

FROM: THE OFFICE OF CONGRESSMAN BOB DOLE
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FOR RELEASE AM'S FRIDAY, JULY 26, 1968

WASHINGTON, D.C., July 26 -- Congressman Bob Dole today released the text of a letter mailed yesterday to Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford.

Noting that Kansas has 1.12 percent of the U.S. population, Dole said that 16 percent of the 24,450 Reservists and National Guardsmen activated in May were Kansans. Since then, he added, Kansas draft calls have not been reduced proportionately.

The letter to Clifford specifically referred to Kansas National Guardsmen and Reservists who were activated May 13 and are now serving at Fort Carson, Colo. and other bases.

Dole said since his visit at Fort Carson July 7 and 8, he has received a number of inquiries from those men and other persons, indicating considerable uncertainty on the initial reasons for mobilization of the Reservists and Guardsmen and what their future after completion of training may be.

The Congressman told Clifford the men and their families "would be more at ease" if they could receive answers to three questions:

- 1) "Why, specifically, were the Reservists called, and why were the Guardsmen mobilized?"
- 2) "Is there any plan for early release for these men --any or all of them?"
- 3) "If there are no plans for early release, can you anticipate the disposition of the 69th Brigade, or any portion thereof as well as any Kansas Reserve unit, when the current training program ends?"

"Kansans don't expect the best of both worlds, but neither are we entitled to the worst," he said. "The Kansas obligation should not be greater than that of any other state."

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Dear Mr. Secretary:

" On May 13, 1968, approximately 3,600 Kansans of the 69th Brigade and 395 Kansans who are members of the Army Reserve were mobilized.

" On July 7 and 8, I visited the 69th Brigade, now part of the 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized). While there, a meaningful briefing was conducted by Brigadier General John Breidenthal and Major General Roland Gleszer. I was impressed with the briefing, the training being conducted and the competence of the officers and enlisted men. My visit was necessarily brief; hence, it was not possible to make any studied judgments. Nevertheless, morale seemed generally high and nearly everyone appeared to be making the best of the situation.

" Despite what appeared to be generally high morale, there are unquestionable underlying frustrations, resulting, in my opinion, from two factors: First many are still wondering why they were called to active duty, and second, many wonder what their disposition may be after completing training at Fort Carson.

" The apparent lack of national unity on the Vietnam war policy, coupled with the present effort to end the war through direct negotiations (and I pray this may be done), has led many men and members of their families to question the continuing justification for the May 1968 'call-up'. They may recognize and accept their responsibility and duty to their country, but they, quite properly, would like to know what the future may hold for them.

" This is undoubtedly true also of other Kansas Reservists and Guardsmen activated in May and now stationed at other bases across the nation. It is difficult, I recognize, to determine in advance the future assignment of a particular unit. I recall that neither General Breidenthal nor General Gleszer on July 8 had information as to what would be the disposition of the 69th Brigade or the 5th Division following the present training program. I have been contacted by a number of interested persons since my visit to Fort Carson. The general tenor of the letters indicates that those activated on May 13 are not serving any worthwhile purpose and that they could better serve their nation by returning to their civilian occupations.

" As your records will indicate, the May mobilization affected Kansas more than any other state; in fact, 16 percent of the 24,450 Guardsmen and Reservists activated were Kansans. This will help you understand the widespread concern in our state since on a population basis, we have only 1.12 percent of the nation's manpower. Despite this sharp loss in manpower, draft calls in Kansas have not been proportionately reduced, although General Hershey is reviewing, at my request, the Kansas induction record.

" Notwithstanding this, Kansans don't expect the best of both worlds but neither are we entitled to the worst, and the Kansas obligation should not be greater proportionately than that of any other state.

" It occurs to me that Kansans who were activated in May wherever they may be serving presently, and members of their families, would be more at ease if the answers to the following questions could be provided:

- " 1) Why, specifically, were the Reservists called, and why were the Guardsmen mobilized?
- " 2) Is there any plan for early release for these men -- any of all of them?
- " 3) If there are no plans for early release, can you anticipate the disposition of the 69th Brigade, or any portion thereof, as well as any Kansas Reserve unit, when the current training program ends?

" Needless to say, I appreciate your consideration of this inquiry, and if any further information is needed, please contact me."

Sincerely yours,

BOB DOLE
Member of Congress