measures to ensure that (1) units are complying with existing requirements and (2) all members are provided required briefings and written information. We believe the Army increases the likelihood of added disruption to the lives of reservists and their families if unit members are not provided required briefings and written information. Furthermore, this disruption could adversely affect units' ability to assemble members in accordance with mobilization schedules.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Secretary of the Army

--ensure that commanders comply with applicable directives requiring units to provide annual briefings and other written information on personal readiness to their unit members,

--develop follow-up procedures to ensure that members absent from briefings are afforded make-up sessions, and

--require periodic feedback from command reviews on how well units are helping reservists get their personal affairs in order.

AGENCY COMMENTS

DOD agreed with each of our recommendations. It said that the Department of the Army will publish a "Family Assistance Handbook for Mobilization" which will be available to all reserve component members during fiscal year 1984, and the Army is exploring ways to ensure its distribution and use. DOD also said that the Army will require that commanders make an annual statement that all members were provided required briefings and other written materials. Also, feedback on how well units are helping reservists get their personal affairs in order will be obtained through command readiness and annual general inspections, command staff visits, mobilization exercises, and mobilization planning conferences.

METHODOLOGY USED TO DETERMINE THE ACCURACY OF INFORMATION
ON ALERT ROSTERS AND WHETHER ARMY RESERVISTS
RECEIVED PERSONAL READINESS INFORMATION

Because the Army Guard and Reserve are organized separately, we designed our study to allow us to sample from both organizations.

We collected data using a structured interview (see app. II) administered over the telephone. A stratified two-stage random cluster sample design was used to select the unit members to be interviewed. This design allows findings from a relatively small percentage of the universe to be projected to the entire universe, with a specified probability that the sample findings are within a calculable confidence limit of the underlying universe value. We used a specified probability of 95 percent for our estimates. Thus, we are 95 percent certain that the universe values for the member characteristics estimated by our sample findings are within the ranges defined by the confidence limits. Unit characteristics are not projectable beyond the units actually visited.

Confidence limits were calculated by a computerized formula using the Statistical Analysis System. The formula computes confidence limits for two-stage cluster samples with simple random sampling of clusters and elements within clusters. On the basis of computer simulations, we determined that adequate estimates could be obtained by sampling unit members in as few as five Guard and five Reserve units.

We randomly sampled 25 names from the alert rosters of each of the 10 units. However, 14 of those selected from the alert rosters were determined to no longer be unit members and 27 could not be reached after as many as 8 attempts. We completed interviews with 209 (or 83.6 percent) of the sample of 250 names.

Home phone numbers and addresses are required to be on alert rosters, while work phone numbers at the time of our field work were optional. (See p. 5.) Each of these three pieces of information was categorized as correct or in error based on information provided by those with whom we completed interviews, and in a few instances, supplemented by information in the files of the units. An additional category of "not applicable" was used for work phone numbers in those cases where none was listed on the alert roster and the member told us that either he/she did not have one (for example, the member was not working) or did not know what it was. Regarding home addresses, we made allowances so that if a zip code was not included on the alert

roster or minor discrepancies were noted in the street address, we considered the overall home address correct. Table 1 summarizes our findings from the units visited. Percentages on this table exclude results considered as not applicable.

TABLE 1

Errors in Phone Number and Address Information

<u>Location</u>	<u>Percent in error</u>		
	<u>Home phone number</u>	<u>Home location</u>	<u>Work phone number</u>
Reserves:			
San Francisco, Calif.	50.0	41.7	57.1
Junction City, Wis.	10.5	36.8	50.0
Bossier City, La.	21.7	17.4	28.6
Green Bay, Wis.	15.0	30.0	27.3
Jacksonville, Fla.	26.1	30.4	41.2
National Guard:			
Camp Atterberry, Ind.	0.0	25.0	26.7
Milwaukee, Wis.	27.3	27.3	53.3
Watertown, S.Dak.	26.1	43.5	34.8
Hamburg, Pa.	13.6	31.8	17.6
Marianna, Fla.	24.0	36.0	34.8

To project these results to the universe of Reserve and Guard units that our sample units represent, we weighted the findings and computed the 95-percent confidence intervals as previously described. Estimates of the percent of errors in home and work phone numbers and home addresses, along with the lower and upper confidence limits for each of these characteristics, are shown in table 2.

TABLE 2

	<u>Estimated in error</u>	<u>Lower limit</u>	<u>Upper limit</u>
	----- (percent) -----		
Home phone number	21.2	12.2	30.3
Home location	30.4	21.5	39.3
Work phone number	35.5	26.0	45.0

To interpret the figures in this table, consider the estimated percent in error as the best single estimate of the percentage of errors and the upper and lower limits as defining the range within which we are 95 percent certain that the actual universe value lies. For example, we estimate that 21.2 percent of the home phone numbers are not correct for members of the reserves. Furthermore, we are 95 percent confident that at least 12.2 percent, and as many as 30.3 percent, of their home phone numbers are in error.

We also questioned reservists about whether they had received briefings and other written materials that would aid them in personally preparing for a mobilization. Table 3 summarizes our findings from the units visited. Percentages in this table also exclude results considered as not applicable.

TABLE 3

Findings Regarding Receipt of Required Briefings or Other
Written Information

<u>Location</u>	<u>Received no required briefing</u>	<u>Received no written information</u>	<u>Received DOD Form 1543 only</u>
	----- (percent) -----		
Reserves:			
San Francisco, Calif.	33.3	58.3	16.7
Junction City, Wis.	5.3	15.8	52.6
Bossier City, La.	17.4	43.5	34.8
Green Bay, Wis.	5.0	25.0	30.0
Jacksonville, Fla.	30.4	56.5	17.4
National Guard:			
Camp Atterberry, Ind.	40.0	45.0	30.0
Milwaukee, Wis.	0.0	27.3	0.0
Watertown, S.Dak.	13.0	21.7	13.0
Hamburg, Pa.	9.1	31.8	36.4
Marianna, Fla.	36.0	72.0	12.0

To project these results to the universe of Reserve and Guard units that our sample units represent, we also weighted the findings and computed the 95-percent confidence intervals as previously described. Our findings are shown in table 4.

TABLE 4^a

	<u>Estimated</u>	<u>Lower limit</u>	<u>Upper limit</u>
	----- (percent) -----		
Briefings not received	18.3	7.6	29.0
Other written information not received	39.3	24.0	54.6
Only DOD Form 1543 received	26.3	15.8	36.7

^aThese figures should be interpreted in the same manner as described on page 17.

QUESTIONS ASKED DURING INTERVIEWSWITH ARMY NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE MEMBERSAND PROJECTED RESULTS

1. How long have you been in the Army Reserve or the Army National Guard?

18.5% Less than 1 year	20.1% 6 to 10 years
27.5% 1 to 2 years	19.1% Over 10 years
14.7% 3 to 5 years	

2. How long have you been a member of this Reserve (Guard) unit?

3.6% Less than 3 months	21.7% 13 to 24 months
5.9% 3 to 6 months	55.7% More than 24 months
13.2% 7 to 12 months	

3. Is the work telephone number correct?

13.0% Wrong	
12.4% No number was shown on the alert roster, but the unit member did have one.	
3.9% No number was shown on the alert roster and the unit member had one but did not know it.	
5.2% The alert roster listed a phone number, but the unit member no longer had one.	
65.5% Correct, or the roster did not show a number and the unit member did not have one.	

- 3a. If the phone number was wrong, unknown, or not shown but there was one, how long had the error existed?

40.3% More than 12 months	19.7% 4 to 6 months
17.3% 7 to 12 months	14.9% 1 to 3 months
	7.7% Less than 1 month

- 3b. For those who had work phone numbers but did not show one on the alert roster, was there any objection to listing it on the roster?

100% No	
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4. Is the home telephone number correct?

14.5% Wrong	
6.8% No number was shown on the alert roster, but the unit member did have one.	
78.8% Correct	

- 4a. If the home phone number was not correct, how long has the unit member had a new number?

31.5%	More than 12 months	25.7%	1 to 3 months
22.2%	7 to 12 months	6.4%	Less than 1 month
14.2%	4 to 6 months		

5. Is the home address correct?

19.8%	Wrong		
.9%	No home address was shown on the alert roster, but the unit member did have one.		
1.0%	The unit had directions to the member's home, but the directions were inaccurate.		
8.7%	The unit needed directions to the member's home but did not have them with the alert roster.		
69.6%	Correct		

- 5a. If the home address was not correct, how long has the error existed?

36.8%	More than 12 months	19.2%	1 to 3 months
15.5%	7 to 12 months	4.8%	Less than 1 month
23.8%	4 to 6 months		

6. Have you ever been briefed by someone in your unit or some other Army (or National Guard) organization about preparing for the financial, legal, or personal complications that may arise if your unit is mobilized rapidly?

18.3%	No	80.6%	Yes
1.1%	Not sure		

- 6a. If briefed, when was the most recent briefing?

1.4%	More than 2 years ago	65.6%	Within the last 6 months
3.7%	13 to 24 months ago		
27.0%	7 to 12 months ago	2.3%	Not sure

7. The Army (National Guard) makes available an "Annual Legal Checkup Form"--DOD Form 1543. This form helps you organize personal and dependent information relating to wills, power of attorney, real estate, personal property, and the location of your valuable documents. This form does not have to be turned in to your unit, it's for your personal use. Has this form been made available to you?

47.6%	No	45.9%	Yes
6.5%	Not sure		

- 7a. If the form was made available, have you ever filled out this form since joining (name unit)?
- 55.9% No 38.5% Yes
5.6% Not sure
- 7b. If the form was made available and filled out, did your unit commander or someone else from your unit review it with you?
- 71.2% No 28.8% Yes
8. Other than the form we just talked about, have you ever received any written information on these subjects from your unit or other Army (or National Guard) organization?
- 69.2% No 24.2% Yes
6.6% Not sure
- 8a. If you received written information, when did you receive it?
- 4.3% More than 2 years ago 42.3% Within the last 6
7.4% 13 to 24 months ago months
35.7% 7 to 12 months ago 10.3% Not sure
9. In the event of war or other national emergency, how long do you have from the time you are notified by your unit until the time you must physically be at your home station?
- 20.2% Not sure
28.1% Less than 1 day 2.9% 4 to 7 days
23.4% 1 day 1.5% 8 to 14 days
10.4% 2 days
13.5% 3 days
10. Do you have the kind of job you can leave on short notice?
- 70.5% Yes 24.3% unemployed
5.2% No
11. Have you ever discussed with your current employer the possibility of having to leave your job on short notice if your unit is mobilized?
- 51.6% No 48.4% Yes

12. Have you ever been informed by your unit or other Army (or National Guard) organization about your reemployment rights if you are ever mobilized?

26.5% No 72.3% Yes

1.2% Not sure

13. If your unit were mobilized, you would have to provide certain documents in order for your dependents to receive government benefits, such as medical care. Do you have any dependents, including your spouse if you are married?

36.5% No 63.5% Yes

14. If you have dependents, are you currently married?

11.7% No 88.3% Yes

15. If married, do you have, or could you quickly get, a copy of your marriage certificate if you need to?

2.7% No 96.7% Yes

.6% Not sure

16. If you have dependents, do you have, or could you get, copies of birth certificates for all your dependents (including your spouse) if you needed to?

13.4% No 82.5% Yes

4.1% Not sure

RELATED REPORTS ON ALERT PROCEDURES

<u>Reporting organization</u>	<u>Report date</u>	<u>Locations cited</u>	<u>Finding reported</u>
Army Audit Agency	June 1982	27 Reserve and Guard units in 11 states and Puerto Rico	Alert rosters were consistently incomplete and inaccurate and had not been tested as required. The rosters did not list all assigned members, did not contain all required information, included members no longer with the units, and contained many incorrect addresses and telephone numbers. Unit alert roster tests were not conducted annually--in one unit, the test was 26 months past due.
Army Audit Agency	Feb. 1982	21 Guard units in South Dakota	The ability of the South Dakota National Guard to contact all members was questionable. Alert rosters were not kept current. At 15 of 21 units visited, alert rosters did not reflect the latest personnel changes. Guard members who should have been listed on rosters were not, and personnel who were no longer members or no longer assigned to the units were listed.

<u>Reporting organization</u>	<u>Report date</u>	<u>Locations cited</u>	<u>Finding reported</u>
63rd Army Reserve Command	Oct. 1982	Summary of lessons learned during an exercise of alert notification procedures in the Army command's units	Major problems were experienced in the alert notification process. Many section members could not be contacted due to work conflicts, outdated alert rosters, and lack of knowledge as to who was to be contacted next in the alert procedure.
Commanding General, California National Guard	July 1981	Guard units in the state of California	Annual general inspections, staff visits, and management reports indicate certain critical problems have not been corrected. Unit readiness will increase only when these problems, such as verifying alert rosters, are solved.

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