COMMUNITIES RULE:
INTRA-SERVICE POLITICS IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY

by

Robert Allen Zirkle

B.S., Physics
B.A., Political Science
University of Illinois, 1982

Submitted to the Department of Political Science
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

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29 October 2007

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Chair, Graduate Program Committee
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ABSTRACT

Intra-service politics can help explain many behaviors and outcomes across a variety of
military services and countries. The thesis begins by developing a framework for
understanding intra-service politics based on a review of organization theory. Every
military service contains a variety of communities or unions organized by specific
missions, functions or technologies. These communities compete with one another to
determine a service’s dominant culture and missions; and the distribution of a service’s
budgets, equipment and personnel. Three patterns intra-service relations are proposed: a
strong and independent central leadership capable of acting as an honest broker between
competing communities (e.g., the German Army of the interwar period); a single
monarchical community dominating a service (e.g., the U.S. Air Force); and an oligarchy
of communities controlling a service (e.g., the U.S. Army). In the latter two patterns,
doctrinal developments, capabilities, and distribution of resources will mirror and tend to
reinforce the power of the dominant unions. In order to test the relevancy and plausibility
of the oligarchic pattern, the bulk of the thesis is taken up with three case studies
examining the division design process in the U.S. Army during the 1970s and 1980s: the
Division 86 design, the High Technology Light Division, and the Light Infantry Division.
Overall, the evidence from these three case studies suggests the utility of an explanation
based on intra-service community politics for certain behaviors. Moreover, it suggests a
U.S. Army dominated by an oligarchy composed of an armored/mechanized infantry
(“heavy”) community, an artillery community, an aviation community and a light infantry
community. The oligarchy itself has a multi-tiered structure, one where the light infantry
community has the least power and influence, while the heavy and artillery communities
have the most; the aviation community occupies a position in-between, wielding
considerable power but never being the equal of the two dominant ground force
communities.

Thesis Supervisor: Harvey M. Sapolsky
Title: Professor of Political Science
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have benefited from the generous assistance of a multitude of people over the years, without whom this work would not have been possible. I wish to express my sincere appreciation first of all to Harvey Sapolsky, my advisor and dissertation supervisor, for maintaining faith in spite of the passage of many years and a host of problems and obstacles. His insights and patience enabled me to overcome numerous intellectual hurdles. I would like to thank as well the faculty and staff of the former Defense and Arms Control Studies Program (now the Security Studies Program) at MIT, particularly George Rathjens, Jack Ruina, William Kaufmann, and Stephen Meyer, for their early intellectual and general financial support; and the Institute for Defense Analyses’ Central Research Program for funding the later stages of this effort. I am grateful to Richard J. Sommers and the staff at the Military History Institute at Carlisle Barracks for advice and assistance in making my way through the Institute’s archives; and to the staff at the Institute for Defense Analyses Library, particularly Jennifer Pond and Michael Yared, for their many hours of diligent service in tracking down source material.

Michael Leonard, Victor Utgoff and Col. (Ret.) Chris Christenson, all from the Institute for Defense Analyses, provided much needed moral support and encouragement over the years. Col. Christenson also provided many hours of discussions and invaluable insights into the workings of the U.S. Army and its infantry community. I am indebted to Amy Alrich, Lawrence Korb, and Caroline Ziemke for their comments on drafts of various chapters over the years and to the members of my dissertation committee: Harvey Sapolsky, Barry Posen, and Owen Cote, Jr. Finally, I wish to express my love and gratitude to my wife, Amy, and my sons, Lucas and Matthew, for their support over these many years, and for putting up with far too many weekends with Dad “upstairs working in the attic.”
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<td>AAF</td>
<td>Army Air Forces</td>
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<td>AAH</td>
<td>Advanced Attack Helicopter</td>
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<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>Active Component</td>
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<td>ACAB</td>
<td>Air Cavalry Attack Battalion</td>
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<td>ACCB</td>
<td>Air Cavalry Combat Brigade</td>
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<td>ACE</td>
<td>Armored Combat Earthmover</td>
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<td>Armored Cavalry Regiment</td>
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<td>Armored Gun System</td>
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<td>Army Materiel Command</td>
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<td>AoE</td>
<td>Army of Excellence</td>
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<td>APC</td>
<td>Armored Personnel Carrier</td>
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<td>ARDEC</td>
<td>Acquisition, Research, Development and Engineering Center</td>
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<td>ASF</td>
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<td>ASW</td>
<td>Anti-Submarine Warfare</td>
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<td>Aviation and Troop Support Command</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATFA</td>
<td>Atomic Field Army</td>
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<td>AUSA</td>
<td>Association of the United States Army</td>
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<td>AVF</td>
<td>All-Volunteer Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>BCT</td>
<td>Brigade Combat Team</td>
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<td>BDP</td>
<td>Battlefield Development Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>BUR</td>
<td>Bottom Up Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>C³CM</td>
<td>Command, Control and Communications Countermeasures</td>
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<tr>
<td>C³I</td>
<td>Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAC</td>
<td>Combined Arms Center</td>
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<td>CACDA</td>
<td>Combined Arms Combat Development Activity</td>
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<td>CENTAG</td>
<td>Central Army Group</td>
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<td>CENTCOM</td>
<td>United States Central Command</td>
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<td>Command and General Staff College</td>
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<td>CNO</td>
<td>Chief of Naval Operations</td>
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<td>COIN</td>
<td>Counterinsurgency</td>
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<td>CONARC</td>
<td>Continental Army Command</td>
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<td>CONUS</td>
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<td>CS</td>
<td>Combat Support</td>
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<td>CSS</td>
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<tr>
<td>CTC</td>
<td>Combat Training Center</td>
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<td>CVBG</td>
<td>Carrier Battle Group</td>
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<td>DA</td>
<td>Department of the Army</td>
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<td>DARCOM</td>
<td>U.S. Army Materiel Development and Readiness Command</td>
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<tr>
<td>DARPA</td>
<td>Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCR</td>
<td>Division Cuirassée</td>
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<td>DCSOPS</td>
<td>Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans</td>
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<td>DISCOM</td>
<td>Division Support Command</td>
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<td>Division Air Defense Gun</td>
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<td>DLM</td>
<td>Division Legere Mecanique</td>
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<td>DOA HQ</td>
<td>Department of the Army Headquarters</td>
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<td>DoD</td>
<td>Department of Defense</td>
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<tr>
<td>DRB</td>
<td>Defense Resources Board</td>
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<td>DRE</td>
<td>Division Restructuring Evaluation</td>
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<td>DRS</td>
<td>Division Restructuring Study</td>
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<td>EAC</td>
<td>Echelons Above Corps</td>
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<td>EW</td>
<td>Electronic Warfare</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAA SV</td>
<td>Field Artillery Ammunition Support Vehicle</td>
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<td>FAV</td>
<td>Fast Attack Vehicle</td>
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<td>FDP</td>
<td>Force Development Plan</td>
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<td>FCS</td>
<td>Future Combat Systems</td>
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<td>FIST-V</td>
<td>Fire Support Team Vehicle</td>
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<td>FM</td>
<td>Field Manual</td>
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FM&R  Forces, Manpower and Reserves
FORSCOM  U.S. Army Forces Command
FPU  Firepower Unit
FY  Fiscal Year
GAO  General Accountability Office
HASC  House Armed Service Committee
HHB  Headquarters and Headquarters Battery
HHC  Headquarters and Headquarters Company
HMMWV  High-Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle
HTLD  High Technology Light Division
HTMD  High Technology Motorized Division
HTTB  High Technology Test Bed
ID86  Infantry Division 86
IDF  Israeli Defense Force
ID(L)  Infantry Division (Light)
IOC  Initial Operating Capability
IPR  Interim Program Review
ITV  Improved Tow Vehicle
JCS  Joint Chiefs of Staff
JRTC  Joint Readiness Training Center
JSCP  Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan
LAV  Light Attack Vehicle
LAW  Light Anti-Armor Weapon
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<tr>
<td>LAWCV</td>
<td>Light Armored Wheeled Combat Vehicle</td>
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<td>LIC</td>
<td>Low Intensity Conflict</td>
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<td>LID</td>
<td>Light Infantry Division</td>
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<td>MACOM</td>
<td>U.S. Army Major Command</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAU</td>
<td>Marine Amphibious Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAU(SOC)</td>
<td>Marine Amphibious Unit (Special Operations Capable)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAW</td>
<td>Medium Anti-Armor Weapon</td>
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<td>MICV</td>
<td>Mechanized Infantry Combat Vehicle</td>
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<td>MEU</td>
<td>Marine Expeditionary Unit</td>
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<td>MI</td>
<td>Military Intelligence</td>
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<td>MLRS</td>
<td>Multiple Launch Rocket System</td>
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<td>MOMAR</td>
<td>Modern Mobile Army</td>
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<td>MOU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
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<td>MP</td>
<td>Military Police</td>
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<td>MPG</td>
<td>Mobile Protective Gun</td>
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<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
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<td>Northern Army Group</td>
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<td>NSC</td>
<td>National Security Council</td>
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<td>NTC</td>
<td>National Training Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>O&amp;M</td>
<td>Operations and Maintenance</td>
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<td>OIF</td>
<td>Operation Iraqi Freedom</td>
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<td>OKH</td>
<td>Oberkommando des Heeres</td>
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<td>OMB</td>
<td>Office of Management and Budget</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
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<td>ORC</td>
<td>Organized Reserve Corps</td>
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<td>OSD</td>
<td>Office, Secretary of Defense</td>
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<td>OOTW</td>
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<td>PD</td>
<td>Presidential Directive</td>
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<td>POL</td>
<td>Petroleum, Oil, and Lubricants</td>
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<td>POM</td>
<td>Program Objective Memorandum</td>
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<td>QRP</td>
<td>Quick Response Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>R^3</td>
<td>Robustness-Resiliency-Redundancy</td>
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<td>R&amp;D</td>
<td>Research and Development</td>
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<td>RAF</td>
<td>Royal Air Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>RC</td>
<td>Reserve Component</td>
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<tr>
<td>RDF</td>
<td>Rapid Deployment Force</td>
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<td>RDJTF</td>
<td>Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force</td>
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<td>REDCOM</td>
<td>U.S. Army Readiness Command</td>
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<td>ROAD</td>
<td>Reorganization Objectives Army Division</td>
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<td>ROTAD</td>
<td>Reorganization and Testing of the Airborne Division</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROCID</td>
<td>Reorganization of the Current Infantry Division</td>
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<td>ROCAD</td>
<td>Reorganization of the Current Armored Division</td>
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<td>RPG</td>
<td>Rocket-Propelled Grenade</td>
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<td>SAC</td>
<td>Strategic Air Command</td>
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<td>SAIC</td>
<td>Science Applications International Corporation</td>
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<td>SASC</td>
<td>Senate Armed Services Committee</td>
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<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEAD</td>
<td>Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses</td>
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<td>SIPE</td>
<td>Single Integrated Protective Ensemble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCOM</td>
<td>Special Operations Command</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOF</td>
<td>Special Operations Forces</td>
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<td>SOUTHCOM</td>
<td>United States Southern Command</td>
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<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>Self-Propelled</td>
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<tr>
<td>STINGER</td>
<td>Self-Contained Infrared Non-Guided Explosive Round</td>
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<td>STRAC</td>
<td>Strategic Army Corps</td>
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<td>TAC</td>
<td>Tactical Air Command</td>
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<td>TACOM</td>
<td>Tank and Automotive Command</td>
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<td>TCATA</td>
<td>TRADOC Combined Arms Test Activity</td>
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<td>TIED</td>
<td>TRADOC Independent Evaluation Directorate</td>
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<td>TO&amp;E</td>
<td>Table of Organization and Equipment</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOW</td>
<td>Tube-launched, Optically-tracked, Wire-guided</td>
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<td>TRADOC</td>
<td>U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command</td>
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<td>TRASANA</td>
<td>TRADOC Systems Analysis Activity</td>
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<td>UMT</td>
<td>Universal Military Training</td>
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<td>USACDC</td>
<td>U.S. Army Combat Development Command</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAF</td>
<td>United States Air Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAFE</td>
<td>United States Air Force, Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAEUR</td>
<td>United States Army, Europe</td>
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<td>WESTCOM</td>
<td>U.S. Army Western Command</td>
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SYMBOLS

XX
Division

X
Brigade

Battalion

Company, Battery (Artillery), or Troop (Air or Ground Cavalry)

Platoon/Detachment

Armored

Mechanized Infantry

Infantry (Standard or Light)

Motorized or High Technology Light

MPG
Mobile Protected Gun

LT MTZ
Light Motorized
LT ATK: Light Attack
AG: Armored Gun
CAB(H): Combined Arms Battalion (Heavy)
CAB(L): Combined Arms Battalion (Light)
LAB: Light Attack Battalion
HHC: Headquarters & Headquarters Company
MP: Military Police
Signal (Communications)
Combat Engineer (Heavy/Mechanized)
Combat Engineer (Light)
Band: Division Band
Scout: Scout/Reconnaissance
<table>
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<tr>
<td>CHEM DEF</td>
<td>Chemical Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBC</td>
<td>Nuclear, Biological, Chemical</td>
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<td>MI</td>
<td>Military Intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEWI</td>
<td>Combat Electronic Warfare and Intelligence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decept Det</td>
<td>Deception Detachment</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADA</td>
<td>Air Defense Artillery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSL</td>
<td>Air Defense Missile</td>
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<tr>
<td>GUN</td>
<td>Air Defense Gun</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Self-Propelled Artillery (Heavy)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Towed Artillery</td>
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<tr>
<td>HHB</td>
<td>Headquarters and Headquarters Battery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAB</td>
<td>Target Acquisition Battery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8 IN
Eight-Inch Artillery

155MM
155mm Artillery

105MM
105mm Artillery

MLRS
Multiple Launch Rocket System

GSRS
General Support/Reserve Support (Artillery)

DS
Direct Support (Artillery)

ACAB
Attack Combat Aviation Brigade (Heavy/Mechanized)

ACAB
Attack Combat Aviation Brigade (Light)

CB(AA)
Combat Brigade (Air Attack)

CAB
Combat Aviation Brigade

HHD
Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment

HHT
Headquarters and Headquarters Troop
CAC  Cavalry/Command Aviation Company

CSAB  Combat Support Aviation Brigade

Attack Helicopter

Cavalry Squadron (in Aviation Brigade)

Attack Helicopter

Armored Cavalry

Reconnaissance (Light/Cav)

SPT CMD  Support Command

DISCOM  Division Support Command

HMMC  Headquarters and Materiel Management Company

DMMC  Division Materiel Management Command

DSOC  Division Support Operations Center
AG  Adjuntant General (in Division Support or DISCOM)
PS  Personnel Support
FIN  Finance
TAMC  Tactical Aviation Maintenance Company
Bde SPT  Brigade Support
AVN SPT  Aviation Support
FSB  Forward Support Battalion
CSB  Combat Support Battalion
MSB  Main Support Battalion
Maintenance
Supply and Transportation
Medical
CHAPTER ONE
A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

Why does the U.S. Army have a legacy of neglecting traditional lighter infantry forces, lavishing attention and resources instead on heavier mechanized forces, despite the more frequent use of the former in combat operations since World War II and especially in the post-Cold War era? Why, nearly fifteen years after the Cold War, does it maintain a force structure and balance of forces essentially unchanged from the time its principal mission entailed the defense of Western Europe? Why, as late as 2002, was the Army proposing to procure a 40-ton artillery system, the Crusader, more suited to the NATO mission than to an expeditionary force? And why, while engaged in two counterinsurgency wars emphasizing the importance of dismounted infantry operations, does it continue to put the bulk of its R&D budget into mechanized forces? This dissertation will argue that these and many other forms of service behavior can be explained, in part, by examining the Army's intra-service politics.

Military services (armies, air forces, and navies), like most organizations large and diverse enough to require multiple specialties, are composed of subunits. These subunits struggle and cooperate with one another over missions, resources and status within the parent organizations; these interactions constitute intra-service politics. This politics affects many areas of a military service, from the individual behavior of officers to budgets and weapons acquisition, from the ways services organize for combat to the ways they fight wars.

And, as with all organizations, military organizations require tools to perform their assigned missions, such as aircraft for air forces and ships for navies. For the U.S. Army, the basic tool is the individual soldier, who is then organized hierarchically into standardized groups of various sizes for tactical, functional and administrative purposes. These groups range in size from squads at the smallest level to armies and army groups at the largest. Below a certain size, units do not contain all the necessary functionality to operate independently on the battlefield and, consequently, are highly dependent upon other organizations for such functions as fire support, transportation, logistics, and maintenance. In general, since World War I, the smallest unit in the U.S. Army that is designed to be self-contained enough to fight independently has been the division.¹ Over

¹ In the nineteenth century, units as small as companies were scattered across the American West and were designed to fight independently. In the twentieth century, the Army had a small number of independent
the course of the twentieth century, as the largest tactical organization that trains and fights as a combined arms team, the division became the basic U.S. Army unit for planning and conducting land battles, and for performing the Army's major role in national security – fighting and winning the nation’s ground wars.

As a result, the Army has attached great importance to the number, size and composition of these divisions. These characteristics have been important indications of what threats the service takes most seriously and what missions it views as most important. And most importantly for this study, these characteristics are also an indication of the relative distribution of power within the service. Maintaining or increasing the number of divisions in the force structure has been important to the Army for several reasons. Divisions have been the “coin of the realm” for armies, in the same way that air wings and ships are for air forces and navies, respectively. Hence, divisions have been seen as more prestigious for armies than brigades, regiments, or smaller formations. Within DoD, the number of Army divisions has been used as a short-hand for comparing how well the service does versus its sister services in competition for resources. Also, increasing the number of divisions was thought to enhance deterrence vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. Many in military circles, after noting how the West assessed Soviet ground forces, believed that the Soviets also used “number of divisions” (without assessing their individual capabilities) as a short hand for determining an army’s combat power. Finally, increasing the number of divisions enhances training and command opportunities for officers.

Given the importance of divisions, the Army has spent considerable time and resources designing and maintaining these forces. While the service has developed a number of highly successful – in some cases even highly innovative – division designs (such as the World War II infantry divisions, the airmobile/air assault divisions of the Vietnam era, and the heavy armor and mechanized divisions arising from the Division 86 design of the mid-1980s), the service has also produced a series of less successful designs. This latter list includes airborne divisions (though these have been quite useful in situations such as crisis response for which they were not specifically designed), Pentomic divisions, the High Technology Light Division, and the Light Infantry Divisions. Moreover, the U.S. Army has proven itself better at designing some types of divisions than others over time. During wartime, the Army has shown some skill at learning and adapting a variety of divisions to fight as needed by the dictates of a

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brigades and regiments. In the twenty-first century, the Army is moving away from division-sized units to brigade-sized formations designed to deploy and operate independently of one another; this is the thrust of the service’s “modularity” program.
particular conflict, with some notable exceptions. During times of peace since World War II, however, the Army has generally been more successful at designing heavy armored and mechanized formations than units relying much less on armored vehicles.

**PURPOSE**

To understand why the U.S. Army has been more successful in the latter half of the twentieth century with “heavy” (mechanized) divisions rather than “light” (non-mechanized) divisions, and why this pattern has persisted in the post-Cold War period, this dissertation will examine the service’s internal politics and, in particular, the power relationships between its various subunits. Indeed, intra-service politics can help explain many behaviors and outcomes across a variety of military services. Intra-service politics is important for understanding service output and structure, particularly during peacetime. For instance, it can help explain why the U.S. Navy has been able to develop a very successful and sophisticated anti-submarine warfare capability, but has failed to achieve similar success with a far-less technologically complicated capability against a far more ubiquitous threat such as anti-mine warfare. Or, why the inter-war French Army of the 1920s and 1930s failed to fully exploit the operational possibilities made available by the internal combustion engine. Although not a complete answer, intra-service politics is a very important factor in understanding these and a wide range of other behaviors and outcomes. However despite the prevalence and seeming importance of intra-service organizations and relationships on military organizations, very little theoretical work has been produced that is specific to intra-service military politics.

The objective of this work is three-fold: 1) to develop a framework for understanding intra-service politics; 2) to test the relevancy and plausibility of a portion of this theoretical framework, specifically a set of propositions concerning the expected behavior of services ruled by an oligarchy of intra-service communities; and 3) to better understand U.S. Army’s intra-service politics and its relationship to force structure and division design. While many observers have pointed to the importance of intra-service politics, much of this has been anecdotal; there have been few systematic attempts to examine this phenomenon across time, location and services. This work is an effort, in part, to initiate such a research program by developing a framework for thinking about intra-

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2 For example, the Army was quite adept at learning and adapting both its tactics and organizations during World War II, but displayed much less skill during the Vietnam War; on World War II, see Russell A. Hart, *Clash of Arms: How the Allies Won in Normandy* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004); on Vietnam, see Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).
service politics and its effects on service behaviors and outcomes. In particular, this dissertation will examine the internal politics of the U.S. Army and use it to test one set of propositions concerning the impact of a specific pattern of intra-service politics: i.e., a pattern in which two or more communities are dominant in a service possessing a weak central leadership. This particular pattern of intra-service politics, it will be argued, best describes the U.S. Army for most of the twentieth century.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this section will be to develop a theoretical framework for understanding intra-service politics and its effect on military organizations, a framework that will be used to examine the U.S. Army’s division design process in the post-Vietnam War era. To do so, it will begin with a review of the available literature concerning organizational sub-units and their interactions, moving from organizations in general down to the specific phenomenon of military services. Among the issues to be examined are the characteristics that distinguish sub-units, the relationship between subunits and the mission of the broader organization, and the influence of these subunits on individual officers’ behavior. The issues over which intra-service conflict occurs, as well as the arenas in which this conflict occurs, also will be described. Next, the chapter will describe the interaction between the external environment and intra-service politics, including the role of civilians in this process. Three general patterns of intra-service politics then will be developed, along with sets of illustrative examples. Although resistant to change, the ways in which these patterns can be altered, often by way of the external environment, will also be described. The resulting framework will be used to build up a set of propositions concerning intra-service politics, a portion of which will be tested in the remainder of this thesis by examining the U.S. Army division design process in the 1970s and 1980s. The chapter concludes with a description of how this U.S. Army during the post-Vietnam War era might fit into this theoretical context.

Characteristics of Organizational Sub-Units

James March has described the general phenomenon of organizational subunits in the following terms:

Organizational subunits are important to the development of individual preferences and identities....They are a focus for the development of values, wants, and allegiances. They serve as information networks for the development of common perceptions of resources and alternatives and for
the development of a common sense of agenda and timing. Subunits are also collections of shared experiences.  

Similarly, Peg Neuhauser has described the presence of “tribes” within organizations:

Any organization with specialized functions and departments is made up of groupings – which we shall call “tribes” – that look at their work and at the organization in very different ways. They have their own dialects, values, histories, ways of thinking, and rules for appropriate behavior.

Whether called subunits, sub-cultures, tribes, communities, or unions, the concept is basically the same: most organizations contain smaller groups whose membership consist of individuals with specialized training, knowledge and/or missions that distinguish them from members of other sub-units in the organization. They typically are centered on specific technologies or functional areas. They provide values and perspectives to their members, and command the long-term loyalty of those members.

Like other organizations, military services have always contained such subcultures. And, as militaries grew in functional diversification and incorporated new technologies over time, the numbers and types of these subunits grew and changed as well. For several millennia, armies were composed of one or more of the following sub-units: archers, foot-soldiers (perhaps armed with a short sword or pike) and mounted troops. With the arrival of gun powder, armies gradually shifted to artillery and infantry armed with individual firearms, while retaining horse cavalry. Over the course of time, arming and supplying these armies became separate specialties, and hence communities, unto themselves. Technological advances in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries gave rise to further subunit expansion through mechanization, electronic communications, chemical weapons, and, in many armies, aircraft. Indicative of most modern armies, today’s U.S. Army has been described as two-tiered, with the top tier reserved for the so-called “traditional” combat arms (armor, infantry and artillery) along with the two newest combat arms – aviation and air defense artillery. The second-tier

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contains all the other subunits of the organization (such as engineering, logistics, communications) in subordinate and supportive roles.\(^5\)

Up through the mid-nineteenth century, navies were composed simply of surface ships. But with the arrival of steam technology, the U.S. Navy, to cite one example, split into two functional groupings or communities: officers aboard ships and on-shore ship designers and engineers. By the end of World War II, technological advances had divided many modern navies into at least three platform-centric communities: a weakened combat surface ship community and two new communities of aviation (aircraft carriers and their accompanying aircraft) and submarines. Additional, lesser naval communities also arose including mine/counter-mine warfare and sealift (including amphibious forces).\(^6\)

In the early days of aviation, air forces – whether independent or as subunits themselves of armies – performed simple reconnaissance functions. During World War I and the interwar period, their functions – and consequently their communities – expanded to include fighter (pursuit), ground attack, and, later, strategic bombardment and transportation. By the late 1950s, many air forces contained such unions as fighters, ground attack, strategic bombardment, ballistic missiles, reconnaissance, and airlift, as well as a variety of communities representing support functions (e.g., mechanics, logisticians, etc.).\(^7\) However, in order to gain independence from ground armies, many air forces choose to emphasize strategic bombardment as their core mission, which led to a dominant role for the strategic bombing community within these services.

**Services versus Intra-Service Communities**

With one notable exception, our discussion of the military services will be limited to a nation’s army, air force and navy – the military organizations of a nation designed for

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warfare on land, in the air, or at sea, respectively. Within each service are subunits which we have called communities, unions or sub-cultures. These subunits can be based on specific functions (communications, logistics, maintenance), centered around specific weapons platforms (submarines, aircraft carriers, artillery, helicopters, armored vehicles), or oriented towards specific missions (air defense, close air support, strategic bombardment). In any case, membership in these subunits requires specialized knowledge and skills distinguishing them from other subunits in the service. A common knowledge and skill base, along with common experiences, gives rise to a shared identity among subunit members. As March has described it, members “define their own group in opposition to other groups” within the service.  

Communities may coincide with officially recognized service arms or branches. For example, many armies in the period between the First and Second World Wars recognized infantry, artillery and cavalry as official service arms. For most of these armies during this period, a single community can be identified with each of these arms. In some cases, however, an officially recognized arm may contain several different communities; this has been particularly true for the modern infantry. Many armies contain three or more separate, identifiable communities within their infantry branch: mechanized infantry, designed to fight alongside tanks; regular infantry, either foot-mobile or truck-borne; and one or more elite units, such as paratroopers. Similarly, air defense artillery in the U.S. Army was a separate community – with special skills, training, and outlook – within the broader artillery branch, until its designation as a separate branch. Alternatively, a distinct community may be spread across several branches of a service. A distinct aviation community, for example, existed within the U.S. Army during and following the Vietnam War although its members were scattered throughout a number of Army branches. Finally, elements from separate branches of a service may join together to form a single community. Because of the need for close cooperation on the battlefield and subsequently similar skills and training requirements, mechanized infantry often form a community in league with the armor branch. In some armies, mechanized (or armored) infantry are actually part of the armored branch, while in others, the tactical development and training of mechanized infantry are closely control by the armored branch. In the U.S. Army, although responsibility for tactical development and training of mechanized

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8 The exception is the U. S. Marine Corps which, though officially part of the U.S. Navy, has been treated as a separate service by the U.S. government since World War II.

9 March, Decision Making, 117.
infantry remain with the infantry branch, mechanized infantry and armor officers have often joined together to form a single “heavy” community within the service.

However, despite the strong bonds among members of specific communities within a given service, loyalty to the parent service is always greater. Rarely, for example, will coalitions form among similar communities across services (e.g., among aviation communities from separate services). Indeed, the fiercest inter-service rivalries often involve similar communities within different services (e.g., U.S. Army aviation and U.S. Air Force close air support). Moreover, as Huntington has pointed out, inter-service rivalry always will be stronger than intra-service rivalries. This becomes particularly apparent when the parent service’s existence or independence feels threatened. For example, in the mid-1940s, other communities within the U.S. Air Force halted their intra-service conflicts and subsumed their views to those held by the strategic bombing community in order to help the Air Force obtain independence from the U.S. Army. Likewise, later in the 1940s, during the “Super Carrier” controversy, all unions within the U.S. Navy came together to argue for the importance of the Navy’s aviation community in nuclear warfare, when it look as if that service was to be eclipsed by the Air Force for the then all-important strategic nuclear mission.

**Communities and Officers**

Service communities play a strong role in the careers of their members. Junior officers usually begin their careers focused on one particular community within their service – learning the skills specific to it, serving in staff functions relevant to it, and leading troops or operating platforms unique to it. As a consequence, officers become inculcated with the perspectives of their particular community, maintain a loyalty to it, and seek to promote its interests within the service. While promotion officially occurs from a service-wide promotion list, intra-service distinctions are carefully, if informally, noted.  

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11 This point was made, for instance, in Arnold Kanter, *Defense Politics: A Budgetary Perspective* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 18. According to John Lehman, the Secretary of Navy typically offers guidance to the Navy promotion boards regarding the percentage of officers from each of the service’s three dominant unions (aviation, surface, and submarine) that should be promoted each year; see John F. Lehman, Jr. *Command of the Seas: Building the 600 Ship Navy* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1988), 36.
Unions often have their own journals for transmitting knowledge, enhancing skills, and maintaining communications among the community members.\textsuperscript{12} And, many unions also have professional associations for current and retired officers, acting as a conduit for communications and promoting the union’s interest both within the service and outside among other governmental entities and the public.\textsuperscript{13} Different clothing and insignias often distinguish membership in a service’s various communities. In the U.S. Navy, for example, aviators traditionally wore brown shoes while surface ship officers wore black. Submariners, on the other hand, have been known as the “felt slipper” community for the footwear they used while at sea to limit noise emanating from a submarine. Likewise surface ship officers wear the “Surface Warfare Officer” badge, while submariners wear “dolphins” and aviators have “wings.”\textsuperscript{14} Each branch of the U.S. Army has its own insignia as well; for example, crossed rifles for infantry and crossed cannons for artillery.

Some officers spend their entire careers within a single community, rarely gaining knowledge of other communities within their service. In the U.S. Navy, for example, “[o]fficers are not encouraged to have a broad understanding of all the naval warfare specialties, thus affiliation with the warrior sub-cultures apparently has priority over other concerns.”\textsuperscript{15} It is only at the general officer level in most militaries that an officer usually has the opportunity to command soldiers/sailors from other communities.\textsuperscript{16}

As a result, officers over time develop strong community identities. According to one Air Force officer, his brother “officers are accused of responding to the question ‘What are you?’ with “fighter pilot” or “missileer” rather than “Air Force officer.”\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{12} Examples include the U.S. Army’s \textit{Infantry Journal} and the \textit{Cavalry Journal} in the period prior to World War II, and the service’s \textit{Infantry}, \textit{Armor} and \textit{Field Artillery} magazines today. Similar journals can be found in the British and French armies.

\textsuperscript{13} Examples include the U.S. Army Armor Association, the Army Aviation Association of America, United States Field Artillery Association, and the National Infantry Association. Some of these associations even cross service boundaries, such as the Field Artillery Association which represents both Army and Marine artillery members.

\textsuperscript{14} Thompson, \textit{Brown Shoes}, 57.

\textsuperscript{15} Thompson, \textit{Brown Shoes}, 64-65.

\textsuperscript{16} For example, a newly minted rear admiral with a background strictly in the surface navy can find himself commanding a carrier battle group.

\textsuperscript{17} Danskine, \textit{Fall of the Fighter Generals}, 11. In a late 1990s survey of U.S. Air Force officers conducted by an Air Force Academy professor found that “40-50 percent of junior officer flyers identified themselves as pilots first – they just happened to be practicing that occupation for the USAF;” see James M. Smith, \textit{USAF Culture and Cohesion: Building an Air and Space Force for the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century} (USAF Academy CO: INSS, 1998), 12.
Likewise, Army officers often identify themselves by branch specialty when writing for professional publications or service schools such as the Command and General Staff College.

And, differences across communities within the same service can lead to behavioral differences in the officers themselves, making it difficult to switch from one sub-culture to another. During the Vietnam War, for example, pilots from the U.S Air Force’s Strategic Air Command (SAC) often found it difficult to switch to the service’s fighter community when the opportunity was offered. According to one Air Force officer:

SAC pilots who entered fighter units had to break into a tough, insular culture...Many such pilots found it difficult to make the transition to the aggressive, individualistic ethos that valued flying skills in a more dynamic arena than they had been used to as the first measure of acceptance....a few did extremely well, but many did not fare as well and remained somewhat alienated within the fighter community. 18

Areas of Intra-Service Conflict

A variety of issues have been identified as potential areas for intra-service union conflict. As has already been mentioned, promotions are one issue over which communities struggle. A second area is the determination of the service’s “dominant professional activity” or, as described by Mort Halperin, the organization’s “essence.” According to Halperin, an “organization’s essence is the view held by the dominant group in the organization of what the missions and capabilities should be.” 19

18 Colonel Mike Worden, Rise of the Fighter Generals: The Problem of Air Force Leadership, 1945-1982 (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1997), 186. On the behavioral differences between fighter and bomber pilots, famed WW II General James H. Doolittle explained: “The fighter pilot is a rugged individualist; he doesn’t take control or domination the way the bomber pilot does. The bomber pilot is a team player he’s got a team.” Gen James H. Doolittle, interview by Prof. Ronald Schaffer, 24 August 1979, transcript, USAF Historical Research Center, Maxwell AFB, AL; quoted in Danskine, Fall of the Fighter Generals, 10, n. 17. However, it can be difficult to determine the degree to which these behavioral differences are due to the influence of a particular community and how much of it has to do with the selection process for officers. U.S. Air Force psychologists during World War II, for example, looked for specific behavioral traits in junior officers when helping to determine pilot assignments; see Worden, Rise of the Fighter Generals, 7.

19 Halperin, Bureaucratic Politics, 28.
equates this notion of “essence” to “organizational culture.”\textsuperscript{20} Carl Builder has described the effect of organizational culture in this manner:

\begin{quote}
...the dominant concepts of war held by military institutions have a significant effect upon the kinds of forces they acquire and train and, therefore, upon the kinds of wars they are prepared to fight. [And,] the services’ dominant concepts of war probably serve their peacetime institutional interest better than they serve their preparedness for the next war.\textsuperscript{21}
\end{quote}

Following on the determination of the organization’s dominant culture is the determination of its doctrine – a third area for union rivalry.\textsuperscript{22} Doctrine describes the method by which militaries conduct war, and determines the service’s priorities relative to roles and missions. Stephen Peter Rosen has described doctrine as at the heart of the “ideological struggle” within military organizations.\textsuperscript{23} Though often described by the military as the product of careful analysis and a reflection of such grand terms as the “principles of war,” it just as often reflects inter- and intra-service struggles over budgets, roles and missions. Many examples of this phenomenon can be found at the inter-service level: for example, the role of strategic airpower doctrine in the U.S. Air Force’s struggle for independence from the U.S. Army, or the Air Force and Navy doctrinal debates during the 1948-1949 “Revolt of the Admirals.”\textsuperscript{24} Within a service, doctrine can be a reflection of the community power structure. For example, the U.S. Air Force’s official doctrine of the 1940s and 1950s, which dealt exclusively with strategic air power, reflected in part the dominant role of SAC.\textsuperscript{25} The U.S. Army’s AirLand Battle doctrine of the early 1980s, with


\textsuperscript{21} Builder, \textit{Masks of War}, 127.


\textsuperscript{23} Rosen, \textit{Winning the Next War}, 19.


\textsuperscript{25} See Worden, \textit{Rise of the Fighter Generals}. 

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its almost exclusive focus on mechanized warfare and high-intensity combat in Europe, echoed the joint dominance of armor, mechanized infantry, artillery, and aviation within that service.\textsuperscript{26} Likewise, the U.S. Navy’s Maritime Strategy of the 1980s, which ensured equal roles for the surface navy, aviation and submariners, was a reflection of the balance of power between these three unions within the service.\textsuperscript{27}

Finally, the budget process – determining who gets what – is a fourth issue area over which intra-service communities struggle.\textsuperscript{28} The distribution of scarce resources such as personnel, programs, weapon systems, and numbers and types of combat units often mirror the distribution of community power within a service. And, if more than one community is dominant, the struggles among these dominant sub-groups within a service are similar to that of the negotiations between the parent services over budgets and missions.\textsuperscript{29}

\textbf{Arenas for Intra-Service Politics}

All modern military services are divided into two sets of organizations. The operational side of a service consists of those forces that actually carry out the service’s primary mission of furthering its country’s national security, and fighting and winning wars. In armies, for example, the operational side includes everything from armor and infantry divisions engaged in combat to medical personnel treating the needs of military personnel or indigenous civilian populations. In navies, the operational side consists of the “fleet.” Although some internal politics occurs in these settings, for the most part it is kept to a minimum as all branches and functions of a service generally must cooperate together to achieve success on the battlefield.\textsuperscript{30}

There is, however, another side to most services, a side that never sees deadly combat, but where struggles over budget and missions take place daily. These are the organizations that support and prepare combat forces for their missions. It is here where the intra-service cooperation typically found on the battlefield often breaks down. And, it is here that intra-service community politics takes place, where political coalitions among


\textsuperscript{30} In armies, this cooperation is the very essence of modern combined arms warfare.
communities are forged, and where conflict among communities occurs. This is the arena for Rosen’s “ideological” struggle. This collection of organizations goes by various names: the “institutional” or “developmental” portion of a service, the “force providers,” the “shore establishment” (in many navies), or the “sustaining base” (in the U.S. Army).\(^{31}\) This half of a military service includes the people who decide what weapons and equipment the service will develop and acquire; what types and numbers of forces and organizations the service will design, train, and maintain; and what roles and missions the various branches and unions will perform. It is in and around these agencies and their functions of doctrinal development, training, force design, and materiel development and procurement that resource questions get decided within a service. These developmental institutions can have their own influence within the larger service structure, and the intra-services communities and unions that come to dominate particular agencies can use that power to further their own interests.

**External Environment and Intra-Service Politics**

The external environment can influence and constrain intra-service politics. External factors or constraints include technological developments, national strategy, security threats, and domestic economic and political conditions. Technological developments can give rise to new functions and hence new communities within a given service, and they can reduce or eliminate the importance of other communities. Changes in national strategy or changes in the threat posed by international opponents can reinforce the political power of certain communities or overthrow the power of others. Domestic economic and political conditions determine the amount of resources available to a service, can enhance or reduce the political power of certain communities within a service, and can influence and constrain the ways different intra-service communities respond to internal service conflict. Domestic political conditions can also determine the structure and power of a service’s central leadership, influencing the latter’s ability to control its service’s internal political struggles. Finally, interservice rivalry can affect intra-service politics; for example, driving intra-service communities together to combat a common interservice threat.

Intra-service politics, in turn, can help determine how quickly and how well a service responds to changes in the external environment. If changes to the international threat environment, for example, lead to a requirement for a new function or mission that lays outside of a service’s current community structure, that service may respond slowly,

ineffectively or not at all depending in part on its intra-service politics. A similar situation can arise as a service attempts to respond to the introduction of new technology.

**Role of Civilians in Intra-Service Politics**

Civilians play one of two general roles in the intra-service political process. The first is the promotion of a new or weak community by key government officials. In the case of the rise of the Royal Air Force (RAF) Fighter Command, for example, a number of civilian officials across various British governments during the 1930s – and particularly the minister for defense coordination, Sir Thomas Inskip – have been credited with helping to spur the rise of the fighter community within the RAF. Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara played a similar role for U.S. Army aviation in the early 1960s, spurring the service to develop innovative combat organizations centered on helicopters and ensuring that adequate resources were pumped into this effort. Likewise, James Forrestal was a strong supporter and promoter of the naval aviation community to a position of dominance as U.S. Secretary of the Navy. The motivations of these officials can range from impartial concern for national security and a changing threat environment (as was the case for the British and McNamara) to a mixture of strategic concerns and personal loyalties (such as Forrestal who had long-standing personal ties to the naval aviation community).

However, while civilians can promote change within a prevailing intra-service community structure, they also can hinder such change through their second role: sustaining communities once they have achieved power within their parent service. As before, key officials, whether from the executive or legislative branches of a government, may support the interests of specific intra-service communities for what they perceived to be sound reasons of national security, or for personal or professional loyalties to that

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particular community. For example, John Lehman, when he was Secretary of the Navy, had a strong bond with the naval aviation community as a pilot in the naval reserves, and did a great deal to support the interests of this established community. 35

On the other hand, members of the legislature may indirectly support specific communities by voting for programs advancing the interests of these communities while simultaneously providing money and jobs for their local political constituents. Such programs can range from the production of weapons systems (ships, aircraft, tanks, etc.) to the stationing of maintenance facilities and military bases (the latter two have been particularly well used by the U.S. Navy). The industries directly participating in these activities (producing weapons, repairing ships, etc.), the businesses that depend on these industries, and the lobbyists and trade associations affiliated with both, constitute another source of civilian support for specific intra-service communities. The local civilian populations dependent upon these jobs are yet again another source of such support.

Finally, as the above suggests, the presence of an industrial base associated with a particular intra-service community’s weapon systems or platforms can help sustain current intra-service politics; but they can also act as agents of change. In the first case, an industrial base can help sustain the power of a related intra-service community by supplying civilian-based local political constituencies, a professional group of industry lobbyists, and a ready-made base of support in legislatures. 36 Second, and for largely the same reasons, a pre-existing industrial base can enhance the chances that a new intra-service community will become a dominant one within its parent service. A pre-existing industrial base for helicopters and aviation, for example, enhanced the chances that the aviation community would become a dominant union within the U.S. Army. Indeed, though not a sufficient condition, the presence of an industrial base (at least in the twentieth century) appears to be a necessary condition for a community to achieve, maintain, or share dominance within a service. Alternatively, the absence of big-ticket weapon systems and their associated industrial base may be a key reason behind the gradual decline of the dismounted infantry community in the post-World War II U.S. Army.

35 Lehman did nothing to hide his affection for naval aviation, see, for example, Lehman, Command of the Seas, 339-40.

Patterns of Intra-Service Politics

Several students of organizational theory have described organizations as political communities. James March and R.M. Cyert developed a theory for explaining business firm decision making in which the firm is considered a political coalition, with a senior executive in the role of political broker between different subunits of the organization. In their formulation, the composition of the firm is negotiated between the various players as are the organization’s goals. Picking up on this point, Rosen has described militaries in general as being complex, political communities:

Each branch has its own culture and distinct way of thinking about the way war should be conducted, not only by its own branch, but by the other branches and services with which it would have to interact in combat. If the military organization is health, there is some general agreement among the various branches about how they should work together in wartime. This agreement is a dynamic condition. There is no permanent norm defining the dominant professional activity of the organization. Many theories concerning the relative priority of roles and missions compete. There are not only fights about the relative resources of each branch but also arguments about what the next war will or should look like.

Like Cyert and March, Rosen sees a service’s senior leadership acting as a political power broker mitigating these fights, integrating the participants, and determining the service’s proper professional activity. Several tools are available to officers in this struggle; the two highlighted by Rosen are doctrine and control over promotions. Elsewhere, March has described an inherent rivalry within organizations between subunits who occupy dominant positions within that organization and those who would like to do so (described as the “ambitious”). This situation leads the dominant subgroup to choose between “sharing” the top spot or resisting the encroaching subunit, just as the ambitious subunit has the choice of “joining” or “fighting.” The choices, in turn, can lead to differing patterns of intra-service community politics, as noted below.

In essence, all military services contain unions or communities, and all experience intra-service politics consisting of cooperation and conflict between these groups. Intra-

37 This is described, for example, in James G. March, “The Business Firm as a Political Coalition,” Journal of Politics 24, no. 4 (November 1962): 672.
38 Rosen, Winning the Next War, 19
39 Ibid., 19-20.
40 March, Decision Making, 115-16.
service politics, however, can be beneficial to the overall service. For example, the close identification with a primary group smaller than the parent organization can enhance the development of pride in service. The emphasis on specialized training and skills stimulates professional expertise. If organized and fought properly, multiple unions and the differing capabilities they possess can enhance survivability and combat effectiveness on the battlefield by allowing the strengths of one branch to compensate for the weaknesses of others.41 In times of technological change, the existence of competing communities provides multiple opportunities for testing and experimenting with new capabilities and ideas. The presence of multiple points of view helps prevent myopia and the rise of “group think” within the service, preventing the focus on a single mission or capability and enhancing the service’s ability to respond to changing environmental and contextual conditions. Moreover, the intra-service competition among ideas and programs offers up more options for the civilian and senior military leadership to choose from, and it can spur innovation. The existence of a variety of missions, programs and capabilities acts as a hedge against uncertainty in regards to future threats and future wars.42

But many of these benefits can not be realized in the absence of an actor operating over and independent of these communities, one with an interest in the overall performance of the parent service, and one strong enough to choose among competing communities and enforce those decisions. Such an actor can also guard against the dangers and bias inherent in the notion of “organizational essence” or “organizational culture.” James Q. Wilson has identified three potential dangers arising from organizational culture:

First, tasks that are not part of the culture will not be attended to with the same energy and resources as are devoted to tasks that are part of it. Second, organizations in which two or more cultures struggle for supremacy will experience serious conflict as defenders of one seek to dominate representatives of the others. Third,

41 While especially prevalent in modern ground forces, the employment and mutual reinforcement of multiple unions can also be found in naval and air forces as well.
organizations will resist taking on new tasks that seem incompatible with its dominant culture.\textsuperscript{43}

The pattern of intra-service community politics, specifically the ways in which that politics is managed, can be a crucial element in determining how well a service performs its overall mission and how well it responds to changes in the external environment. Three general patterns can be identified: a “monarchy” in which a single union dominates a service, an oligarchy of two or more unions dominating a service with a weak or non-existent independent high command, and a strong independent high command overseeing a collection of competing unions.\textsuperscript{44}

Thomas Ehrhard has described a somewhat similar set of internal service power arrangements in his study of the adoption of innovative weapon systems in the U.S. military.\textsuperscript{45} Ehrhard classified military organizations and their decision making structures into two types of configurations – monarchical or feudal – determined by the degree of control exerted by the service’s central leadership. These two configurations, in turn, were based on Machiavelli’s observation that:

> All kingdoms of which we have any knowledge are governed in one of two ways, either by a single prince with everyone else as servants …or by a prince with the aid of barons, who hold that rank not by the prince’s grace, but by right of birth in an ancient family.\textsuperscript{46}

In Ehrhard’s definition of a monarchical service, power is concentrated “in the service chief as the top representative of a single dominant subgroup.”\textsuperscript{47} The present study has adopted this terminology and definition for the single-community dominated service; with the caveat that the service chief in this arrangement is not independent of his subgroup, but acts largely in the interests of this community rather than the interests of the service overall. Likewise, Ehrhard’s feudal service is very close to this study’s description of a community-based oligarchy; both are decentralized collectives of relatively co-equal subgroups, with service chiefs (i.e., the central leadership) having

\textsuperscript{43} Wilson, \textit{Bureaucracy}, 101.

\textsuperscript{44} The term dominance is used in a manner similar to that employed by Danskine, in that it “implies the ability to affect doctrinal changes, budget priorities and cultural imperatives within” a service; see Danskine, \textit{Fall of the Fighter Generals}, 15, fn.5.


\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
limited power and rotating among the dominant subgroups.\textsuperscript{48} The term oligarchy is used here, however, as it better conveys the true source of power within the service (the community collective) and helps to focus on the internal power structure within the ruling oligarchy. Indeed, the oligarchy itself need not be monolithic, but can have a range of internal power arrangements: e.g., all of the communities within the oligarchy can have equal power or the oligarchy can possess a tiered power structure with some communities more equal than others. Moreover, the term “oligarchic service” takes in a range of possible power arrangements between the oligarchy and senior service leaders: from those with a central leadership whose power is nearly co-equal to that of the oligarchy to those where the power of the central leadership is all but non-existent. The key feature of this category of intra-service structure is a service dominated by a collection of (roughly) co-equal communities. Unlike Ehrhard, this study adds a third category of intra-service power arrangement – the strong central leadership – which in Ehrhard’s scheme would be subsumed under the monarchic label. Under this third category, and in contrast to the definition of the monarchic service, the central leadership is not beholden to a single subgroup or community within the service and can act as an honest-broker for the overall good or effectiveness of the service. Whether or not the central leadership tends to come from a single subgroup or rotates amongst several subgroups over time, the key concept is that the central leadership is a separate and independent, and the dominant element in the service’s power structure.

Services dominated by single, monarchic communities tend to be very good at performing the missions or functions assigned to the dominant community. Unfortunately, missions and functions performed by other communities within the service tend to be neglected in terms of resources (financial, intellectual, and personnel), technology, and training. In some cases, missions and functions falling outside the purview of the dominant community are simply ignored, and no community within the service may be identified with such purposes. Such services often are unprepared for the wars they must fight, having prepared instead for the wars their dominant community would like to fight. They can be very vulnerable to surprise and often find themselves in disastrous situations early in wars if unanticipated circumstances arise. Mike Worden has described single-community dominant services as suffering from a “condition” that:

\begin{quote}
...leans towards myopia and monistic thinking, often manifested in a consuming focus on a purpose or mission that favors the dominant culture. When these organizations
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.
face inevitable environmental or contextual change that challenges the existing paradigm, they fail to recognize the need for change because of their uniformity of perspective. This perspective also limits alternatives and adaptability to the change.  

Services containing several dominant communities, even if they lack a strong independent high command, overcome many of the problems of a single-community dominant service. Such community oligarchies have the capacity, however, to develop very effective combat forces for roles and missions within the purview of their dominant unions. And, these dominant unions often will coordinate and integrated amongst themselves to a high degree. Because of the availability of multiple perspectives and capabilities, these organizations have a greater resiliency against surprise on the battlefield than do single-community dominated services.

However, once a community oligarchy is established, the members of the coalition have little incentive to upset the existing arrangements or to examine areas outside the “reigning ideology.” As a result, these types of organizations often fail to adjust rapidly to changing circumstances if these entail new roles or missions, or require the adaptation of new technology. Instead, the unions will exert strong pressures to maintain the status quo – either ignoring the changes or attempting to incorporate them within the existing union structure. The focus will be on roles, missions, and doctrines that accommodate the most powerful unions (for example, the U.S. Army’s Cold War preference for the defense of Western Europe and mid-intensity combat or the U.S. Navy’s Maritime Strategy of the 1980s). Existing programs and missions outside the reigning intra-service power structure will be neglected (for example, minesweeping in the U.S. Navy and Low-Intensity Conflict Operations in the U.S. Army), while new ones either ignored or rendered ineffective. Again, this can lead to failure in the opening


50 Whether or not, in the absence of strong senior leadership, a single community or an oligarchy of communities can come to dominate a service depends on a variety of factors, both internal and external to the service. One possible factor lies in the degree to which a service’s communities perceive an interdependence among the communities on the battlefield as necessary for victory. In other words, a coalition of unions will tend to dominate a service the more it is believed that those unions are dependent upon one another for success in the organization’s prime mission area(s). Conversely, if unions believe they can win alone or with little help from other unions, then they will tend to dominate their service. For more on this see Kanter, *Defense Politics*, 19.


stages of a war, until the service is able to properly adjust and overcome the dominant communities’ resistance. And, while single-community dominant services can suffer from a dearth of alternatives, services containing several dominant communities can suffer the opposite problem: multiple, competing, compartmentalized alternative programs, leading to the inefficient use of limited resources and dissipation in the overall effort.

By contrast, when a service’s senior leadership is strong and able to act as an impartial broker between the communities, that service is more likely to witness the positive effects of intra-service competition. Oftentimes, such services find broad internal agreement on their roles and missions, and on the means for successfully performing those missions. Moreover, such organizations are much better able to successfully adapt to changing external strategic conditions and incorporate and exploit new technologies. Vital missions and functions are less often ignored. In military services with strong central control, the unions tend to be integrated better both organizationally and doctrinally to meet the service’s missions and the nation’s needs. Whether or not such leadership exists depends on a variety of factors, including: domestic political views on the desirability of a strong military high command, the size of a service (the smaller a service, the easier for a central command to exercise control), and the history of a service’s high command (those services with a prior experience of strong leadership, tend to maintain that legacy). However, a strong military high command carries with it certain dangers. For example, if too strong, the high command may stifle a healthy competition among the service’s communities. And, the mere presence of competing alternatives does not always guarantee that the high command will choose wisely. A strong military high command also has potentially dangerous implications for civilian control of the military. Moreover, the stronger the central military leadership, the harder it will be for those inside or outside the service to correct its errors.

Community-Based Monarchy

In the absence of a strong, independent central leadership, one union may come to dominate the service and its leadership in a monarchic fashion as described above. Over time the union predominating over a service can change, but the underlying pattern of behavior will remain unchanged. A variety of indicators would suggest single union monarchic dominance: For example, a large percentage of officers at the upper echelons

53 On elites and organizational leadership, see Frederick C. Mosher, Democracy and the Public Service (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 122-23.
of a service should all come from the same community background. A situation where a service’s culture, dominant mission, and doctrine are focused almost exclusively on a single union would be another set of indicators. A third indicator can be found by examining a service’s budget; if it is skewed towards a single community, if the majority of weapons purchased and programs funded are oriented towards that community, then it is likely the dominant community. Similarly, a single community is likely to be dominant if the majority of combat units within a service come from that community. Finally, an examination of personnel policies would suggest single union dominance if the majority of personnel, or better still, the majority of quality personnel are directed into this union.

1. U.S. Air Force

One example of a single-community monarchical service is the U.S. Air Force, where successive communities – first, the strategic bombing community, represented by the Strategic Air Command (SAC), and then tactical fighter/ground attack community, represented for much of the post-World War II period by the Tactical Air Command (TAC) – have dominated the service. Supporters of strategic bombing, a mission widely recognized within the Air Force both before and during World II as the best argument for an independent air force, originally came to dominance at a time when the Air Force was seeking autonomy from the Army in the design of the post-World War II defense establishment. In 1948, the Air Force officially endorsed strategic bombing as its “primary mission,” a view which was to prevail for nearly the next twenty years. Summarizing the period from 1945 through 1965, one author, AF Colonel Mike Worden, pointed to the complete dominance of the Air Force by SAC, reflected in that fact that this community “received clear budgetary, procurement, doctrinal, and personnel preference.” But a shift began during the mid-1960s, leading to the eventual overthrow of SAC and the rise to dominance of the tactical, or fighter, community (including fighter pilots as well as those involved in flying aircraft engaged in ground support roles such as close air support and interdiction) by the late 1970s.

54 Several other communities have been identified in the U.S. Air Force, including the missile, mobility, reconnaissance and electronic warfare, logistics and support, and special operations.

55 As Perry Smith has written: “Bombardment and autonomy were natural partners, but fighters were antithetical to both except when fighters were used to support the strategic mission;” Smith, Air Force Plans for Peace, 25. See also Worden, Rise of the Fighter Generals, 29.

56 Ibid., 38.

57 Ibid., 86. For more on the period from 1945-1955, see Ziemke, Shadow of the Giant.
The U.S. Air Force provides an excellent example of how events external to the organization can influence intra-service politics. For example, the development of nuclear weapons assisted the rise of SAC following World War II, while Eisenhower’s New Look/ Massive Retaliation grand strategy (with its emphasis on strategic nuclear weapons at the expense of conventional forces) helped maintain its prominence during the 1950s. Likewise, events external to the Air Force—most importantly, the Vietnam War, the Kennedy Administration’s Flexible Response Strategy, and an executive branch emphasis on ballistic missiles over manned penetrating bombers for carrying out the strategic nuclear mission—led to the rise of the conventional tactical air community at the expense of SAC beginning in the mid-1960s. 58

A look at the distribution of general officer backgrounds within the service illustrates the relative and shifting dominance of the strategic bomber and tactical fighter communities over time. By 1953, seventy-one percent of the Air Force’s rated positions (i.e., positions occupied by aviators) above the rank of major general were filled by officers from the bomber community. 59 And, by the early 1960s, nearly sixty percent of all general officers were from the bomber community. In 1960, general officers with a bomber background led all major USAF commands, except for TAC and U.S. Air Force Europe (USAFE); within a year, under the new Air Force Chief of Staff, Curtis LeMay, officers from the SAC community would take over these commands as well.

However, a change is apparent during the latter half of the 1960s. While in 1960, bomber generals outnumbered fighter generals on the air staff by a ratio of 5.5 to 1; by 1975, this ratio had been reduced to two to one and by 1982 there were no bomber generals on the air staff. 60 Up through 1973, every Air Force Chief of Staff had a background in strategic bombing or was a strong advocate of this community. 61 None have had such a background since, with most post-1973 chiefs of staff coming from the fighter community. By 1975, the bomber community held only twenty percent (three out of fifteen) of the major Air Force commands, while the fighter community headed two-thirds of the major commands. By 1990, while the percentage of major commands

58 Two technological developments have also been cited in the rise of the fighter communities: aerial refueling gave fighter greater range, while precision guided munitions gave fighters the ability to deliver munitions with greater accuracy and flexibility; Worden, *Rise of the Fighter Generals*, 191-92.

59 Ibid., 67.

60 Ibid., 243, 247, and 251.

61 Several early USAF Chiefs of Staff, (e.g., Carl Spaatz, Hoyt Vandenberg and Thomas White), while not bomber pilots, were enthusiasts of strategic bombing; see Danskine, *Fall of the Fighter Generals*, 20, n. 49.
headed by the fighter community remained fairly constant (at about sixty percent or eight out of fourteen commands), the percentage of such commands headed by the bomber community was reduced to fifteen percent (two out of fourteen commands). At the time, even the head of the Strategic Air Command was led by a member of the fighter community. The dominance of this community continued into the new century: by 2000, fighter pilots occupied sixty percent of the four-star general officer slots and commanded sixty-three percent of all major commands, although only slightly more than five percent of all officers in the U.S. Air Force were fighter pilots.

A look at budgets and aircraft procurement over time reveals a similar pattern in community dominance. As early as the late 1940s, the Tactical Air Command, representing the fighter community became, in the words of Colonel Worden, “a command without sufficient money or priority to meet its demands.” And the situation only became worse: while TAC was able to develop twenty-three different types of aircraft from the end of World War II through 1954, this figure dropped to one new production series aircraft during the period from 1955 to 1964. Even during the Korean War, a war in which the tactical community played a strong role, Air Force planning skewed toward the bomber community: a planned expansion program in aircraft, announced in mid-1952, included thirty-two medium bomber wings, all but two of which were assigned to SAC.

But once again, a change can be seen beginning in the mid-1960s. Starting with the budget for fiscal year 1966, tactical general purpose aircraft received the bulk of the Air Force budget, and continued to do so through the remainder of the century. In turn,

63 Danskie, Fall of the Fighter Generals, 1.
64 Worden, Rise of the Fighter Generals, 38
65 Ibid., 85
66 Ziemke, Shadow of the Giant, 228
67 For fiscal year 1966, Air Force General Purpose Forces received $31 billion dollars in Total Obligation Authority versus $29 billion Strategic Forces, $16 billion for C3I/Space and $12 billion for Mobility. (all in FY01 constant dollars) Similar figures for FY62 were $18 billion for General Purpose Forces, $51 billion for Strategic Forces, $12 billion for C3I/Space and $6 billion for Mobility; in FY70, $25 billion for General Purpose Forces, $20 billion for Strategic Forces, $15 billion for C3I/Space and $11 billion for Mobility; in FY80, $23 billion for General Purpose Forces, $13 billion for Strategic Forces, $8 billion for C3I/Space and $8 billion for Mobility; in FY90, $27 billion for General Purpose Forces, $16 billion for Strategic Forces, $7 billion for C3I/Space and $7 billion for Mobility; and in FY2000, $19 billion for General Purpose Forces, $4 billion for Strategic Forces, $10 billion for C3I/Space and $10 billion for Mobility. Data are from Danskie, Fall of the Fighter Generals, 125.
tactical fighter wings grew in number, while SAC wings were reduced: from 1970 to 1980, the number of fighter wings in the active-duty Air Force grew from thirty-five to thirty-nine, while the number of bomber wings went from twenty-eight down to twenty. 68 During the 1970s, the tactical air community acquired several new aircraft, while SAC faced continued hurdles in acquiring even one new aircraft (the B-1 bomber).

Air Force historians have pointed out the adverse effects arising over the years due to this pattern of single union dominance within the Air Force. 69 Two oft-cited examples are the difficulties experienced by the tactical air community during the opening phases of both the Korean and Vietnam Wars. The SAC-dominated Air Force largely ignored ground support missions in the period following World War II. Not surprisingly then, the U.S. Fifth Air Force had a great deal of difficulty with interdiction and close air support operations during the first nine months of the Korean War. 70 A secret Air Force study, reporting in January of 1951, cited the lack of doctrine, poor training and inadequate equipment as major reasons for the shortcomings initially experienced in the group support missions. 71 As Colonel Worden has described the

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68 By 1990, the number of fighter and bomber wings stood at thirty-six and sixteen, respectively, while by 1999, the numbers of both had been reduced to nineteen and three respectively. Data are from Danskin, Fall of the Fighter Generals, 126; See also Worden, Rise of the Fighter Generals, 187-188; and Carl H. Builder, The Icarus Syndrome: The Role of Air Power Theory in the Evolution and Fate of the U.S. Air Force (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 179-89.

69 Worden, Rise of the Fighter Generals, 238; Smith, Air Force Plans for Peace, 25; Danskin, Fall of the Fighter Generals, 44-71; Builder, Icarus Syndrome, 166-71. Another example of the effects of SAC domination can be seen in the case of B-70 bomber, which the Air Force was able to maintain for twelve years (first as the B-70 and then as the RB-70) despite opposition from both the Eisenhower and Kennedy/Johnson Administrations (Eisenhower became a supporter, but only as an election-year ploy), the development of Soviet high-altitude air defense capabilities early-on the development of this high-altitude penetrating bomber, and the development and increasing reliance on ballistic missile for the nuclear mission. Indeed, the rise of ICBMs spurred the bomber-dominated Air Force leadership to plead for the B-70 before the Eisenhower administration, with Air Force Chief of Staff Thomas White imploring the President to support the bomber because: “There is a question of what is to be the future of the Air Force and of flying. This shift [to missiles] has a great impingement on morale.” Memorandums of Conference with the President, Nov. 16, 18, and 21, 1959, Augusta, Georgia, By Gen. Andrew Goodpaster, Eisenhower Presidential Library, DDE Diary Series, Box 45, Folder: Staff Notes – November 1959; quoted in Kotz, Wild Blue Yonder, 35. SAC commander Thomas S. Power nicknamed the B-70 “The Savior,” while then Vice Chief of Staff Curtis LeMay proclaimed that the Air Force would not be reduced to being “the silent silo-sitters of the sixties.” For more on the B-70, see Kotz, Wild Blue Yonder, 34-36, 61-64, and 69-76; Michael E. Brown, Flying Blind: The Politics of the U.S. Strategic Bomber Program (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 210-29; Herbert York, Race to Oblivion: A Participant’s View of the Arms Race (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970), 53.

70 The Fifth Air Force was able to overcome these problems by improvising a workable system that is widely credited with helping to sustain the Pusan perimeter.

71 Specifically, historians have pointed to a lack of adequately trained forward air controllers, a poor air control system, and inadequate communications equipment as problems plaguing the tactical community during this initial phase. For more on these problems, see Allan R. Millett, “Korea, 1950-1953,” in Case
situation facing the Fifth Air Force in the early days of the war: "Unpreparedness and neglect led to a desperate situation..."72 Similar neglect of tactical aviation followed the Korean War, and, as a result, the Air Force had to painfully relearn the lessons of ground support operations during the opening phases of the Vietnam War. Concerning the early phases of the air war in Vietnam, Caroline Ziemke has noted: "Doctrine and capabilities for tactical operations in a limited, non-nuclear war had improved little since 1950."73

2. Israeli Army

The Israeli Army from the early 1960s through the 1973 Yom Kippur War also presents a pattern of single-community monarchical dominance. In this case, the armor corps became the dominant community among the Israeli ground forces. The leader of the armor corps, and later Army Chief of Staff, General Israel Tal, argued successfully during the 1960s that armor was the decisive arm of the ground forces and that consequently Israel should focus almost exclusively on tank-heavy formations. This argument was made, in part, on economic grounds of affordability: the Israeli Defense Forces could not afford to purchase enough infantry vehicles and tanks, so it should focus its efforts on the decisive weapon, the tank. The argument for a tank-dominant force also rested on an analysis of the terrain: the flat, open desert terrain of the Middle East left no place for defending infantry and armor to hide, giving the decisive advantage to tank-heavy forces and negating the need for the "typical" armor-infantry-artillery combined arms tactics. Although integrated combined-arms teams played a crucial role the initial Israeli breakthrough of Egyptian defenses in 1967, this experience was ignored in favor of the later rapid tank exploitation through the Sinai.

As a result, the Israeli armored forces of the late 1960s were equipped with modern tanks while most of its infantry, even during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, rode

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72 Worden, Rise of the Fighter Generals, 41.

into battle on 1940s vintage half-tracks. Israeli artillery too suffered, with much of it
towed, and with most formations lacking their full complement of artillery. Promotion
patterns also illustrated the dominance of the armor community, with armored officers
promoted more rapidly following the 1967 War than those from other arms. Mechanized
infantry officers were even prohibited from commanding units larger than a company
without first qualifying as armored officers.

The Israeli ground forces paid a heavy price during the opening phases of the
1973 War for this armored community dominance, especially against Egyptian ground
forces. As a result, in the aftermath of that war, the Israeli Defense Forces became a
combined arms forces, purchasing large quantities of self-propelled artillery and infantry
weapons.74

Coalition/Oligarchy of Communities

Several indicators should be present in situations where an oligarchy, or coalition,
of communities dominate a service. For instance, the service’s upper echelons should see
a balance of officer backgrounds from across the dominant communities. The service’s
culture, dominant mission, and doctrine should encompass the dominant communities
within the service. No single community should be considered decisive in terms of
combat; but instead several communities, either working together or independently, will
be necessary to achieve victory. Resources – personnel, budgets, weapons
systems/programs and missions – should be fairly evenly distributed across the dominant
unions. External change should see the reigning communities attempt to adapt to the
change within their traditional missions. New technology may be adopted by multiple
communities, for example, but usually as a means to further traditional missions.
Multiple, parallel programs may be developed to address similar problems or incorporate

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74 For more on this period, see House, Towards Combined Arms Warfare, 174-179; John A. English, On
Infantry (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1981), 186-87; Anthony H. Cordesman and Abraham R. Wagner, The
Herzog, The Arab-Israeli Wars (New York: Random House, 1984) 135-323; Edward Luttwak and Dan
the Banks of the Suez: An Israeli General’s Personal Account of the Yom Kippur War (Novato, CA:
Presidio Press, 1980); Abraham Rabinovich, The Yom Kippur War: The Epic Encounter That Transformed
the Middle East (New York: Schocken Books, 2004); and Chaim Herzog, The War of Atonement:
similar technologies, but with little subsequent effort to integrate or coordinate across the communities.

1. Postwar U.S. Navy

Since the end of the Second World War, the U.S. Navy has been ruled by a triad of unions: the surface ship, aviation and submarine communities. While the relative power of these communities has shifted over time, the dominance of these three within the Navy is clear and has been attested to by many observers. For example, of the nineteen Chiefs of Naval Operations (CNOs) in the postwar period, nine have come from the surface warfare community, seven from aviation community and three from the submarine community. The aviation and surface warfare communities have often alternated the post of CNO. Though the submarine community did not have its first CNO until 1982, they did have Admiral Hyman Rickover as their leader until the early 1980s, whose influence with Congress rivaled and oftentimes exceeded that of any CNO. And the balance in leadership between the three communities has been maintained below the CNO level. In 2001, for example, out of thirty-two three- and four-star admirals, eleven had backgrounds in surface warfare, fourteen in aviation and six in submarines. Finally, until 1992, the power of these unions was institutionalization at the top echelons of navy staff with Deputy Chiefs of Naval Operations for Air Warfare, Surface Warfare, and Submarine Warfare. These three deputies have been described by various observers as the “‘union representatives’ in headquarters.”

In the post World War II-era, the relationship between the three unions has remained largely harmonious. This situation arose, in part, due to a recognition of the mutual dependence each often feels towards the other two in terms of ensuring mission success at sea. For example, carriers are highly dependent upon surface ships and

75 The surface ship community refers here to those officers in U.S. surface combatant force composed of destroyers, frigates and cruisers.


77 On Rickover’s influence, see Zumwalt, On Watch, 63-65 and 85-123; Lehman, Command of the Seas, 8-29; and Thompson, Brown Shoes, 43-44.

78 Ibid., 65.

79 Indeed, when the service itself came under threat during the late 1940s, all elements of the Navy united to promote the interest of one of the unions – the aviation community – against the alleged designs of the Air Force; much as the Air Force communities united to promote strategic air power in order to achieve autonomy. For more on this naval episode, see Davis, Postwar Defense Policy, 149-50. For intra-service naval politics in the interwar period, see Davis, The Admirals Lobby, 73-85.
submarines for their protection: a typical Carrier Battle Group (CVBG) contains five to six surface warships and two attack submarines, all with a major (if not sole) mission of defending the aircraft carrier from air, surface and sub-surface threats. Similarly, the surface navy’s ability to carry out shore bombardment – an increasingly important mission for this community in light of the absence in the post-Cold War era of opponents with large surface fleets – is dependent upon the air superiority provided by carrier aviation. But, another reason for the absence of serious internal conflict is the simple fact that, as Paul Mitchell put it, calls for taking money from carriers, submarines, or surface ships “would have stirred up an enormous amount of [in the view of the dominant communities, unnecessary] debate within the navy.”

The influence of these unions is often reflected in naval doctrine. For example, the service rejected CNO Admiral Zumwalt’s proposed convoy escort strategy of the 1970s, with its call for relatively simple and relatively inexpensive surface escort ships and escort carriers. Instead, the Navy opted for the Maritime Strategy of the 1980s which required the acquisition of large numbers of sophisticated and expensive platforms across all three communities. Large numbers of high technology ships, such as Aegis-armed surface ships and new highly-capable aircraft carriers, would be required to steam deep into Soviet waters, while a greater emphasis on offensive anti-submarine warfare (ASW) operations required a new generation of advanced attack submarines.

These three communities have occasionally engaged in limited competition amongst themselves and this has had some positive benefits; providing, for example, a greater variety of weapon platforms and systems for the civilian and senior uniformed leadership to choose from over the years. However, the presence of such a balanced intra-service political structure, coupled with the inability of the senior naval leadership to exercise control independent of the communities, has had a number of negative consequences. For example, missions and programs that fall outside the boundaries of these three unions often fail to receive attention or resources. A prime example of this tendency can be seen in the grievous state of U.S. naval mine/counter-mine warfare capabilities during the latter half the twentieth century.

Additionally, the desire to maintain balance between the communities can lead to some perverse unintended consequences. An early example can be found from the 1960s, as the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) was conducting an analysis to

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81 See, for example, Zumwalt, On Watch, 64; and Thompson, Brown Shoes, 95-100.
determine the proper mix of future ASW capabilities for the Navy. The service formed a committee with representatives from the three dominant communities, all of whom had R&D programs in this area. To demonstrate the importance of their programs and so as not to lose out in future funding efforts, each community gave their respective systems very high Probability of Kill values against submarines. With no one in the senior leadership of the Navy willing to adjudicate these values, they all went forward into the OSD analysis. As a result, while the Navy was arguing for more ASW capabilities across the board, the analysis conducted by OSD using the Navy-supplied numbers suggested that the service already possessed a substantial overkill in such capabilities.82

2. Interwar French Army and Mechanization

During the period between World Wars I and II, the French Army witnessed a similar pattern of intra-service community politics: a weak central senior leadership overseeing three dominant communities. During the interwar period, the infantry, artillery, and cavalry communities maintained their dominance within the French Army – a dominance they had held for several hundred years. Other, typically newer communities (e.g., engineers, signal, etc.) resided on a second-tier below this triad. Despite the relatively equal status afforded to the three dominant communities, the infantry remained the “Queen of the Battlefield” (as it did in most armies of this period), while all the other unions played supporting roles. For example, the French Army’s interwar concept of the methodical battle envisioned the artillery “provid[ing] the momentum and the rhythm for [the infantry] attack.”83 In fact, although French doctrine exalted the notion of “combined arms,” historians have criticized the French Army of this period for interpreting combined arms to mean simply integrating weapons in order to best support the infantry.84

The French Army suffered from weak central leadership for most, if not all, of the interwar period. The French High Command has been condemned by students of the

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82 Enthoven and Smith, How Much is Enough, 229-32.
84 Rather than combining arms in a way that the weaknesses of one are compensated by the strengths of another, which was the German interpretation of the phrase and is now the generally accepted definition in the U.S. Army; see, for example, House, Towards Combined Arms Warfare, 2-3. On the French, see Ibid., 60 and Doughty, “The French Armed Forces,” 61. A similar criticism has been made of the U.S. Army during this period; see Ronald Spector, “The Military Effectiveness of the US Armed Forces, 1919-1939,” in Military Effectiveness, Vol. II: The Interwar Period, ed. Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1988), 90.
period for the absence of “a clear chain of authority and responsibility that could provide the army a firm sense of direction for developing its doctrine and designing its weapons....[Moreover] the fragmented organization...stifled creative solutions to doctrinal problems.” 85 This structure was tolerated and, in many cases, promoted by a national political leadership more concerned about controlling the power of officers with monarchist (versus republican) tendencies than about effective military leadership, and who felt that maintaining a fragmented military high command was a hedge against military encroachment on civilian prerogatives and the potential “unwanted health problems for the Third Republic” that a concentration of military power might pose. 86

One affect of this pattern of intra-service politics can be seen in the way the French Army attempted to incorporate and exploit new technology during the interwar period, specifically mechanization and tanks. Multiple and parallel mechanization efforts arose and were split among the dominant communities. Early on, this situation provided an excellent means for examining and testing the potential of the new technology. However, the tank was often examined only as a means for better performing each community’s traditional missions. Owing to the absence of strong independent leadership at the level of the French Army’s high command, at no point short of the Second World War was an effort made to integrate these parallel efforts into a coordinate overall program.

The French Army had established a tank corps during World War I. But, this independent organization had been disbanded by 1920, and its responsibilities for tank development split among the dominant traditional communities. Responsibility for tank doctrine and training was placed in the Infantry Directorate, while the development of tank technology became the responsibility of the new Section Technique des Char de Combat in the artillery branch. During this time, the official role of the tank was seen as strictly one of supporting the infantry, with Section Technique des Char de Combat, in


announcing its first tank program in 1921, declaring explicitly “that the mission of the
tank was to accompany infantry.”87 A second center of armor development, however,
quickly sprang up around retired General Jean Baptiste Estienne (often called the Father
of French Armor) and this very same Section Technique des Chars de Combat, an
organization which he headed for several years as the Tank Inspector and in which he
was to have a major influence until his death in 1936. In the early 1920s, Estienne,
ignoring the Infantry Directorate and the French high command which had already
approved light and heavy tank programs to accompany the infantry, appealed directly to
industry to develop a medium tank whose role would be independent of the infantry.
Estienne eventually won approval for his program from the French Supreme War
Council, which in typical fashion continued all three tank programs – light, medium and
heavy.88 Tension and the lack of coordination between the Infantry Directorate and the
armor enthusiasts in Section Technique des Chars de Combat – between the tank doctrine
writers and the tank designers – was to continue throughout most of the interwar period.
In the late 1920s the French cavalry too began to see the merits of mechanization, and a
third center of armor development began. In July 1930, the French military issued a
decree calling for the creation of an experimental Division Legere Mecanique (DLM or
light mechanized division) in the cavalry.89 In association with this effort, the cavalry
community began its own tank design program.

By the end of the interwar period, no effort had been made to integrate these
parallel programs, wasting valuable intellectual energy and making inefficient use of very
limited financial and industrial resources. Robert Doughty has characterized the French
efforts during this period as fragmentary and lacking in clarity of purpose, where “each
branch decided what it wanted the tank to do and then energetically pursued the
construction of a tank designed and equipped to accomplish this end.”90 The DLM, first
activated in 1934, remained a mechanized cavalry division, designed to carry out
traditional cavalry missions. Meanwhile, the infantry program culminated in the division
cuirassée (DCR or armored division), which was designed to accompany and support the

87 Eugenia C. Kiesling, Arming Against Hitler: France and the Limits of Military Planning (Lawrence, KS:
University Press of Kansas, 1996), 150.
88 For more on Estienne efforts during this period, see Bruce Gudmundsson, On Armor (Westport, CT:
Praeger Publishers, 2004), 45-46; Kiesling, Arming Against Hitler, 150; and Doughty, Seeds of Disaster,
138-41.
89 Kiesling, Arming Against Hitler, 147.
90 Doughty, Seeds of Disaster, 176.
infantry in the methodical battle. Likewise, three different French tanks were developed for three different roles: the cavalry designed and built a cavalry tank, the infantry developed a tank specifically designed to accompany infantry, and a medium tank was developed by the armor enthusiasts around Estienne. Moreover, even within the infantry branch a clear division developed between the infantry and armor, so much so that it has been described as almost two separate branches. This separation even affected cooperation on the battlefield: a French captain claimed that when a tank battalion was attached to an infantry division, that division often failed to provide the battalion with intelligence data. Again, according to Doughty, at no point during the interwar period, did the branches show “a willingness to compromise and combine limited and precious resources into a single effort for creating a tank” or appropriate armor doctrine, nor did the French High Command ever attempt to force such an integration. A somewhat similar pattern of intra-service politics can be seen in both the British and American armies’ responses to mechanization during the same interwar period.

**Strong Center**

Many of the same indicators found in the community oligarchy pattern will be found in this pattern of intra-service politics, including: multiple communities; competing, parallel programs; and the pursuit of alternatives means for accomplishing similar missions. However, as the name suggests, this pattern should find a strong high command, largely independent of individual community interests, and one willing to operate as an honest broker between the communities. In addition, it should be possible to

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93 Doughty, *Seeds of Disaster*, 177.

94 According to one student of U.S. mechanization efforts during this period: “The War Department provided little leadership, critical or otherwise, to sort out these matters; the nominal head of the institution was not in control of the component parts”; David E. Johnson, *Fast Tanks and Heavy Bombers: Innovation in the U.S. Army, 1917-1945* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 223. In the 1920s, tank development was limited to the infantry branch; while the 1930s saw efforts to develop armor in both the infantry and cavalry branches. As was the case with French Army, however, no effort was made by senior leadership within the U.S. Army to integrate or coordinate these efforts. In both cases, the tank was merely used as a means to better conduct each of the unions’ traditional roles; see Ibid., 22 and John T. Hendrix, “The Interwar Army and Mechanization: The American Experience,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 16, no. 1 (March 1993): 75-108. Instead, the then-dominant communities within the Army (infantry, artillery, and cavalry) independently sought ways to employ the tank and other mechanized equipment to support their combat arm. For a discussion of the U.S. Army and its response to mechanization in the interwar period, see Chapter 3 below.
identify situations where this command chose between competing communities and/or attempted to integrate results or programs across such communities.

1. Interwar German Army and Mechanization

In contrast to the French Army’s experience with mechanization, the German Army was much more successful at exploiting the potential of tanks and mechanization; enabling it to integrate tanks into an effective combined arms organization. The extent of the German achievement, relative to the French Army, can be seen in the former’s success on the battlefields of Western Europe in May/June of 1940. Like its French counterpart, the German Army of the interwar period contained a number of different communities, each with differing views on the value and use of mechanization and tanks, and each seeking to promote its own interests. In the German case, however, a strong central leadership was able and willing to integrate and choose among competing claims of these various communities.

As in the French Army, three traditional unions dominated the German Reichsheer in the immediate post-World War I period: i.e., infantry, cavalry and artillery. In the German Army, as elsewhere, the infantry remained first among equals and the “Queen of the Battlefield.” While the experience of the Western Front in World War I led most German officers to acknowledge the end of the massed cavalry charge, and even some to call for the abolition of the horse cavalry, this community retained a strong role in the early post-war years. Army commander Hans Van Seeckt, who took a favorable view towards tanks and mechanization, could write as late as 1927 that “the days of the cavalry, if trained, equipped and led on modern lines, are not numbered....its lances may still flaunt their pennants with confidence in the wind of the future.”

Moreover, due to the restrictions of the Versailles Treaty, the German Army from 1920 to 1933 contained an unusually high percentage of horse cavalry, not only compared to other armies of that period, but also compared to the pre-World War I German Army.

Finally, while the artillery branch in the old Prussian Army was not held in very high esteem, its status improved greatly under the Reichswehr, with great attention paid to

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96 The ratio of cavalry divisions to infantry divisions in the German Army rose from 14:100 and 15:100 in 1899 and 1911, respectively, to 42:100 during the period 1920-1933. Likewise, the ratio of cavalry regiments to infantry regiments rose from 46:100 and 48:100 to 85:100 during this time, and the ratio of cavalrymen to infantrymen rose from 9:100 and 10:100 to 20:100. Data are from Gudmundsson, On Armor, 31.
improving the technical capabilities of this arm. And while artillery officers in the pre-World War I army could hope for little in terms of career advancement beyond their branch, officers from this branch came to dominate the top positions within the German Army of the 1930s and 1940s. The artillery community of this era has been described as "a closely knit fraternity" and one "highly protective of its interests." Communities occupying a second tier in the Reichswehr included engineers (known as "Pioneers"), transportation, and communications (signal).

The interwar German Army differed from its French counterpart in terms of the leadership and independence exhibited by the German high command. The German Army had a legacy of strong senior leadership in the form of its Great General Staff stretching back to the Scharnhorst era. Although the Versailles Treaty called for the removal of the Great General Staff, General Hans von Seeckt (chief of the General Staff from 1919-1920 and commander of the Army from 1920-1926) merely reordered and renamed most of the functions of this organization, in the process improving many aspects of its performance. In 1919, the core functions of the General Staff were transferred to a new organization known as the Truppenamt, set up immediately beneath and directly answerable to the army commander-in-chief. Other elements of the former General Staff were transferred to other government, mostly civilian, organizations. Also directly under the army commander, and directly answerable to him, were two additional organizations: the Weapons Office (Waffenamt) and a collection of nine branch inspectorates. The Weapons Office was responsible for research, development and testing of all ordnance and equipment as well as coordination with industry in the manufacture of military armaments. The nine branch inspectorates (infantry, artillery, cavalry, transport, pioneer and fortresses, signal, weapons schools, medical and veterinary) were responsible for the development and direction of training and the coordination of equipment development with the Weapons Office for their respective branches. In 1925, the branch inspectorates came under the authority of the Weapons Office.98

97 Cooper, German Army, 151. Cooper suggested that the rise of these officers to top positions in the post-World War I German Army were related to their generally higher intelligence and lower death rate during the World War I as compared to cavalry and infantry officers; ibid. The first two Commanders-in-Chiefs of the Wehrmacht (von Fritsch, and von Brauchitsch) were originally from the artillery branch, as were the first two chiefs of staff of the post-1935 General Staff (Beck and Halder). Forty percent of the German general officer corps that fought in World War II began their careers in the artillery branch. See also Albert Seaton, The German Army, 1933-1945 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 268-69.

This simplified arrangement, whereby the technology research and development organization and the doctrinal development organization operated under the authority of a single commander, allowed for effective coordination of weapons and doctrine. Officers frequently rotated from one organization to the other, enhancing this coordination. Furthermore, the branch inspectorates and the departments within the Weapons Office were structured in such a way as to require cooperation across these subunits for most weapon design programs, inhibiting the development of compartmentalization within these organizations. 99

This high command arrangement remained in place until Hitler renounced the Versailles Treaty and its restrictions on the German military in 1935. At that time, the Truppenamt reverted back to a reconstituted Army General Staff. Meanwhile the functions of the Weapons Office were split amongst a number of new organizations, such as the General Army Office and the Army Ordnance Office, all under the command of the Chief of Army Equipment/Commander of the Replacement Army. Both the Chief of the Army General Staff and the Commander of the Replacement Army reported directly to the Commander in Chief of the Army (i.e., the head of the Army High Command or the Oberkommando des Heeres, OKH). 100 While these new arrangements were somewhat more complicated, and were to become more so as the German military underwent a massive rearmament, the high command retained considerable power and, compared to its counterparts in other countries of the period, successively carried out an impressive procurement program. 101

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99 Corum, “A Comprehensive Approach to Change,” 44. The benefits of this arrangement for armor development became clear as early as the mid-1920s. As Corum explains it: “…the Waffenamt was directed to oversee one tank program that combined the efforts of several departments. While the motor vehicle section of the Waffenamt was the primary office overseeing development of tanks, the artillery inspectorate was given guidance on the development of appropriate tank guns and the communications inspectorate was directed to coordinate its efforts with the other branches to develop appropriate radios for armored vehicles.” He contrasts this with the case of the French Army where, as we have seen, the infantry and cavalry each undertook separate tank development programs; Ibid.


101 As James Corum concluded: “For all of the inefficiencies of military procurement – and under the Nazis there were many – the Germans were able to design a new family of maneuver weapons with
Turning specifically to German mechanization efforts, few within the Reichswehr argued that the tank had no role to play on the battlefield. The argument instead centered on exactly what that role would be. Elements of the cavalry community, especially amongst its older members, were early opponents of mechanization in any form, seeing it as a direct threat to their beloved horses. The head of the cavalry, General von Poseck, who asserted immediately after the war that no machine could replace the horse, led a charge from 1924 to 1927 arguing for the continued relevance of the horse in an age of mechanization. Von Seeckt responded by taking a middle approach, arguing that both the horse and mechanization would have a place on any future battlefield. However, following the failure of maneuvers in 1932 with a mixed horse-motorized division, many cavalry officers called for a more thorough mechanization of the cavalry branch, while at the same time retaining traditional cavalry missions. The infantry community, on the other hand, argued that tanks should properly be limited to the subordinate role of supporting the infantry. For instance, a standard infantry training manual from the early 1930s stated that the role of the tank was “simply to make easier the infantry’s push in to the enemy’s position.” In contrast, the armor enthusiasts, centered around the Inspectorate for Motor Troops, argued for an independent armored force.

The German high command of the 1920s and 1930s (particularly General Ludwig Beck, head of the Truppenamt from 1932 to 1935 and then chief of staff of the Army General staff from 1935 to 1938, and General Werner von Fritsch, army commander-in-chief from 1935 to 1938) has been described by many historians as consisting of considerably less duplication of effort and at a considerably faster pace than either the French or the British; Corum, “A Comprehensive Approach to Change,” 63.

102 In his memoirs, Heinz Guderian specifically identified the Inspectorate of Cavalry as “our main adversary” in the battle for an independent tank role; see General Heinz Guderian, Panzer Leader (New York: 1952; reprint, Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2002) (page citations are to the reprint edition), 26.


104 Indeed, as in many armies of the period, the German high command formed an experimental mixed division of horses and motorized vehicles. However, when field experiments in 1932 suggested the infeasibility of such a force, the German high command ordered the abandonment of horse-motorized divisions, in contrast to other armies. The French Army, for example, maintained a similar type of mixed horse and mechanized unit through 1940. This is not to suggest that horse cavalry disappeared from the German Army – horse cavalry regiments were assigned reconnaissance roles in many infantry units up to the start of World War II – but division-size horse cavalry formations were subsequently abandoned, and certain elements within the cavalry community began to argue for mechanizing the cavalry branch. See Corum, “A Comprehensive Approach to Change,” 49-50.

105 Habeck, Storm of Steel, 189.
thoughtful but cautious supporters of armor and mechanization. The notion that the senior leadership in the German Army was unusually conservative or hostile to armor innovation — a view promoted by armor enthusiast Heinz Guderian and his supporters — has been described by James Corum as “a pleasant fiction.” As Mary Habeck and other scholars have pointed out, the central point of contention between Beck and Guderian lay in the fact that Guderian and his supporters were promoting the interest of a very narrow interest group, the armored forces, while Beck needed to worry about the health and fighting capability of the army overall. As a result, while the high command often supported the goals of other communities within the German Army over the opposition of the armor community, that same high command gradually moved towards developing the panzer force desired by the armor enthusiasts over the course of the 1930s. Overall, Beck has been credited by many historians with taking a variety of actions to ensure a proper balance of infantry and armor.

For example, the Reichswehr doctrinal manual the Truppenfuhrung, written by a committee headed by Beck and issued in October 1933, took a middle approach to the mechanization debate, presenting elements crucial to both sides. For the armor supporters, the Truppenfuhrung, while stating that armor and infantry needed to loosely coordinate their efforts, decried tying the tanks too closely to the infantry, an action which “robs the tank of the advantage of its speed and possibly leaves it to become a victim of enemy defenses.” At the same time, conceding a point made by the critics of the armor school, the Truppenfuhrung allowed that at certain times tanks could be made directly subordinate to infantry commanders to enable them to break through enemy defenses.

Continuing to follow a middle course, Beck created the first three panzer divisions in 1935 following Hitler’s renunciation of the Versailles Treaty. At the same time, he established the Armored Troop Command (though this organization only had authority over tank units) with Guderian’s mentor, General Oswald Lutz, as its chief. But

106 See Ibid., 192; Citino, Quest for Decisive Victory, 212-13; and Murray, “Armored Warfare,” 41.
110 See Cooper, German Army, 137-138; and Habeck, Storm of Steel, 191-92.
Beck, ever cautious, took these actions only after the 1935 field maneuvers successfully demonstrated for the first time the utility of the large tank formations.\footnote{Lewis, Forgotten Legions, 50-51.} And, in response to the pleadings of the cavalry community, Beck established the armored car and tank-equipped light (cavalry) divisions in 1937-38. Similarly, Beck responded to calls by the infantry community for greater tank support by forming several separate tank brigades during this same period. Finally, two additional panzer divisions were formed in 1938. The army high command then attempted to integrate these efforts in late 1938 by assigning Guderian to a new post, the Chief of Mobile Troops (Chef der Schnellen Truppen), charged with overseeing the development and training of all mechanized and cavalry troops.\footnote{This new post was not problem-free, however, and Guderian never felt that he had all the authority he required; see Guderian, Panzer Leader, 62-63. By this time, Beck had already resigned his post as Chief of the General Staff over his disagreed with Hitler concerning the Czech Crisis.}

Overall, Beck and others in the German high command concluded as early as 1935 that the entire German Army needed to be mechanized. But, they also determined that financial constraints and limited German production capacity would make this goal unattainable for many years. Instead they choose to mechanize the force on a schedule consistent with their view of the needs of the German Army. According to S.J. Lewis:

Panzer divisions were their first priority; secondly light divisions designed to function as motorized cavalry; thirdly, four motorized infantry divisions; and fourthly, the motorization of specialized equipment to be employed by the army command at critical locations, such as heavy artillery, anti-aircraft guns, engineer battalions, supply columns, and signal units.\footnote{Lewis, Forgotten Legions, 53. See also Gudmundsson, On Armor, 221-23.}

And the German Army quite successfully carried out this program: When Beck began his tenure as head of the Truppenamt in 1933, the German Army had no mechanized or motorized units, but by the time he resigned in 1938, the army possessed five panzer divisions, four light (cavalry) divisions and four motorized infantry divisions.\footnote{Lewis, Forgotten Legions, 51.}

The German high command continued to bring about changes to the force even after the army’s first successful campaign of World War II. Shortcomings encountered during the Polish Campaign led to the transformation of the four light cavalry divisions to
the heavier Panzer division design, bring the total number of Panzer divisions to ten. In addition, the Panzer divisions increased their infantry support by acquiring motorized infantry units from the four motorized infantry divisions. Clearly, throughout the interwar period and right up to the early stages of the Second World War, a strong German Army high command successfully intervened in intra-service politics, choosing and integrating from among the options and opportunities offered by the various army communities.

**Changing Intra-Service Community Membership**

The pattern of intra-service politics can be very resistant to change. Military organizations find it difficult to make radical changes in doctrine – doctrine that reflects the prevailing intra-service politics. Likewise, development and acquisition programs

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115 A sixth Panzer division was created just prior to the start of World War II. The transformation of the light divisions was aided by the availability of Czech heavy tanks captured by the Germans during the Sudetenland Crisis.


117 Another example of a military organization with a strong central leadership is the modern United States Marine Corps. The Marines contain a number of communities – including air, artillery, armor, engineers and signal corps – but have been traditionally dominated by the infantry community. Since 1960, every Marine Commandant but one has come from the infantry branch. However, the small size of the Marines, the tightly-knit nature of its small number of developmental organizations located at a handful of sites, and the near-religious zeal of its officer corps has enabled the central leadership – embodied in the form of the Commandant and a small coterie of officers surrounding him – to exercise very strong control. The relationship between the Commandant and Corps often has been described in terms reminiscent of the Catholic Church. According to one Marine historian: “All power in the Corps emanates from the Holy See of the commandant’s office. His general’s are his cardinals but they are only the princes of his church – he remains the rock on which it sits. Like the Pope, only the commandant can speak *ex cathedra*.” See F.G. Hoffman, former Marine historian at the Marine Corps Combat Development Commander, interviewed by Thomas Ehrhard on 27 May 2000, quoted in Ehrhard, *Unmanned Aerial Vehicles*, p. 86. Aided by the small number of missions typically assigned to the corps at any one time, this strong central leadership has enabled the Marines to respond quickly and effectively to new missions over the years: small wars and amphibious warfare in the 1930s; the infantry-heavy, limited conventional wars and small-scale operations of the 1950s and 1960s; armored operations on NATO’s flanks in the 1970s and early 1980s; and infantry-heavy low-intensity conflicts in the late 1980s and 1990s. For more on the Marines, see Frank Marutollo, *Organizational Behavior in the Marine Corps: Three Interpretations* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1990); Millett, Allan R. “Why the Army and the Marine Corps Should Be Friends,” *Parameters* 24, no. 4 (Winter 1994-95): 30-40; Allan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc. 1980); Rosen, *Winning the Next War*, 80-85; Allan R. Millett, “Assault from the Sea: The Development of Amphibious Warfare Between the Wars – the American, British, and Japanese Experiences,” in *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period*, eds. Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, 50-95 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

118 As illustrated by the extensive military innovation literature; see, for instance, the numerous cases provided in Rosen, *Winning the Next War*, and Murray and Millett, *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period*. 
associated with the dominant communities are difficult to cancel or greatly down-size, especially as they develop constituencies outside their parent service. Moreover, changing promotions patterns, requiring the removal of the current set of officers in key and senior positions and replacing them with a new generation of officers from different communities, can be a long process.\textsuperscript{119} As a result, once established, the dominance of particular communities within a service tend to persist for long periods of time.

In most cases, only a serious threat external to the organization can alter the pattern of intra-service politics and change which communities dominate a service. These threats may lie in the international arena: for example, war or a drastic change in the strategic environment facing the nation. The establishment of the British RAF Fighter Commander on an equal footing with the service’s Bomber Commander arose as a result of the changing strategic environment facing the British during the course of the 1930s. During wartime, successful militaries are able to overcome the adverse effects of intra-service politics, although they may pay a heavy price during the early stages of the conflict. For example, it took the British Army until the Battle of Tobruk in 1942 to overcome the deleterious affects of its interwar pattern of intra-service politics and to begin to develop an effective organization and doctrine for combined arms warfare.\textsuperscript{120} Finally, the rise of the aviation community in the U.S. Army during the 1960s was a result both of a changing strategic environment (a new emphasis on counterinsurgency in the early 1960s) and the Vietnam War. The experiences and lessons learned from conflicts also can bring new communities to positions of dominance. The armor communities in the French, British and American armies all rose to positions of dominance equal to that afforded to the traditional infantry and artillery communities as a result of these armies’ experiences with armor during World War II. The Israeli Army gave a renewed emphasis to both the mechanized infantry and artillery communities as a result of the IDF’s near-disaster with its overly armor-heavy forces in the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

Alternatively, the external threat may involve – or be perceived to involve – the survival of the service itself arising from inter-service rivalries in peacetime. Even the threat of a military service losing a previously unimportant mission to a rival can produce a reaction whereby the community associated with this mission is boosted into the front

\textsuperscript{119} See Rosen, \textit{Winning the Next War}, 20-21; and Danskine, \textit{Fall of the Fighter Generals}, 108.

\textsuperscript{120} See, for example, Correlli Barnett, \textit{The Desert Generals}, 2d edition (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1982) and John Bierman and Colin Smith, \textit{The Battle of Alamein: Turning Point, World War II} (New York: Viking, 2002).
ranks. Oftentimes, it requires a combination of such events – e.g., war followed up by interservice threats in the immediate postwar environment – to produce enough momentum to propel a community into a position of dominance, either alone or as part of an oligarchy. For instance, the evolution of the aviation community as a coequal with the surface warfare community in the U.S. Navy arose both as a result the experiences of World War II and as a consequence of the Navy’s postwar competition with the Air Force for nuclear missions.

**Propositions Regarding Intra-Service Politics**

The theoretical framework developed in this chapter suggests a number of propositions concerning intra-service community politics and its effects on the parent organization. First, every military service contains a variety of communities or unions centered on specific missions, functions or technologies. These communities compete with one another to determine the service’s dominant culture and missions as well as the distribution of the service’s budgets, equipment and personnel. For services with a strong and independent central leadership, one capable of acting as an honest broker between communities, the intra-service politics can have a variety of benefits.

In services where such central leadership is absent, however, one of two patterns develop: either a single community dominates the service or an oligarchy of communities controls the service. As these patterns become established, the service’s resources, doctrine, and dominant roles and missions tend to align with these patterns. Doctrinal developments will reflect the preference of the dominant unions. Likewise, the distribution of resources – including budgets, weapons, programs, personnel and combat organizations – will mirror and tend to reinforce the power of the dominant unions. Consequently, current missions that are best suited to one of the dominant unions will be performed well (i.e., will have appropriate doctrine, organizations, and weapons programs), and new missions suited to these unions will be readily adopted.

In such services, communities other than the dominant ones often are not represented in the service’s core culture or mission, and receive far less doctrinal attention. These lesser communities receive far fewer resources and training time. As a result, missions and functions associated with these communities tend to be performed less well by the parent service. Likewise, new potential missions and programs that fall outside the jurisdiction or capabilities of the dominant unions tend to be neglected. The doctrine, technologies or combat organizational designs associated with these missions or programs often will either be given negligible attention or killed outright, unless pressure
is brought from outside the organization. And, in those infrequent cases where the lesser communities appear to succeed in getting a new initiative adopted, the dominant communities generally are able to turn the new effort to their advantage or else have it implemented in such a way as to have the least adverse impact on themselves.

POST-VIETNAM U.S. ARMY AND COMMUNITY OLIGARCHY

Having developed a theoretical framework, the study begins to examine the specific case of the U.S. Army. The following section will propose how the U.S. Army during the 1970s and 1980s fits into the theoretical framework developed over the course of this chapter.

Community Politics

In the post-Vietnam War era, the U.S. Army consisted of a weak central leadership and a dominant coalition or oligarchy of communities. While competition among the communities exists, conflict and rivalry often appear muted. Kanter found, for example, that it was “much more difficult to identify salient and stable cleavages which differentiated among well-defined Army groups,” than it was in the other U.S. military services, and he characterized the Army as the most integrated of the services.\(^\text{121}\) Builder essentially agreed with this assessment, adding that, while the branch distinctions were a source of “pride and banter” between the unions, each Army branch recognizes its dependence upon its fellow branches and readily recognizes their contribution on the battlefield.\(^\text{122}\)

The Army is divided into a collection of functional or combat specific subunits, known as branches. The service contains twenty different branches: Air Defense Artillery, Armor, Aviation, Infantry, Engineer, Field Artillery, Special Forces, Chemical, Military Intelligence, Military Police, Signal, Civil Affairs, Ordnance, Quartermaster, Transportation, Chaplain, Army Medical, Adjutant General, Finance, and Judge Advocate General. A few of these officially are broken down further into sub-branches; for example, Psychological Operations is a sub-branch of Civil Affairs, while Maintenance and Ammunition are sub-branches of Ordnance.

While the infantry branch officially is a single unified branch, it is divided into several different factions: mechanized infantry, equipped with armored personnel carriers designed to move and fight with armored forces; elite airborne infantry; air assault infantry tied to the aviation branch with which it fights; and traditional non-mechanized infantry.


Although infantry officers will often command a variety of these forces over the course of their careers—with rotations among airborne, air assault and traditional infantry billets especially common—they still tend to focus on one of these unofficial sub-branches. Mechanized infantry tactics, in particular, often are considered different enough from other infantry tactics that officers below the rank of general officer rotate much less frequently from mechanized infantry billets to other types of infantry. Likewise, commanders of light infantry divisions typically come from a light infantry background, while those commanding mechanized infantry divisions typically come from a career dominated by mechanized infantry commands.

Because of the way they are trained and equipped to fight, mechanized infantry officers frequently have views and positions similar to armored officers, lead them to form a “heavy union” within the Army. Moreover, because of their critical role in the Army’s main mission during the Cold War—the defense of Western Europe—the armor/mechanized infantry heavy union has dominated internal Army politics for most of the post-World War II era. For similar reasons, the field artillery and aviation branches also have been politically strong. By contrast, it will be argued that one element of the infantry branch, the traditional non-mechanized, or foot-mobile infantry had been losing power within the service over several decades, reaching a low point in the post-Vietnam era.

The Army’s central leadership, or high command, is represented by the Department of the Army Headquarters (DOA HQ) and the Army Chief of Staff. The official role of the DOA HQ has been described as one of integration, tying all of the subordinate subsystems together for the Army as a whole. Its tasks [are] to decide what is to be...accomplished by the whole system and to see to it that the system performs as expected. It also acts as the source of funds for the subsystems, obtaining them from DoD, Office of Management and Budget, and Congress. The Chief of Staff’s relative power within the service as varied over time, with the strongest chiefs found in the period from World War II (in the person of General George Marshall) through the 1950s reign of the “hero” generals of that war (ending with General Maxwell Taylor). The power of the chief of staff reached a nadir with the appointment of General William Westmoreland in the late 1960s, who was once booed off the stage by an audience of mid-ranking officers at the service’s Command and

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123 The tactics used by airborne, air assault and traditional infantry tend to have much in common; their major difference lies in their means for getting to the battlefield.

General Staff College. Though improving somewhat since then, the Chief of Staff’s position has remained relatively weak. Indeed, he has been described as “the king only by the grace of the nobles,” in contrast to the Marine Corps Commandant whom the same author likened to the Pope. As a working hypothesis, this study proposes the following picture of the Army’s internal power structure: a weak central leadership and a service dominated by an oligarchy of communities. In this initial picture, the oligarchy consists of four co-equal communities—a heavy armor-mechanized infantry union, field artillery, and aviation. With one possible exception, the remaining elements of the Army lay outside this oligarchy, in less dominant positions within the service. The one exception may be the traditional, foot-mobile infantry community. Clearly, this community steadily lost its position of dominance within this oligarchy. To begin, the study will hypothesize that the foot-mobile infantry has been cast out of the service’s ruling coalition of communities since the end of the Vietnam War.

**Arenas for Intra-Service Army Politics**

Rosen is correct in pointing out that the conflict and competition within the Army is fundamentally between the service’s various branches and unions, but this competition occurs within the service’s “sustaining base.” For the purposes of combat unit design, two post-Vietnam U.S. Army sustaining base agencies are critical arenas for the playing out of intra-service politics: the Army Materiel Command (AMC) and the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). They are two of three Army Major Commands (MACOMs) under the Department of the Army’s overall structure. The third MACOM, Forces Command (FORSCOM), has control over all active-duty and reserve forces based in the continental United States (CONUS) with the primary objective of managing unit training and readiness for these forces.

AMC is charged with the research, development and acquisition of weapon systems for the Army. To fulfill this role, the command has maintained a number subordinate acquisition, research, development and engineering centers (ARDECs), such as the Tank

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125 Millett, “Army and Marine Corps,” 38.
Automotive Command (TACOM), the Aviation and Troop Support Command (ATCOM), and the Natick Soldier System Center. While providing equipment and services across the Army, many of the centers have traditionally focused on specific branches or unions within the service. For example, TACOM has generally supported the “heavy” union within the service, while ATCOM has supported the aviation branch and Natick Center served the needs of the infantry soldier. The commander of AMC has a largely technical and managerial role in the organization; he rarely has control over the outcomes of specific AMC programs. Real power within AMC rests, instead, at the level of the branch-specific ARDECs. In existence since the early 1960’s, AMC underwent a temporary name change in the early 1970’s to the U.S. Army Materiel Development and Readiness Command (DARCOM). Despite the change, the organization’s function and subordinate organizations remained the same. The organization’s name reverted back to Army Materiel Command in the middle years of the 1980s. But, for the period of time covered by the three case studies found here, its name remained DARCOM.

TRADOC was established in the fall of 1973 with the merger of the Combat Developments Command (CDC) and elements of the Continental Army Command (CONARC). Prior to the creation of TRADOC, the CDC had responsibility for developing and evaluating Army tactics, doctrine and organization. CONARC, meanwhile, was assigned command of all active-duty and reserve Army units stationed within CONUS, as well as having responsibility for all the service’s branch schools and for the training of all CONUS-based individual soldiers and units. By 1973, the senior Army leadership had come to feel that CONARC had become far too unwieldy and bureaucratized to be effective, while the CDC had too little authority to be effective. To remedy these problems, the Continental Army Command (CONARC) was split into two commands: the Forces Command (FORSCOM) and the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). TRADOC also absorbed the CDC within its overall organizational structure. 126

TRADOC is charged with developing doctrine, designing combat forces, establishing materiel requirements, and developing and maintaining the service’s training system. Most of these tasks are performed within TRADOC’s school system, and in particular at the various branch schools; each of the service’s twenty branches has its own school. For example, the Armor School establishes requirements for tanks and their

associated weapon systems, develops armored concepts and tactics, has principle responsibility for the design of armored units, and develops and conducts armor training. The Aviation and Infantry Schools perform similar tasks for their branches. Again, like AMC/DARCOM, branch politics plays itself out through the various TRADOC organizations. Unlike AMC/DARCOM, however, the commander of TRADOC plays a strong role in guiding the activities of his organization. His approval is required before products leave the organization and flow up the chain of command; and, as we will see, he has often taken a direct role in unit design and doctrine development.

**Combat Unit Design In An Oligarchic Service**

If the theoretical framework on intra-service politics and the description of how the U.S. Army fits into this framework are both true, then the following results would be expected in terms of combat organization and design: When a proposed organization and its mission fall under the purview of the existing union oligarchy and its dominant combat concept (i.e., entails “heavy” forces designed for mid-intensity combat on the plains of Central Europe), the organizational design process will engage and be the focus of the majority of Army. The process will likely succeed, producing an effective combat organization that will be the center-piece of service doctrine and program development efforts. On the other hand, for combat organizations and missions outside the purview of the union oligarchy (for example, “light” forces designed for expeditionary or low-intensity operations), the design efforts will fail or become redirected in a manner to better serve the interests of the reigning intra-service power structure. Because the desire will be to maintain the status quo, the more expensive or otherwise disruptive such an organizational design and its associated programs are to the reigning community oligarchy, the more likely it will be that the overall effort will simply fail. If, on the other hand, the initiative is seen as costing the dominant unions little or nothing in terms of resources and (better still) can be made to support these unions in their primary missions, then it is more likely that such efforts will be implemented however much they may veer away from their original intent.

**CASE SELECTION**

The remainder of this work will focus on testing these propositions by looking at three organizational design efforts within the U.S. Army of the late 1970s and early 1980s: the heavy Division ’86 design effort, the High Technology Light Division (HTLD) program, and the Light Infantry Division (LID). Each has been chosen to illustrate particular aspects of intra-service politics. The Division ’86 design appears to
fit in well with the proposed Army community oligarchy, with its emphasis on artillery, aviation, armor and mechanized infantry units. If the theory described here is correct, then the Army should have devoted considerable time, effort and financial resources to seeing the design succeed. The HTLD on the other hand, was proposed specifically as a counter to the prevailing emphasis on heavy forces. It was proposed by the Army Chief of Staff and was widely (and correctly) seen as his favored project during his tenure. If the senior leadership within the Army was strong, then his view should have prevailed. If, as proposed here, such leadership were weak, and because it went against the views of the proposed oligarchy, then the HTLD should have failed. Finally, the LID presents a somewhat mixed picture. It was another “pet” project of a new Army Chief of Staff that again ran to be counter to the emphasis on heavy forces. However, it did support the interests of a previously dominant community – the traditional foot-mobile infantry. If the senior leadership is weak and the foot-mobile infantry community no longer within the oligarchy, then the LID effort should either clearly fail or simply become a supporting element for the dominant members of the service.

**OUTLINE OF DISSERTATION**

The remainder of this work will examine the particular case of the U.S. Army and the division design process. As the three division design cases to be examined occurred sequentially from the early 1970s to the mid-1980s, Chapter Two will describe some the most important external factors influencing the service over the forty years following World War II. Particular emphasis will be placed on examining two of the most crucial issues facing the Army up through the early 1980s – its manpower and force structure. One of the key external constraints on the Army’s internal politics—the service’s manpower policies—and its leadership’s attitudes towards manpower issues will be reviewed over the post-World War II era up to mid-1983. The influence of changing budgets and missions on these manpower levels will be explored, charting the trends in manpower policies over this time period. The structure and use of the Army’s Reserve Components – the National Guard and Army Reserve – will also be examined, as will the influence of these issues on the active-duty forces. Finally, by following changes in the overall distribution of defense resources, the Army’s shifting political fortunes relative to the other services can be followed.

Chapter Three will explore the changing internal political power relations among the Army’s various communities. Among the factors that have influenced these communities and their relative positions within the service are the changing roles and missions of the service, the introduction of new technologies, changing nature of the threat, their experience
in wartime, changing public and congressional attitudes towards particular wars, and the service’s traditional preference for substituting of firepower for manpower. The chapter will illustrate how the membership of the service’s oligarchy changed over the course of the twentieth century. For example, it will describe the splintering of the infantry branch into a number of subgroups and the gradual erosion of the traditional infantry from a position as one of the service’s dominant communities.

Having described the external factors influencing the Army’s intra-service politics and having described the structure and membership of that politics, the next three chapters consist of case studies of specific U.S. Army division design efforts. Chapter Four examines the heavy Division 86 design of the 1970s and early 1980s. This division concept was designed to provide part of an integrated solution to the problems presented by high-intensity conflict against a modern armored opponent, specifically Soviet-style forces in Europe. Chapter Five looks at the High Technology Light Division (HTLD) concept. This division concept was designed to provide a high technology solution to the Army’s need for effective forces capable of rapidly deploying to crises and conflicts outside the NATO area. Through innovative organizations and tactics, combined with cutting edge technologies, the HTLD was intended to be highly mobile – both strategically and tactically – while at the same time providing a highly lethal anti-armor capability. Finally, Chapter Six examines the case of the Light Infantry Division design. This division was designed to be light-weight and have high strategic deployability, containing approximately ten thousand troops and capable of being deployed in about five hundred C-141 sorties. The division also was designed to be primarily a foot-mobile infantry force, with at least fifty percent of the troop-strength composed of non-mechanized infantrymen. While meant to have utility in a NATO environment, the division was to be optimized for low-intensity combat operations.

The lessons learned from this examination of the force design and internal Army politics will be discussed in the final chapter. There too will be a discussion of the Army’s future and possible changes to its intra-service community structure.
CHAPTER TWO
CONSTANTS AND CONSTRAINTS
ON THE U.S. ARMY

INTRODUCTION

The external environment can influence and constrain intra-service politics. External factors or constraints include technological developments, national strategy, security threats, and domestic economic and political conditions. Technological developments can give rise to new functions and hence new communities within a given service, and they can reduce or eliminate the importance of other communities. Changes in national strategy or changes in the threat posed by international opponents can reinforce the political power of certain communities or overthrow the power of others. Domestic economic and political conditions determine the resources available to a service, can enhance or reduce the political power of certain communities within a service, and can influence and constrain the ways different intra-service communities respond to internal service conflict. Domestic political conditions can also determine the structure and power of a service’s central leadership, influencing the latter’s ability to control its service’s internal political struggles. Finally, inter-service rivalry can affect intra-service politics; for example, driving intra-service communities together to combat a common inter-service threat.

This chapter will present an historical overview illustrating how the interplay of a variety of factors external to the U.S. Army – e.g., U.S. strategic choices, congressional activities, inter-service competition, and reserve issues – influenced the service’s manpower levels, force structure, and budgets for the first fifty years after World War II. This chapter will not be an exhaustive survey of these factors; additional constraints will be described as they arise and relate to the case studies in the chapters that follow.

THE IMMEDIATE POST-WAR YEARS: 1945-1950

The U.S. Army won the Second World War, but lost the U.S. government’s postwar defense debate. The rapid demobilization at the war’s end quickly dismantled the massive U.S. military machine, and was followed closely by a squeeze on military budgets imposed by the fiscal policies of a Truman Administration searching for a “peace dividend.” The Army and Navy bore the brunt of the budgetary restraints as atomic weapons, and the Air Force that possessed them, came to be seen by many civilians as the basis for U.S. security through deterrence. Public apathy towards the Army increased too due to a general postwar exhaustion with military issues. Despite the desires of the American people and the Truman Administration to return to peacetime pursuits following the war, a series of ominous political developments soon erupted around the globe; leading to the
deterioration of the U.S.-Soviet postwar relationship, and the gradual development and acceptance of containment as the basis of U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union. The result of these contradictory military and political developments was a growing perception of a gap between U.S. political commitments and existing military forces.

At the end of World War II, the U.S. Army contained over eight million military personnel and fielded eighty-eight full-strength divisions – sixty-seven infantry, sixteen armored, and five airborne. Consistent with past U.S. practice, Army planners expected a large-scale postwar demobilization of this force. At the same time, they expected this process to be a gradual and orderly one, consistent with the service’s immediate postwar occupation duties and commitments. An elaborate demobilization scheme had been devised during the war, wherein military personnel were scheduled for release based on a point system taking into account such factors as length of service and combat duty, decorations, and number of dependents.1

The Army was hardly prepared for the relentless and overwhelming pressures which immediately arose following the war to “bring the boys home.” Not only did the Truman Administration find itself under pressure from Congress and a vocal minority of the public to release the citizen soldiers from their military duties, but in many areas the soldiers themselves staged demonstrations and riots demanding to be released.2 Such pressures forced the Army to quickly abandon the point system for an across the board release of all soldiers serving two years or more, resulting in the most hasty and haphazard demobilization in U.S. history. The Army underwent a seventy-five percent reduction in manpower levels from V-J Day to July 1946.3

Stories abound of the deleterious effect of this rapid demobilization on an army deployed across the globe. Personnel shortages overseas were so severe, that commanders found it difficult even to guard the large stockpiles of Army materiel from theft by the local populace.4 Combat effectiveness and morale slumped as enlisted personnel were deprived of officers, who in turn were

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3 Huntington, Common Defense, 35.

4 Ridgway, Soldier, 158.
reassigned to new duties at a dizzying pace. In later years, this process was to be decried by many, not as a demobilization of the Army, but as its destruction.

Nevertheless, while the haste was unprecedented, the large-scale demobilization of the World War II Army followed a familiar feast-or-famine pattern in American military history. Every war since the American Revolution had seen a rapid build up of U.S. forces and materiel during the conflict, followed by drastic cuts in budgets and personnel at war's end. Moreover, several World War II Army leaders, in particular Chief of Staff George C. Marshall, feared that a large standing army would be incompatible with and dangerous to American values and democracy, while placing an intolerable burden on the federal budget. In planning for the future, therefore, the Army leadership foresaw the requirement for a small peacetime force capable of rapid mobilization to a mass army through reliance on a large, pre-trained pool of citizen soldiers.

To obtain such a system, the Truman Administration revived a call for Universal Military Training (UMT). Under this concept, originally conceived following World War I, virtually all males between the ages of eighteen and twenty would be called upon to serve one year of military service in peacetime, during which they would receive basic and limited specialized training. Upon release from active-duty, they would be placed into the federal military reserve system to await call-up if needed. With the expiration of post-war selective service authorization in March 1947, the Truman Administration introduced UMT legislation to Congress. However, traditional opposition to this concept from educators, churchmen, and others, coupled with skepticism of the relevance of mobilizable trainees in the atomic age and general public disinterest, led Congress quietly to reject UMT legislation (a water-downed version was buried in the House Rules Committee) by the end of 1947.

Further adverse effects on Army capabilities arose due to the fact that, throughout the 1945-1950 period, the Truman Administration's fiscal policy focused on the twin goals of balancing the federal budget and reducing the large debt accrued during the war. To meet these goals, the

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6 See, for example, Gavin, War and Peace, 106.

7 Sherry, Preparing For The Next War, 50-51.


Administration relied on the so-called “remainder method” for determining the military budget. Under this procedure, domestic spending would first be subtracted from expected revenues, with the remaining funds then allotted to the military.

By the beginning of 1948, the resulting military budget ceilings imposed by the Truman Administration had forced the Army into “a shockingly deplorable state.” While Congress authorized a personnel level of 669,000 officers and enlisted men, the Administration’s budget bureau reduced this figure to 560,000. Even this level of manpower proved impossible for Army recruiters to meet, in part because postwar inflation had combined with static military pay to reduce greatly military pay scales relative to civilian wages. As a result, the Army was able to recruit a force of only 552,000 soldiers. By contrast, while the Army was expecting a resulting manpower shortage of 165,000 by the end of 1948, the Navy’s personnel situation was expected to improve by July 1948 and the Air Force’s personnel picture was characterized as “satisfactory.”

Moreover, the manpower that was available to the Army was organized into a force with limited combat effectiveness: one half was stationed overseas on occupation duty (hence, neither trained or organized for combat), while most of the remainder was stateside performing administrative chores. This situation led to a large gap in capabilities versus the perceived threat and U.S. political commitments. According to a February 1948 Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) briefing to the President, the military could identify four “explosive” areas of the world where political/military events could potentially lead to U.S. military deployments: Greece, Italy, Korea, and Palestine. Yet, the Army could muster a U.S.-based strategic reserve of only two and one-third divisions for deployment in emergencies, along with eleven Marine Corps battalion landing teams. Moreover, all of these strategic reserve units were under-strength and, according to its Chief of Staff, General Omar Bradley, only the 82d Airborne (short 1100 personnel) could “be remotely described as combat ready.”

The Army’s inability to obtain sufficient volunteers (by March 1948, the service had fallen 130,000 personnel below its authorized strength), combined with threatening Soviet activities in Europe in the spring of 1948, led Congress to reinstate conscription with the passage of the

13 At the time of February briefing, however, Navy personnel shortfalls resulted in the immobilization of 107 ships; see Ibid.
14 Ibid., 374-76; Bradley and Blair, A General’s Life, 474; and Walter Millis, Arms and the State: Civil-Military Elements in National Policy (New York: The Twentieth Century Fund, 1958), 208.
Selective Service Act of 1948.\textsuperscript{15} Despite this legislation, the Army would obtain only about thirty thousand draftees by the middle of 1950.\textsuperscript{16}

While the Army’s manpower woes persisted, the military services were busy preparing their first unified short-range emergency war plan, which was meant to serve as the basis for future force planning. This war plan, code-named Halfmoon, assumed that the United States would respond to a Soviet invasion of Western Europe by dropping atomic bombs on the Soviet Union. In these initial stages, the Army’s role would be limited to protecting U.S. Air Force bases from which these atomic strikes would be launched, and denying the use of potential bases to the Soviet Air Force in areas adjacent to the United States. Once the Soviets had surrendered, and following a World War II-type general mobilization, the U.S. Army would serve in an occupation role throughout Europe and the Soviet Union similar to its mission following World War II.\textsuperscript{17}

Army planners calculated that Halfmoon would require an initial ground force of a million men and eighteen combat-ready divisions. Realizing the impossibility of sustaining such a force in peacetime under any reasonable apportionment amongst the services of the fiscal year 1950 defense budget ceiling of $14.4 billion, the Army leadership settled for an active-duty force of 800,000 men and twelve divisions, with seven divisions stationed overseas and five in a stateside strategic reserve. The remainder of the Halfmoon force requirement would be met by six “elite” fully equipped National Guard or Organized Reserve Corps (the predecessor to the Army Reserve) units.\textsuperscript{18}

The 1949 war plan, Offtackle, carried forward many of the same assumptions found in Halfmoon. The major difference lay in the new plan’s emphasis on halting a Soviet invasion west of the Rhine, in concert with our European allies. With Army force requirements similar to those of Halfmoon, the JCS now agreed to the recruitment of an 800,000-man Regular Army, but formed into only ten and two-thirds active-duty divisions. Throughout these deliberations, planners assumed a constant fiscal year 1951 defense budget ceiling of $14.4 billion.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{15} Jacobs and Gallagher, \textit{Selective Service Act}, 43-102.
\textsuperscript{18} Bradley and Blair, \textit{General’s Life}, 489.
However, all of these force plans were abandoned in mid-May 1949, when the new Secretary of Defense, Louis Johnson, announced that the budget ceiling for fiscal year 1951 would be reduced to $13 billion. In the final budget figures for fiscal year 1951, Secretary Johnson allotted the Army only $4 billion, putting an end to the service’s goal of an “800,000-man” force. Indeed, the Army’s planned fiscal year 1950 authorized strength of 677,000 was now scheduled to be reduced during fiscal year 1951 to 630,000 active-duty personnel. And further cuts were expected: initial planning for fiscal year 1952, begun in the spring of 1950, suggested a reduction in Army manpower below 620,000 personnel and the resulting loss of its newly acquired tenth active-duty division.20

By June 1950, five years after World War II and on the eve of the Korean conflict, the Army stood at fewer than 600,000 active-duty personnel, 70,000 fewer than authorized force levels. Of the service’s ten under-strength divisions, five were assigned to the strategic reserve (known at that time as the General Reserve) based in the United States and designed for emergency deployments. The remaining divisions were on occupation duty in Europe (one based in Germany) and Asia (four divisions in Japan). Completing the service’s field army were a division-size European Constabulary Force; five separate regimental combat teams stationed in the United States and Hawaii, of which two were part of the General Reserve; four armored cavalry regiments, one assigned to the General Reserve; and a number of smaller combat support and logistics units.21 In order to meet declining budgets projected over the next few years, the Army was forced to remove one battalion from each of its divisions’ three infantry regiments as well as one of four artillery batteries from each division.22 Moreover, two divisions assigned to the General Reserve (the 3d Infantry and 11th Airborne) consisted only of two regiments of two battalions each (rather than the standard three and three).23 So severe were the cuts to the active-duty Army force structure that then Army Chief of Staff, General J. Lawton Collins, later revealed that he was prepared to resign had Secretary of Defense Johnson recommended further cuts in the service’s active-duty division numbers.24

21 Weigley, United States Army, 502-503; Schnabel, U.S. Army in the Korean War, pp.43-45; and Hill, Minute Man, 501.
22 Blair, The Forgotten War, 28.
23 Ibid., 120.
One of the two reserve forces available to the Army, the Organized Reserve Corps (ORC), faced problems as well in the period between World War II and Korea. Unlike its active-duty brethren, the ORC did not suffer from a lack of manpower. In fact, although the ORC had few material benefits to entice recruits, over one-half of the discharged World War II-era officer corps had accepted commissions in the ORC by July 1946. Similarly, by mid-1948, over seventeen percent of the discharged enlisted personnel had also signed up for the reserves. The major difficulties for the ORC, rather, stemmed from a paucity of organized units and a lack of financial support, resulting in inadequate training opportunities and a dearth of equipment.

By contrast, the picture was much brighter for the Army National Guard. The Guard fared betterfiscally than either the Regular Army or the ORC during this period, and successfully competed for the limited manpower pool with the ORC. Traditional active-duty Army antagonism of the Guard was still prevalent, however, and focused on issues of training standards and deployability. This antagonism surfaced, for example, in a 1948 effort to federalize the state-run Guard on a permanent basis. This effort, strongly supported by Regular Army officers, quickly died in Congress as had similar efforts in the past; a victim both of its complexity and the traditional strong political power of the Guard Association within Congress. The power of the Guard Association was demonstrated in other ways as well during this period, including the addition by Congress of a total of $79 million to the budget of the National Guard during the financially strapped years of 1947 and 1948. Indeed, in the latter year, the Guard’s budget was the only component of any service to be increased; the ORC budget remained constant, while all others were cut. By 1950, the Army National Guard had grown from its immediate post-World War II total of eighteen divisions to twenty-five infantry and two armored divisions, along with twenty regimental combat teams, seven armored cavalry regiments, and over one thousand smaller units.

THE KOREAN WAR: 1950-1953

During the period 1950-1953, Army manpower and force levels were dominated by the Korean War and the massive rearmament that accompanied it. As typically occurs in wartime, previous fiscal constraints were removed from the Army budget, and its force levels grew

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25 Crossland and Currie, *Twice the Citizen*, 84.
28 Ibid., 72-73.
29 Mahon, *Militia and National Guard*, 204-205.
proportionately. The result was a narrowing of the gap between political commitments and military capabilities.

The North Korean invasion of South Korea, in June 1950, ignited a large-scale rearmament of the U.S. military, especially of the U.S. Army. The framework for this effort had been developed several months before in an interdepartmental review of national security policy, NSC-68. This document, which painted a distressing picture of Soviet political intentions and the East-West military balance, called for a large expansion of U.S. limited war and general war capabilities. Although not yet approved at the time North Korean forces first crossed the 38th Parallel in South Korea, NSC-68 guided the buildup that followed.30

The immediate cause for the rearmament was the commitment of U.S. military forces to the war in Korea. The first U.S. ground troops sent into Korea were pulled directly from occupation duty in Japan. Largely untrained, inadequately equipped and greatly undermanned, these units suffered heavy initial losses and gave up much territory to the rapidly advancing North Korean ground forces.31 In response, General MacArthur requested immediate individual replacements, both to fill out under-strength units and to replace casualties. In addition, he sought smaller units in order to bring his divisions in Japan and Korea up to full wartime strength (e.g., a third infantry battalion for each regiment and a fourth artillery battery for each division), as well as major units (entire regimental combat teams and divisions) to reinforce his struggling field army.32

The JCS met these demands by drawing manpower and units out of the General Reserve, thereby depleting the emergency forces needed to respond to other global threats to U.S. interests, including those that might arise in Europe. As a result, one month after the North Korean invasion, the army’s General Reserve was drawn down from 140,000 to 90,000 personnel. Within the first two months of the war, one division, an airborne Regimental Combat Team, eight infantry battalions, and three tank battalions were sent to Korea. All remaining units in the General Reserve,


with the exception of the 82d Airborne, were largely reduced to cadre status to provide individual and small unit replacements to Korea.\textsuperscript{33}

In addition, Congress quickly moved to grant President Truman authorization to call up a large number of ORC and National Guard units and individuals to active duty. Among the first mobilized were individual ORC troops to fill out depleted active-duty units, with first priority going to reinforcing units in Korea and then to forces in the stateside General Reserve; entire Guard and ORC units soon followed. Before the truce was signed in July 1953, two National Guard divisions, fourteen separate ORC battalions and forty separate ORC companies, along with large numbers of individuals, were rotated through Korea.\textsuperscript{34} In total, eight Army divisions (active-duty and reserve) and one Marine division, along with a number of individual regiments and brigades, saw action on the Korean peninsula during the course of the conflict.\textsuperscript{35}

Forces for the Korean War, however, were just one element of the rearmament program. The North Korean invasion and subsequent Chinese intervention in the winter of 1950 were seen by many in the Truman Administration to be the opening gambits in a global Soviet-inspired conflict, with Korea simply a feint to draw the Western powers’ attention away from Soviet preparation for an invasion of Western Europe. In response, the United States increased the size of the state-side General Reserve and, in conjunction with its European allies, quickened the pace of NATO development. The first steps to improve NATO capabilities were undertaken in December 1950 when General Dwight Eisenhower was recalled to active duty as the first Supreme Commander of NATO. Two months later, Congress granted the President authority to deploy troops to Europe in peacetime as part of NATO forces. During the remainder of 1951, four additional Army divisions – including federalized National Guard divisions serving as temporary substitutes for Regular Army units then being formed – were sent to Europe to reinforce the one U.S. Army division stationed there since World War II.\textsuperscript{36} All U.S. ground forces stationed in Europe were put under the evolving NATO command structure. Stateside, several Regular Army divisions were formed, four National Guard divisions activated, and a host of smaller Guard and ORC units called to active duty, all for use in the United States either as training divisions or to strengthen the general reserve force. By the

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 87-99 and 118-20; Blair, Forgotten War, 121-3; and Goulden, Korea: The Untold Story of the War, 134-35.

\textsuperscript{34} Crossland and Currie, \textit{Twice the Citizen}, 99.

\textsuperscript{35} Weigley, \textit{United States Army}, 508-509; Fautua, “‘Long Pull’ Army,” 112.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 112-13; and Bradley and Blair, \textit{A General’s Life}, 646.
end of 1952, the Korean mobilization had created an Army of 1.5 million personnel, twenty
divisions and more than fifteen regimental combat teams.37

Although some problems and delays were experienced in getting reserve units to a state of
combat readiness, the major issues facing the Korean reserve mobilization revolved around
questions of equity. First, many of the individual reservists sent to Korea as combat replacements
were from the inactive-duty Reserves, and had received little or no recent combat training. Many
felt it unfair that they should be facing combat while more recently trained Reservists remained in
the United States. More broadly, most of the reservists recalled to active duty, whether individuals
or members of organized units, were veterans of World War II. Many of these reservists,
particularly those in Korea, resented the double jeopardy of being recalled again to military duty,
especially while millions of eligible males who had never served in the military remained in civilian
life. Even those reservists not mobilized often suffered, as many employers began to fire or refuse
to hire members of the reserve for fear of soon losing them to additional mobilization call-ups.38

Despite the rearmament’s overall success, Congress failed to approve one critical element of
the Army’s buildup. The Truman Administration, concerned about the possible need for a larger
standing army and reserve force following Korea, presented another UMT proposal to Congress in
January 1951. A much watered-down version was approved several months later, which included
the creation of a commission designed to recommend ways for implementing UMT. When the
House rejected the commission’s recommendations the following year, however, UMT was once
again defeated.39 In its place, Congress passed the Armed Forces Reserve Act of 1952, detailing the
responsibilities, organization and regulation of the federalized reserves.40

One reason for the ultimate demise of UMT was the public’s decreasing anxiety over the
threat of global war as the conflict in Korea stalemated and a Soviet invasion failed to materialize
elsewhere. This feeling eventually reached into the Truman Administration as well, and affected
the Army’s plans for the future. In the fall of 1951, the Army, with JCS concurrence, recommended
a fiscal year 1953 budget allowing for an expansion to 1.5 million men and the equivalent of
twenty-seven divisions, growing to the equivalent of thirty-three divisions two years later.41 The

37 Ibid., 651; and Allan R. Millett and Peter Maslowski, For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United
38 Crossland and Currie, Twice the Citizen, 97-100; and Weigley, United States Army, 508-10.
39 Jacobs and Gallagher, Selective Service Act, 42; Collins, Lightning Joe, 345-6; and Mahon, Militia and National
Guard, 207-208.
40 On the details of the legislation, see Crossland and Currie, Twice the Citizen, 100-101.
41 Bradley and Blair, A General’s Life, 650.
Truman Administration, however, moved to slow down and stretch-out the defense buildup in the latter part of 1951, approving a fiscal year 1953 military budget only half as large as the services requested. This pattern was repeated during deliberations over the fiscal year 1954 budget in the summer of 1952. By the end of the Truman Administration, the Korean War buildup was largely at an end. 42

MASSIVE RETALIATION AND THE EISENHOWER YEARS: 1953-1960

Under the Eisenhower Presidency, Army manpower and force levels were once again dominated by Administration efforts to constrict military budgets and by a military strategy emphasizing the centrality of nuclear weapons to U.S. security. For most of this period, the Army leadership found itself fighting for the very survival of its service.

In security policy, the Eisenhower Administration came into office determined to achieve two goals it believed central to long-term U.S. interests; both of which, it contended, had been dangerously overlooked by the previous Administration. The first was the establishment of a proper balance between military force structure and national economic growth. According to President Eisenhower, the Soviet Union presented the United States with both a military and an economic threat, the latter arising from overextended U.S. military budgets. To meet this dual threat required the maintenance of an adequate, but minimal, level of military force. The Administration’s second and related national security goal was the development of a military program designed to ensure U.S. security for the “long haul,” to eliminate the roller coaster defense budgets of the Truman era. 43

These goals led to the development, during Eisenhower’s first term, of the “New Look”, best known for its substitution of nuclear “massive retaliation” for U.S. involvement in conventional limited wars. Among the elements of the New Look were the development of continental air defenses and the continued accumulation of nuclear firepower. To carry out these programs while simultaneously reducing defense spending, conventional active-duty ground forces or, as President Eisenhower derisively put it, the “bottle washers and table waiters” bore the brunt of the defense cuts. Following a November 1953 meeting with Secretary of State Dulles, Secretary of the Treasury George Humphrey, and Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson, Eisenhower wrote that:

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42 Ibid., 650-51.
It was agreed that the dependence we are placing on new weapons would justify completely some reduction in conventional forces – that is, both ground troops and certain parts of the Navy. 44

The Eisenhower Administration argued that the capability to strike at the heart of an opponent’s power afforded by strategic aircraft carrying nuclear weapons lessened the importance of conventional ground forces. In addition, the Administration contended that the newly-developed “cheap” tactical nuclear weapons could be substituted for costly conventional manpower; an effort characterized by Administration spokesmen as obtaining “more bang for the buck.” In NSC-162/2, approved by the President on 30 October 1953, the military was ordered to plan for the use of tactical or strategic nuclear weapons at any time it became militarily desirable. 45 This position was restated publicly many times by senior Administration officials; with President Eisenhower, for example, commenting at the height of the 1955 Quemoy-Matsu Crisis:

Where these things [nuclear weapons] are used on strictly military targets and for strictly military purposes, I see no reason why they shouldn’t be used just exactly as you would a bullet or anything else. 46

In December 1953, the Defense Department, at the behest of President Eisenhower, announced its intention to reduce the Army’s manpower levels down to one million troops by fiscal year 1957. The first stage of this demobilization saw manpower levels drop from 1.5 million to 1.3 million in the year and a half following the Korean cease-fire in mid-1953. In developing the fiscal year 1956 budget during the summer of 1954, the Eisenhower Administration accelerated and deepened these reductions, calling for a force of 1.1 million soldiers by fiscal year 1955 and a further reduction to approximately 800,000 troops the following year. Congress approved this level and schedule of Army reductions, while rebelling against the Administration’s proposed troops cuts in the Marine Corps; Congress mandated Corps personnel levels for fiscal years 1956 and 1957 that were ten thousand above the Administration’s goal. 47 Ultimately, the Administration failed to complete the scheduled reductions in Army manpower, reducing the service to an authorized strength of just over one million men in 1956.

Concurrent with the reductions in active-duty Army manpower levels was a renewed emphasis on the reserves. In 1954, President Eisenhower announced that “the establishment of an

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46 Department of State Bulletin 32 (21 March 1955), 459-60; quoted in Huntington, Common Defense, 80, n. 86.

47 Huntington, Common Defense, 79.
adequate reserve . . . will be a number one item submitted to the Congress next year.”48 This move too was largely justified as an economizing measure, with Administration spokesmen frequently pointed out that one active-duty soldier required funding equivalent to ten reserve personnel. The Administration’s National Reserve Plan, submitted to Congress in January 1955, called for measures to heighten the readiness of Army Reserve units, improve the combat effectiveness of the National Guard, and strengthen recruitment into the reserves. The subsequent Reserves Forces Act of 1955, passed by Congress that August, did increase the potential for a larger reserve force, but did little to improve its combat effectiveness. For much of the Eisenhower era, the reserves – like their active-duty force counterpart – were to suffer from inadequate recruitment, equipment and facilities.49

While the immediate Korean War demobilization was not as severe as that following World War II, it did cause considerable consternation and protest from Army leaders. General Matthew Ridgway, who became Army Chief of Staff in the fall of 1953, argued vociferously with Defense Secretary Charles Wilson over the prudence and logic of the planned reductions in the active-duty Army. Ridgway rejected the Administration’s assumption that reserve units could adequately substitute for active-duty forces, owing to the extended time necessary to turn reserves into combat-ready units compared to the expected rapidity of future wars. He also refuted an Administration justification for U.S. troop reductions in Europe based on the existence of a future twelve-division West German army by pointing out that the West German military force did not and would not exist for several years to come.50

On the issue of nuclear weapons, Ridgway and his supporters argued that the New Look’s reliance on strategic nuclear weapons left the United States with an all-or-nothing strategy. President Eisenhower’s statements to the contrary, Ridgway also questioned – correctly as it turned out – the readiness of civilian leadership to grant authority for nuclear use in a crisis or limited conflict. Moreover, he contended that, given the geographic demands placed on the Army, it was imprudent to substitute tactical nuclear firepower for manpower as too few of these weapons had yet been produced and deployed, and that such weapons were too vulnerable to preemptive attack.51


49 On the state of the reserves during the Eisenhower Administration, see Mahon, Militia and the National Guard, 214-27; and Crossland and Currie, Twice the Citizen, 124-29.

50 Ridgway, Soldier, 290-91.

51 Ibid., 291.
More importantly, the Army Chief of Staff asserted that the advent of tactical nuclear weapons required more troops, not fewer. First, the complexity of the new weapons would require more maintenance personnel than older, conventional munitions. Moreover, the increased firepower of these weapons in the hands of the enemy carried the potential for vastly increased causality rates, necessitating even larger numbers of trained replacements. Finally, he argued that the increased pace and depth of combat with nuclear weapons also demanded more troops.\textsuperscript{52}

Underlying all of these arguments, however, was the fear on the part of the Army leadership that many inside and outside the Eisenhower Administration no longer viewed the service as playing a central role in U.S. national security, that an attitude was prevalent in the country that “the foot soldier is obsolete.”\textsuperscript{53} Substantiating these fears were comments such as those of JCS Chairman Arthur Radford “that atomic forces are now our primary forces . . . that actions by other forces, on land, sea or air are relegated to a secondary role.”\textsuperscript{54} In response, one of Ridgway’s three “great tasks” as Army Chief of Staff became “to preserve the spirit and pride of an Army which top-level efforts steadily sought to reduce to a subordinate place among the three great services that make up our country’s shield . . .”\textsuperscript{55}

Another Army response to the Administration’s increased reliance on nuclear weapons was to launch a series of attempts to design a “nuclear army.” The first attempt began on 28 December 1953, just three days after Secretary of Defense Wilson approved the JCS plan for carrying out NSC-162, when Army Chief of Staff Ridgway ordered the head of Army Field Forces to prepare a study examining “the probable organization of the Army during the period 1960-1970.”\textsuperscript{56} Ridgway specified that the future field army should include organic atomic weapons and that the study was to assume that authorization for their use would be granted. The resulting design – the Atomic Field Army (ATFA) – was rejected by Ridgway’s successor, General Maxwell Taylor, who instead turned to another on-going nuclear-armed force redesign effort, known as the Pentanna Study. This latter effort eventually culminated in a set of “Pentomic” division designs announced in October 1956.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 296-97.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 212.
\textsuperscript{55} Ridgway, \textit{Soldier}, 296.
For the senior Army leadership, the real motivations behind these efforts to develop a division for the nuclear battlefield lay in the realms of budgetary battles and public relations. A number of academic studies over the years have shown that these design attempts were not the result of “an objective examination of the actual requirements of the nuclear battlefield,” but rather were efforts to increase the Army’s procurement budgets and even to justify its continued existence. New types of tactical nuclear weapons, and the forces needed to support and fight with them, were felt to be the only method available for justifying an expansion of the Army’s procurement budgets.

For example, though originally focused on the needs of the Army during the latter half of the sixties, General Ridgway eventually shifted the focus of the Pentanna Study to one of developing a force consistent with the service’s atomic war plans for 1960. By combining a drastic force redesign with a definite war plan set for only five years hence, the Army thus could argue for a major weapons development and procurement effort now to meet these needs. And, according to one student of this period, the real reason behind General Taylor’s rejection of ATFA lay in the effort’s failure to preempt further cuts to the Army’s budget. Likewise, Taylor, in explaining his acceptance of the unproven Pentomic configuration at a classified briefing for Army school commandants, stated that mandating that new division structures be developed around future weapon systems could, in turn, be used to justify new procurement funding.

On the public relations side, both Ridgway and Taylor believed that the Army suffered because of a public perception that the service was out of date. In criticizing the Administration’s over-reliance on strategic nuclear retaliatory capabilities, General Ridgway expressed dismay at an Army commanders’ conference that “you can’t get at the American people so easily. So it comes back again to the question of the public relations problem . . .” By developing an “Atomic Army,” Ridgway hoped the Army could show its continued relevance to American people. Similarly,

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58 This argument is made in Midgley, Deadly Illusions, 60.

59 Ibid., 59.

60 Ibid., 68.

61 Conference Notes of the Commanders Conference held by the Chief of Staff at Fourth Army Headquarters, 6 January 1954 CS 320 Cases 1-3 (Secret) p. 44; quoted in Midgley Deadly Illusions, 35, n. 6.
General Taylor admitted that the term Pentomic was a “Madison Avenue adjective” created in response to the view among the public of the Army as an obsolescent force in the new atomic age.\(^{62}\)

Unfortunately, the Pentomic design quickly proved unworkable in practice, and the design was soon abandoned.\(^{63}\) Overall, most observers concluded that the Pentomic divisions were less capable than their predecessors on a conventional battlefield and no better than these older designs on a nuclear one. The Pentomic concept was widely and harshly criticized by many officers within the Army. Indicative of these views were the comments of General Paul L. Freeman, made during an early 1970’s retirement debriefing: “Every time I think of the Pentomic division . . . I shudder. Thank God we never had to go to war with it.”\(^{64}\)

During Eisenhower’s second term of office, some rhetorical changes were made in U.S. strategy. For example, the recognition of mutual deterrence and its consequences, led the Eisenhower Administration to reduce the emphasis on mobilization and reserves, and to begin to acknowledge the need for limited war capabilities. As early as 1955, there was official acceptance of the need for a “versatile, ready force to cope with limited aggression.”\(^{65}\) Nonetheless, the Army’s active-duty forces saw few real changes in either capabilities or force levels in the latter half of the 1950s. Indeed, active-duty Army manpower levels were reduced from one million to fewer than 900,000 over the period from fiscal year 1956 through fiscal year 1958. The need to stabilize military spending in the face of increasing defense costs led to another round of manpower reductions during the fiscal year 1959 budget deliberations in the summer of 1957. The Administration set authorized Army manpower levels for both the fiscal year 1959 and fiscal year

\(^{62}\) General Maxwell D. Taylor, *Swords and Plowshares* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1972), 171. General William DePuy, who at the time of the Pentomic effort was assigned to the Office of the Army Chief of Staff, later commented that the division was General Taylor’s “response to the fact the Army seemed to have been left out of the atomic age and needed to sound and appear very modern;” see Romie L. Brownlee and William J. Mullen III, *Changing an Army: An Oral History of General William E. DePuy, USA Retired* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army and United States Military History Institute, Pennsylvania, 1985), 112.


1960 budgets at 870,000 troops.\textsuperscript{66} By the end of 1960, the Army was reduced to fourteen divisions, with only eleven of these combat capable though often not combat-ready.\textsuperscript{67}

On reserve policy, the Eisenhower Administration actually reversed its earlier ostensible support for the Army Reserve and National Guard. Each year from 1958 to 1960, the Administration proposed a ten percent reduction in reserve paid drill strength. Nonetheless, not only were these and similar attempts to cut the budget of the Army Reserves unsuccessful, Congress actually increased funding for the Guard and Reserve throughout this period.\textsuperscript{68}

Army Chief of Staff General Maxwell Taylor, like his predecessor General Ridgway, argued vehemently against further cuts in active-duty strength. After the failure of the Pentomic design effort, however, the logic of the Army leadership’s argument shifted from an emphasis on the manpower requirements of combat operations in a tactical nuclear environment towards the needs of a limited conventional war capability. According to General Taylor and his supporters, the soon-to-arrive U.S.-Soviet mutual balance of terror at the strategic nuclear level diminished the deterrent value of threats to use nuclear weapons in all cases except those where truly vital U.S. interests were at stake. Yet, the United States would still require a military capability to protect its interests in lesser contingencies. The only way to do so, Taylor argued, was through the use of conventional forces designed specifically for limited warfare; retaining tactical nuclear weapons only for those exceptional cases where their use would be in the U.S. national interest. The Army, as the service assigned the specific mission of sustained ground combat, should have the primary role in these limited war situations, naturally with the cooperation of the other services. To fulfill this role, the Army required sustained or increased force levels maintained at a high state of readiness, both deployed overseas and as part of a stateside strategic reserve.\textsuperscript{69} Unfortunately, as Taylor was later to admit, the resources required for such wars:

\begin{quote}
were largely ground forces using unglamorous weapons and equipment – rifles, machine-guns, trucks and unsophisticated aircraft – items with little appeal to the Congress or the public.\textsuperscript{70}
\end{quote}

Nor did they appeal to the Eisenhower Administration, which both acknowledged the need for a limited war capability and largely rejected the means prescribed by Taylor to provide it.

\textsuperscript{66} Taylor, \textit{Uncertain Trumpet}, 53-54, and 77.

\textsuperscript{67} Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., \textit{A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House} (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett Publications, 1965), 295.


\textsuperscript{69} For the full argument, see Taylor, \textit{Uncertain Trumpet}, especially Chapter Eight and pp. 98-100.

\textsuperscript{70} Taylor, \textit{Swords and Plowshares}, 171.
Instead, the Administration increasingly emphasized the use of tactical nuclear weapons to combat limited wars. John Foster Dulles, in a private meeting with Eisenhower during the second Quemoy-Matsu Crisis in the fall of 1958, summed up the U.S. defense posture of the latter half of the 1950s. According to notes taken by Eisenhower’s military aid, General Andrew Goodpaster, who was also present at the meeting,

Mr. Dulles directed attention to the point regarding atomic weapons, recalling that we have geared our defense to the use of these in case of hostilities of any size, and stated that, if we will not use them when the chips are down because of adverse world opinion, we must revise our defense setup. 71

Unable to successfully rebut this view, General Taylor continued to focus on preparing the Army for battlefield nuclear operations, as well as arguing for improve conventional combat capabilities.

One of few measures taken by the Army during this time to develop a conventional limited war capability was the 1958 formation of a four-division Strategic Army Corps (STRAC). While the remaining Army units in the state-side strategic reserve were assigned training missions, the STRAC was designed to provide a rapidly deployable force for contingencies worldwide. Continued personnel reductions, however, forced the Army to reduce the Strategic Corps to a three-division force by 1959. 72 Even with this smaller force, the lack of adequate air- and sea-lift, the low combat-readiness of many of these units, and a host of other difficulties precluded the development of a true rapid deployment capability. 73 General Taylor, who stepped down as Chief of Staff in 1959, was to find a more receptive audience for his arguments, both the need for a “Flexible Response” strategy and increased conventional force levels, in the next presidential administration.


President Kennedy came into office having campaigned against the Eisenhower “Massive Retaliation” strategy and its over-reliance on nuclear weapons. Kennedy, instead, endorsed a program very similar to General Taylor’s “Flexible Response” strategy, calling for a greater emphasis on non-nuclear forces and limited conventional war capabilities. The U.S. Army was to be a major beneficiary of this new strategy. For force planning purposes, the Pentagon adopted a

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“Two-and-a-Half War” strategy under which it was to create forces sufficient for two simultaneous major conflicts against the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China, as well as a minor (limited) war somewhere in the Third World. The Army’s eleven barely combat-capable divisions were woefully inadequate to carry out such an ambitious strategy. For example, upon taking office, President Kennedy was reportedly “appalled” to discover that shipping ten thousand troops to Southeast Asia would virtually wipe out nation’s the strategic reserve and leave it unable to meet other emergencies. 74

In response, one of Robert McNamara’s first acts as Secretary of Defense was to recommend procurement of modern forces capable of being airlifted to any spot on the globe, as well as a host of Army and Air Force conventional weapons systems. Funding also was increased for research and development on non-nuclear weapons. While only incremental additions were initially proposed to Army and Marine Corps manpower levels, the Army’s Special Forces branch was to more than double in size. The focus on the Special Forces reflected the Administration’s new emphasis on low-intensity warfare. 75

Beginning with a supplemental budget request in the summer of 1961, brought on by the Berlin Crisis, and continuing through the fiscal year 1963 budget request, the McNamara Pentagon lavished attention and funding upon all elements of the active-duty Army. Resources were provided for procurement of weapons and materiel to equip new and existing divisions. The service received nearly half of the overall authorized increase in military manpower, increasing from 875,000 to about 1,000,000 troops over this period. With these additional resources, existing Army divisions, including the three training divisions, were brought up to full strength and readiness, and five new fully-capable divisions were added to the force structure. 76

Meanwhile, to allow Army regular forces to fight local wars anywhere in the world while still maintaining a capability to reinforce Europe, McNamara foresaw a renewed role for what was now called the service’s Reserve Component (RC) – the National Guard and Army Reserve. This led to a series of attempted reorganizations of National Guard and Reserve forces throughout the early to mid-sixties, designed to better prepared them to support the active-duty component. These efforts met stiff resistance from the elements of the RC and their supporters in Congress. The opposition again illustrated the power of the various reserve organizations and the difficulties faced by any Army effort to “interfere” with its reserves.

74 Schlesinger, Thousand Days, 295.
75 Kaufmann, McNamara Strategy, 58.
76 Ibid., 67-68.
In the Pentagon's initial plans, formulated in early 1961, the reserves would be reorganized so as to provide a timely replenishment of the U.S.-based strategic reserve in a crisis or local conflict. Under this schedule, two reserve divisions were to be combat-ready within three weeks of call-up and a total of ten divisions were to be available after eight weeks. At this time, the Reserve Component consisted of ten Army Reserve and twenty-seven National Guard combat divisions, all maintained at no more than seventy percent of their wartime manpower levels; thirteen Army Reserve training divisions; and a host of smaller Reserve and Guard units.77

The difficulties and inadequacies of the existing reserve policy were to become apparent only a few months later when, during the height of the Berlin Crisis, McNamara announced the large-scale call-up of reserve units. Before the mobilization ended, two National Guard divisions, a number of company-size Guard units, nearly 450 Reserve units, and thousands of individual reservists were placed on active duty.78 The short-term purpose behind this call-up was to fill-out existing active-duty units until the selective service could meet this demand. The two mobilized guard divisions served as replacements in the strategic reserve in case two active-duty divisions from this force were required for re-deployment to Europe.

Although the mobilization was credited with helping to stabilize the international situation and with providing time for the buildup of active-duty forces, it also brought to light a host of problems with the Army's Reserve Component.79 Rather than providing an immediate combat capability, the Kennedy Administration found that many reserve units required four to six months to achieve combat effectiveness. Most units were discovered to be not only lacking in requisite manpower, but also equipped with outdated, inadequate, or nonexistent equipment. Moreover, the call-up itself created massive confusion, uncovering a number of administrative glitches in the mobilization system. For instance, the procedure meant to assign individual reservists with particular specialties to units short of these skills went awry, resulting in mal-distribution of skills throughout the force. Politically, the most serious problem with the mobilization was the resulting public protests over the disruption of citizen soldiers' civilian lives in a situation short of actual conflict.80 Following this episode, McNamara conceded that the use of reserve units in crises was untenable, that they could be realistically called to active duty "only when armed conflict is

77 Crossland and Currie, Twice the Citizen, 153-55; and Kaufmann, McNamara Strategy, 64.
78 Crossland and Currie, Twice the Citizen, 137.
79 Kaufmann, McNamara Strategy, 67-81.
imminent..." \(^{81}\)

In response, he and the Army undertook a series of steps designed to reorganize the reserves and to increase their readiness for mobilization.

Opposition from Congress, state governments, and reserve officer organizations forced the Pentagon to reverse its initial planned reductions in the RC and maintain reserve paid drill strength at 700,000 personnel (400,000 National Guard and 300,000 Reserve). Nonetheless, approximately 1,850 obsolete company or detachment-sized reserve units were eliminated and about 1,000 new units added. By May 1963, when the reorganization was completed, four combat divisions had been dropped from both the Army Reserve and the National Guard. More importantly, the resulting reserve force structure was prioritized into two distinct groups. Those designated as high-priority units—totaling six combat divisions and additional support units—would be assigned the task of rapidly reinforcing and supporting the active-duty Army in sudden emergencies. These units were to be maintained at a high-state of readiness, manned at eighty percent or higher of their wartime strength, and have on hand nearly their entire wartime equipment allotment. The remainder of the Reserve Component was to be used only in the case of a general mobilization and manned at about fifty percent of its wartime levels. \(^{82}\)

McNamara’s efforts to rationalize the Reserve Components were to culminate a year and half later in a second major reorganization proposal, involving: a large-scale reduction in Reserve Component combat divisions; the merger of all Army Reserve units into the National Guard; and the reconfiguration of the Army Reserve to consist solely of individual Reservists. In part this reorganization effort was driven by the Army’s fiscal constraints: funding was unavailable both to modernize all active-duty Army units and equip a 29-division Reserve Component. In light of these constraints, the McNamara Pentagon determined that full modernization could only be achieved with an active-duty/reserve force structure of twenty-four divisions: sixteen active-duty divisions and eight reserve combat divisions. \(^{83}\)

As opposition mounted to this latest reserve proposal, McNamara announced in November 1965 that 751 Army Reserve units would be disbanded nationwide. Furthermore, the reserves’ high-priority units once more were to be restructured. Now designated the Selected Reserve Force, these units would be assigned to quickly reinforce active-duty units in contingencies beyond the rapidly escalating Vietnam conflict. This new force would consist of three divisions and six independent brigades from the National Guard along with 232 combat service and combat support

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\(^{81}\) Kaufmann, \textit{McNamara Strategy}, 80.

\(^{82}\) On the details of this reorganization and the battle over its approval, see Crossland and Currie, \textit{Twice the Citizen}, 154-61.

\(^{83}\) Ibid., 163.
service Army Reserve units. The peacetime manning levels of these units would be increased to one hundred percent from their current levels of seventy-five to eighty percent. 84

After two and half years of acrimonious debate, insurmountable opposition to the Army Reserve/National Guard merger from Congress and from the Army Reserve’s Reserve Officers’ Association forced the Pentagon once again to accept a compromise on the composition of the reserves. In the Pentagon’s final version, approved by Congress in the summer of 1967, the Reserve Component was reduced to eight combat divisions, all in the National Guard. The Army Reserve, however, was able to hold onto its thirteen training divisions, as well as its combat support and combat service support units. As an additional sweetener, the Army Reserve also acquired three of the Reserve Component’s twenty-one independent combat brigades. Paid drill strength was maintained at 400,000 for the National Guard, but reduced to 240,000 for the Army Reserve. Except for the elimination of the reserve training divisions in the 1970s, the Reserve Component maintained this basic force structure through the 1980s. 85 By 1967, however, the U.S. Army was already mired in a conflict in Southeast Asia which was to affect both active-duty and reserve force structures, as well as manpower levels throughout the service, for the next decade.

When President Johnson ordered the first combat units to Vietnam in July of 1965, the Army was deployed to a number of locations outside the continental United States (CONUS): five divisions and three independent regiments were stationed in Europe, two divisions were stationed in Korea, one division was based in Hawaii, an independent airborne brigade was stationed in Okinawa, two independent infantry brigades were based in Alaska, and an infantry brigade was assigned to the Panama Canal Zone. 86 The remainder of the Army units were all stationed in CONUS, including: eight divisions – two armored, two airborne, one mechanized infantry, and three infantry – as part of the U.S. ground force strategic reserve (two marine divisions rounded out this force); an air assault test division; two independent brigades, one each of infantry and armor, which primarily served as training units; and an armored cavalry regiment. 87

By the middle of 1968, total active-duty Army division strength had increased from sixteen to nineteen divisions, while manpower levels nearly doubled from their early 1960s figures. The majority of these forces were engaged in the war raging in Vietnam. Prior to the 1968 Tet

84 On this reorganization, see Ibid., 171-72; and Mahon, Militia and National Guard, 234.
85 On McNamara’s merger efforts and their opposition, see Crossland and Currie, Twice the Citizen, 163-179; and Mahon, Militia and National Guard, 231-36.
87 Ibid.
Offensive, units deployed to Vietnam included seven Army divisions and three independent brigades or regiments, as well as two Marine divisions. Despite increases in selective service levies, the Army was able to achieve this build-up only at the cost of seriously depleting its forces elsewhere.

For example, the U.S.-based strategic reserve force was reduced to only four divisions; the remaining state-side units consisted of the two training brigades and a single infantry brigade in Alaska. Of these forces, only the 82d Airborne was deemed fully combat-ready and deployable, with the rest severely skeletonized for replacements to Vietnam. Moreover, all of these units, including the 82d, found themselves heavily involved in restoring and maintaining order during the anti-war demonstrations and racial tensions of 1967 and 1968, further reducing their combat-readiness. The Vietnam War’s demands on manpower led to a further reduction in state-side forces by the middle of 1968, when a brigade each from the 82d and the 5th Mechanized divisions were deployed to Southeast Asia.

Similar activities took place in Europe, where personnel were drawn off as early as 1966 to fill-out under-strength or newly-activated divisions earmarked for Vietnam. By mid-1968, entire units were being transferred from Europe to the United States, including the remaining two brigades of the 24th Infantry (Mechanized) Division, an armored cavalry regiment, and several support units. This transfer was made, in part, to help shore-up the depleted strategic reserve. Although deployed stateside, these units remained committed to a NATO contingency and much of their heavy equipment remained on the European continent. Nonetheless, by 1969 U.S. forces in Europe had been reduced by over 100,000 troops from earlier in the decade, with the Johnson Administration projecting a European troop deployment of only 291,000 by 1970; the number of divisions earmarked for Europe dropped from fourteen to nine.

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88 The fourth division, the recently formed the 6th Infantry, was never more than a paper unit.

89 Ibid., 201-205.


A major reason for the strain on Army force and manpower levels was President Johnson’s decision, in the summer of 1965, not to order a mobilization of the reserves. This decision was made despite a recommendation by Secretary of Defense McNamara and the Joint Chiefs of Staff that nearly 235,000 reservists, including approximately 125,000 from the Army RC, be called to federal service. Moreover, as we have seen, it was taken in the face of existing mobilization plans, wherein any large-scale commitment of military ground forces was highly dependent upon the call-up of the Army reserves. This dependence was especially acute in the area of basic training, where Army Reserve training divisions were expected to supply the bulk of units to train any large influx of draftees, the active-duty Army having already eliminated half of its division-size training units during its early 1960s build-up. The absence of these reserve divisions for training placed a disruptive burden on active-duty Army strategic reserve units.

Several reasons have been cited for this failure to call-up the reserves early in the Vietnam conflict. Throughout the conflict, President Johnson sought to avoid actions that could arouse public opposition to the war. And, given the unpleasant experiences associated with the Korean and Berlin mobilizations, the political leadership had reason to fear that a reserve call-up could create similar domestic political and economic costs. Moreover, Johnson and many of his advisers wished to refrain from sending dramatically hostile and escalatory signals to North Vietnam and its allies, as well as to U.S. allies. Reserves also were not called up specifically for Vietnam because of a desire to retain these units for other contingencies that might arise. But, perhaps most importantly, reserves were not mobilized for Vietnam owing to President Johnson’s fear that such actions would help bring about a national debate on Vietnam that, in turn, could threaten his “Great Society” domestic welfare programs.

A limited mobilization, involving sixty-six Army Reserve Component units, did finally occur in the spring of 1968. The mobilization was justified as a response to the Tet Offensive in Vietnam and to increased tensions in Korea, including the seizure of the U.S. spy ship USS Pueblo. However, only thirty-five of the forty-two Army Reserve support units mobilized were shipped to

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Vietnam, with the remainder assigned to the depleted strategic reserve. Of the over 12,000 National Guard personnel federalized, only 7,000 saw action in Vietnam; of these, 4,000 were detached from their units to act as individual replacements. By the summer of 1969, all Reserve Component ground force personnel had been returned to civilian live.

By this time, several elements of U.S. strategy that would directly affect Army manpower levels and force structure were under revision. First, a new president was in office, committed to the withdrawal of all U.S. ground forces from Vietnam and the turning over of the war to the South Vietnamese military. As a result, the United States began the “Vietnamization” of the war during 1969, and the first Regular Army units began to return home. Moreover, the Nixon Administration expressed its intent to extend “Vietnamization” across the globe. In the Nixon (or “Guam”) Doctrine, President Nixon announced that countries allied to the United States (except those in NATO and Japan) would from now on have to rely on their own ground forces as a first line of defense. U.S. naval, air, and nuclear forces would be provided as necessary, but the United States would no longer so readily provide ground forces for the defense of U.S.-allied Third World countries. In a third change, in official recognition of the split in the communist world, the Pentagon was directed to adopt a new “one-and-a-half-war” strategy for force planning purposes. Accordingly, the military would

maintain in peacetime general purpose forces adequate for meeting a major communist attack in either Europe or Asia, assisting allies against non-Chinese threats in Asia, and contending with a [limited] contingency elsewhere.  

These new strategic policies reduced the requirements for Army forces and had an obvious effect on the service’s force structure. As divisions returned to the states from Vietnam, several were simply deactivated or put into a skeletonized cadre status. By the time the last of the U.S. ground forces left Vietnam at the end of 1972, this process of deactivation had left the Army with a mere thirteen active-duty divisions, down from a Vietnam War high of nineteen divisions and three fewer than before the Vietnam build-up.


Army personnel and force levels were driven during the 1970s by the cessation of conscription, constrained defense budgets, and a reduced role for ground forces in U.S. security strategy. Adding further to the service’s troubles was an underlying public antipathy towards the

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military in the aftermath of Vietnam and the social upheavals of the 1960s. These factors combined to present the service with its most severe personnel problems since the late 1940s. In turn, the situation forced the service to establish a new and closer relationship between the active-duty and reserves forces. Two studies early in the Nixon Administration set the stage for Army manpower issues throughout the coming decade.

First, the President’s Commission on All Volunteer Armed Forces (known as the “Gates Commission”) was formed soon after the Nixon Administration came to power, with a mandate to examine the new president’s campaign pledge to end conscription. In the period from the Korean War through the 1960s, the United States maintained its first extended “peacetime” draft. As the sixties drew to a close, however, the identification of the draft with the increasingly unpopular Vietnam War coupled with the perceived inequities of the conscription system led to widespread calls for an end to the draft. The Gates Commission began by arguing that, if the draft was to be maintained, military pay scales should be made commensurate with those found in the civilian marketplace in order to partially compensate for the inequities of selective service. If this were done, however, the Commission claimed that the military services would be able to fulfill their manpower needs through volunteers alone, removing the necessity for a draft. With the widespread acceptance of this argument, the Army was suddenly, and for the first time in its history, required to pay for a large active-duty force.

In a parallel effort, and as part of the new Administration’s reevaluation of U.S. security policy, the National Security Council (NSC) undertook an examination of the U.S. defense posture early in the Administration’s first term. The study identified manpower costs as a major driver of the “staggering” pressures on defense budgets. In addition, given the Administration’s commitment to an all-volunteer military, these personnel costs were expected to escalate rapidly. In light of this analysis, the study concluded that manpower had to be cut from the military. Moreover, these cuts had to be made where the bulk of the manpower existed – in the conventional forces and especially the Army.

As a result of the move to the All Volunteer Force (AVF), and consistent with the NSC analysis, the Army found that its active-duty personnel shifted over-night from a relatively inexpensive resource to a very expensive one, as the service attempted to maintain force levels while competing with the civilian economy for quality manpower. In pursuing this competition, increased personnel benefits and the devotion of more funds to recruitment led manpower costs to

97 Weigley, United States Army, 567; and Cooper, “Military Manpower Procurement Policy,” 163.

98 On the reasoning behind the Gates Commission conclusions, see Ibid., 163-64.

consume well over 50 percent of the Army’s budget by the mid-1970s.\textsuperscript{100} In response to these pressures, and with the end of the Vietnam War, the Army’s personnel numbers were quickly reduced. Active-duty end-strength was cut by nearly half from 1969 to 1973 – from 1.5 million troops down to 785,000.

To make up for the resulting manpower shortfalls, the Army – like all the services – began substituting civilian workers for military personnel in suitable jobs. The service also began to increase its recruitment of women: the percentage of female enlisted personnel in the Army grew from 2.4 percent at the start of AVF to nearly 10 percent by the early 1980s.\textsuperscript{101} And, to decrease the demand for personnel, starting in the early 1970s, the service cut and streamlined headquarters and management personnel within the Army Headquarters at the Pentagon, at the Army Major Commands, and at other Army installations throughout the United States.\textsuperscript{102}

Despite these efforts, the Army experienced a host of difficulties filling the ranks of its newly volunteer force. The media and congressional hearings throughout the 1970s were filled with rumors and allegations concerning recruiting improprieties and irregularities.\textsuperscript{103} Besides a shortfall in numbers, the Army also experienced serious shortages in the quality of recruits due to a combination of events, including an upturn in the civilian economy, a congressional cap on military salary increases, and the end of the Vietnam-era GI Bill. The service fell below its established strength objectives in fiscal year 1979, and was able to escape this fate the following year only through the expedient of recruiting a large percentage of admittedly low-quality personnel.\textsuperscript{104}

The Army’s Reserve Components, on which the potential impact of AVF had never been examined, were even more seriously affected by the end of conscription. Since the beginning of the peacetime draft, enrollment in the National Guard (and, to a lesser extent, the Army Reserve) had been viewed as an outlet for many young men to fulfill their military obligations without unduly disrupting their civilian lives. This legitimate means for circumventing the draft acted as boon to Guard recruitment. At no time was this more prevalent than during the latter half of 1960s, the

\textsuperscript{100} Weigley, \textit{United States Army}, 567.

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{102} Kalergis, “Purposeful Change,” 63-64.

\textsuperscript{103} For example, the Army found that an inaccurate re-scaling of its Armed Forces Qualifications Test (AFQT) during the mid-1970s had resulted in the inadvertent introduction of a large number of marginally qualified personnel; see Martin Binkin, \textit{America’s Volunteer Military: Progress and Prospects} (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1984), 12-13; and U.S. Congressional Budget Office, \textit{Quality Soldiers: Costs of Manning the Active-duty Army} (Washington, DC: Congressional Budget Office, 1986), 8.

height of the Vietnam War, when many Guard units had long waiting lists of applicants. Once
the threat of the draft ended, Guard manpower levels began a steady decline as personnel
completing their initial obligations left the organization and recruitment of new troops dwindled. In
the absence of further incentives or pressures to join, manpower levels in the Guard declined from
nearly 400,000 to about 345,000 between 1973 and 1979; the latter figure representing less than 80
percent of its funded strength.

Army Reserve manning levels suffered similar consequences with the advent of the AVF,
although the detailed reasons varied. The vast majority of Reserve manpower came from enlistees
or draftees who, upon completion of their required time in the active-duty Army, fulfilled their
military obligation by serving for a specified period in the Reserves. The pool of former draftees
entering the Reserves dried up following the end of conscription. Moreover, many who joined the
AVF did so with the intent of making the military a long-term career, thereby also reducing the
number of former enlistees rotating out of the active-duty Army into the Reserves. As a result, like
the Guard, personnel levels in Reserves units declined from over 235,000 in 1973 to fewer than
190,000 by 1979. In the second category of Army Reserve, the Individual Ready Reserve, whose
members were unassigned to organized units and were intended to fill-out under-manned active-
duty and reserve units in time of war, manning levels fell from 1,059,000 at the end of fiscal year
1972 to 144,000 by January 1978.

To remedy the situation facing the RC, several small-scale recruitment incentive programs
for the Guard and Reserve were undertaken during the Carter Administration. Nevertheless, reserve
force levels continued to decline to the end of the decade. By 1980, the entire Army Reserve
Component was suffering a shortfall in personnel of twenty-five percent below their peacetime
manning levels. To find the necessary personnel in time of war, discussion even turned to the
merits of reactivating officers and enlisted men from the ranks of the Retired Reserve, consisting of
soldiers who had finished their military careers or had otherwise fulfilled their military obligations.

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108 Ibid., 240.

The failure to adequately consider the adverse impact of the AVF on the reserves was especially ironic in that the AVF and the economic constraints accompanying it led the active-duty Army to rely increasingly on these Reserve Components to flesh out its wartime force structure in what came to be known as the “Total Force” concept. This increased dependence on the reserves was presaged in a December 1969 memorandum by then Army Chief of Staff General William Westmoreland. General Westmoreland, in part as a tacit criticism of the failure to mobilize reserves during the Vietnam War, ordered that future Army planning be predicated on the use of the Reserve Components as the initial and primary source of additional units and individuals for the active-duty component in any future rapid mobilization. Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird made this reliance on the Reserve Components official DoD-wide policy in an August 1970 memorandum to the service secretaries. At about the same time, the first Army experiments with round-out units - employing reserve forces to bring under-strength active-duty units to full wartime capability - began with the attachment of an Army Reserve battalion to the 1st Armored Division.

In its initial formulation, the Total Force concept appeared to be a return to the pre-Vietnam policy of mobilizing the Reserve Component during the open phases of major foreign policy crises, as in the Berlin Crisis of 1961. And, reminiscent of the early Eisenhower era, both Secretary Laird and the Army leadership argued for the increased use of reserve forces on the grounds of the economic advantages of substituting reserves for active-duty manpower. Again, officials cited figures demonstrating that ten reserve soldiers could be supported for the price of one active-duty enlisted person. Unfortunately for the Army, as will be seen, this argument would take on a life of its own, creating a rationale for a seemingly unending series of reductions in and restructuring of the active-duty Army as Congress sought further cost savings in the defense budget.

Another early-1970s development with long-term implications was the Army’s reconsideration of its support and combat structure. At the time, Army Chief of Staff General Creighton Abrams and Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger concluded that the Army needed to add three divisions to its active-duty force structure, returning to the pre-Vietnam force level of sixteen active-duty divisions, in order to demonstrate continued U.S. resolve in the face of the Vietnam draw-down. However, both Abrams and Schlesinger realized that, for the foreseeable

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110 Crossland and Currie, *Twice the Citizen*, 214.


future, no additional increases to personnel levels were to be forthcoming from Congress or the Nixon Administration. The reluctance on the part of Congress to increase Army personnel strength arose in part due to the fact that many in Congress were beginning to argue that the service’s use of its existing manpower resources was wasteful. Despite its streamlining efforts, influential Congressmen, in particular Georgia Senator Sam Nunn, claimed that the Army continued to have far too many personnel in management and logistics positions and far too few combat troops; resulting in an imbalance in the ratio of combat-to-support forces (known as “tooth-to-tail”). 113

To reconcile these divergent pressures, the Army instituted a policy which it was to repeat several times over the next ten years: headquarters and support manpower requirements were to be reduced further, while the freed-up active-duty manpower spaces were used to form additional combat units. In this way, the service was able to protect its manpower resource base, while expanding its number of division “flags.” 114 This policy was part of a larger deal cut by Schlesinger and Abrams in late 1973 and known ever since as the “Golden Handshake.” As part of this deal, Schlesinger agreed to support increases in the active-duty Army’s combat force structure and to protect from civilian analysts in OSD the service’s number one modernization program – the M-1 tank. In exchange, Abrams agreed not to seek expansion of the active-duty Army’s personnel strength beyond the current level of 785,000 and to rid the service of marginal or redundant support units. 115

To ensure approval of this force expansion, Abrams and Schlesinger formulated a carefully crafted scheme. To avoid opposition from the Office of Management and Budget, the Army budget submitted to Congress in January 1974 indicated only a small increase in force structure, from thirteen to thirteen-and-one-half divisions. Not until February, during appearances before Congress, did Abrams announce the service’s intention to expand to sixteen divisions. Owing to the support that the popular Chief of Staff enjoyed on the Hill and the seemingly “cost-free” nature of the increase in combat capability (more combat divisions for the same number of troops), Congress


easily approved the Army’s plans. Schlesinger then cemented this support by speaking favorably of the program both publicly and in internal Administration debates.\textsuperscript{116}

Interestingly, in light of subsequent policy, Schlesinger justified increasing active-duty division strength by criticizing former Defense Secretary Laird’s reliance on reserve combat units for “initial defense mission[s],” describing this decision as “imprudent.” While acknowledging that reserve ground units could be “useful in special circumstances,” Schlesinger asserted that active-duty forces would have to be relied on “where there are only short periods of warning and the most decisive battles of the war occur during the first days and weeks of conflict;” wars that he claimed would be the norm for the United States in the future. He concluded that the United States “should stop pretending that we can use all of [the RC] as full substitutes for active-duty ground forces.”

Schlesinger called on Congress to continue encouraging the Army to shift active-duty manpower from support to combat units. Finally, he urged Congress to maintain a floor of 785,000 troops in the active-duty force and, if possible, to increase active-duty manpower “so as to reduce still further our dependence on the Guard and Reserve for our initial defense forces.”\textsuperscript{117}

While Congress failed to maintain Schlesinger’s recommended troop minimum (Army end-strength would soon fall by another ten thousand troops), it enthusiastically promoted increasing the service’s “tooth-to-tail” ratio. The most visible manifestation of congressional enthusiasm for this policy came with the passage of the Nunn Amendment to the 1975 Defense authorization bill. The amendment, embodied in Public Law 93-365, mandated a reduction of support forces in Europe (principally in the Army and Air Force) of six thousand spaces in fiscal year 1975 and twelve thousand spaces in fiscal year 1976. The freed-up personnel spaces, in turn, were to be converted to combat units. The Army fully complied on schedule with this directive, converting 6,000 spaces in 1975 and 6,175 in 1976.\textsuperscript{118} Similar conversions from support to combat spaces also took place in Korea without congressional legislation, but consistent with the mandates of the Schlesinger/Abrams “Golden Handshake” agreement. Following completion of these initial conversions, however, some elements in the military suggested that the readjustment of the tooth-to-tail ratio had perhaps gone far enough, and that further conversions might reduce combat effectiveness and sustainability.\textsuperscript{119} The trend was even reversed slightly in 1980, with the addition

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\textsuperscript{116} The Abrams-Schlesinger strategy is presented in Ibid. Both the policy and the manner in which it was approved was to prove instructive to Schlesinger’s senior military assistant, General John Wickham, ten years later as he sought approval for the Light Infantry Division program.

\textsuperscript{117} Schlesinger, \textit{DoD Annual Report to Congress FY76}, pp. III-14, III-15, and III-16.


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of some support units to the active-duty force. By the late 1970s, however, the die had been cast: the notion that active-duty combat capability could be increased through cuts in support had become firmly rooted in Congress.

Similarly, the process of transferring these support missions to the reserves and the filling out of active-duty combat divisions with reserve units gained strong congressional support. The admonitions of Schlesinger and others not withstanding, throughout the remainder of the decade, the Reserve Components became ever more tightly integrated into the active-duty Army force structure, at least for wartime planning purposes. In fact, at the same time that Schlesinger was warning of the dangers of over-reliance on reserve forces, he announced the start of a large-scale program of affiliating Reserve Component combat brigades and battalions with active-duty divisions, either as round-out or augmentation units (the latter were designed to increase the combat capability of full-strength active-duty units in wartime). All three of the new divisions created in the “Golden Handshake” agreement were assigned round-out combat brigades. By the end of the decade, every active-duty division, except those stationed in Korea and Europe, had designated Reserve Component battalions or brigades, either as round-out or augmentation units. While the combat affiliation task was assigned principally to the National Guard, which contained the bulk of the combat units in the reserves, the Army Reserve supplied about sixty-six percent of the wartime support units to the active-duty Army. For example, according to the second commander of the Rapid Deployment Force, General Robert Kingston, a “sizable proportion” of the RDF – ostensibly designed to be a “quick reaction force” – would consist of Reserve Component forces. The integration of the reserves with the active-duty duty forces culminated in the CAPSTONE Program, finalized in 1980. Under this program, every Reserve Component unit, except Guard divisions, was assigned an active-duty Army affiliate. In addition, discrete reserve mobilization packages were designed for a wide range of contingencies. In short, within ten years the Reserve Component

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124 Crossland and Currie, Twice the Citizen, 255.
had gone from a backup force to the active-duty Army to one whose units would be among the first sent into a combat operation.

While perhaps carried further than originally intended, this policy also served another primary goal of the Army leadership. By making the active-duty forces evermore dependent on the reserves, these officers were trying to ensure that the Army would never again face a situation similar to its experience during the Vietnam War, where military forces were committed to battle without the full mobilization and support of American society.125

Despite their new mobilization tasks, however, the undermanned Guard and Reserve units remained frequently ill-trained and unprepared for their assigned combat and support roles. Most units were either short of critical equipment or equipped with obsolete or obsolescent armaments. Facilities were either inadequate or simply nonexistent. Moreover, several exercises conducted during the latter half of the 1970s pointed out severe shortcomings in the mobilization process.126

Efforts to remedy shortcomings in the Reserve Components, particularly the Guard, became a major congressional focus – often at the expense of active-duty units. As has been seen throughout this chapter, Congress long has been a strong supporter of Reserve and National Guard interests. Traditional congressional interest in reserve matters is understandable given the local constituency aspect and the historic grass roots strength of the National Guard and Reserve Officers Associations. The Total Force concept gave a new-found strategic basis to this long-running concern. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Army Chief of Staff would spend a portion of his time before Congress explaining why a Guard unit in a particular Congressman’s district or Senator’s state was not receiving adequate support or the latest equipment.127 There were frequent congressional attempts to adjust the Army’s modernization procurement schedule so that Guard and Reserve units would have priority in modern equipment over many of the active-duty divisions. Suggestions were even made by some in Congress that the numbers of active-duty personnel should be reduced until Guard and Reserve units were fully outfitted with the latest materiel.128


128 See, for example, U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Appropriations. Subcommittee on Defense, Department of Defense Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1985, Part 5: Army Light Infantry Divisions, Hearings, 98th Cong., 2d sess. (13 September 1984), 16.
On the larger strategic level, the Army and the country spent the first half of the 1970s attempting to overcome the legacy of Vietnam. The unsuccessful war in Southeast Asia affected the U.S. Army in a multitude of ways. Besides those already discussed, the experience brought about a severe degradation in morale, discipline and readiness of the force, a situation widely recognized and decried inside and outside the Army.\(^{129}\) The service’s painful experience with counterinsurgency fighting in the jungles of Southeast Asia and its aftermath led most of its officers to reject involvement in similar conflicts in the future, and embrace the more traditional form of warfare found on the plains of Central Europe. Other factors reinforced the Army’s turn back to the European continent.

The Nixon Doctrine, a direct result of the U.S. experience in Vietnam, suggested that U.S. ground forces would rarely become involved in combat outside of the European theater, and helped orient the service once again towards the defense of Western Europe. Moreover, the Army leadership claimed that the focus on the Vietnam War “set back the army ten years,” in terms of research, development, and procurement of weapons designed for the war in Europe.\(^{130}\) At the same time, the Warsaw Pact had continued to improve its conventional forces on the European continent, both quantitatively and qualitatively.\(^{131}\) Secretary of State Kissinger’s announcement of the “Year of Europe” in 1973 reinforced for the Army the importance of its NATO mission. Moreover, this mission appeared far less controversial among the public and politicians than did further interventions in the Third World. The service needed such a non-controversial mission to maintain funding support during a period of overall budgetary reductions. Finally, the 1973 Yom Kippur War demonstrated the new requirements and increased lethality of modern weapons in armored warfare, profoundly influencing the perceptions of the service’s force planners and designers.\(^{132}\) The upshot of all of these factors was the Army’s near-total embrace of the NATO mission following its exit from Vietnam.

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The coming to power of the Carter Administration brought about a second-look at the Army’s focus on the defense of Western Europe. The impetus behind this re-examination began with an NSC study, similar to the Nixon-era NCS effort eight years before, examining the overall U.S. military force posture. This new study, completed in mid-summer 1977, concluded that, while the United States could compete with the Soviet Union politically, economically, and ideologically, Moscow had the greater momentum in the military arena. The study questioned, for instance, NATO’s ability to withstand a Warsaw Pact attack on the European central front. Just as important, it characterized the Persian Gulf as a “vital and vulnerable region,” and suggested a requirement for a capability to deploy military forces to this region.

Debate over the implications of this study revealed “a sharp dispute” within the Carter Administration and was indicative of a wider split in world views among its members. On the one side, led by Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, were those who preferred to keep U.S. strategic nuclear forces at a minimum assured destruction level, wanted to examine unilateral force reductions in Europe and Korea, and felt that U.S. interests in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf regions could best be handled through U.S.-Soviet arms control. The other side of the debate, led by National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, emphasized the growing global Soviet military threat, the vulnerability of the Persian Gulf, and “the growing Soviet projection of power in Africa, Southeast Asia, and possibly even the Caribbean;” all of which needed to be countered militarily by the United States.

In the end, the NSC study led to the signing of Presidential Directive 18 (PD-18) in August 1977. PD-18 accepted the arguments of the Brzezinski faction by reaffirming the tenets of the NATO forward defense strategy in Europe. It also called for maintaining a “deployment force of light divisions with strategic mobility” for contingencies worldwide, especially in the Persian Gulf and Korea. Units designated for this light force included one Marine division and two Army divisions, the 82nd Airborne and the 101st Air Assault Divisions. The two Army divisions now formed what became known as the “Unilateral Corps.” It was from this document that, after overcoming great bureaucratic lethargy, the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) was born.

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134 Ibid., 177.
135 Ibid., 177-78.
136 Ibid., 177.
The early efforts to encourage formation of the RDF met with limited success throughout most of 1979. In April, for example, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown failed to move the Pentagon bureaucracy when he instructed the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) to study possible command arrangements for a rapid strike force. He tried again in June by sending a formal request to the JCS for a study of command arrangements for the Persian Gulf; a study to be completed by 1 September. The JCS replied to this request at the end of August with an equivocal response, unsure whether responsibility for such a force should go to the mordant CONUS-based Readiness Command or to a new independent organization. Brown sent yet another memo to the JCS in October, instructing them to establish by 1 March 1980 an independent joint task force with security responsibilities in Southwest Asia as well as globally. This memo, however, failed to specify which military forces were to be involved, what the relationship of this task force would be to other commands, or what operational strategies were to be adopted by the task force. More importantly, the memo again failed to move the bureaucracy to accelerate its efforts. 138

Despite this general lack of enthusiasm for the proposal within the Pentagon, there was interest expressed from the highest echelons of the Army. In his last press conference as Army Chief of Staff, in June of 1979, General Bernard Rogers described the forthcoming formation of the Unilateral Corps using already existing forces. 139 Likewise, the new Army Chief of Staff, General Edward Meyer, spent part of his first press conference discussing the establishment of a mobile striking force which “contain[ed] a potpourri of forces all the way from very limited war-type forces up through a corps consisting of both armored and light infantry units.” 140 Nevertheless, the military as a whole displayed little interest in an RDF concept prior to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. 141


141 Several reasons may have been behind this indifference. First of all, the Southwest Asian region was split between two existing U.S. Unified Commands, the European and the Pacific Commands. For both these commands, Southwest Asia was of peripheral concern. Yet, no one wanted to get involved in the bureaucratic turf battles necessary to divest one or both commands of their respective responsibilities in this region. Without a separate command for Southwest Asia, however, no bureaucratic entity existed willing to consistently push for strengthening resources in this area. Moreover, prior to Afghanistan, the Administration saw the principle threat to the region as arising from internal instabilities. None of the services were willing to divert resources from the primary and preferred missions to unconventional and possibility unpopular conflicts along the periphery. For more on these arguments, see Kupchan, Persian Gulf and the West, 88-90.
Once this invasion took place, however, the principle threat to the Persian Gulf region was seen as a conventional attack by Soviet air and ground forces. Now the Pentagon bureaucracy became fully engaged behind the RDF concept. On 18 February 1980, Secretary Brown ordered the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) to open its headquarters on March 1 under the command of Marine Lt. Gen. P. X. Kelly. Although the RDJTF would have no forces permanently assigned to it, three Army divisions (the 82nd Airborne, the 101st Airborne (Air Assault) and the 24th Infantry (Mechanized)), one Marine division and its accompanying air wing, two Ranger battalions, and two Special Forces groups would be available as ground forces.

Along with the formation of the RDJTF, other immediate military actions were taken in the region. In April, Oman and Kenya signed base access agreements with the United States in exchange for military aid; Somalia followed with a similar agreement in August. In the meantime, seven existing cargo ships were sent to the Indian Ocean with enough equipment and supplies on board for a 12,000-man Marine Amphibious Brigade and several air squadrons, two aircraft carrier battle groups were deployed, and a 1,800-man marine landing team was stationed aboard the fleet. During the fall of 1980, an Army-Air Force contingent of nearly five thousand troops participated in military exercises with Egyptian forces in Egypt.

The Carter Administration had planned for increased defense expenditures even before Afghanistan; some of the funding was to go to programs designed to improve the military’s strategic deployability for contingencies outside of Europe. For example, funding requests for a new multipurpose transport aircraft, termed the CX (later known as the C-5), as well as for maritime pre-positioning ships were programmed into the fiscal year 1981 budget proposals as early as November 1979. Eventually, eight fast sealift ships were also requested. The five-year defense plan announced by the Pentagon in December of 1979 projected a real average annual increase of 4.5 percent in defense appropriations. But, activities in Southwest Asia brought a renewed urgency, as well as additional funding, to these proposals.

Despite these efforts, however, by the end of the decade, the new Army Chief of Staff Edward Meyer would complain of a “hollow army,” with undermanned active-duty combat units supported by an inadequate active-duty logistics structure, and over-reliant on under-manned and under-equipped reserve units for critical functions, especially support. Readiness problems in the active-duty force were especially severe: six of the ten CONUS-based active-duty divisions were

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rated as non-combat ready in the summer of 1980. The final Carter defense budget attempted to remedy some of these deficiencies; proposing, for example, an active-duty manpower level for fiscal year 1982 of 786,000, up from an estimate of 775,000 personnel in fiscal year 1981.

**THE REAGAN BUILD-UP: 1981-1987**

The Reagan Administration came into office vowing to confront what it perceived to be growing worldwide political and military threats emanating from the Soviet Union. Many of its members also criticized what they felt had been a misplaced, decade-long Eurocentric focus to U.S. security policy. Nonetheless, Administration defense planning and policy documents continued to list the defense of Western Europe as an American defense priority second only to the defense of the United States itself. This mission remained the primary focus of the Army.

The Administration, however, also expanded and strengthened the Rapid Deployment Force, eventually turning it into a unified command, the U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM), in January 1983. A number of Army units were put under this command in peacetime, with others to be made available in an emergency. Unfortunately, most of these army units – along with the command headquarters to which they were assigned – remained stationed in the United States, over seven thousand air-miles from the Persian Gulf. RDF-related Army deployments to the region also began in the early 1980s. The first major RDF exercise, Operation Bright Star 82, began with

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144 Senate Armed Services Committee, *DoD Authorization for Appropriations for FY82*, Part 2, 656.


maneuvers involving joint U.S.-Egyptian armed forces in Egypt in November 1981. Eventually, more than six thousand U.S. troops—including elements of U.S. Army heavy divisions—took part in the month-long exercise, which included operations in Somalia, Oman, and the Sudan.\(^{149}\) And, in April 1982, the Army began rotating battalions from the 82nd Airborne and 101st Airborne (Air Assault) to the Sinai Peninsula as part of the Sinai Peacekeeping Force.

But a major thrust of the Reagan Administration security efforts lay in low-intensity conflict and countering Soviet expansion in the Third World beyond of the Middle East and Persian Gulf. Rarely, however, did the Administration envisioned using U.S. combat units to carry out these operations. Instead, the Administration preferred to employ military advisors, Special Operations units (such as Delta Force and the Green Beret), or semi-private paramilitary forces; and to stress the provision of financial and military aid for governments battling communist insurgents or insurgents battling communist regimes.\(^{150}\) When combat units were needed for contingency operations, the Administration usually turned to the Marine Corps for ground troops. By 1983, U.S. military forces were deployed overseas more frequently than during any other year since the Vietnam War; these operations included: operations in and off the coast of Lebanon; deployment of forces against Libya in support of both Sudan and Chad; re-deployment of naval forces into the Persian Gulf after Iran threatened oil shipping lanes; increased support for the Contras; Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada; and large-scale military exercises in Latin America. Of these operations, however, the Army was involved only in the last two—Operation Urgent Fury and military exercises in Latin America—and these only required deployments for a week or two per operation.

The personnel and budget pictures for the Army were decidedly mixed during the early years of the Reagan Administration. Despite carrying out the largest peacetime buildup of military forces in the nation's history, the coming to power of the Reagan Administration did not greatly improve the Army's active-duty duty manpower strength. The Army continued to operate under the constraints of the All-Volunteer Force, and in the face of budgetary restrictions and congressional reluctance to authorize large-scale increases in Army personnel.

\(^{149}\) Jay Monica, "RDF’s 'Bright Star'," *Washington Quarterly* 5, no. 2 (Spring 1982): 113-116. This exercise had been planned earlier under the Carter Administration, but had to be postponed for nearly a year.

There were definite improvements, however, in certain areas of the Army’s personnel picture during the early 1980s. The service was able, for instance, to fill its manpower spaces with much higher quality recruits. The educational level of recruits steadily increased during the early 1980s; the percentage of enlistees with at least a high school diploma reached record levels. Enlistees’ scores on the Armed Forces Qualifications Tests (AFQT) also improved, spurred in part by congressional legislation establishing an annual twenty percent ceiling on the recruitment of enlistees with marginal test scores. Several additional factors contributed to this overall improvement in Army personnel, including an across-the-board pay raise; intensified recruiting efforts; and increased unemployment in the civilian economy.\textsuperscript{151}

Many of these same factors led to a dramatic increase in manpower levels in the Army National Guard and Reserve as well. From 1980 to 1983, the paid drill strength of the Reserve grew from 190,000 to over 266,000, while the Guard expanded by 50,000 troops. At the same time, complaints continued in Congress and elsewhere over the training, equipping, and readiness of these Reserve Components.\textsuperscript{152}

Despite these improvements in the service’s personnel picture, remnants of Chief of Staff Meyer’s “hollow army” persisted. Army leadership still complained to Congress that many of the service’s active-duty combat units were maintained at ninety percent, or less, of their requisite wartime strength and that their sustainability was low. Testifying before Congress in 1981, Chief of Staff Meyer stated that “[b]efore activating more Army divisions, we must correct major deficiencies in the reinforcing, sustaining and supporting categories of the Army.”\textsuperscript{153} And, Army planners projected that additional manpower would be needed for existing divisions over the next ten years as the Army began to convert its armor and mechanized divisions to the new, larger Division 86 designs. A typical mechanized infantry division, for example, would grow from 18,500 manpower spaces in the old design to 20,265 under Division 86.\textsuperscript{154}

\textsuperscript{151} Martin Binkin, \textit{America’s Volunteer Military}, 28.


\textsuperscript{153} Senate Armed Services Committee, \textit{DoD Authorization for Appropriations for FY82, Part 2}, 688.

\textsuperscript{154} The exact amount of this shortfall is a matter of some dispute, mainly due to controversies over the number of mobilizable reserve personnel to include. One source stated that the shortfall approached one-quarter of a million manpower spaces; Lt. Colonel William Higgins (former LID action officer in the office of Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans) interview with the author, Alexandria, VA, 7 November. A second source, who helped arrive at the numbers, has confirmed that TRADOC found that the Army required 1,500,000 personnel to fill the Army ’86/90 force designs in wartime; Robert Keller (former Head of Force Directorate, Army Combined Arms Combat Development Activity) interview with the author, phone, 29 March 1989.
These rising manpower demands, moreover, would occur in an environment in which the prospects for recruiting were looking increasingly poor. Unfavorable projections in demographics were frequently cited as a major cause for concern in the future. For example, the size of the eighteen year-old male population was expected to decline over the coming years – after peaking in 1979 – owing to depressed birthrates over the previous two decades. Additional factors further darkened the Army’s recruiting picture: for example, the armed forces greater demand for recruits with higher intellectual skills as military technology became more complex; expected improvements in the civilian economy, making military service a less attractive-duty employment option; and greater competition from higher education for desirable elements in the declining youth population. Just as important, the Army’s demand for more manpower competed directly with the other services’ increasing manpower needs as the military buildup of the early 1980s reached its peak, a competition in which the Army had been traditionally handicapped.

Figure 1 illustrates the Army’s historic dilemma. The large-scale rapid Army mobilization and demobilization brought on by the two wars in Asia are clearly seen. While each of the other three services witnessed some “bump” in manpower due to these conflicts, none of them experienced the turbulence witnessed by the Army. Though both the Navy and the Air Force saw their end-strength reduced following Vietnam, these reductions were fewer in number and occurred at a much more gradual rate than were Army reductions during this period. Moreover, while the Army remained essentially flat throughout the remainder of the 1970s and into the 1980s, both the Air Force and Navy personnel numbers began to rebound beginning in the late 1970s. Excluding a small Vietnam War-era bump, the Marine Corps, by contrast, has maintained steady manpower levels of approximately 170,000 to 200,000 marines since 1950.

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155 The cohort size is expected to increase again, temporarily at least, beginning in the mid-1990s; see Binkin, America’s Volunteer Military, 29-42.

The Army's failure to expand its personnel levels in the early 1980s was both self-imposed and a product of congressional actions. To illustrate the former point, in the spring of 1981, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower, Reserve Forces and Logistics, Lawrence Korb, approved a five-year expansion of active-duty Army manpower amounting to 100,000 spaces.157 This expansion would have raised manpower levels up to the service's claimed wartime personnel requirements.158 Army Chief of Staff Meyer, however, rejected this proposal, opting instead for incremental increases to the service's manpower to bring end-strengths back up to around 785,000. Underlying Meyer's rejection of the larger Army expansion was the Schlesinger/Abrams "Golden Handshake" of 1973. While no one, in or out of the Army, considered any element of this agreement to be still binding, it had become commonly accepted within the service that a personnel strength of around 785,000 was the largest figure that the Army could justify and – most

157 Korb interview with author.
158 In 1982 congressional testimony, Army officials stated that an end-strength of some 867,000 personnel were required to fill the then-current wartime levels; U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services. *Department of Defense Authorization for Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1983, Part 3: Manpower and Personnel*, Hearings, 97th Cong., 2nd sess. (1982), 1440.
importantly – afford given other budgetary priorities. And, the affordability issue was becoming increasingly relevant in the early 1980s in spite of the Reagan build up.159

By the time the Reagan Administration came into office, the Army’s largest peacetime modernization effort in its history was just beginning to come to fruition, after a long decade of struggle. Central to this effort was the “Big Five” modernization program, consisting of the M1 tank, the M2/M3 infantry fighting vehicle, the Sergeant York air defense gun system, the Apache attack helicopter and the Blackhawk utility helicopter. Three of these programs were transitioning into production as the decade of the 1980s began. As a result of modernization, the Army estimated that procurement expenditures would increase from twenty-four percent of its budget in fiscal year 1981 to nearly thirty percent by fiscal year 1983.160 A less-than-expected increase for Army procurement in the final proposed Carter defense budget (for fiscal year 1982) had already led to a stretch-out of these programs. While the Reagan Administration supplemental for fiscal year 1982 restored these systems to their original production schedules, potential problems still lay ahead. For instance, a General Accounting Office (GAO) report, released in October 1981, cited “substantial cost growth” in the three modernization systems then transitioning into production.161 It predicted similar increases in the future for the remaining programs.

These expected increases in the procurement account had to be squeezed into a budget traditionally constrained by other expenditures. Since the coming of the All-Volunteer Force, the manpower-intensive Army had witnessed its budget dominated by two types of costs: personnel-related and O&M. In fiscal year 1981, for instance, these two areas consumed nearly seventy percent of the service’s budget.162 The October 1981 GAO report projected that elements of the service’s modernization program, once fielded, “will require very large amounts of resources in the late 1980s and beyond” for operations and maintenance (O&M).163 In the absence of congressionally-guaranteed long-term funding increases, General Meyer choose to sacrifice large-scale personnel increases, and their accompanying greater costs, for protection of the service’s modernization effort.164 The Army stayed with the much more modest Carter Administration

163 U.S. GAO, Budgetary Pressures, p. iii.
164 Korb interview with author; and General Meyer interview with author.
personnel program: for fiscal year 1982, an 11,000 increase over the estimated fiscal year 1981 end-strength of 775,000, stabilizing at 787,00 thereafter.\textsuperscript{165}

Congressional approval of even this modest increase, however, proved to be difficult. Although the service was able to attain a 1981 end-strength that was six thousand personnel above its initial estimate, actions during congressional deliberations over the fiscal year 1982 budget resulted in an approved end-strength for 1982 that was nearly 1,000 spaces below the previous year’s figure. When the Army subsequently requested a supplemental increase for fiscal year 1982 to achieve an end-strength of 784,000, as well as funding to maintain this level into fiscal year 1983, Congress rejected both requests, holding the service’s personnel level at 780,000 for both years.

In contrast to the Army, the other services were quite successful in their plans to simultaneously increase personnel strengths and modernize their forces. From fiscal year 1981 to 1983, Navy and Air Force authorized end-strengths increased an average of over ten thousand and eleven thousand personnel, respectively; while the Marine Corps witnessed an average annual growth of two thousand soldiers in its smaller force. The reasons behind this differential success rate are complex and vary from service to service, often based on historical congressional biases and perceptions. However, one factor behind this difference in the early 1980s can be found in the differing justifications the services gave for their manpower requests. Several patterns emerge from a review of the services’ congressional testimony on manpower issues from this period.

The Navy and Air Force, in requesting incremental increases in their authorized manpower levels, continually focused on the manning requirements of their latest weapon systems. For the Air Force, this included crews for new tactical air wings, ground launched cruise missiles, and strategic nuclear weapons.\textsuperscript{166} Likewise, early in the Reagan Administration, the Navy talked of the manning requirements for two soon-to-be recommissioned battleships and for several smaller ships then being built.\textsuperscript{167} Later on, this justification was expanded to the manning requirements for the “600-ship” navy, which the service claimed would require at least fifty thousand additional sailors.\textsuperscript{168} By justifying increases to personnel levels based on the manning requirements of particular weapons systems, both the Air Force and Navy were able to shift the debate to weapons procurement: If

\begin{itemize}
    \item \textsuperscript{165} Senate Armed Services Committee, \textit{DoD Authorization for Appropriations for FY82, Part 6}, 3254.
    \item \textsuperscript{166} See, for instance, Senate Armed Services Committee, \textit{DoD Authorization for Appropriations for FY82, Part 2}, 96.
    \item \textsuperscript{168} U.S. Congressional Budget Office, \textit{Manpower for a 600-Ship Navy: Costs and Policy Alternatives} (Washington, DC: Congressional Budget Office, August 1983), 5-12.
\end{itemize}
Congress approved procurement dollars for new weapons, then it also must approve the personnel levels required to manned them.

The Marine Corps presented a somewhat different approach, combining the small incremental needs of its forces with the increase importance of their missions. In February 1981 congressional hearings, Marine Corps Commandant General Robert H. Barrow testified that the Marines could manage in fiscal years 1981 through 1983 with the manpower level of 188,100 established in 1980. At the same time, however, he mentioned that the requisite war-time strength of the Marines was only 210,000 troops; in other words, the shortfall could be easily closed with little effort. And, in response to a written question concerning whether the Marines could use additional manpower, the Commandant presented a five-year program of manpower increases. At these same hearings, the Marine Corps also made a strong case for the increasing relevancy of its role, maintaining that the Corps’ “natural” missions were also those of most present concern to Washington: show-of-force and crisis intervention in areas outside of Europe. Congress responded favorably to this approach, quickly approving the Marine’s newly-proposed 1981 manpower figure – amounting to a 2,500 space increase – in a supplemental appropriation in March of 1981. And, within a month, Barrow’s unofficial five-year program had become the Marine’s official manpower requests for 1982 and beyond.

The Army’s manpower justifications suffered by comparison. Unlike the Navy and Air Force, the Army could not point to particular congressionally-approved weapons systems which had to be manned, but rather to division spaces which had to be filled – divisions which Congress had little do to in creating and which, unlike weapon systems, rarely generated jobs or dollars for the constituents back home. Moreover, as we have seen, Congress was skeptical of the need to fill these division spaces with active-duty manpower rather than the reserves. And, unlike the Marines, the Army presented a nearly insurmountable manning shortfall and was much less successful at presenting its role in operations outside of Europe.

In the area of reserve issues, the Army leadership attempted to reduce the active-duty Army’s dependence on the reserves. In their first Force Posture Statement to Congress, Secretary of Army John Marsh and General Meyer acknowledged that:

The realignment of soldiers from support to combat missions in the Active-duty Force was accommodated by greater reliance on the


170 Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, DoD Appropriations for FY82, Part 2, 188. This hearing was held on 23 April 1981.
Reserve Component for logistics in an emergency. In a real sense, we did rob Peter to pay Paul.\footnote{171} Much of the requested manpower increases during 1981 and 1982 were to go towards such programs as increasing active-duty support forces scheduled for deployment with the Rapid Deployment Force.\footnote{172} These efforts largely failed. The 1983-87 Program Objective Memorandum, for instance, stated that a significant portion of the support units for the Rapid Deployment Force would remain in the Reserve Components.\footnote{173}

This failure, in part, stemmed from the lack of concern among most of the civilian leadership in OSD over any undue dependence on the reserves. In fact, during the early 1980s, the civilian leadership asserted the need for an even greater integration of active-duty and reserve forces. In taking the Total Force Concept to its logical conclusion, Secretary of Defense Weinberger, in a speech before the Congress of the Interallied Confederation of Reserve Officers on 9 August 1982, stated that:

\begin{quote}
We can no longer consider reserve forces as merely forces in reserve... Instead, they have to be an integral part of the Total Force, both within the United States and within NATO.\footnote{174}
\end{quote}

Moreover, the view prevailed within OSD that any problems experienced by the services, including the active-duty/reserve mix in the Army, could be solved through increased expenditures—“a rising tide lifts all boats.”\footnote{175}

In sum, by the time Army Chief of Staff General Meyer reached the end of his tenure, in mid-1983, several trends in manpower policy presaged a difficult period ahead for the Army’s force and personnel structure: The Army was preparing to transition to a new force design structure that required far more manpower spaces than the service could fill, while shortfalls existed even in the present structure. Meanwhile, future economic and demographic trends suggested an increase in future personnel recruitment and retention costs. The composition of the service’s budget, coupled with the need to protect its equipment modernization program, precluded any large-scale increases in manpower levels.

The Army’s failure to gain congressional approval for the incremental personnel increases it did request, in the face of well-advertised shortfalls, contrasted sharply with the ready successes of its sister services. Moreover, both the Air Force and, especially, the Navy were projecting further manpower demands tied to weapon system procurement schedules. Congress continued to display a tendency to discount the importance of support functions located in the active-duty Army – the never-ending call for correcting the “tooth-to-tail” imbalance – in spite of Army complaints that this process had already gone too far. The Reagan Administration itself was calling for increased reliance on the reserves, a call which Congress was only too willing to take up.

General Meyer’s successor as Army Chief of Staff, General John Wickham, attempted to address the Army’s personnel shortfalls through the Army of Excellence (AoE) program. The dual, conflicting goals behind this effort was both to reduce the gap between the service’s required personnel spaces and its fixed end-strength, and to generate enough excess spaces to permit the creation of a new type of division (the Light Infantry Division) in the active-duty duty force structure. General Wickham gave the Army a mere ten weeks to develop the details of these Army-wide reductions. The personnel space reductions were brought about through a number of actions. First, headquarter staffs of non-combat units throughout the service, from the Department of the Army to the MACOMs and their various sub-components, were once again reduced and personnel sent back out into the field. The focus then shifted to down-sizing the divisions recently completed in the Division/Army 86 force design.176 Despite concerns that the Army had already put too much emphasis on combat capability versus support functions, the focus of the division down-sizing was on further reducing support functions in the active-duty duty force. These reductions were achieved, in part, through the introduction of less-manpower-intensive technologies, by pulling certain Combat Support (CS) and Combat Service Support (CSS) units out of the designs and consolidating these units at corps level, or by simply eliminating perceived inefficient or obsolescent CSS functions from the divisions. Finally, many CS and CSS functions and their associated personnel spaces were transferred to the Reserve Component.177 In the final result, the Army was able to partially close the personnel shortfall. For example, the Division ‘86 heavy divisions, both armor and mechanized infantry, were reduced from over twenty thousand personnel spaces down to near sixteen thousand.

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177 General Wickham, who was Defense Secretary Schlesinger’s military assistant in 1974, was a close observer of Schlesinger’s and Chief of Staff Abrams’ efforts to increase the number of Army divisions with a fixed end-strength by, in part, moving CSS functions to the reserves; General John A. Wickham, Jr. interview with the author, Fairfax, VA, 7 November 1988.
As the Cold War drew to a close in the late 1980s, the Army developed plans to transform itself from an armor-heavy, NATO-oriented force to a lighter, expeditionary force. These plans included reorganizing the service into three types of units: a largely non-mechanized XVIII Airborne Corps for the rapid response mission; elite special forces, designed for missions like counter-terrorism and hostage rescue; and heavy armor and mechanized infantry forces for high-intensity combat contingencies. These plans called for the Army to shift its force structure in favor of the XVIII Airborne Corps, with further force cuts planned to fall most heavily on armor and mechanized infantry forces. Nonetheless, the new Army Chief of Staff, General Carl Vuono, would continually emphasize over the coming months that the Army needed to retain “a mix of forces – armored, light, and special operations.” In addition, the senior Army leadership formed a “Light Force Modernization” task force to outline future equipment needs for the light forces. Future procurement would go first to the contingency corps, and only later to the other armor and mechanized units. However, this task force was not designed to improve the capabilities of the foot-mobile infantry, but instead to improve the strategic deployability of the dominant intra-service communities as it emphasized the development of lighter tanks, helicopters, and anti-aircraft and artillery systems. Essentially, although their traditional combat units might take cuts in the immediate future, the dominant communities were seeking to retain their position of pre-eminence within the service by “lightening up” their weapons platforms.

Secretary of Defense Weinberger retired in November 1987. His successor, Frank Carlucci adopted a much tougher management style, with tighter control over all the uniformed services. The new Defense Secretary came into office with a mandate to seek further reductions in service budgets as a result of a just-completed White House-Congressional budget summit. He soon directed the Army to cut $9 billion more from its fiscal year 1989 budget proposal. The service responded, in part, by ordering the reduction of ten thousand active-duty duty spaces in fiscal year 1988. To meet this reduction, the Army initially proposed cutting one brigade each from the 9th

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182 Included in the ten-thousand figure was a congressionally-mandate 1.5% cut in total active-duty duty officer strength; see Jim Tice, “10,300 Spaces to Be Sliced From Army Force Structure,” Army Times, 14 March 1988, 1.
Motorized Division and the 6th Infantry Division, turning those brigades’ missions over to National Guard units. While the plans to reduce to the 6th Infantry Division were eventually modified, thereby restoring 1,400 personnel spaces to the Army, cuts to the 9th Infantry Division went ahead as planned and reduced the active-duty Army from 780,900 to 772,300 personnel by 1 October 1988. These reductions signaled the beginning of a long force restructuring effort by the Army.

The service planned to maintain its fiscal year 1988 end-strength through fiscal year 1989. By contrast, Congress mandated that the strength of the Army’s reserve component increased by six thousand in fiscal year 1988; although an additional planned increase of nearly three thousand in fiscal year 1989 was canceled (see Table 1). In the end, the Army was able to restore about half of the total budget cut originally requested by Carlucci, largely by shifting these reductions onto the Air Force and Navy. Still, the service’s proposed budget share for fiscal year 1989 was only 27% of the total DoD budget (see Table 2). These budget levels were sustained as the 1989 budget worked its way through the 1988 congressional session.

A new round of Army budget and manpower cuts began shortly after the Bush Administration entered office in January 1989. Over the next four years, the active-duty Army’s force structure would find itself under pressure from two sources – steep budget reductions from OSD and Congress, and pressures from Capital Hill to enhance the role and maintain the size of the service’s Reserve Component. Faced with increasing budgetary pressures at home and in light of the political changes taking place at the time in Eastern Europe, the Bush Administration moved as quickly as possible in 1989 to implement further cuts in Army budgets. By the time the fiscal year 1991 budget proposal was presented to Congress in early 1990, OSD had mandated that the Army cut active-duty personnel spaces by nearly 44,000 through September 1991 (26,900 in 1990 and 17,000 in 1991). These reductions would lead to an Army end-strength of 727,000 personnel by the end of fiscal year 1991, the lowest troop level since 1950. To meet these cuts, the Army chose to deactivate the 2nd Armored Division and the 9th Motorized Division, as well as taking one brigade away from the 4th Infantry (Mechanized) Division. But these cuts were only the beginning.

183 “6th, 9th Infantry Divisions May Lose Active Brigade,” Army Times, 1 February 1988, 1; and Larry Carney, “6th Infantry Deal Saves 1,400 Slots,” Army Times, 15 February 1988, 1.


To accommodate the Administration's proposed annual two percent reduction in the
Pentagon's budget through fiscal year 1997, the Army leadership developed a multi-year end-
strength draw-down plan. Through fiscal year 1995, the service planned to reduce its active-duty
duty strength by 35,000 troops annually, for a total reduction of 140,000 personnel through the

1992-95 time period.\textsuperscript{186} Aided by the soon to be completed CFE Treaty, the Army proposed withdrawing one of its two corps stationed in Europe, leaving the service with 150,000 personnel on the continent.\textsuperscript{187} For the moment, the service was projecting a cut of only one additional active-duty duty division, bringing the service total down to fifteen active-duty duty divisions, with the bulk of the cuts presumably coming from support and headquarters units.

The size and pace of these reductions were still not enough for a Congress hungry for a "peace dividend." As Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee Les Aspin described the situation to General Vuono during congressional hearings on the Army's fiscal year 1991 budget:

I think we are headed for a real disconnect between what you see you need in the way of time, in order to bring down that force, and what I see are the political pressures. People are thinking we are going to get a very significant contribution from defense for the deficit reduction... It is not going to be demobilization, but it certainly is going to be more accelerated than the type of gradual thing you are looking at. You are going to have to bring down the size of the Army a lot faster than 35,000 soldiers a year... that is just flat not going to be adequate.\textsuperscript{188}

Aspin's assessment would prove prescient, despite events in the Persian Gulf less than six months later.

In the meantime, the service completed its proposed long-range budget plans through fiscal year 1997 and presented them to OSD for approval. With small additional cuts in manpower projected for fiscal year 1996, the Army leadership proposed an active-duty duty end-strength of 580,000 personnel by 30 September 1996, a fourteen-division active-duty component (a reduction of one division) and an eight-division reserve component.\textsuperscript{189} However, the Army leadership's desire to protect force structure persisted in these plans: a twenty-five percent cut in manpower over a ten-year period (from 780,000 in 1987 to 580,000 in 1997) brought only a twenty percent reduction in division flags (from eighteen to fourteen).

While largely accepting the Army's projected personnel numbers, OSD quickly rejected its proposed force structure. As early as June 1990, the Secretary of Defense, Richard Cheney, presented an "illustrative" plan to congressional budget negotiators that called for a 12-division

\textsuperscript{186} Jim Tice, "Faster Force Cuts Foreseen," \textit{Army Times}, 19 March 1990, 15.
\textsuperscript{188} Les Aspin quoted in Tice, "Faster Force Cuts Foreseen," 15.
active-duty Army force structure and an active-duty end-strength of 568,000 troops by 1997.\textsuperscript{190} By August, this figure would become part of the Pentagon’s Base Force for the future. The Base Force, developed jointly by OSD and the JCS’s Joint Staff, presented a notional three-way split in the military’s force structure: an Atlantic Force, a Pacific Force, and a Contingency Force. For the Army, five active-duty divisions were assigned to the Atlantic Force, with two stationed in Europe and three in CONUS; two divisions were assigned to the Pacific Force, with one stationed in South Korea and a second in Alaska or Hawaii; and five divisions—the 82\textsuperscript{d} Airborne, 101\textsuperscript{st} Air Assault, 24\textsuperscript{th} Infantry (Mechanized), 7\textsuperscript{th} Infantry Division (Light), and 10\textsuperscript{th} Mountain—were assigned to the Contingency Force (roughly corresponding to the Army’s XVIII Airborne Corp).\textsuperscript{191} The three “Forces” were seen as purely conceptual, designed to aid planners in organizing their thinking, and were not designed to be actual future military commands. Nonetheless, the force structure—known simply as the Base Force—was meant to be the Pentagon’s outline for the design of the military in the 1990s as well as the driver of future budget planning.

Shortly after the release of the Base Force blueprint, the armies of Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, setting off the largest U.S. overseas military deployment since the Vietnam War. Throughout the build-up in the Gulf, however, the service continued its planned draw-down. And, as Aspin predicted, Congress maintained its call for even faster cuts. Despite pleas from Chief of Staff Vuno that the service could not sustain faster cuts without “fractur[ing] the Army,” the House passed its version of the 1991 defense budget in September 1990 calling for cuts of 68,500 troops in fiscal year 1991, while the Senate version mandated reductions of 40,000 troops over the same time period. In October, Secretary Cheney further undermined the Army’s objections that it could not survive cuts deeper than the planned 17,000 troops, by announcing to Congress that up to 35,000 troops could be cut from the service in 1991 while still meeting the Pentagon’s operational needs in the Gulf.\textsuperscript{192} The two houses of Congress finally agreed to an Army reduction of 42,000 troops, while allowing the Defense Department to exceed in the short term the authorized end-strength ceiling by up to one percent if this were necessary for Operation Desert Shield.\textsuperscript{193}

As the troops returned home from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait following the war against Iraq, active-duty Army manpower levels continued to fall. Under pressure from both OSD and Congress for deeper cuts in Army personnel levels, General Vuno presented a 1992-93 fiscal year plan to

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Congress that set active-duty duty troop levels at near 535,000 personnel by 1995 (versus the earlier plan for 580,000 troops by 1997). Congress willingly accepted this level, setting a figure in the fiscal year 1992 defense bill of 536,000 troops by 1995. Abandoned also was General Vuono’s cautious schedule for achieving these troop reductions: rather than maintaining annual reductions of 35,000 soldiers, the 1992 defense bill required cuts of 49,800 spaces in 1992 and another 42,000 in 1993.\footnote{Greg Seigle, “Reserve Cuts Hit Raw Nerve in Congress,” \textit{Army Times}, 6 January 1992, 32.} As a result of these planned personnel cuts, unspecified future reductions in force structure would be necessary to prevent the hollowing out of the Army’s combat forces.

With General Vuono’s retirement in July of 1991, his successor, General Gordon Sullivan, would be left the task of deciding where further cuts would be made in the service’s force structure. General Sullivan outlined, in part, how these cuts would be made in an August 1991 presentation. Two of the four divisions stationed in Europe would return home turning fiscal year 1992 and one of the two U.S. Corps in NATO would be disbanded, reducing Army troop levels in Europe down to under 100,000 soldiers. Of these forces, the 8\textsuperscript{th} Infantry (Mechanized) Division would simply be deactivated, while the 3\textsuperscript{rd} Armored Division would disband temporarily and reactivate later in CONUS to replace an (as yet unnamed) stateside division to be deactivated.\footnote{“US Army Details Major Withdrawal,” \textit{Jane’s Defence Weekly}, 24 August 1991, 300.} Additional, smaller Army units stationed in Europe would also be sent home and disbanded, including the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR).

Later, in its fiscal year 1993 budget proposal, the Army revealed additional details about its force restructuring efforts. The 199\textsuperscript{th} Infantry (Motorized) Brigade, the last remnant of the disbanded 9\textsuperscript{th} Infantry Division, would be re-flagged as the 2\textsuperscript{nd} ACR and converted into the Army’s first light armored cavalry regiment. The unit was scheduled to move to Fort Polk, Louisiana to operate as the Opposing Force at the Joint Readiness Training Center, when the Center itself moved from Fort Chaffee during the summer of 1993. The service announced in its fiscal year 1993 budget proposal that the drawdown in Europe would be completed in 1993 rather than 1995, as previously indicated.\footnote{Details on the Army’s FY1993 budget proposal are drawn from Katherine McIntire, “Doing the Force-Structure Shuffle,” \textit{Army Times}, 6 January 1992, 26; Bernard Adelsberger, “Army Takes Fast Track to Contingency Force,” \textit{Army Times}, 10 February 1992, 6; Bernard Adelsberger, “1993: Big Step Toward Bottom Line,” \textit{Army Times}, 10 February 1992, 6; and Sean D. Naylor, “On the Fly: Army Scrambles to Assemble Quick-Reaction Light Armor Force,” \textit{Army Times}, 20 July 1992, 28.}

Other details of the Army’s 1993 budget also suggested that the service was reorienting from a European to a rapid contingency perspective. But, it was clear that the composition of any rapid contingency force had changed since the end of the Gulf War. One of the lessons the Army
drew from Operation Desert Storm was that future contingencies likely would involve operations against heavily mechanized opponents. This insight, coupled with the need for rapid deployability, led the service to renew its decade-long search for a light Armored Gun System. Work also began on converting the 2nd ACR now stationed at Fort Polk to a new light armored cavalry regiment design. In addition, an armored division, the 1st Cavalry, was shifted from a NATO-oriented corps (III Corps) to the contingency-oriented XVII Airborne Corps. Moreover, all heavy divisions in the XVII Airborne Corps would now be full-up units ready for immediate deployment. 197 By contrast, all three remaining III Corps divisions, assigned to reinforce forward-deployed forces in Europe, would now have a National Guard round-out brigade.

Finally, the budget proposed total cuts of nearly 55,000 National Guard and 50,000 Army Reserve personnel in fiscal years 1992 and 1993. These proposed cuts in the Reserve Component set the stage for yet another bruising battle on Capital Hill, as the number of reservists from each state as well as specific units slated for elimination became identified by the Pentagon. Displaying once again their long-renown political power, the reserve lobbying organizations (the National Guard Association, the Adjutants General Association, and the Reserve Officer’s Association) and their congressional supporters ultimately prevailed in the ensuing budgetary battle. Congress passed a 1993 Defense budget mandating nearly 423,000 Guardsmen and 280,000 Army Reservists (for a total of over 700,000 reserve personnel), and only 575,000 active-duty duty troops by the end of 1993. Active-duty Component Army strength was scheduled to be reduced further, down to 525,000 by 1995 according to congressionally-authorized figures.

SUMMARY

During much of the period from the end of World War II, the peacetime U.S. Army found itself beleaguered and besieged. Except during times of real or perceived national emergencies, the Army lost out in the three-way struggle with its sister services for budgetary resources. New technological trends, arguments of cost-effectiveness, and an American predisposition to substitute military hardware and firepower for soldiers all led Congress and several Administrations to favor the hardware-focused Air Force and Navy over the manpower-intensive Army. Public and political backlash against the Army’s involvement in two unpopular wars on the Asian continent served to

197 The 1st Cavalry Division, which had consisted of two active-duty brigades and one National Guard round-out brigade, would now be a fully active-duty duty division with the addition of the remaining brigade from the deactivated 2nd Armored Division. Likewise, the 24th Infantry (Mechanized) Division would absorb the formerly independent 197th Infantry (Mechanized) Brigade, losing its third-brigade round-out unit as well. In both cases, the new active-duty brigade and its parent division had been paired during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, while the abandoned National Guard brigades had been at the center of the subsequent round-out training controversy; see, for example, Major Craig S. Chapman, “Gulf War Nondeployed Roundouts,” Military Review 72, no. 9 (September 1992): 20-35.
accelerate Army demobilization and funding reductions following these wars, adding further to the service’s woes. Table 3 illustrates, for example, how the service’s force structure varied widely over the first forty years after World War II. With this force structure, the Army was required to station troops permanently overseas to fulfill U.S. strategic commitments, maintain a strategic reserve at home for unforeseen contingencies, and still have enough forces available to fight two major conflicts over twenty years on the Asian periphery.

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Source: Semi-Annual Report of the Secretary of Defense, selected years; Annual Report of the Secretary of Defense, selected years; Department of Defense Annual Report, selected years.

Table 3: Location of Active-duty Duty Army Divisions, Selected Years

A second, and related, set of constants and constraints revolves around the Army’s relationship with its reserve forces. Congress, for example, has often favored the interests and budgets of the Army NG and Reserves over those of the active-duty Army. Meanwhile, the active-duty Army developed a reliance on its reserve component for many functions over the post-World War II – and especially post-Vietnam War – period. These forces, however, were often unavailable when needed: the active-duty Army usually (and sometimes unfairly) viewed these forces as ill-prepared for combat missions, while politicians often have proven reluctant to mobilize these forces during crises. These conflicting impulses have produced stresses and strains within the Army during both peace and war. All of these constants and constraints influenced, either directly or indirectly, the Army’s intra-service community politics, as the following chapters will illustrate.
CHAPTER THREE
THE EVOLUTION OF U.S. ARMY
COMMUNITIES AND FORCE STRUCTURE

INTRODUCTION

Over the course of the twentieth century, a number of technological and military
developments have influenced the number, type and relative political position of the Army’s
internal communities. These include: mechanization of ground warfare; the development and
employment of aircraft in combat operations; the development of nuclear weapons, especially
tactical battlefield nuclear weapons; the U.S. commitment to defend Western Europe against
invasion by a modern, mass army; the American preference for substituting firepower for
manpower; and the U.S. participation in two unpopular infantry-focused wars on the Asian
continent. This chapter will explore the affect of these developments on the U.S. Army’s
communities, especially the membership of its reigning oligarchy. One of the most affected
communities has been the infantry branch, which split into several different sub-communities and
witnessed the diminution of its traditional foot-mobile infantry from a once dominant position in the
service’s internal political structure. This chapter will illustrate as well how the external constraints
identified in the previous chapter effected the Army’s communities and their relative power within
the service.

THE INTER-WAR PERIOD

Up to the eve of the Second World War, the ground Army was dominated by three combat
arms: infantry, cavalry, and field artillery.1 Their position was reinforced by the “semi-
autonomous” status granted to the leadership of these branches in the persons of the newly
formed Chiefs of the Combat Arms (artillery, cavalry and infantry) by Congress in the National
Defense Act of 1920.2 Of these three communities, the infantry was by far the dominant branch.

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1 Due to the reorganization of the Artillery Corps in 1907, the Army acquired a fourth combat arm – the coastal
artillery – but this branch tended to be much weaker than the other three. As the threat to the U.S. mainland receded
during the course of World War II, the political influence of this branch receded still further. The coastal artillery
was abolished as a separate branch and merged once again with the field artillery in the Army Reorganization Act of
1950.

2 In turn, the Chiefs of the Combat Arms had been created as a means to wrest some power over weapons
development and procurement for the service’s various bureaus; see, for example, Daniel R. Beaver, Modernizing
the American War Department: Change and Continuity in a Turbulent Era, 1885-1920 (Kent, OH: The Kent State
University Press, 2006), 198-99; and William O. Odom, After the Trenches: The Transformation of U.S. Army
Doctrine, 1918-1939 (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1999), 17. For more on the problems of
the Army’s bureau system, see Hewes, From Root to McNamara, 3-31; and Beaver, Modernizing the American War
Department. For critical discussions of the role of service chiefs, see Odom, After the Trenches and Johnson, Fast
Tanks and Heavy Bombers.
The primary type of military combat unit in the Army was infantry-based, with the largest generally being infantry regiments or divisions. The infantry held the same status in the U.S. Army as it did in most armies worldwide: i.e., it was considered the “Queen of the battlefield.” According to a 1938 War Department General Staff statement, for example: “The infantry division continues to be the basic combat element by which battles are won, the necessary enemy field forces destroyed, and captured territory held.”

Up to the end of World War I, all infantry moved to and across the battlefield on foot. The increasing mechanization of warfare in the period between the two world wars, however, led the armies of the great powers to experiment with and develop several new types of combat formations beyond these centuries-old infantry units. Aircraft and self-propelled, armored ground vehicles (most importantly the tank) radically changed warfare. Their effects on the U.S. Army were to be manifold: altering the way its ground forces fought battles; changing its arsenal of weapons; adding new communities to the service and its oligarchy; splintering the infantry branch as a variety of different types of infantry organizations were formed; and diminishing the power of the traditional infantry community.

But mechanization in ground forces initially came more slowly to the U.S. military than in other great power militaries. While public apathy towards the military and tight defense budgets helped to curb mechanized and motorized innovation in the U.S. Army during the interwar years, these factors alone are insufficient to explain this trend, as witnessed by the greater success experienced by other armies of the period operating under similar constraints. A better explanation can be found within the U.S. Army, where the service’s traditional role as a border constabulary and a focus on protecting the U.S. homeland combined with the opposition and prejudices of the service’s then-ruling oligarchy of three combat branches restrained mechanization and prohibited the rise of an independent armored service.

The American Army in World War I developed and employed a Tank Corps during World War I. Armor opponents, however, succeeded in halting this independent armored organization through restrictions embodied in the basic legislation governing the Army during the inter-war period, the National Defense Act of 1920. In addition to abolishing the Tank Corps, the National Defense Act mandated that the tank was an infantry weapon, and restricted its

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3 1st ind. (LtR C/AC to AG, 31 August 1938), AG to C/AC, 5 October 1938; quoted in Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, eds. The Army Air Forces in World War II, Vol. 6: Men and Planes (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), 197, n. 7.


development and use to the infantry. Responsibility for tank doctrine and training was specifically limited to the Chief of Infantry, while the development of tank technology was assigned to an infantry-affiliated section of the Ordnance Department. In 1922, the Army’s Adjutant General’s Office decreed that:

The primary mission of the tank is to facilitate the uninterrupted advance of the riflemen in the attack. Its size, armament, speed, and all the accessories for making it an independent force must be approached with the above mission as the final objective to be obtained in development.

Tank development remained firmly under the control of the infantry branch throughout most of the 1920s. Indeed, Majors Patton and Eisenhower were strongly discouraged from independently examining the tank while instructors at the Tank School at Fort Meade, Maryland. Eisenhower was even threatened with court martial by the Chief of Infantry if he persisted in his independent studies.

Efforts were made in the late 1920s to break the grip of the infantry, with mechanized experiments conducted by an ad hoc Experimental Armored Force, utilizing the Army’s large stockpile of World War I tanks. However, this effort came to a halt in 1931 when the new Chief of Staff, Douglas MacArthur, citing the severe budgetary constraints imposed by the depression, disbanded the Experimental Mechanized Force. He decreed that henceforth future tank developments would be undertaken within the confines of both the infantry and the cavalry branches. Although small-scale field tests were renewed in 1932, this time under the cavalry branch, the long struggle of armor supporters in the U.S. Army against the service’s budget restrictions and the entrenched interests of the established combat arms continued right up to the German invasion of France in the late spring of 1940.

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6 This legislation followed the recommendation of the Superior Board, appointed by the General Headquarters Staff of the U.S. Allied Expeditionary Force to examine the lessons of World War I: “...tanks should be recognized as infantry supporting and accompanying weapons...and...be organized for association with and [engaged in] combat as part of an infantry command;” Report on Superior Board on Organization and Tactics 1919 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Command and General Staff College, 1919), 30; quoted in Hofmann, George F. “The Demise of the U.S. Tank Corps and Medium Tank Development Program.” Military Affairs 37, no. 1 (February 1973): 21, n. 6. For more on the National Defense Act, see Russell F. Weigley, Eisenhower’s Lieutenants: The Campaigns of France and Germany, 1944-1945 (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1981), 8.


8 Wilson, Treat ‘Em Rough, 215-216; Hofmann, “Demise of the U.S. Tank Corps,” 20; and Johnson, Fast Tanks and Heavy Bombers, 75.

tank developments were seen merely as a means to better conduct their traditional roles or, as one historian of the period, David Johnson, has put: “the tank was viewed as an auxiliary of the infantry or as a way to modernize the cavalry.” This pattern continued until the formation of the independent Armored Force in July 1940 finally combined all tanks and tank development in the U.S. Army under a single organization.

The development of aircraft offered a novel means for transporting troops to the battlefield and, in turn, would create a new type of infantry subgroup – the airborne. This development, like that of armor, had its origins in the First World War. In October 1918, commander of the Army Air units in Europe, General Billy Mitchell, won approval for a plan to parachute a full division behind German lines as part of the next U.S. offensive. Only the early termination of the war brought this plan to a halt. Although airborne forces offered a means for breaking the deadlock of ground warfare, the U.S. Army showed little interest in the inter-war period. Economic stringency limited development of airborne forces in the United States to a single experiment in 1929. The Army, however, did develop an independent and very powerful organization devoted to air combat, the Army Air Corps, which by the end of the 1930s had become a de facto separate military service.

WORLD WAR II

The situation of armor in the U.S. Army changed dramatically with the German demonstration of the power of concentrated tank and motorized formations during the latter’s May 1940 invasion of Belgium and France. This event led almost overnight to a renewed enthusiasm for


10 Johnson, Fast Tanks and Heavy Bombers, 221; for a similar assessment, see Hendrix, “Interwar Army and Mechanization,” 94-95. In some quarters, opposition to the tank extended to opposition to any form of mechanization. As late as 1938, the Chief of the Cavalry Arm, Major General John Herr, could argue that “[w]e must be misled to our own detriment to assume that the untried machine can displace the proven and tried horse;” quoted in Hewes, From Root to McNamara, 66, n. 16. Similar sentiments were expressed by the Artillery branch, where officers asserted that field guns should continue to be horse-drawn; see Ibid. For more on the progress/development of mechanization in the interwar period from a cavalry perspective, see George F. Hofmann, Through Mobility We Conquer: The Mechanization of U.S. Cavalry (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2006), 77-294; and Matthew Darlington Morton, Men on “Iron Ponies,” The Death and Rebirth of the Modern U.S. Cavalry (Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University (Ph.D. diss), 2004), 15-225.


13 Geoffrey Powell, The Devil’s Birthday: The Bridges to Arnhem 1944 (New York: Franklin Watts, 1984), 12. This pattern of neglect was followed in the armies of most of the major powers with the notable exceptions of Germany and Russia, where the concept of landing troops behind enemy lines by both parachute and glider were fully developed during the 1930s.
armored formations in the U.S. Army. In July 1940, the “Armored Forces,” an organization independent of any of the traditional combat arms, was created at Fort Knox, Kentucky. The 7th Cavalry Brigade and the Provisional Tank Brigade formed the nucleus of its first two new armored divisions. A second victory for the nascent armor forces came with the reorganization of the Army command structure and the creation of the Army Ground Forces (AGF) in March 1942. This reorganization resulted in the wartime abolition of the offices of the Chiefs of the Combat Arms, a haven for armor opposition, and the transfer of their powers to the AGF command.14

The July 1943 War Department Troops Basis finalized the total number of Army divisions to be raised during the war at eighty-eight, of which sixteen would be armored divisions. Ambitious plans to form whole tank corps and armies, however, failed to materialize. This failure was due in large part to a more somber reevaluation of the German and British armored formations, to the shortage of shipping space, and to the newly recognized requirements of modern combined arms warfare.15

The armored division designers soon learned that infantry were needed to support and protect the advancing tanks from certain, especially dismounted, anti-tank threats. These armored infantry, the precursors to today’s mechanized infantry, road into battle on half-wheeled/half-tracked vehicles, known as “half-tracks,” designed to provide them at least some of the cross-country mobility—though not the armor protection—of the tank.16 While the Armored Forces’ first armored divisions contained three armored infantry battalions, it remained a tank-heavy force with a total of six tank battalions. Bloody lessons learned during combat operations in Tunisia, led to changes in the division’s organization. The new structure (known as the 1943 Armored Division) reduced the number of tank battalions to three; thus giving the division equal numbers of tank, infantry, and artillery battalions and making it easier to form combined arms teams.17

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14 Hewes, From Root to McNamara, 69; Efforts in 1940-41 to establish a separate armor branch raised strong opposition from the Chiefs of the Infantry and Cavalry branches; the question was put aside for the remainder of the war; see Kent Roberts Greenfield, Robert R. Palmer, and Bell I. Wiley, The Army Ground Forces: The Organization of Ground Combat Troops, United States Army in World War II series (Washington, DC: Historical Division, U.S. Army, 1947), 62-67.


16 Haworth, W. Blair, Jr. The Bradley and How It Got That Way: Technology, Institutions, and the Problem of Mechanized Infantry in the United States Army (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 17-18. Throughout the war, the Army consistently failed to provide a enough tracked vehicles with sufficient armor—the half-track was not as heavily armored on the sides as most tanks and provided no overhead protection to troops riding in the back—to allow the infantry to keep pace with the tank’s mobility when under fire or off-road over most types of terrain; see Weigley, United States Army, 574.

17 For more on the 1943 reorganization of the armored division, see Greenfield, Palmer, and Wiley, Organization of Ground Combat Troops, 319-335; and Gabel, “World War II Armor Operations,” 153. Fourteen of the sixteen armored
infantry also developed specialized tactics to enable them to fight with and support the armor divisions. 18

The war did not go as well for the cavalry branch. Horses were very seldom employed during the war, and then only in the most rugged terrain. Of the Army’s two cavalry divisions, the 1st Cavalry was converted to an infantry division early in the war and fought in the Pacific. The 2nd Cavalry never engaged an enemy; instead, its troops were sent to North Africa to build airfields for a time and then the unit was quietly disbanded. The sole cavalry units to see combat operating as cavalry were a handful of Mechanized Cavalry Commands: regimental-sized units equipped with light tanks and scout cars, but no horses. Their missions were limited generally to reconnaissance and security, as the other traditional cavalry missions, such as shock and exploitation, had been largely subsumed by the Armored Forces. 19

The interwar promise of air-delivered troops, however, was realized in World War II. The successful use of airborne units during the German’s May 1940 invasion of France, once again, served to stimulate similar developments in Britain and the United States. In June 1940, Churchill ordered the immediate formation of a 5,000-man parachute force. A test platoon of airborne troops was established in the United States, with orders going out three weeks later for the activation of the U.S. Army’s first parachute battalion. 20 This was soon followed by the creation of the first airborne regiment, the Provisional Parachute Group (PPG). An additional stimulus for airborne development in both the Britain and the United States was the successful German airborne assault against Crete in 1941. Ironically, and unknown to the allied powers, the extremely heavy losses sustained by the airborne units led the German Army to largely abandon air assaults throughout the remainder of the war. 21

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18 Greenfield, Palmer, and Wiley, Organization of Ground Combat Troops, 336-37. In addition, the emphasis on the pursuit role of the tank and the false belief that tanks would rarely engage other tanks stunted the development of U.S. armor; emphasizing mobility at the expense of armor and firepower. Owing to the opposition of McNair and his defenders, it was only in the spring of 1945 that a U.S. heavy tank first appeared in Europe; a delay of over two years from its initial development by the Ordnance Department; see, Hewes, From Root to McNamara, 122-23 and Weigley, Eisenhower’s Lieutenants, 21-22.

19 The 1st Cavalry Division fought as a World War I-era “square” infantry division; while the 2d Cavalry Division was reactivated later in the war, but just as quickly deactivated. For more on the Cavalry Branch during World War II, see Hofmann, Through Mobility We Conquer, 295-396; and Morton, Men on “Iron Ponies”, 226-451.

20 Powell, Devil’s Birthday, 245.

21 Following Crete, the Germans mounted only two battalion-sized airborne assaults throughout the remainder of the war; see Ibid.; and Williamson Murray, “Crete,” MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History 3, no. 4 (Summer 1991): 28-35.
By the end of the war, the U.S. Army had formed five airborne divisions and several independent regiments. More of these divisions had been planned; as late as April 1943, a twelve-division airborne force remained in U.S. plans. An early leader of the airborne, General Matthew Ridgway, described civilian and military leadership’s attitude towards the airborne as a “brand new toy.” Field commanders, however, complained that airborne divisions, as well as other specialized units, tied up valuable manpower at a time when critical shortages existed in front-line troops. Airborne units were generally unsuitable for typical combat operations, lacking the necessary firepower, although they were frequently misused in this manner. For much of the war, particularly after the invasion of Normandy, airborne units remained out of combat, preparing for operations which were continually made obsolete by the rapid movement of the allied armies across Western Europe. Moreover, efforts early in the war by the commander of the PPG to make the airborne a separate combat branch, with control over its own air transport, were successfully stopped by the infantry branch and the Air Corps.

Other attempts were made, generally unsuccessful, to create other types of specialized divisions. Experiments with a motorized infantry division design were abandoned after they were found to be too elaborately equipped and too demanding of the limited available shipping space. Instead, truck companies were pooled at the corps-level and made available to standard infantry divisions as needed. Likewise, efforts to field “light” mountain and desert divisions were halted after field exercises confirmed the initial impressions of commanders that such units were understrength and incapable of sustaining themselves in prolonged combat. One exception to this retreat from specialized divisions, beyond airborne units, was the fielding of the 10th Mountain Division to the mountainous terrain in northern Italy. However, although the 10th retained some of its specialized alpine character, it was beefed up to the point were it was nearly as heavy as a

22 Ridgway, Soldier, 93.
23 See Powell, Devil’s Birthday, 245-52; House, Toward Combined Arms Warfare, 135-38; and Marc DeVore, The Airborne Illusion: Institutions and the Evolution of Postwar Airborne Forces, SSP Working Paper (Cambridge, MA: Security Studies Program, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, June 2004), 2-5 Despite these problems, the Western allies maintained a favorable attitude towards airborne units at least until Operation Market Garden starkly revealed the shortcomings of such operations; see Powell, Devil’s Birthday; and Weigley, Eisenhower’s Lieutenants, 305-319.
standard infantry division. In general, the decision not to field a large number of specialized divisions during World War II stemmed from a set of judgments by Army planners. First, it was felt that, with a shortage of front-line troops expected (and realized in practice) it made little sense to tie-up valuable combat power in large numbers of units capable of only limited types of operations. Moreover, with the United States involved in a global war it was impossible to develop separate divisions specialized for each type of terrain, climate, and operational environment in which U.S. combat units might find themselves. Instead, Army planners, led by AGF Commander, Major General Leslie McNair, felt that the most efficient and effective means for fighting a global war lay in the formation of standard infantry units capable of fighting anywhere, though not optimized for any particular circumstance.

And, ultimately, the traditional foot-mobile infantry, who manned these standard infantry divisions, remained the dominant combat arm in the U.S. Army throughout World War II. Of the Army’s war-time strength of eighty-eight divisions, sixty-seven were standard infantry divisions. Of the twenty Army divisions that served in the Pacific, all but one were standard infantry divisions; the lone exception being an airborne division (the 11th Airborne). While all sixteen of the Army’s armored divisions served in Europe, as did four of its five airborne divisions, over twice as many standard infantry divisions (forty-eight) fought on the European continent during World War II. Moreover, in a return to the interwar years, tanks frequently were employed to provide fire support to these standard infantry units; and, consequently, were required to move at the same walking speed as these forces. Indeed, the need to make available additional tank battalions for employment as corps-level, pooled assets to be attached to infantry divisions as needed was one of the reasons behind the reduction in size that accompanied the design of the standard (1943) armored division and the activation of few armored divisions than initially planned. As the war progressed, tank battalions were frequently attached on a permanent basis to infantry divisions. This pattern of infantry dominance continued after the postwar demobilization.


28 Though Army planners recognized that some tailoring of the standard infantry division would be necessary for specific theaters and circumstances, they felt that this could be accomplished given the inherent flexibility in the division’s design; see Weigley, United States Army, 461-65.


30 The permanent attachment of tank units to infantry divisions was in contradiction to the McNair’s principle of “pooling” assets not always requirement by infantry units. In came about, however, as division commanders experienced the benefits of these armored units as well as the difficulties inherent in coordinating temporarily attached formations; see House, Towards Combined Arms Warfare, 107 and 129-30; and Weigley, Eisenhower’s Lieutenants, 27.
THE POST-WAR PERIOD

Shortly after the end of hostilities in Europe, the General Board of the European Theater was formed to examine the lessons learned from the war for the postwar Army. Overall, the Board found that wartime division designs had been effective and were suitable for the post-war era. One of its reports, *Organization, Equipment and Tactical Employment of the Infantry Division*, endorsed the wartime infantry experience with armor, calling for the addition of an organic medium tank regiment of three battalions to each standard infantry division.\(^{31}\) Likewise, the report on the Armor Division concluded that Army’s experience in the European Theater “clearly indicated the necessity for Armored Divisions distinct from Infantry Divisions.”\(^ {32}\) It also found that the tactics employed by these armored divisions during the war were “correct and resulted in success.”\(^ {33}\) The Airborne division report examined alternatives to the division, but found none of them acceptable. It concluded that: “If our army is to carry out its mission in the future, the airborne division must be retained.”\(^ {34}\) Any shortcomings could be corrected by providing the airborne division with augmented version of the standard infantry TO&E.\(^ {35}\)

Most of the General Board recommendations were accepted by the Army in the 1946 division designs. The Army did modify the Board’s specific recommendations concerning the addition of tanks to the standard division; choosing instead to add a medium tank company to each infantry regiment and a heavy tank battalion at the division level.\(^ {36}\) This design was never put into practice, however, owing to the rapid demobilization and severe budget constraints following the war. By early 1948, each of the four infantry divisions stationed in Japan, for instance, contained a single tank company. Only one of the four infantry divisions stationed in Germany came close to approaching the authorized division structure. Besides these infantry divisions, all on occupation duty, the Army consisted of one depleted armored unit (with a single armored brigade-equivalent) and one airborne division, both stateside as part of the “strategic reserve.” Finally, a division-size

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\(^{33}\) Ibid.


\(^{35}\) Ibid., 30.

Constabulary Force was assigned to occupation duty in Germany. By the end of 1948, deteriorating relations between the United States and the Soviet Union brought about a slight improvement in the Army’s Armored Forces: the armored division was enhanced and an armored cavalry regiment was created in the United States, while the Constabulary Force was converted into three armored cavalry regiments (essentially lighter versions of the wartime Mechanized Cavalry Commands) in Germany.

No matter how depleted, however, all three types of divisions – infantry, armor and airborne – were retained in the postwar Army and became a permanent part of the service’s force structure. Despite their mixed wartime record, the position of the “elite” infantry represented by the airborne was enhanced due to the mystique and popularity associated with these units in the public mind, and to the fact that many of airborne officers rose to the top ranks of the service in the decade following the war. The position of the armor branch was solidified with the passage of the 1950 Army Organization Act. This congressional legislation established the Armored Force as a separate branch of the Army, abolished the cavalry branch, and merged its remaining elements into the new armor branch. The traditional infantry retained their dominant position as seen by the percentage of standard infantry retained in the force structure. Budget constraints account, in part, for the emphasis on infantry: it was cheaper to moth-ball tanks and other armored-unit equipment than to continue paying the operation and support costs for armored divisions. But the service’s postwar missions also account for this infantry focus. During the five years between the end of World War II and the Korean conflict, the Army was limited largely to an occupation role, better suited (with the exception of the Constabulary Force) for infantry than armored units.

THE KOREAN WAR ERA

Even more so than World War II, Korea relied on the fighting skills of the infantryman. While eight Army infantry divisions, and scores of smaller infantry units, were sent to the peninsula, no armored formations larger than a battalion saw action. Although the North Korean Army

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37 The Constabulary Force constituted the last act of the independent horse cavalry branch, containing three brigades composed of squadrons of a light tank troop, a motorcycle platoon, and a horse platoon. For more on the Constabulary Force, see Hofmann, Through Mobility We Conquer, 397-456.

38 A number of reports following the war called for the abolition of the cavalry branch; George F. Hofmann, Through Mobility We Conquer, 464. The 1950 Act also abolished the coastal artillery and merged its remaining personnel with the field artillery.

39 No new tanks were produced from the 1945 to the start of the Korean War nor were many of the M26 Pershing tanks, fielded late in the war; see Oscar C. Decker, “The Patton Tanks: The Cold War Learning Series,” in Camp Colt to Desert Storm: The History of U.S. Armored Forces, eds. George F. Hofmann and Donald Starry (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1999), 300-301; and Anne W. Chapman, The Army: World War II to Korea, TRADOC Special Historical Study (Fort Monroe, VA: Office of the Command Historian, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 5 October 1992), 16.
effectively used small, road-bound tank formations to spearhead their initial attack across the 38th Parallel, armored engagements generally were rare throughout the conflict, owing both to the lack of tanks in the U.S. units first deployed to the invasion and to hilly terrain of the Korean peninsula. The stabilization of the front after the spring of 1951 turned the conflict into an infantry and artillery-focused war of attrition characterized by small-unit engagements. In this situation, armor employment was limited to the emplacement of individual tanks in fortified bunkers along hillsides to be used as direct and indirect fire support for infantry units, and as carriers of large search-lights to illuminate nighttime battlefields.

The infantry's dominant role in Korea, however, eventually may have proven detrimental to its political fortunes at home as public frustration with the war steadily rose. To the extent that the infantry became identified in the public's mind with limited conventional conflicts like Korea, and as public support for U.S. participation in such wars declined, public and congressional support for the infantry branch likewise may have waned. Moreover, this situation was reinforced by the incoming Eisenhower administration's determination not to get involved in such wars in the future.

Two developments during the conflict, however, helped boost other Army communities. First, the helicopter had its combat premier in Korea, where it was mainly employed in the evacuation of wounded personnel from the front lines. Between 1951 and 1953, over 21,000 casualties were air-lifted by army medical evacuation teams. The Army also conducted a small number of heli-borne troop movements and supply operations during the war, presaging the development of the airmobile forces. And, ironically, the rapid success of North Korean tanks early in the conflict has been described as a catalyst for renewed post-war U.S. efforts to develop armored forces.

The Korean War initiated a much broader mobilization of U.S. military might, much of it focused on the defense of Western Europe and enhancing the role of mechanized forces. Though the bulk of the forces initially sent to Europe were infantry divisions, this was due to the type of

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40 One of the few large-scale armored engagements of war took place during the August 1950 battle in "the Bowling Alley" along the Pusan Perimeter; see Max Hastings, The Korean War (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1988), 86.
41 Ibid., 272.
42 Bergerson, Army Gets an Air Force, 71.
44 Doughty, Evolution of Army Tactical Doctrine, 15.
forces the Army could quickly call upon: only a single armored division remained in the U.S. in June 1950, and no armored forces were available in the National Guard or reserves. During the first stage of mobilization, in 1951, three infantry divisions (one active-duty and two mobilized National Guard units) and the service’s only armored division were sent to West Germany to reinforce the single infantry division and several armored cavalry regiments stationed in that country since the end of World War II. 45 As soon as possible, the two National Guard infantry divisions were demobilized and replaced with an active-duty armored division.

The build-up in Europe also led to a requirement to produce a large number of tanks very quickly. As a result, a decision was made in September 1950 to produce the first new tank in five years, the M47. Based on modifications to the World War II-era M46 tank, the M47 was viewed merely as an interim solution to the Army’s armor shortfall. A decision to produce a brand-new replacement, the M48, soon followed. 46

The new U.S. commitment to NATO, and the defense of Western Europe from Soviet invasion, suggested that the U.S. Army’s reliance on “heavy” mechanized forces would only grow in the future, especially in response to similar Soviet and Warsaw Pact force developments. The continued quantitative superiority of Soviet ground forces alone would force the Army to rely on mechanized forces, as Army planners considered mechanized forces ideal “for conducting a rapid and violent strike against a numerically superior enemy.” 47

EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION AND THE “NEW LOOK”

While the Eisenhower Administration and its “New Look” defense strategy had a deleterious effect on nearly all of the Army’s communities, it fell most heavily – at least rhetorically – on the infantry. The contention that “cheap” tactical nuclear weapons could substitute for expensive manpower seemed particularly aimed at the manpower-intensive traditional infantry division, where the bulk of Eisenhower’s derisively termed “bottle washers and table waiters” could be found. The traditional infantry also conflicted with an Army budgetary strategy centered on the procurement of high-technology equipment. And, the “unglamorous,” low-technology, foot-slogging infantry were an ill-fit with the Army’s related public relations campaign designed to portray the Army as forward-looking, futuristic, and technology suave. By contrast, armor, aviation, mechanized infantry, and artillery fit quite well with the Army’s desired image.

45 Bradley and Blair, General’s Life, 646.
46 Decker, “Patton Tanks,” 304.
47 Doughty, Evolution of Army Tactical Doctrine, 15.
The Army’s emphasis on the atomic battlefield further enhanced mechanized and heli-borne forces at the expense of the infantry. Tanks and the recently improved armored personnel carriers were considered essential for protection against atomic effects and for the mobility required of dispersed atomic forces. Helicopters too were to be utilized extensively for rapid dispersal and concentration of troops; one of the few innovations of the Pentomic design to survive its demise was the addition for the first time of helicopter units organic to divisions. While an infantry design was included in the Pentomic reorganization, there seemed little room for non-mechanized, traditional infantry on the atomic battlefield of the future. In fact, a major shortcoming of the Pentomic concept was identified as its failure to provide adequate motorized mobility to its infantry divisions.48 The Army’s abandonment of this ultimately unworkable atomic division design helped at least ensure a future for the traditional infantry community.

The traditional infantry’s prospects should have brightened as well with General Taylor’s call for a limited conventional war capability; as the Army had experienced, limited wars were usually infantry-centered conflicts. In practice, however, the airborne divisions appeared to be the preferred instrument for these types of contingent operations. Airborne divisions tended to be lighter (i.e., more easily deployable) than their standard infantry counterparts, were generally maintained at a higher level of combat readiness, and were perceived to be more imbued with an elite warrior spirit. The Army’s primary organization for responding to limited wars during the late 1950s, the Strategic Army Corps, consisted of two Airborne Corps – each with an airborne and infantry division – when originally established in 1958. Troop cuts, however reduced this force to one infantry and two airborne divisions a year later.49

In terms of technology and procurement, the latter half of the 1950’s witnessed several trends favorable to the aviation and mechanized communities. For example, development of the helicopter continued following its initial use in the Korean War, primarily with an eye towards increasing mobility on the atomic battlefield. Numerous tests of equipment (including the arming of the helicopter) and organizations were carried out at the Aviation School at Fort Rucker throughout the 1950s.50 Improvements were also in armored personnel carriers (APCs) designed to carry the

48 Each Pentomic infantry division was assigned a transport helicopter company and a battalion of armored personnel carriers (APCs) attached to the division headquarters. However, there were only enough APCs to transport one of the five battle groups at a time. This lack of transport, combined with problems in cooperation between the semi-independent battle groups and the APC transport battalion under the command of a sixth organization, proved to be a major shortcoming of the Pentomic concept; see House, Towards Combined Arms Warfare, pp. 157; and Haworth, The Bradley, 29.


armored infantry on the battlefield. The first APCs with overhead protection were deployed in December 1952, and a cheaper successor was fielded two years later. The M113 program began in 1956 and saw the first of these vehicles deployed in 1960. Finally, a new tank, the XM-60, went into production starting in 1958.51

While these other communities seemed to be growing in power within the Army, the traditional infantry remained one of the dominant players within the service. By the end of the 1950s, mandated cuts in manpower led to the deactivation of two of the service’s five armored divisions. While both airborne divisions remained, the traditional infantry could boast of nine out of fourteen of the Army’s remaining divisions.

KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION AND “FLEXIBLE RESPONSE”

The military build-up instituted by Kennedy Administration led to an Army renaissance, with all the service’s communities benefiting. The election of President Kennedy meant a de-emphasis on the tactical nuclear battlefield and a greater focus on developing conventional force capabilities for a wide spectrum of conflicts. While the defense of Europe remained the primary Army mission, the administration also emphasized conventional forces capable of intervention in the Third World. In response, the Eisenhower-era Strategic Army Corps was soon combined with available tactical air and airlift assets to create STRIKE Command. This joint Army-Air Force command had responsibility for conducting independent operations in the Middle East, Southern Asia, and Africa South of the Sahara, as well as supporting other geographic commands.52

Another top priority of the new administration was the development of a counter-insurgency capability; yet another mission that could have been given to traditional, foot-mobile infantry. In the early Kennedy years, however, this new mission became the primary responsibility of the Army Special Forces. In an ironic twist, the Special Forces mission was turned on its head, as it went from a guerilla organization whose major task was the fomenting of insurgency in the Eisenhower years to an anti-guerilla unit designed to counter insurgencies. Along with the change in roles, the Special Forces went from a peripheral organization within the service to an elite high-profile combat unit, much to the chagrin of the regular Army. Despite the Special Forces

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51 On armor and mechanized developments during the 1950s, see Haworth, The Bradley, 24-27; and Decker, “The Patton Tanks,” 306-12.

52 Haffa, Half War, 93.
assignment, counterinsurgency interest and training suddenly flourished throughout the Army in the early 1960s, with a flurry of new courses at service schools and training manuals. And this interest was especially prevalent within the infantry community.

At the same time, the Army’s new division design, the Reorganization Objectives Army Division (ROAD) concept, was finalized, approved and implemented. It was to mark a turning point among the Army’s communities. The ROAD design was a response to the military shortcomings revealed in the Pentomic division. While the Pentomic concept emphasized nuclear operations and was designed for transitioning from nuclear to non-nuclear combat, the ROAD design reversed this order: emphasizing conventional operations and designing divisions for transitioning from non-nuclear to nuclear warfare. More importantly for intra-service politics, it introduced mechanized infantry units into the Army’s force structure.

The basic ROAD structure—regardless of division type—consisted of a division base to which were added varying numbers and types of combat maneuver battalions. The ROAD reorganization included three types of divisions: “heavy” divisions, which were either armored or mechanized infantry depending upon the ratio of armored to mechanized infantry battalions (typically, armored divisions contained a ratio of armored-to-mechanized infantry battalions of six-to-five, while mechanized divisions contained a four-to-five ratio); a non-mechanized infantry division, and an airborne division. The distinguishing feature of the heavy ROAD design was the mechanized infantry battalion. This battalion was essentially a ROAD infantry battalion, but equipped with the APC as organic transport, providing the unit with a high degree of cross-country mobility and protection from small arms and fragmentation (especially from air-bursting artillery munitions). In this way, the mechanized infantry were better able to “complement and enhance” the capabilities of the accompanying tank forces. Helicopters were also deployed as organic assets throughout the ROAD designs. Both the heavy and the infantry division base included an armored cavalry squadron equipped with tanks, APCs and troop-carrying helicopters. Additional aviation assets were provided by an aviation battalion, with fixed and rotary wing aircraft for reconnaissance, and a separate company of troop-carrying helicopters. Overall, the ROAD design nearly doubled the Pentomic division’s air assets.

Before the ROAD design was completed, the infantry branch did gain a crucial victory; a victory illustrated by the shift from “armored” infantry to “mechanized” infantry. Prior to the ROAD reorganization, the armor branch was the proponent for infantry found in armored divisions.

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55 Ibid., 21-22; and Weigley, *United States Army*, 540-41.
The change to “mechanized” infantry signaled that the infantry branch would now be the proponent for this type of infantry. Though subtle, this change was significant for the infantry branch: had the armor retained proponency, they would have had direct control over the development of doctrine and equipment for what would become a very large proportion of the infantry. By obtaining proponency for the mechanized infantry, the infantry branch retained control over these forces.

In practice, this meant that there would no longer be separate publications relating specifically to infantry supporting tank-based formations. Instead, the infantry developed a single set of publications covering all infantry units, making these publications and the doctrines they contained much less tank-specific and less tightly focused.56 These new field manuals stressed that the central difference between the varieties of infantry lay simply in their method for arriving on the battlefield.

Unfortunately, the mechanized infantry battalion represented a significant break from the “traditional” infantry units of the past. As the armored infantry had demonstrated, an entirely new set of doctrinal problems presented themselves to mechanized units and their commanders, greatly increasing the complexity of combat operations over the “traditional” foot-mobile infantry.57 Moreover, the infantry branch was unable to prevent a major split in its community. From now on, the “heavy” side of the Army would consist of armored and mechanized infantry community, while traditional infantry would be relegated to a “light” community only loosely associated with the airborne and airmobile elements.

The formation of the mechanized infantry division largely was prompted by recognition that the Soviet Army had undergone increasing mechanization throughout the latter half of the 1950s. As a result, the three infantry divisions stationed in Europe were quickly converted to mechanized ROAD units, while a number of additional heavy divisions, both armored and mechanized, were formed stateside. By the end of 1962, less than a year after the ROAD reorganization began, the ratio of heavy-to-light divisions in the active-duty Army was fifty-fifty (nine divisions each – eight combat-ready and one training), representing a significant shift in the service’s force structure mix.

Besides gaining spaces in the ROAD design, the aviation community was able to develop a completely new division in the early 1960’s, one that fully utilized the capabilities of helicopter on the battlefield. Despite advances made during the previous decade in helicopter technology and battlefield employment, many in the defense community were surprised in 1962 when Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara organized the Howze Board and gave it a mandate to increase the

Army’s rotary-wing aviation efforts. With the support of the Secretary of Defense, the Board’s recommendations to develop air assault divisions and air cavalry regiments were realized in 1964 with the formation of the 11th Air Assault Test Division. Shortly before this unit’s 1965 departure for the escalating conflict in Vietnam it was renamed the 1st Cavalry (Air Mobile) Division.\(^{58}\) The development of air assault doctrine was to further complicate the “traditional” functions of the infantry, further splintering the infantry branch, and give additional impetus to the rise of the aviation community.

THE VIETNAM WAR

Like the Korean War, ground combat in the Vietnam conflict was almost exclusively carried out by infantry units. By January 1968, seven of the nine U.S. Army divisions deployed in the Vietnam were regular infantry, with the remainder being airmobile divisions. Once U.S. ground forces became fully committed, despite a number of multi-division operations during 1966 and 1967, Vietnam was primarily waged by small light infantry units on reconnaissance and patrol.\(^{59}\) In large part this was due to the method of warfare chosen by the communist forces. One study of the war found that the enemy rarely attacked with forces as large as a battalion, and seldom chose to undertake ground assaults of any size, choosing instead to engage in a “war without fronts.”\(^{60}\)

Only three US Army tank battalions were deployed to Vietnam, with a few smaller armored units temporarily sent over as the Army became desperate for forces following the 1968 Tet Offensive. The M113, however, has been described as “the workhorse of armor in Vietnam.”\(^{61}\) It was employed in a variety of roles, including troop carrier, mortar carrier, bridge launcher, and ambulance. Small M113-equipped mechanized units were frequently attached to infantry forces as

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\(^{59}\) General Bruce Palmer, Jr., *The 25-Year War*, 155-56.


the need arose for additional firepower. So successful were these units, that some dismounted forces were converted to mechanized infantry.\(^{62}\)

The demands of the war, however, took a severe toll on the heavy armor/mechanized infantry community located beyond Southeast Asia. Most of the armor and mechanized infantry units in Europe were cannibalized for personnel to fill-out under-strength or newlyActivated divisions earmarked for Vietnam. By the end of the decade, US Army forces in Europe had lost one mechanized infantry division, an armored cavalry regiment, and over 100,000 troops. The few remaining heavy units in the United States were similarly skeletonized for the war. Just as important, the community failed to procure any new weapons systems for nearly a decade due largely to the budgetary restrictions imposed by the war. While minor modifications were made to the M60 tank, and a search for a new main battle tank would begin, no new successful tank acquisition would get underway until the 1970s. Likewise, the Army’s Mechanized Infantry Combat Vehicle (MICV) program, began in 1964, failed to find a replacement for the M113, even though the which US Army Combat Development Command (USACDC) had decided very soon after it was first deployed that the M113 was insufficient to accompany future tanks into battle.\(^{63}\)

The aviation community, in contrast, had a very good war in Vietnam. Prior to the U.S. escalation in 1965, helicopters were being widely used in Vietnam for transport and fire support, providing the aviation community the opportunity to experiment and demonstrate the utility of the new helicopter technology and tactics on the battlefield.\(^{64}\) By the time large-scale deployments of U.S. troops began, airmobile operations had become firmly established and the newly formed 1st Cavalry (Airmobile) Division was one of the first units sent to Southeast Asia. As the numbers of U.S. combat troops grew, most long-distance movement by infantry was conducted with helicopters. A helicopter aviation brigade soon was established in Vietnam, controlling up to one hundred company-sized aviation units, both gunship and transport. Like the “pooled” tank units of World War II, many of these aviation units became semi-permanently attached to particular infantry divisions.\(^{65}\) Similarly, helicopter units were often borrowed from the two air assault divisions operating in-country for temporary use by the infantry. Overall, the helicopter played a vital role in

\(^{62}\) For descriptions of some of the operations of armored units, see Stanton, The Rise and Fall of an American Army, 97-99, 141-142, 187, 274-278, 304-305; and Sorley, “Adaptation and Impact,” 339-52.


\(^{65}\) House, Towards Combined Arms Warfare, 164.
the success of infantry operations in Vietnam, and its successes there help to firmly establish the aviation community within the Army hierarchy. 66

In the end, though, both armored forces and helicopters in Vietnam were designed solely to support the infantry. Vietnam, once again, was an infantryman’s war. Even more than Korea, however, the ultimate failure of the United States to bring the war to a favorable conclusion, combined with U.S. public’s eventual disgust with the conflict, proved detrimental to the Army community most closely identified with it. Unlike Korea, however, even the Army itself turned against the traditional foot-mobile infantry as the war drew to a close.

POST-VIETNAM AND THE DECADE OF EUROPE

So painful had been the Army’s experience in Vietnam that the service spent most of the 1970s, as one author found, engaged in activities designed to deny its experiences in Southeast Asia. 67 Gone from the service schools’ curricula was any discussion of counterinsurgency. The service sponsored few, if any, studies examining the lessons of Vietnam. 68 Indeed, if the Army drew any lesson at all from Vietnam, it was a simple one of “never again.” And this rejection of the Vietnam experience led the service, in turn, to reject the non-mechanized infantry community who fought it. As the forces withdrew from Vietnam, most of the infantry divisions were disbanded upon returning to the states. By the end of the U.S. involvement in the war in 1973, only one of the four non-mechanized infantry divisions to fight in Vietnam, the 25th, remained in the active-duty force. Of the other divisions remaining in the force structure, the 1st Infantry reverted back to its

66 The Army’s heavy reliance on the helicopter did have some negative consequences, however. While helicopter transport provided the infantry with an advantageous degree of cross-country mobility in the jungles of Vietnam, once dismounted, the U.S. infantryman was discovered to be frequently less mobile than his communist counterpart. Moreover, helicopters were of little use at night, when insurgents frequently operated, as well as in poor weather. Helicopters also required much support and servicing, adding to the problems of the U.S. military’s “bloated logistical tail” in Vietnam. For more on the operational costs of associated with helicopter use, see David Richard Palmer, *Summons of the Trumpet: U.S.-Vietnam in Perspective* (San Rafael, CA: Presidio Press, 1978), 142.


68 One author found that in 1976 the service’s premier profession journal, *Military Review*, published only thirteen articles focused on the Vietnam War or unconventional warfare, out of a total of 124 articles published that year; while thirty-one articles dealt with NATO-related issues or on World War II in Europe. The situation had changed little by the early 1980s: during the 1981-82 time period, out of 148 articles published in *Military Review*, forty-eight articles focused on NATO, Soviet forces in Europe or the World War II European theater; while only nine discussed unconventional warfare; see Russell F. Weigley, “Reflections on ‘Lessons’ From Vietnam,” in *Vietnam as History: Ten Years After the Paris Peace Accords*, ed. Peter Braestrup (Washington, DC: The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and University Press of America, January 1984), 115, n. 1 and 2.
mechanized infantry status upon its return to Fort Riley, the 1st Cavalry became an experimental divison for a year or so before converting to an armored division, and the 101st retained its airmobile status.

While the Vietnam War proved disastrous for the traditional infantry, the experience was a boon to the aviation community. The numbers of helicopters increased from a few hundreds at the time of the Howze Board to more than twelve thousand by 1970. At that time, the Army had more active-duty aviators than did the Air Force, while about 26 Army generals and 230 colonels were drawing flight pay.\(^{69}\) By the war’s end, the community had become a well-established and coherent union within the service.

As the service withdrew from Vietnam, the Army refocused its efforts on mechanized warfare in Europe. Besides simply wanting to put the painful experience of Vietnam behind them and for a host of externally directed factors described in the previous chapter, a number of intra-service bureaucratic reasons existed as well for the Army’s emphasis on Europe.\(^{70}\) Only in Europe, for example, did the Army face the prospect of high-intensity, high-attrition combat against a heavily armed opponent. In this way, the Army could make the best justification for large-scale procurement programs, with weapons at the cutting edge of technology. Likewise, the European contingency served as a justification – perhaps the only one available to the Army – for maintaining a large standing army in peacetime. Without NATO, the Army would have faced much greater cuts in manpower and budgets than it did following the withdrawal from Vietnam. Moreover, the Army was already forward deployed in Europe and so, unlike other locations on the globe, not as reliant on the other services to get to the theater of combat. Finally, the European contingency served as a useful planning tool, as Secretary of Defense Harold Brown declared later in the decade: “[I]f we have reasonable confidence of halting [a Warsaw Pact attack in Central Europe], it would be logical to assume that we have the basic forces to deal with other contingencies of a less demanding nature.”\(^{71}\)

In practice, the Army’s return to a European orientation immediately enhanced the intra-service position of the armor/mechanized infantry “heavy” community. Only by making armor and mechanized infantry the center of Army development could the service ever hope to fight outnumbered and win against the massive tank-heavy armies of the Warsaw Pact. The aviation community quickly adapted as well to the changing strategic focus. As the Vietnam War was


\(^{70}\) Some of these reasons are discussed by Builder, *Masks of War*, 187-89.

winding down, the Army aviation community shifted its focus from transporting troops to attacking tank and other armored vehicles; equipping helicopters with a new generation of anti-tank guided missiles (ATGMs) and adopting nap-of-earth and pop-up flying tactics. The impact of the service’s European focus can be seen in three areas: procurement and force design, doctrine, and force structure. All served to enhance further the armor/mechanized infantry and aviation communities, as well as the ever-present artillery branch.

The service’s future modernization and procurement effort, formulated in the early 1970s, focused on armament required for mechanized conflict in Europe. This effort was symbolized by the “Big Five” modernization program consisting of tanks, APCs, two types of helicopters, and an air defense gun; though not part of the “Big Five,” new self-propelled artillery were also in the procurement plans. While many of these weapons could be used to support light forces outside of Europe, they were designed primarily for the demands of a European battlefield. Similarly, the major thrust of the service’s new force design efforts, culminating in Division 86, concentrated on restructuring armored and mechanized infantry units to take advantage of these soon-to-be acquired new weapons. And, the Army began experimenting with new types of helicopter formations. The new anti-armor, helicopter-heavy air cavalry combat brigade (ACCB), for example, was proving its value in a series of tests held from 1971 through 1973.

These changes partly were in response to doubts raised within the Army about the applicability of Vietnam-era helicopter tactics to combat environments like Central Europe (with their abundance of modern anti-aircraft weapons), especially following their poor showing during the Lam Son 719 operation in Laos during 1971. For more on Lam Son 719 and its effects on helicopter tactics, see Bergerson, Army Gets an Air Force, 139; Keener, Helicopter Innovation, 39-46; and Tolson, Airmobility, 235-52.

These aviation experiments were part of the TRICAP program. In May 1971, the 1st Cavalry Division (recently returned from Vietnam) was reformed as the experimental TRICAP division. The division, a variant of the ROAD design, combined an armored brigade (with tank and mechanized infantry units), an airmobile infantry brigade, and an air cavalry combat brigade (ACCB) – hence the name TRICAP for its combination of three separate capabilities. The TRICAP concept was designed to see if the airmobile experiences learned in Vietnam could be transferred and extended to the mid- to high-intensity environments of the Middle East and Europe. After two and a half years of experimentation, the Army disbanded TRICAP, concluding that while the division could react more quickly and kill more enemy forces than a standard armor division, it also took more casualties and had a lesser capability for taking and holding ground than the standard armor division. However, the attack helicopter-heavy ACCB was judged a success, with substantial anti-armor capability, and was reassigned to be organized as independent organization at the corps-level. The ACCB concept returned to the division with the Division/Army'86 redesign. For more on the TRICAP division, see Lewis Bernstein, Army Experimental Formations and Their Possible Influence on the Establishment of the Force XXI Experimental Force, TRADOC History Conference Workshop (Fort Leavenworth, KS: CAC History Branch, Research Division, Center for Army Lessons Learned, 23 October 1996), 13-16; Combat Studies Institute Faculty, Sixty Years of Reorganizing for Combat: A Historical Trend Analysis, CSI Report No. 14 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, Army Command and General Staff College, December 1999), 34-36; Pat Ford, Edwin H. Burba, Jr. and Richard E. Christ, Review of Division Structure Initiatives (Alexandria, VA: Human Resources Research Organization, October 1994), 7-8; and Richard W. Kedzior, Evolution and Endurance: The U.S. Army Division in the Twentieth Century (Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation, 2000), 53-54.
A great deal of activity was taking place as well in the area of doctrine for mechanized warfare. Improvements to Warsaw Pact forces, new technological capabilities, and the lessons of the 1973 Middle East war led the Army to conclude that changes were required in armored warfare doctrine; doctrine which had previously been based to a large extent on the lessons of World War II.74 Throughout the decade of the 1970s, the service was consumed with a series of efforts to rewrite its doctrine for armored/mechanized forces. The first effort led to the Active Defense concept embodied in the 1976 edition of the service’s premier field manual, FM 100-5 Operations. The extensive criticism and controversy engendered by this doctrine forced the service to undergo a second re-evaluation of its doctrinal precepts, culminating in the AirLand Battle concept of the 1982 FM 100-5.75 Both the 1976 and the 1982 versions of FM 100-5, designed to serve as the “bible” for describing how the Army intended to fight future wars, focused almost exclusively on the requirements of heavy forces on a European battlefield.

In contrast to the fervor over armored doctrine, efforts to review light infantry doctrine were practically nonexistent. The new versions of FM 100-5 had little to say about light infantry or about combat outside of the European theater. The Army’s failure in Vietnam caused little reassessment of its counter-insurgency or light infantry tactical doctrines. Though a few works by military personnel criticized the service’s performance in Vietnam, the official line took the position that Vietnam was a failure of political leadership more than military tactics, and the tactics themselves largely were ignored. The 1981 edition of the service’s field manual on low-intensity conflict, FM 100-20 Low-Intensity Operations, has been described as “little more than a restatement of FM 31-16, Counterguerrilla Operations, issued in 1967.”76

This same emphasis on the heavy side of the service was evident in the area of force structure as well. During the 1970s, the Army undertook to convert many of its light infantry forces to heavier, mechanized formations. To enable the Reserve Components (RC) to better assist the active-duty Army in Europe, an RC “mechanization process” began as early as fiscal year 1974. At that time, four reserve brigades – one airborne and three infantry – were converted to two mechanized infantry and two armored brigades. The conversion of two more RC infantry brigades to mechanized infantry was planned for fiscal year 1975.77

74 Doughty, Evolution of Army Tactical Doctrine, 42-43.
76 Krepinevich, Army and Vietnam, 272.
77 Schlesinger, DoD Annual Report to Congress FY75, 99.
Of the three active-duty divisions reactivated in the mid-1970s, two were standard infantry while the third was mechanized infantry; as a result, the total number of light divisions in the sixteen-division active-duty force temporarily rose to seven. A change in the mix of heavy/light forces, however, was soon planned. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld announced in January 1976 that “as soon as funds and equipment availability permit, the intent is to convert two active-duty Army infantry divisions [the 24th and 9th] into heavy divisions,” with conversion scheduled for no sooner than fiscal year 1978. When completed, the light side of the Army would consist of one division apiece of airborne and air assault, and three non-mechanized infantry divisions, one of which was deployed in Korea. Under this plan, the percentage of heavy to light Army brigades would be sixty-one to thirty percent. This five-division light force, according to Rumsfeld, “along with the three active Marine divisions, should be sufficient to meet foreseeable requirements for predominantly infantry forces.”

Rumsfeld’s successor, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown, felt that this program of “heavying-up” the Army failed to go far enough. He declared in his first report to Congress that after the previously planned conversions (now set to begin during 1979) “our land forces ‘light/heavy’ mix will remain too light if our primary orientation is to be NATO.” Furthermore, he could foresee “other non-European conflicts requiring armored and mechanized units.” As a result, the Carter Administration’s first Five-Year Defense Program called for the conversion of the 2d Infantry Division, which the administration planned to removed from South Korea, to a mechanized infantry unit as its components were redeployed to the states. Army planners,

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78 Rumsfeld, *DoD Annual Report to Congress FY77*, 104. One factor driving this conversion of the Army’s lighter standard infantry divisions to heavier mechanized infantry divisions was the development by OSD of a new approach to comparing NATO and Warsaw Pact forces based on standard “firepower units” (FPUs), in which a rifle was worth 1 FPU while a tank might be worth 100 FPUs. According to General Meyer, due to the adoption of this approach by the mid-1970s, OSD had “decided that armored division equivalents was how you evaluated whether or not a division was worth having in the Army. They were looking at everything in the context of armored division equivalents. Of course, that meant that you needed more tanks and more firepower and everything else. The thrust and the pressure from OSD was clearly to have more and more heavy armored divisions.” See General Edward C. Meyer, “High Technology Test Bed/Army Development and Employment Agency Oral History Interview with General (Retired) Edward C. Meyer, Chief of Staff of the Army, 1979-1983;” interview by Joe D. Huddleston, 13 June 1984; transcript, High Technology Test Bed/Army Development and Employment Agency Oral History Papers, Archives, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 2 (hereafter cited as “General Meyer interview with Huddleston”). For more on this method of comparing forces, see Lawrence and Record, *US Force Structure in NATO*, 105-25; and William W. Kaufmann, “The Arithmetic of Force Planning,” in *Alliance Security: NATO and the No-First-Use Question*, eds. John D. Steinbruner and Leon V. Sigal (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1983), 208-16.

79 Rumsfeld, *DoD Annual Report to Congress FY77*, 104.

80 Brown, *DoD Annual Report to Congress FY79*, 141.

81 Ibid.

82 Ibid., 141-42.
meanwhile, were considering converting all of the service’s non-mechanized standard infantry divisions to a mechanized format as funds and equipment became available.\textsuperscript{83} If all of these planned conversions had been carried out, the percentage of heavy divisions in the Army would have approached ninety percent of the force structure (fourteen out of sixteen divisions).

Several factors intervened, however, to halt these plans before they were fully implemented. The 24\textsuperscript{th} Infantry Division was converted to a mechanized force as planned. But the transfer of the 2\textsuperscript{d} Infantry Division from Korea was stopped following an outcry from conservative elements in Congress and elsewhere; although before these plans were changed, a few of the division’s battalions were redeployed to the United States and converted to mechanized units. Other elements of the division remaining in Korea also were mechanized, leaving the 2\textsuperscript{d} Division with an unusual, mixed “heavy/light” structure. The scheduled mechanization of the 9\textsuperscript{th} Infantry Division was halted as well when the new Army Chief of Staff, General Edward Meyer, convinced Secretary Brown to use the division to test new high-technology concepts for a light, highly mobile unit with anti-armor capability similar to heavy divisions.\textsuperscript{84} If successful, the HTLD would serve as a prototype for additional units. Although this move still would mean the end of the standard non-mechanized infantry division in the Army’s active-duty force structure – the remaining divisions would be converted to the HTLD format – it did bring a stop to the “heaving-up” of the service. Despite agreement to examine the HTLD, the final Carter-era Five-Year Program, issued in January 1981, included adding twelve additional heavy maneuver battalions to the active-duty Army force.\textsuperscript{85}

By the end of the Carter Administration, only seven years after the last U.S. ground forces withdrew from Vietnam, the traditional foot-mobile infantry community lay in tatters. The community had been reduced from eight standard infantry divisions (nearly forty percent of the total active-duty force) at the height of the Vietnam War down to two under-strength divisions (slightly more than ten percent of the force structure). These remaining divisions, the 25\textsuperscript{th} stationed in Hawaii and the 7\textsuperscript{th} at Fort Ord, CA, were both composed of fewer than two active-duty brigades, rounded-out for combat by a combination of National Guard and Army Reserve units. Given the Army’s current plans, neither division could expect to remain a standard division for long. No new


\textsuperscript{84} General Meyer interview with author.

foot-mobile infantry units were being designed nor was equipment being purchased for such units. The community was being neglected doctrinally and its experiences in Vietnam ignored.

By contrast, the armor/mechanized infantry community dominated the service’s force structure, with four armored and six mechanized infantry divisions (over sixty percent of the force). This community, along with the aviation community and the artillery branch, dominated the service’s procurement budgets. A major division design effort was underway emphasizing all three of these communities, and, in particular, adding major new aviation organizations to the new heavy division structures. Likewise, the service’s doctrinal efforts were all directed at how these new heavy divisions, and their communities, would fight against other modern, mechanized armies.

THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION BUILD-UP

This picture changed but little during the early years of the Reagan administration. Despite growing anti-NATO sentiment in government circles, the Army’s European-focused heavy modernization efforts continued unabated. The service’s Big Five programs were just beginning to enter the procurement phase. The new force designs into which these weapons were to go was also nearing fruition, with the completion of the Division 86 heavy force design study in 1981. Additional design studies examining corps and “echelons above corps” structures were begun in late 1979; although these corps and higher echelon designs could be used in any contingency, their primary focus was on war in Europe. Meanwhile, the position of the aviation community was strengthened further in 1983 when it became an official branch of the service.

While the modernization of the Army’s heavy forces moved forward, the position of the foot-mobile infantry may have reached its lowest point early in the Reagan Administration. Faced with a cut-back in proposed funds for fiscal year 1982, the administration recommended, late in 1981, reducing the 7th Division to a 5,000-troop cadre status by fiscal year 1983. Though this measure was quickly rejected, due to opposition from California’s congressional delegation and from the local community around the division’s home base in California, this proposal illustrates the depths to which the traditional infantry had fallen over the previous ten years.

Finally, the introduction of the M-2 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle deepened the split between the mechanized infantry and the foot-mobile infantry community. The M113 APC


essentially had been a battlefield taxi for infantry troops. Commanders needed to concern
themselves with maintaining these vehicles and with handling them properly on the battlefield, and
troops became somewhat bound to their vehicles, but the main role of the M113 was to support the
dismounted infantry. With the coming of the M-2 Bradley, this role was reversed. First, in order to
have room to equip the Bradley with anti-armor weapons such as the Bushmaster gun and TOW
missiles, the number of infantrymen that the new vehicles could transport had to be reduced from
eleven passengers in the M113 to six passengers and one vehicle commander/dismounted squad
leader in the M-2; the size of the mechanized infantry squad was similarly reduced. More
importantly, commanders of Bradley-equipped units (down to platoon leaders) now were concerned
with how best to place their vehicles to maximize their anti-armor potential, to best put enemy tanks
into “kill sacks.” The role of the dismounted infantry, in turn, was reduced to protecting these
vehicles from dismounted enemy troops. Owing to this new emphasis, mechanized infantry officers
became even more tightly bound with the armored brethren in their heavy community.

SPECIAL CASE OF THE ARTILLERY COMMUNITY

The artillery occupies a unique place in the story of the Army’s internal politics. Over the
course of the twentieth century, it remained the one unwavering member of the service’s ruling
oligarchy. All elements within the service have recognized the vital importance of indirect fire on
the battlefield, reflected in its ubiquitous position in the service’s combat organizations. For
example, every Army division and division design since the square-division of World War I has
included an artillery brigade organic to the division. This has provided an abundance of spaces and
command slots for the artillery branch. Since World War I, the Army has had both self-propelled
and towed guns, enabling artillery to accompany both armor and infantry onto the battlefield.89
And, the artillery branch has been very good at its mission over the years; providing massive
amounts of accurate and lethal indirect fire on demand. Indeed, this capability was the one most
feared by the German military during World War II.90 And, this capability fit well with the
traditional U.S. preference for substituting firepower for manpower on the battlefield. Throughout
the period examined in this chapter and the three case studies to follow, the artillery community
maintained its place solidly within the Army’s oligarchy.

89 Major Albert C. Bole, Towed Versus Self-Propelled Artillery in the Period Prior to 1955: An Historical
Investigation of the Argument in the United States Army (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Command and General Staff
College (thesis), 1966).

90 See, for instance, Weigley, Eisenhower’s Lieutenants, 28.
SUMMARY

Over the course of the twentieth century, the political structure of the U.S. Army has undergone considerable change. Some of its once dominant communities have seen their influence decline until they were abolished (the horse cavalry), while others have been created and have seen their influence grow (the armor and aviation communities). Table 4 illustrates two of the major trends in the service’s political structure through the early 1980s. First, the infantry branch, which began the period as a single community, splintered into several different factions — mechanized, motorized, airborne, heli-borne airmobile, and traditional foot-mobile infantry — each with its own tactical/doctrinal requirements and procurement needs.91 Second, the “heavy” community — represented by the armor and mechanize infantry — steadily rose to prominence within the service, while the once-dominant traditional foot-mobile infantry — represented by the standard infantry division — underwent a decline. Essentially, because of their critical role in the Army’s main mission during the Cold War, the defense of Western Europe, the armor/mechanized infantry community has been a dominant player in internal Army politics for much of the post-World War II era. For similar reasons, the field artillery and aviation branches also have been politically strong. By contrast, the traditional foot-mobile infantry lost power within the service during this period (except when required to carry the burden of the fighting during the Korean and Vietnam Wars), reaching a nadir in the post-Vietnam era.

This chapter suggests the following picture of the service’s ruling oligarchy over the course of the twentieth century: During the pre-World War II period, this oligarchy consisted of the three then-dominant combat arms: infantry, artillery, and cavalry. Following the war, the cavalry saw its position in the oligarchy taken over by the armor branch, but the traditional infantry and artillery remained. This picture changed somewhat with the ROAD division reorganization and the development of mechanized infantry; while the traditional, foot-mobile may have retained their place in the oligarchy, the armor and mechanized infantry gradually formed a single community. Following its successes in the Vietnam War, the aviation community joined the oligarchy in the early 1970s. However, the traditional infantry, reflecting the trauma of Vietnam, lost its dominant place in that oligarchy. Since that time, the U.S. Army has been ruled by an oligarchy consisting of three communities: a “heavy” armor/mechanized infantry community, an aviation community, and the artillery branch.

91 The tactics used by airborne, air assault and traditional infantry tend to have much in common; their major difference lies in their means for getting to the battlefield.
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Source: Semi-Annual Report of the Secretary of Defense, selected years; Annual Report of the Secretary of Defense, selected years; Department of Defense Annual Report, selected years; and International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance, selected years.

Table 4: Heavy-Light Division Mix Among Active-Duty Army Divisions, Selected Years
CHAPTER FOUR
CASE 1: DIVISION 86

INTRODUCTION

As the U.S. Army’s withdrawal from the Vietnam War neared completion, the service turned back to its community oligarchy and the service’s core mission: the defense of the European Central Front against a heavily-armored Warsaw Pact attack. In response, the service began a large-scale integrated program combining new doctrine, combat organizations and weapon systems. The Division 86 design was part of this integrated solution to the problems presented by high-intensity conflict against a modern armored opponent, specifically Soviet-style forces in Europe. The Division 86 design clearly fit in well with the Army’s community oligarchy of artillery, aviation, armor and mechanized infantry. According to the framework of intra-service politics proposed in the opening chapter, when a tactical organization and its mission fall under the purview of the existing community oligarchy and its dominant combat concept, the organizational design process should be a major focus of the service’s institutional or developmental component (i.e., so-called the “sustaining base” in the U.S. Army). The process will likely succeed, producing an effective combat organization that will be the center-piece of service doctrine and program development efforts. If the framework described here is correct, then the Army should have devoted considerable time, effort and financial resources to seeing the design succeed.

ORIGIN OF DIVISION 86

The Division 86 design effort began as a product of several years of careful study and analysis by the U.S. Army on the nature and characteristics of modern war. It was one element in an integrated program designed to improve the service’s capability to carry out its core mission – high-intensity armored combat against a modern ground army. The other two elements of this program were the development and procurement of a host of new weapons systems and a complete overhaul of the service’s principal doctrine.

New Weapons Programs

As the Army began the slow process of recovery from the material and psychological effects of the Vietnam War, the service returned to a focus on its core mission: defense of Western Europe along the inner German border. As it did so, many of its officers came to the view that the Army had failed to keep up with technological advances in weaponry made by the Soviets and others during the late 1960s. By 1970, many in the Army believed the service to be ten years behind in the
acquisition of new battlefield systems. No new tanks, tracked infantry vehicles, or artillery were developed during the whole of the 1960s, with nearly all funds, manpower and equipment going to the war in Vietnam. As General William DePuy later explained it: “Because of the cost of a preoccupation with the Vietnam War, the Army lost a generation of modernization.”¹ This failure to modernize that was so widely decried within the service involved, for the most part, weapon systems associated with the Army’s pre-war dominant communities – armor, mechanized infantry, and artillery.

The Army did attempt to rectify this situation during the 1960s, but without much success. Secretary of Defense McNamara helped initiate the joint U.S.-German MBT-70 tank program in the early sixties, but this effort was terminated in January 1970 amid cost overruns, technical difficulties and management issues. To replace the MBT-70, Congress began a U.S.-only program, the XM803, which lasted only one year before being cancelled due to cost and technical concerns.² Similarly, the Army began a slow, on-again off-again effort to find an infantry fighting vehicle (also known as the Mechanized Infantry Combat Vehicle or MICV) to replace its M113 armored personnel carrier; an effort that began almost as soon as the M113 began entering the service in 1960.

The Soviets and their Warsaw Pact allies, meanwhile, engaged in a massive conventional rearmament effort during the 1960s and early 1970s. They added five new divisions to their forces in Eastern Europe and moved these forces to bases closer to the Warsaw Pact-NATO border. They replaced older T-54 and T-55 tanks with modern T-62 and T-72 tanks, and increased the numbers of tanks in their motorized rifle divisions. The quality and quantity of their self-propelled artillery improved as well.³ The Soviet army also successfully developed and deployed an infantry fighting vehicle, the BMP-1, with characteristics nearly identical to those desired by the U.S. Army in its struggling MICV program.

As the withdrawal from Vietnam began, the Army and its dominant communities attempted a new round of weapon development programs. In late December 1971, for example, the Army directed the establishment of a task force to develop the design requirements for a new tank. The

task force completed its work the following summer, just as the service officially began its new tank development effort, known as the XM-1.\(^4\) Progress also occurred in the MICV program, spurred in part by the Soviet deployment of the BMP-1. In November 1972, the Army awarded a contract to the FMC Corporation to build seventeen pilot MICV vehicles. At the same time, the service announced that the MICV program would transition into its engineering development phase, a stage just short of testing and procurement.\(^5\) Army aviation, meanwhile, continued the steady progress it had made throughout the 1960s. For example, after one false start, the service announced a new attack helicopter program, the Advanced Attack Helicopter (AAH) in August 1972.\(^6\)

These and other development efforts eventually generated proposals within the Army for nine major weapon systems by 1972. In an attempt to coordinate the service’s programs before Capital Hill in the face of shrinking budgets, then Assistant Vice Chief of Staff, General William DePuy, assembled six general officers – the heads of the Army’s materiel command, combat development, research and development, logistics, operations and aviation organizations – for a secret, off-site meeting in January 1972. Over the course of several days, these officers debated and bargained over the service’s acquisition programs for the decade of the 1970s. The result was an agreement to focus on five major weapons programs, known afterwards as the “Big Five”: a tank (XM-1), an infantry fighting vehicle (MICV), a self-propelled (SP) air defense gun and two helicopters (a troop transporter and an attack helicopter, the AAH).\(^7\) A sixth program entailed the development of a new 155mm SP howitzer. These programs mapped to the dominant communities within the service and were to become the central elements of the Army’s effort to fight and win on the modern armored battlefield of Europe. In addition to these programs, the Army would continue to develop a host of lesser programs, ranging from improved counter-battery radars to new radios, again designed largely for the high-intensity conflict of the European battlefield (See Figure 2).


\(^6\) The announcement was made on the same day, 10 August 1972, that the previous attack helicopter program, known as the Cheyenne, was canceled due to a combination of cost, technological concerns, and Army-Air Force rivalry. On the Cheyenne program, see Bergerson, *Army Gets an Air Force*, 122-40; and Robert Donald Snyder, *The Politics of Close Air Support* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology (thesis), 1989), 65-84.

\(^7\) These systems would eventually be named the M-1 tank, the M-2/M-3 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle, the Sergeant York air defense gun, the Apache helicopter and the Blackhawk helicopter; see Kelly, *King of the Killing Zone*, 87-88.
New Doctrine

One of the first goals of the newly-formed TRADOC and its first commander, General William DePuy (fresh from his assignment as Assistant Vice Chief of Staff), was to provide a better justification for these weapons development programs before the administration and Congress by embedding them in a more rational combat development process. In this way, DePuy intended to make clear the importance of these programs to the Army’s ability to win future wars. A second concern for DePuy was the need to improve training within the service, especially for high-intensity armored combat, which (like most elements of the service) had declined during the Vietnam years. Both of these factors led TRADOC, in turn, to examine the Army’s doctrine, which would serve both as a justification for these acquisition programs and as a guide for how these new weapons

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**Source:** John A. Romjue, *History of Army 86, Volume 1: The Development of The Heavy Division* (Fort Monroe, VA: Historical Office, United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, June 1982), 3.

Figure 2: New Army Weapons in Development or Acquisition Mid-1970s

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8 Herbert, *Deciding What Has to Be Done*, 100.
would fight on the battlefield. Indeed, revising the service’s doctrine was TRADOC’s first order of business. Prior to assuming command of TRADOC in May 1973, General DePuy held a meeting with the Army Chief of Staff, General Creighton Abrams, to prioritize TRADOC’s near-term tasks. At that meeting it “was decided was that TRADOC first would sort out the doctrine for the Untied States Army.”

1973 Yom Kippur War

Both the Army’s weapon development programs and TRADOC’s doctrinal design work received a major impetus from the service’s intensive study and analysis of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. The war was described by DePuy as “provid[ing] a marvelous excuse or springboard, if you will, for reviewing and updating our own doctrine.” Shortly after the conflict ended, Army Chief of Staff General Creighton Abrams directed TRADOC to examine the war and derive lessons learned from it concerning the modern battlefield. The official Army study, completed in the summer of 1974, suggested that modern technology had greatly increased the lethality of direct fire weaponry (particularly man-portable, anti-tank weapons), the tempo of battle, and the consumption of materiel. These, in turn, required better training, newer tactics, and improved combined arms coordination if the Army was to defend successfully against a Warsaw Pact attack on the plains of Central Europe.

General DePuy wrote a briefing on the implications of the Yom Kippur War nearly six months prior to the completion of the official study. In his briefing, DePuy was much more explicit regarding the implications of the war for the Army’s Big Five and other acquisition programs, finding in its lessons a justification for most of the Army’s programs:

The fact of the matter is, the tank today is the single most important weapon on the mechanized battlefield. There is not doubt about it. ... However, the tank can’t do it alone.

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9 Colonel Edwin G. Scribner, “Doctrine Development by TRADOC, May 1973 – December 1979,” unpublished manuscript, TRADOC Historical Office (THO), Fort Monroe, VA; quoted in Sheehan, Preparing for an Imaginary War, 167, n. 23. Also present at the meeting was Major General Donn Starry, who was to soon play major roles in both the development of doctrine and in the Division/Army 86 design process.

10 Brownlee and Mullen, Changing an Army, 190.


12 DePuy’s results differed little from the official lessons learned published nearly six month later, leading some scholars, such as Kevin Sheehan, to suggest that the entire exercise was nothing more than a confirmation of DePuy’s already established beliefs on modern warfare; see Sheehan, Preparing for an Imaginary War, 170-71.

And later,

...along with the tanks, we must have infantry [specifically mechanized infantry and a MICV], and along with the tanks we must have artillery, either to fire on and destroy targets or to fire smoke for obscuration. We need air defense weapons along so that our tank attack will not be destroyed by enemy air. 14

He went on to describe in detail how the war demonstrated the need for the XM-1 tank, the MICV, the improved 155mm SP howitzer, and the SP air defense gun. And when the war failed to provide evidence supporting a specific Army program, or even contradicted the need for such a program, DePuy simply asserted that the battlefield system would necessary in the European context. For example, in the case of the attack helicopter, which played no role in the 1973 War, DePuy wrote:

We are convinced that the high mobility of the attack helicopter equipped with an anti-tank guided missile system may prove to be critical to the execution of that kind of an active and mobile defense I have just described. 15

The Army’s study of the 1973 Yom Kippur War, therefore, served several purposes. First, it was used to provide a justification for weapons programs the Army already had decided to purchase. Second, it was yet another factor leading the Army to rewrite its tactical doctrine or, at a minimum, it was used by the Army for justifying this activity. 16

The combination of new weapons and new doctrine gave rise, in turn, to the need for a new combat organization. But before turning to this new organization design, we must first examine the development of the doctrine with which it was so closely integrated.

**Active Defense**

Elements of a new doctrine can be seen prior to the 1973 War, but the effort to develop such a doctrine truly got underway in 1974, resulting in the rewriting of the Army’s key doctrinal manual, FM 100-5, *Operations*. An initial draft of the manual by TRADOC’s officially-designated doctrinal development organization, the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, proved unacceptable to General DePuy. In response, he personally took the lead in rewriting FM...
100-5, with the help of a small coterie of officers. The resulting document, which laid out the tenets of what would become known as Active Defense, focused solely on the proper application of firepower on the NATO battlefield. Among its key points, the doctrine declared that the Army needed to prepare to fight and win in Europe while outnumbered. Moreover, the next war would likely be a “come as you are” affair, requiring the Army to be ready to successfully fight the “First Battle.” The concentration of combat power was, according to the doctrine, the key to success on the modern battlefield. It was in this context that maneuver and mobility became important; these qualities allowed armies to concentrate combat power and move to best deliver firepower. While not excluding offense, it stressed the advantages provided by modern weaponry to the defender. Indeed, FM 100-5 stated that one purpose (and a new one for the U.S. Army) of the defense was to “force the enemy to mass so that he is more vulnerable to our firepower.”17 Just as important as the details of the doctrine is the process by which that doctrine was written; specifically, the issue of who was included in and who was excluded from the doctrine-writing process. In short, the process was dominated by the armor community.

Ironically, in light of what was to come, the earliest effort at a post-Vietnam doctrinal revision was undertaken by the Infantry School. During the period 1972-73, the Infantry School developed a doctrine for Europe that attempted to extend the experiences of Vietnam onto the European battlefield and to maintain a dominant role for infantry on that battlefield. Known as the “force-oriented” defense, it called for using small infantry units to draw enemy forces into kill zones, and then withdrawing to the next set of kill zones before the units were decisively engaged with the enemy – described as “trading space for casualties.” Only after the enemy forces were depleted enough that they no longer possessed superior combat power were armored forces to be brought in to conduct successive counterattacks. Heavily promoted by the Infantry School, this concept was rejected by DePuy, “who declared that it had ‘no standing in TRADOC.’”18 It contributed to DePuy’s view that the Infantry School was stuck in the past, tied too closely to a foot-

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mobile infantry tradition, and unable to adjust to the new combat situation facing the Army in Central Europe.

In response, as early as March 1974, DePuy began shifting more responsibilities for mechanized infantry development to the Armor School and its commandant, General Donn Starry. DePuy began giving the Armor School the task of developing the plans and orders for both armor and mechanized infantry brigades to be used in combat modeling efforts directed towards the writing of new training circulars. When the Infantry School protested that they were thereby losing proponency for mechanized infantry, DePuy responded with a letter in early May laying out the two schools’ responsibilities. While the Infantry School retained responsibility for writing training circulars for infantry, airborne, and airmobile battalions, and were to assist Fort Knox in mechanized efforts, DePuy specifically assigned the Armor School the task of writing training circulars for both armor and mechanized infantry brigades. DePuy’s explicit rational for this assignment was that the Armor School was the Army’s “repository of professionalism on the employment of brigades composed mainly of tracked vehicles.”

When the effort to write new training circulars turned into the development of new Army doctrine a short time later, the armor community retained its primacy in the process. General Starry and the U.S. Army Armor Center were given the lead role among the small group of officers rewriting FM 100-5. In part this occurred because DePuy believed that future wars in the Central Europe and the Middle East would be primarily tank battles and that tankers, therefore, should have the leading role in developing the doctrine. But, the Infantry School and Center also were perceived by DePuy as being unable to disengage completely from a ten-year experience with infantry-dominated war in Vietnam. As General DePuy stated in a later interview:

I wanted the Infantry School to get away from the 2½ mph mentality, but they were in the hands of light infantrymen...they didn’t do the mech infantry well at all. They didn’t understand it...that is why I took these draconian measures with them. To shake them out of that lethargy.”

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19 DePuy to Commandant – USAARMS, Commandant – USAIS and Commandant – USACBSC, “Brigade Proponency,” 8 May 1974, DePuy Papers; quoted in Herbert, Deciding What Has to Be Done, 40, n. 7. For more on this, see Herbert, Deciding What Has to Be Done, 39-41. Essentially, DePuy was returning to the days of the armored infantry.

20 DePuy interview with Major Paul H. Herbert, West Point, NY 1 June 1984; quoted in Herbert, Deciding What Has to Be Done, 41, n. 9. For more on the problems of the Infantry School and mechanized infantry during this period, see Urbina, “‘Lethal Beyond Expectations’,” 410.
By the fall of 1975, a draft of the new doctrinal manual was ready. As a product largely of the armor community, it focused exclusively on armored warfare. As DePuy wrote in a letter to the Army Chief of Staff, General Fred Weyand:

Basically, we are involved in moving from a ‘Dismounted Infantry’ oriented doctrine to an ‘Armored’ doctrine, with the Infantry, Artillery and Air Defense in support of tanks in both the offense and defense. 21

The combined “heavy” community of armor and mechanized infantry lay at the heart of this effort. As DePuy described in the letter just quoted:

The Tank/Mech Infantry team, supported by SP Artillery and SP Air Defense weapons, is the core element of Army fighting power. It is the Army’s equivalent of the Navy’s Carrier Task Forces. 22

However, while the manual and the doctrine it described had no role for traditional foot-mobile infantry, it did find room for the aviation community. In the October of 1975, TRADOC conducted a conference with Forces Command (FORSCOM) to gain their acceptance of the new doctrine. FORSCOM, with responsibility for most of the infantry, airborne and airmobile units within the Army, complained about the absence of helicopters and heli-borne tactics. FORSCOM’s displeasure, perhaps combined with a recognition that two of the Big Five systems were helicopters, led TRADOC to include aviation and airmobile tactics in the final version of the manual – the 1976 edition of FM 100-5 Operations. Indeed the manual went so far as to state that: “The airmobile concept is the most dramatic organizational advance in the U.S. Army.” 23

The Active Defense doctrine’s emphasis on armored warfare and the delivery of maximum firepower to the battle drove the key elements of its associated combat organization design, the prelude to Division 86. Moreover, the characteristics of the doctrine design process – development by a small group of officers, largely drawn from the armored community and personally led by General DePuy; a very constrained role for the infantry branch in the process; and operating on a very rapid schedule – were to be repeated in the development of the new division design.

21 Letter to Army CoS General Frey Weyand from DePuy dated 29 April 1975 (letter no. 11) in DePuy, Selected Papers, 161.
22 Ibid., 162.
Division Restructuring Study

The development of new weapons and a new doctrine for employing them led to an examination of new combat organizations and structures. The process began when the Army Chief of Staff, General Fred Weyand, suggested to the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans (DCSOP) that the ROAD division structures needed to be reviewed in light of new technologies. Weyand specifically was concerned that weapons recently had been added to the ROAD divisions in an ad hoc manner, increasing the divisions’ weight and complexity while reducing their flexibility. The suggestion was passed on to General DePuy for review. After six months of analysis by DePuy and (again) a small group officers within TRADOC Headquarters, DePuy wrote back to General Weyand in October stating the need for a new division structure based on weapon systems expected to be deployed during the 1970s and utilizing the newest tactics and doctrine (i.e., Active Defense). Other factors driving the need for a new division design which DePuy spoke of later, included lessons learned from the 1973 War and the observation that the current organization placed too great a burden on company commanders.

A further discussion of this last point is warranted, because it became a key driver of several elements of new division design. In the then current ROAD division design, the company was the lowest point at which different types of arms were combined; e.g., a company task force might be formed by attaching a tank platoon to an infantry company. Moreover, companies typically contained maintenance units as well. DePuy felt that this was a very heavy burden to place on inexperienced company commanders with very little staff support, particularly for officers coming out of the Reserve Component side of the Army (recall this was the time of the initiation of the Army’s Total Force program). This problem was only expected to become worse as new, more complex weapons systems entered the Army’s inventory. Based on these concerns, designers decided to make the battalion the lowest level of combined arms organization (the battalion commander having more experience and staff support than his company-level counterpart) and to move maintenance and other support functions up a level to the battalion.

The Army formally authorized TRADOC to begin the resulting Division Restructuring Study (DRS) in March of 1976. As was typical of DePuy, the DRS was undertaken by a small

25 Brownlee and Mullen, Changing an Army, 175-79; Combat Studies Institute Faculty, Sixty Years of Reorganizing for Combat, 38; and Ford, Burba and Christ, Review of Division Structure Initiatives, 8.
group of officers at TRADOC’s headquarters under his personal control. Similar to the process by which FM 100-5 was written, General DePuy solicited little outside input from other elements of the Army or TRADOC. In line with the developing Active Defense doctrinal concepts, the DRS emphasized bringing maximum firepower forward at the proper place and time on the battlefield. In addition, the study assumed that the greater dispersion found on the modern battlefield required greater mobility, and that the combination of greater mobility and greater firepower (as demonstrated during the 1973 October War) required greater command and control. The study only examined armored and mechanized divisions, recommending a single heavy division type to replace both divisions. Some of the changes recommended by the study were carried over into the Division 86 effort; these included: smaller-sized and single-purpose companies, smaller but more numerous battalions, and the integration of combined arms at the battalion rather the company level. All these changes were aimed at making maximum use of the vast increase in firepower expected soon to be available to the Army’s heavy divisions with the introduction of the new weapon systems in the inventory.

Oddly, however, given the overall emphasis on increasing firepower, the study also recommended cutting the number of tanks within the tank platoon from five down to three and reducing the number of personnel in the mechanized infantry companies. The former action was recommended in the interest of improving command and control. The latter cut was necessitated by the reduction in available passenger space afforded by the new M-2 infantry fighting vehicle. DRS planners felt, however, that the additional firepower carried by the M-2 vehicle itself (versus that found on the M113) would more than make up for the loss of dismounted infantry.

A preliminary DRS design (see Figure 3) was completed in less than two years and approved by Army Chief of Staff General Bernard Rogers in January 1977. At the same time, General Rogers approved designating the 1st Cavalry Division as the test unit for the new concepts. A two year test and evaluation process was established, known as the Division Restructuring Evaluation (DRE). A final review of the division concept was scheduled for October 1979.

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26 Romjue, History of Army 86, Vol. I, 4; Combat Studies Institute Faculty, Sixty Years of Reorganizing for Combat, 40; and Ford, Burba and Christ, Review of Division Structure Initiatives, 8. On the elements of Active Defense, see Doughty, Evolution of Army Tactical Doctrine, 45-46; and Sheehan, Preparing for an Imaginary War, 154-64.


28 The final schedule for testing was not approved until September of 1977; see Romjue, History of Army 86, Vol. I, 10.
However, the DRS design swiftly came under attack from a variety of quarters after it was unveiled for service-wide review. It was criticized for failing to utilize the capabilities of the new weapons to their fullest, as well as for being too fragile for modern warfare. Indeed, the 1st Cav testing program quickly revealed that the DRS design was not robust enough for sustained combat in a European scenario. The Active Defense doctrine underlying the design also was roundly criticized both inside and outside the service for purportedly promoting a static defense posture over offensive maneuver, for focusing too heavily on tactics (what with the doctrine’s emphasis on “servicing” targets with maximum firepower) at the expense of the operational level of war. Critics also claimed that the doctrine focused on deferring defeat rather than assuring success; it was said

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30 Harned, Principles of Tactical Organization, 18.
that the doctrine focused so exclusively on the “first battle” that the Army was likely to lose the second or third battle. 31 Perhaps as important for the immediate future of the DRS design, General DePuy retired from the service shortly after its development stage was completed.

Indeed, some of the biggest doubts were raised by General DePuy’s successor at TRADOC, General Donn A. Starry, who came to question the entire DRS design as well as the much criticized doctrinal concepts underlying it. In particular, the new TRADOC commander was concerned about the failure of the Active Defense doctrine to emphasize attacks on Soviet second echelon forces. By attacking these forces, Starry hoped to provide U.S. ground forces with an opportunity to maneuver against attacking forces, and to move away from the more “static” elements of Active Defense. In addition, General Starry criticized the manner in which Active Defense and DRS had been designed. He felt that they lacked support within the Army overall because they had been produced too quickly by a small group of officers isolated at Fort Monroe (TRADOC Headquarters) and, consequently, that the initial concepts had been inadequately analyzed and tested. And, because it had been developed without input from the service’s schools and centers, DRS – like Active Defense – had failed to develop sufficient political backing within the Army. 32

As a result of these criticisms, the DRS project soon took a back seat to a new heavy division design effort – Division 86. However, testing of the DRS design continued at Fort Hood until mid-1979. And the DRS design work was not wasted; besides adapting some of the DRS concepts, Division 86 used the DRS design as a baseline for comparing new designs. 33

DESIGNING DIVISION 86

AirLand Battle Doctrine and Division 86

Operational Concepts

Between his tenure as head of the Armor School and becoming commander of TRADOC, General Starry spent a tour in Europe as commander of the Army’s V Corps. He brought his experiences from that command to bear in both the fields of doctrinal development and force


32 Romjue, From Active Defense, 11. Starry’s criticism was somewhat ironic given the fact that he had been one of the leading figures in that small coterie of officers; see Spiller, “In the Shadow of the Dragon,” 48-51.

33 Keller interview with author.
design. Indeed, the efforts to develop a new doctrine, which eventually became known as AirLand Battle and led to another revision of FM 100-5, went hand-in-hand with the new heavy division redesign work under Division 86. Although the manual was completed a year after Division 86 received formal approval, the concepts developed for and which underlay the new doctrine also formed the basis for the division design work.

Consistent with his criticism of the Active Defense and DRS development processes, Starry strove to make both the doctrinal and division redesign efforts as inclusive as possible; moving much of the work outside of TRADOC Headquarters, and including all the TRADOC organizations and much of the remainder of institutional Army early on in both efforts. Starry’s ambitions in force development, moreover, went beyond simply designing a new type of heavy division. Instead, he developed and attempted to institutionalize a new permanent force structure design process. According to Starry, doctrine writers and force designers needed to be guided by a common vision of the battlefield, a vision defined by operational concepts and battlefield functions. Consequently, both the doctrinal and the division redesign work were driven by a pair of operational concepts: Central Battle and Force Generation.

From the beginning of his tenure as TRADOC commander, Starry had frequent discussions with his staff on the concept of the Central Battle. This notion, enlarging on the Active Defense’s concept of the “First Battle,” was initially developed and examined by Starry and his staff at V Corps in Europe. Seen as the location on the battlefield where all combat and combat support systems interacted, the Central Battle was defined as

the collision of battalions and brigades in a decisive battle….It consists of tank-antitank, mechanized, and dismounted infantry combat, supported by artillery, air defense, close air support, helicopters, engineers, electronic warfare, command-control-communications, and essential logistic support. It is characterized by the integration of all air and ground systems and the decisiveness of the outcome.

Early on, Starry gave TRADOC the task of delineating and describing the elements of the Central Battle. To begin, he had his planners in the Combat Development Analysis Directorate develop a framework for envisioning a combat operation, and create a methodology for both the doctrinal and combat development processes.

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34 The process eventually became known as the concept based requirement methodology.

35 Ltr ATCD-PD, TRADOC to distr, 17 Nov 78, subj: Battlefield Development Plan (SECRET –Info used is UNCLASSIFIED); quoted in Romjue, History of Army 86, Vol. 1, 15, n. 6. Also see Romjue, From Active Defense, 23-24; Harned, Principles of Tactical Organization, 18 and Naveh, Pursuit of Military Excellence, 291.

The second concept, Force Generation, arose from the Directorate’s attempt to development a conceptual framework for future combat, as planners confronted the problem of what to do after the initial Central Battle had been successfully fought. Specifically, how could NATO commanders prevent the Warsaw Pact from continually throwing wave after wave of combat units into the Central Battle, until friendly forces simply were overwhelmed? NATO might be able to win the first Central Battle, but what about the second, third or fourth Central Battle? Force Generation confronted this problem by interdicting enemy second echelon forces before they reached the battlefield, and by preparing friendly forces to engage successfully in the next Central Battle. According to TRADOC planners, while

“Central Battle focuses on combat effectiveness, Force Generation concentrates combat power at the decisive time and place in order to win Central Battles. It also impedes the enemy’s ability to do the same thing.”

By the close of 1977, the Combat Development Analysis Directorate had completed its second task – the development of doctrinal and force design methodology. Known as the Battlefield Development Plan (BDP), its purpose was to develop a set of concepts about future warfare which could be used to guide doctrinal development, procurement, and division force design over the short, medium and long-term. As outlined, the process began by determining the operational implications of Central Battle and Force Generation. Employing a multi-attribute utility model, the BDP then examined the differences between the close-in (Central Battle) and deep battles (Force Generation) as well as indicated means for integrating the two battle areas into a unified operational maneuver plan. The process assisted doctrinal development by identifying operational and tactical opportunities provided by new technologies. At the same time, planners hoped that it would aid the acquisition process by suggesting preferred directions for technological development and help set acquisition priorities. Finally, it set out the functions and tasks required of combat organizations, considered by Starry to be the initial step in any division design effort. Once these functions and tasks were identified, organizations could be developed to carry out these roles, and the organizations then combined into a coherent division design. Through the BDP process, the Army would be able to make periodic adjustments to any of its division structures, build support for these new designs throughout the service, and allow TRADOC headquarters to maintain ultimate control over the process.

37 Ltr ATCD-PD, TRADOC to distr, 17 Nov 78, subj: Battlefield Development Plan (SECRET –Info used is UNCLASSIFIED); quoted in Romjue, History of Army 86, Vol. 1, 15, n. 7. Also see Romjue, From Active Defense, 26-27; and Harned, Principles of Tactical Organization, 19.

38 Naveh, Pursuit of Military Excellence, 290; Romjue, History of Army 86, Vol. 1, 16-17; and Combat Studies Institute Faculty, Sixty Years of Reorganizing for Combat, 42. The BDP process was very similar to the Force
The Directorate would spend most of the first half of 1978 fleshing out the BDP, which would become the conceptual framework for Division 86 and its associated studies. The main result for division design purposes was the identification of ten functions or critical tasks of battle, five for each of the two operational concepts. Consistent with its emphasis on combat effectiveness, the tasks identified for success in the Central Battle were:

1. Target Servicing – Destruction or neutralization of enemy firepower in the central battle, with special emphasis on countering tanks and antitank guided missiles;
2. Suppression/Counterfire – Destruction or neutralization of enemy indirect fire systems, command-control and communications, and support systems;
3. Air Defense – Destruction or neutralization of the enemy air threat;
4. Logistical Support – Provision of supplies and services necessary to support the forces in the central battle;
5. Command-Control and Communications/Electronic Warfare.

Reflecting the deep attack nature of Force Generation, the tasks under this concept were:

1. Interdiction – Attack of enemy second echelon forces, including first and second divisions and their supporting elements not involved in the central battle;
2. Surveillance/Fusion – Provision of target information both for interdiction operations and for use in the main battle;
3. Force Generation – Movement designed to concentrate or reallocate firepower on the battlefield;
4. Reconstitution – Preparation for the next central battle through the regeneration of forces and the materiel resources required by those forces;
5. Command-Control and Communications.  

TRADOC planners envisioned that all aspects of combat could be encompassed by these ten tasks. They were to serve as the functions around which the Division 86 designs were organized.

**Division 86 Study Directive**

With a methodological framework in place, Starry announced the initiation of the Division 86 Study at the August 1978 TRADOC Commander’s Conference. It was scheduled for completion

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Development Plan (FDP) developed in the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development before that office was eliminated in the early 1970’s. General Starry had been the Director of Plans and Programs in the Office Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, and had been assigned to develop the FDP; Brownlee and Mullen, *Changing an Army*, 119.

39 These ten functions are described in more detail in Romjue, *History of Army 86, Vol. 1*, 30-34.
by October 1979. The study was presented as an extension of DRS design process and would build on the results of that effort. Consequently, the main testing portion of the DRE, which was then entering its second phase (i.e., testing at the brigade level), would continue. So too would the third and final phase of the DRE, involving extensive wargaming and evaluation of the complete DRS division by TRADOC's Combined Arms Command (CAC) and the others; scheduled for completion by the end of 1978. The target year of 1986 was chosen for the new study for essentially three reasons: it was the last year for which reasonable estimates could be made of the Soviet threat, it best fit with the Army's budgetary planning, and it was the year in which it was expected that most of the Big Five and other currently programmed weapons acquisition programs would be nearing completion.

Using the BDP as a basis, Division 86 got underway in October 1978. Task forces were formed around the BDP's ten functional areas (i.e., the "critical tasks"), involving all elements of TRADOC's schools and centers, as well as representation from the Army's materiel and research and development communities under DARCOM. CAC performed the role of overseeing and merging the multifarious results from the various task forces. TRADOC's Systems Analysis Activity (TRASANA) was assigned responsibility for aiding CAC with a complex set of analytical tools. Through systems analysis and wargaming, alternative divisional component designs could be compared to access their capabilities for performing the ten "critical tasks," with shortfalls identified and corrected.

On 31 October, TRADOC issued the Division 86 Study Directive laying down the general principles for the division redesign. According to this document the objectives of the study were six-fold:

1. Develop operational concepts which will take advantage of the increased combat power of new materiel systems.
2. Build a balanced division team: develop effective combined arms interdependence.
3. Organize to facilitate management control and execution of the division's central battle and force generation tasks: reduced and simplify the tactical, technical, and training responsibilities of all echelons of the division.
4. Organize to exploit the new systems: provide skilled teams to handle the division's new equipment and to integrate combat functions of systems and units.
5. Develop sub-element and/or personnel redundancy for critical control functions or for key combat tasks.
6. Plan the transition to the new division. 40

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The directive also specified that the service’s officially sanctioned “European Scenarios” would be the only scenarios used for testing the resulting Division 86 organizations.

The first of three Division 86 general officer workshops was held on 29-30 November 1978 at Fort Leavenworth. The overall purpose of these workshops was to review and assess progress on the design effort, approve study products and recommend changes, and help sort out conflicts and outstanding issues between CAC and the task forces. The operational concept for the design, developed by CAC over the previous two months, was approved at this first meeting, as was the outline of the analytical approach to be taken in the study. According to the approved Operational Concept, the Division 86 Study was

the force development and modernization process that will develop the organization and doctrine needed to integrate into the force the new weapon systems of the 1980s and to optimize their employment. Division 86 will provide an organizational base against which to measure the relative effectiveness of follow-on or improved weapons systems/mix. The development will include tactical concepts upon which to base future doctrine, a base to develop training programs, and a framework within which to perform force structuring trade-off analysis. Division 86 is the beginning of the process to bring concepts, organizations, tactics, training, and weapons systems together in a functional manner.”41

The operational concept made clear that the division was to be focused on the defense of Western Europe from attack by Warsaw Pact forces. The main mission of the resulting heavy division was to carry out its offensive and defensive tasks as part of a Corps committed to CENTAG [Central Army Group] or NORTHAG [Northern Army Group] within the NATO Alliance. In this context the Heavy Division 86 must be able to destroy its share of the enemy weapons systems committed to the central battle within the Corps sector. More specifically, Division 86 must be able to accomplish the following:

a. In the offensive: Destroy enemy security and main defensive belt forces within its zone of attack.

b. In the defense: Destroy enemy 1st and 2nd echelon divisions entering the battle area.42

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42 Operational Concept for Division 86, 13 November 1978 (CONFIDENTIAL – Info used is UNCLASSIFIED); quoted in Romjue, History of Army 86, Vol. 1, 26, n. 14.
Based upon the results of this meeting, the task forces began designing their respective organizations.

**Division 86 Study and Analysis Plans**

A Division 86 study plan published on 15 December 1978 again laid out the basic methodology to be followed: the breakdown and design of individual components of the division around specific functions and sub-functions as defined by the BDP, and then the recombinating of those elements back into a full division. The effort was divided into three phases. During the development phase, lasting from December 1978 to May 1979, the task forces would develop the component organizations and assess their performance against the respective battlefield functions. CAC, in turn, would take the inputs from the task forces and conduct force structure trade-offs of the individual components, followed by the analysis of complete divisions. During the evaluation and synthesis phase, scheduled for June to September 1979, the main activities involved the conduct of division wargames intended to examine supportability, cost and relative effectiveness. The approved organizational inputs (the structure of subunits, their number, and the types of personnel and equipment contained in them) for these wargames were to be provided by the task forces. Finally, a transition planning phase was scheduled for October 1979 through December 1980 during which the elements of TRADOC would determine, among other things, how and when units would be manned, equipped and restructured for the approved Division 86.

Underlying all phases of this work was an intensive and elaborate series of analytical efforts, described as “unprecedented in the Army’s reorganizations of its field units.” These efforts were described and refined by TRADOC’s Combat Developments Analysis Directorate in late 1978. They included a variety of analytical methodologies, computer modeling, wargaming and field testing at every level of the division organization. The models employed ranged from those examining weapon system effectiveness to communications to logistics. Cost-effectiveness analyses were performed comparing the ROAD division to the proposed Division 86 structures. Eventually, facilities at Britain’s Royal Armaments Research and Development Establishment were employed as well in modeling elements of the division. The analysis effort was so extensive that a separate subgroup was formed simply to coordinate and review the models and analytical methodologies employed during the study. The subgroup, with a wide-ranging membership including TRADOC Headquarters, all the TRADOC schools, CAC, Army Materiel Systems

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Analysis Agency, DARCOM, the Department of the Army, and the Air Force, met four times over a six-month period. Figure 4 illustrates the complexity of the analysis program for the Division 86 design process.

**Designing Division 86**

During the first quarter of 1979, CAC and the task forces developed and refined the Division 86 operational concept and developed an initial set of organizational concepts. These were first presented at the second general officer workshop, held 4-5 April 1979. Among the conceptual features of the heavy division outlined at this conference were:

- Maximize firepower forward
- Enable the division to attack second echelon regiments of enemy divisions engaged and second echelon divisions not yet engaged
- Improve command and control through a variety of means including increase the ‘leader-to-led’ ratio
- Improve combined arms integration
- Improve indirect fire support and air defense
- Employ smaller, less complex and single-arm companies and platoons

Also introduced was the innovative concept of “Robustness-Resiliency-Redundancy” (R³). This concept derived from the view of the designers that modern technologies would now require that combat units be capable of fighting around the clock. R³ was defined as “the ability of a unit to withstand attrition and take part in continuous operations and still fight effectively in the central battle.” Losses due both to fatigue and combat casualties were included in the concept. The types of staff and support personnel critical to permit up to forty-eight hours of continuous combat were to be identified and their numbers appropriately enlarged within each division. The workshop approved the various concepts presented, which became the basis for the detailed design work carried out over the next several months.

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46 The R³ requirement ultimately added a relatively small number of personnel to each division, although division designers considered it to be critical capability; Keller interview with author. The R³ personnel requirement included 52 staff personnel, 47 fuel-ammo drivers, 102 ammo handlers, and 53 equipment operators, all required in order to maintain 48 hours of continuous combat based on fatigue alone; and 30 target designation personnel, 29 recovery vehicle operators, 3 medics to replace critical losses due to combat; Romjue, *History of Army 86, Vol. 1*, 109. For more on R³ see Ibid., 107-109.
In the summer of 1979, a number of events occurred that directly or indirectly influenced the Division 86 design process. First of all, in June the new Army Chief of Staff, General E.C. Meyer, called for a formal revision of the 1976 version FM 100-5, largely incorporating many of the operational concepts that had been used to drive the development of Division 86. The next month, General Starry and the task force planners briefed General Meyer on Division 86. The Chief of Staff endorsed the division structure in general terms and formally authorized the absorption of the DRE into the Division 86 design process. In addition, the next phase of the overall work, now known as Army 86, was informally begun in August when General Starry sent the new Corps 86 study directive – including the study objectives – to CAC. And finally in late August, the third and final general officer workshop was held. In addition to briefing the combined corps/division battlefield concept as the first element of the new Corps 86 study, the TRADOC planners presented the complete objective heavy division structures for approval (see Figure 5). General Starry agreed to the division designs, with a few modifications to be made prior to briefing General Meyer in October.
The objective heavy division designs were formally briefed by TRADOC to General Meyer on 18 October 1979. While recognizing that some additional revisions were required, General Meyer agreed in principle to these designs, and authorized the continuation of the evaluation and analysis phase of the effort, as well as the start of the transition planning phase when appropriate. However, he conditioned his acceptance of the final design, scheduled for presentation in June 1980, on successful outcomes to three additional studies: the ongoing Corps 86 study as well as two new studies, the Light Division (Infantry 86) and Echelon Above Corps 86.
Special Design Issues and Community Politics

1. Aviation

Over the course of the Division 86 effort, two organizations proved particularly difficult to design: the Air Cavalry Attack Brigade (ACAB) and air defense. And while both involved identifiable communities in the Army by the late 1970s, neither was yet a separate official branch of the service. The problems faced in developing the ACAB stemmed in large part from the newness of its key weapon system – the attack helicopter. While the airmobile aspects of the unit could rely, in part, on the Army’s experiences in the Vietnam, capabilities represented by the attack helicopter were so new and unique that much in the way of tactics and organization had yet to be worked out. Contributing to the difficulties was the absence of a single organization within the Army with proponency for and expertise in aviation (although the Aviation School did contain a large share of such expertise). With the designation of aviation as a separate branch was still a year or more off, aviation officers and expertise were scattered among several branches. As a result, the Armor Center, with assistance from the Aviation School, was assigned to lead the ACAB design effort. But, in parallel with this effort, TRADOC Headquarters developed and modified its own, smaller ACAB design. Eventually, General Starry approved the TRADOC version as an interim organization and the larger Armor version as the long-term solution. Refinements continued on the ACAB even after the basic division design was approved in October 1979; the major change involved the integration of a ground-based reconnaissance organization into the ACAB. Despite these problems, the aviation community clearly benefited from the important new division role given to it by Division 86 – essentially, aviation units formed a fourth maneuver brigade within each heavy division, with accompanying command slots for aviation officers.47

2. Air Defense

Benefiting as well from its new role in Division 86 was the air defense community. Although not yet a separate branch, the air defense community was at least contained within a single branch – the artillery. The problems faced by the task force (headed by the commandant of the Air Defense Center) developing the air defense organization included combining and integrating a variety of anti-aircraft missiles and guns, both short- and long-range systems. The mobility and survivability of the new short-range STINGER missile proved particularly problematic. However, the biggest difficulty in designing the air defense organization, and one never completely resolved, involved establishing a command and control system for an organization essentially fighting two simultaneous but distinct battles: one at the front and one in the division rear area.48 Nonetheless,

47 The ACAB was a modified version of the ACCB first tested in the TRICAP division experiment.

48 Wilson, Maneuver and Firepowe, 389.
the prominence given to the new organizational design within the division (expanding the air defense organization from a company in the ROAD division to a battalion in Division 86), combined with the new big ticket weapon systems, likely contributed to the air defense community’s emergence as a separate branch in the early 1980s.

3. Infantry School and Mechanized Infantry

Following General DePuy’s departure, the Infantry School eventually retained control over mechanized infantry doctrine and organizational design developments. However, a lingering sense remained at TRADOC Headquarters and among some of its subordinate elements that the Infantry School had not yet shaken loose of its experiences in Vietnam and continued to be more the proponent for the traditional or light infantry community. As a result, the school’s role in the Division 86 process to be much more constrained and less independent than was the case, for example, with the Armor School/Center’s role in defining tank doctrine and organizations. Numerous cases can be found where TRADOC Headquarters or its surrogate, CAC, ignored, overruled or simply dictated outcomes to the Infantry School.

For example, on 11 December 1978, CAC provided specific guidance to the Infantry School concerning the mechanized infantry battalion: i.e., it was to contain 816 men and share a common base with the tank battalion. In another case, the 12-TOW antitank company, a carry-over from the DRS organization, was added to the mechanized infantry battalion at the suggestion of General DePuy. CAC incorporated this suggestion into new guidance for the Infantry School along with a reduction of one squad per mechanized platoon to make up the difference in personnel and equipment without first consulting the Infantry School.49 In yet another case, the Infantry School commandant, still unsatisfied with the TRADOC-authorized addition of a fourth infantry company, complained that supporting the fourth infantry company would necessitate adding two more 107-mm mortars and a fire direction center to the battalion. He furthermore recommended taking all the mortars and scouts out of the battalion’s headquarters company, into which they had recently been placed per a CAC directive, and combined with the twelve Improved Tow Vehicles (ITVs) in a new combat support company. This request was simply ignored by CAC and TRADOC Headquarters.50

The infantry community also expressed concerns regarding the M-2 infantry fighting vehicle. In particular, many infantry officers found irksome the argument that any negative implications arising from the reduction in dismounted troops occasioned by the transition from M113-equipped mechanized infantry platoons to M-2 Bradley-equipped platoons (the passenger

50 Ibid., 76.
compartment of the M-2 was smaller than that of the M113 to make room for additional anti-armor weapon systems on the former vehicle) could simply be ignored because of the obvious increase in firepower available with the Bradley. These officers felt that such an argument treated dismounted troops as simply another provider of firepower, and ignored the special qualities of the infantryman (e.g., maneuver through difficult terrain and initiative) on the battlefield. As a result of such thinking, argued these infantry officers, too few dismounted infantry now were available for the fight. 51 This argument too was largely ignored within the Army. Reinforcing the view that the M-2 developers were more interested in supporting armor than in infantry was the fact that, throughout the latter half of the 1970s, the program managers for the M-2 (supposedly the infantry premier combat vehicle) were all armor officers rather than infantry officers.

But, Bradley system development was not the only area where the infantry community took a backseat to the armor community. It was the Armor School/Center rather than the Infantry School that was given the lead in developing the ACAB. This occurred despite (or perhaps because of) the fact that the Infantry School recently had spent ten years of development, training, and combat experience with helicopters in Vietnam, while the Armor School had no experience with such a force.

Corps 86 and EAC 86

By the fall of 1979, Division 86 had become just the first in a series of planned Army 86 studies. One of them, the Light Division Study (Infantry 86), was a separate effort and will be discussed in more detail in the next case study. But the Corps 86 and Echelons Above Corps (EAC) 86 studies were directly related to the Division 86 effort. All three studies – Division, Corps and EAC 86 – essentially were intended to looked at the problems faced by the Army in NATO and Western Europe (though Division 86 had a secondary mission in the Middle East), and all three

were closely inter-related. Corps 86 was to be structured to fight on a European battlefield in support of and largely composed of Division 86 forces. EAC 86 was to look at the NATO theater-level organization. And, potential trade-offs and interrelationships between Corps 86 and EAC were to be explicitly examined throughout the process. Separate CAC task forces completed most of the Corps 86 and EAC 86 studies in the first half of 1980. The respective study groups briefed the details of the operational concepts, missions and organizations at the corps and EAC level to General Starry at a Corps-EAC workshop held on 19-20 May 1980. Starry complained that both approaches were lacking and called for further analysis. But, after an additional month’s work, Starry approved both the Corps 86 and EAC 86 study recommendations for review by General Meyer, subject to the resolution of final details and minor changes.

**Division 86 Final Approval and Transition Planning**

Details of the Corps 86 and EAC 86 studies were formally briefed to General Meyer in August 1980. He approved the recommended objective corps design and the EAC design concepts for a theater-level army. Likewise, he approved the final Division 86 objective heavy division design (see Figure 6), and formally began the transition planning process for this organization. At the October Army Commanders Conference, Meyer directed TRADOC to conduct the transition planning “as quickly as possible in order to get the army standardized.”

In January 1981, the Army outlined a complex transition effort, involving the complete over-haul of eleven of the service’s sixteen divisions to the Division 86 objective design. In addition, TRADOC would need to undertake an extensive revision of many of its doctrinal manuals and training programs. Meanwhile, the objective designs required over forty new weapons systems and other equipment, some of which remained in development. Transition to the new designs would be on an interim basis until the units were fully equipped with the new material. It was expected that new equipment would begin arriving in 1983. Plans called for nearly all tank battalions to be converted to either the interim or final organizations around March 1983, with most mechanized infantry battalions converting later in the year.

The Division/Army 86 designs presented the Army with a fairly substantial shortfall in personnel. While TRADOC estimated that 836,000 troops were required to field these designs, Congress only authorized 780,000. Yet, the Department of Army chose not to request additional personnel, but to instead spend resources on modernizing the forces. At the time, the service was

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53 Ibid., 21
willing to accept risk in maintaining a peacetime shortfall, expecting that the gap would be closed in a crisis or war time situation through several potential mechanisms: e.g., reassignment of active-duty troops, use of draftees, or the call-up of reserves.\textsuperscript{55}

\textbf{CONCLUSION}

Following the end of the Vietnam, the Army shifted its focus back to its dominant combat concept: high-intensity combat against a Soviet-type foe on the European continent. And as the war wound down, the Army’s intra-service community politics re-asserted itself as well. But the now dominant oligarchy of armor, mechanized infantry and artillery had to make way for an

additional community. For, as World War II thrust the armor community into a position of power within the Army, so did the Vietnam War provide a boost to the aviation community. As the 1970s began, each of these communities had major weapon development programs underway. Meanwhile, the foot-mobile/light infantry and the lessons derived by this community in Vietnam were systematically ignored.

The 1970s witnessed a major upheaval in Army weapons, doctrine and combat organizations. And each area was closely inter-related with the others: New weapons required new organizations and new doctrine. New doctrinal concepts became the framework for the organizational design. New organizations and doctrinal concepts were used to embed the new technologies and justify their requirement before outside audiences (OSD, Congress, etc.), while pointing the way towards new technology requirements. In all three areas, the Army’s intra-service community oligarchy play the key roles. In terms of the design of combat organizations, the Division 86 – encompassing the oligarchy and their major procurement programs – was a major undertaking, requiring eight years (from concept development to final design) to complete. At the time of its completion, the Division 86 design was described as “the most systematic transformation the Army has ever undergone.” 56 A later reviewer judged it to be “the most extensive and thorough organizational redesign study the Army had ever conducted.” 57 The design process involved most of the institutional Army, either working on the design or developing and procuring the weapons that were to go into it. The Division 86 design and its associated studies were at the heart of the Army’s combat development and acquisition efforts during the 1970s and early 1980s.

Once complete, and having received Army-wide input during the design process, Division 86 quickly met with wide acceptance within the service. 58 The new divisions were seen as a tremendous advance in firepower, mobility and armored protection over their ROAD predecessors. And the organization was generally judged a successful one in practice: The service’s armor and mechanized infantry divisions successfully implemented the design, although due to budgetary difficulties in the mid-1980s, on a deferred scheduled. The Army retained the basic Division 86 structure for its heavy divisions for nearly fifteen years, with the exception of minor revisions in the mid-80s (mainly cuts as a result of the Army of Excellence project, to be discussed in Chapter Six),

56 Quote from Jim Tice, “Heavy Division Conversion Plan OK’d” Army Times, 24 August 1981, 1.
57 Kedzior, Evolution and Endurance, 35.
58 Although there was some concern expressed later about the weakness of the corps level structures; see Brig. General (Ret.) John C. “Doc” Bahnsen, Jr. “The Kaleidoscopic US Army,” Armed Forces Journal International, November 1985, 82.
and successfully fought the first Gulf War with this design. All of these conclusions are consistent with the propositions suggested by the framework outlined in Chapter One.
INTRODUCTION

A few months after becoming Army Chief of Staff, General Edward Meyer announced a new division design program, eventually known as the High Technology Light Division (HTLD) concept. This division concept was designed to provide a high technology solution to the Army’s need for effective forces capable of rapidly deploying to crises and conflicts outside the NATO area. Through innovative organizations and tactics, combined with cutting edge technologies, the HTLD was intended to be highly mobile—both strategically and tactically—while at the same time providing a highly lethal anti-armor capability. The High Technology Light Division (HTLD) was proposed specifically as a counter to the prevailing emphasis on heavy forces; i.e., as a counter to the reigning intra-service community oligarchy in the Army of that time. The HTLD program was outside of the purview of the Army’s reigning intra-service oligarchy as described in the opening chapter. Absent any natural constituency in any of the service’s communities, the HTLD appeared to be solely design concept promoted by the service’s weak senior leadership, in particular the Army Chief of Staff. If the intra-service political framework described in Chapter One is true, then the HTLD design concept should not have been a success.

ORIGIN OF THE HTLD

As described in the previous chapter, the view prevailing within the Army and its dominant intra-service communities in the 1970s held that the Army needed to focus on preparing for high-intensity combat against Soviet-style militaries. Mechanized forces (tanks and mechanized infantry) were at the heart of such an opponent’s capabilities and the dominant view held that only similarly mechanized forces could defeat them. The Army, as a result, developed plans to convert all of its remaining non-mechanized regular infantry divisions to mechanized infantry units; a policy which received strong backing within OSD during the Nixon, Ford and Carter Administrations. General Meyer, with a background in light infantry and air assault forces, had long resisted this view, and consistently sought to protect what he referred to as the “Other Army”: i.e., that portion of the force designed for contingencies outside of Europe.  

1 See General Edward C. Meyer “Address to the Annual Convention of the Association of the United States Army, Washington, DC, 14 October 1980”; in Meyer, E.C. Meyer, Chief of Staff, 125; and General Meyer interview with author. As Army DSCOPS, General Meyer had been instrumental in the development of the service’s Unilateral Corps in the mid-1970s, designed for deployment to contingencies outside of the dominant European scenario. This force later became the Rapid Deployment Force; see General Edward C. Meyer, “Pentagon Press Conference; Washington DC, 17 September 1979”; in Meyer, E.C. Meyer, Chief of Staff, 16.
General Meyer was provided an opportunity to adjust the Army's mechanization policy when, shortly after beginning his tenure as Army Chief of Staff, he was asked to present the service’s fiscal year 1980 budget program to Secretary of Defense Harold Brown. Also in attendance at this August 1979 meeting were the Undersecretary for Research and Engineering, William Perry, and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for PA&E, Russell Murray. Murray and his office had long been one of the prime proponents in OSD for the Army's mechanization program. During his presentation, General Meyer argued strongly against the conversion of the next division scheduled for mechanization – the 9th Infantry Division station at Fort Lewis, Washington.² Realizing that he was losing the argument by focusing solely on the need to retain forces capable of fighting non-mechanized opponents, and under pressure to come up with a self-described “brilliant idea,” General Meyer shifted his approach and suggested that there were other ways besides mechanization to improve combat capability against armored forces. Instead, he proposed improving the 9th Infantry’s anti-armor potential through the use of high technology while retaining the unit’s strategic deployability – and, its utility for the “Other Army.” Although Meyer had been thinking along these lines for quite some time, no serious study had yet been undertaken, and the Chief of Staff had not entered the meeting with this specific solution in mind. Nonetheless, while PA&E chief Murray continued to resist the notion, both Secretary Brown and his chief technologist enthusiastically approved.

Thus, the High Technology Light Division (HTLD) concept was born in a quite ad hoc manner with essentially no prior analysis as to its need or potential, and absent any consultation with other Army officers.³ The official announcement of the HTLD design program awaited the October 1979 Association of the United States Army (AUSA) annual convention. A White Paper issued by General Meyers in January of 1980 (although written in October of the previous year) laid out the rationale for a balanced force of heavy and light divisions in Europe, and the development of light, medium and heavy force packages for non-NATO contingencies. The light force packages

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² The 9th saw service in both World Wars I and II, and had been used as a training unit from 1947 to its temporary deactivation in 1962. As the build-up for the war in Southeast Asia continued, it was reactivated in 1966 and thereafter had a unique history of experimentation. Shortly after its arrival in South Vietnam in early 1967, the division was restructured into the Army's only "triamphibian" organization, composed of three different types of brigades: air-mobile infantry, mechanized, and riverine. It retained this structure until returning to the United States over the course of 1969 to 1970, after which it was temporarily deactivated once again. After its reactivation in May 1972 as a regular infantry unit, the division was the service's first to be formed entirely of volunteers as the Army began conversion to an all-volunteer force; see History of the 9th Infantry Division (Fort Lewis, WA: Public Affairs Office, 9th Infantry Division, 1981).

³ General Meyer interview with author. This account of the origin of the HTLD concept was repeated in a number of Meyer interviews; see “General Meyer interview with Huddleston,” 3-4; and Larry Carney, “Ex-Chief Gen. Meyer Warns of ‘Hollow’ Army,” Army Times, 2 February 1987, 8. Meyer characterized the birth of the HTLD as “essentially a spur of the moment decision;” “General Meyer interview with Huddleston,” 4.
were described as essentially existing air cavalry and airmobile, while the medium force packages required rapid deployability combined with an effective anti-armor capability; the latter sounding very much like the eventual HTLD.\(^4\)

**DESIGN EFFORT WITHIN TRADOC**

The initial vehicle chosen by General Meyer for developing this new division concept was the Army 86 process. General Meyer announced the new light division study, known as Infantry 86, at the Division 86 workshop of 22-23 August 1979. While plans called for all three types of light infantry (non-mechanized, airborne, and air assault) to be examined through the Infantry 86 process, the initial focus was to be on the non-mechanized infantry, with study of the latter two put off until some time after 1980. General Meyer’s directive to TRADOC was to develop a light infantry division capable of deploying rapidly to the European theater as well as to contingency operations worldwide, but with the combat power to destroy enemy armored forces and to control land areas.\(^5\) In both contingencies, however, the light division was envisioned, by General Starry at any rate, as in a supporting role to the heavy division resulting from the Division 86 design process. In his study plan for Infantry 86, forwarded to CAC in late October 1980, General Starry foresaw two sets of missions for the light infantry division. The first mission was to reinforce the heavy division in Europe and to be capable of being incorporated into the heavy corps. The second mission set involved initial entry into out-of-NATO contingencies worldwide, seizing airheads and beachheads, defending against counterattacks, but all the while preparing them for the arrival of heavy, mechanized divisions. A separate role for the light division seemingly was not explicitly described.\(^6\)

The Infantry 86 study began with a methodological approach similar to that used in the Division 86 design, built around the Battlefield Development Plan (BDP) process, and including intensive war-gaming and detailed analysis.\(^7\) Responsibilities and assignments were also similar to the Division 86 design approach. Task forces, with representatives from all relevant TRADOC schools, centers and commands, once again were formed around the ten functional areas defined in the BDP. The Combined Arms Center (CAC) at Fort Leavenworth was assigned overall


\(^7\) Romjue, *History of Army 86, Vol. II*, 26
coordination of the task forces. TRADOC headquarters meanwhile would aid in the development of an operational concept, set planning constraints, and lead the overall design effort.

However, the TRADOC planners were to have a much harder time developing an adequate design for the new light infantry division. First of all, unlike the heavy divisions with their clearly defined mission and threat in Central Europe, this new light division had an ambiguous, wide ranging set of missions against an equally diverse set of threats, making it difficult to fit into the planners’ carefully calibrated methodology. As the official history of Army 86 put it:

\[\text{...about the relatedness of the threat, mission, and structure of the light division, agreement was slow in coming. Until late in project planners found it difficult to deal with the structural and strength implications that were present in the threat and mission imposed upon the light division of Army 86.}\]

A yet bigger obstacle was the extremely tough design goals set forth by General Meyer: a division with enough combat power to survive against Soviet-style armor and mechanized units, and yet with enough strategic mobility to be deployed in contingencies outside of Europe. To ensure strategic mobility, the various task forces initially were directed to design a division with no more than fourteen thousand personnel, although allowance would be made for up to one thousand more troops if this led to a demonstrable increase in combat effectiveness. They were told to ignore equipment and cost constraints, and to search instead for innovative operational concepts and cutting edge technology to provide the necessary combat capability. And yet, the TRADOC planners were unable to simultaneously satisfy the need to remain within the mandated personnel ceiling while providing the division the requisite anti-armor power.

The first TRADOC design, ready by January 1980, was rejected by TRADOC Commander General Starry both because it failed to meet the division’s stated operational goals and because it was more than four thousand troops over the stated personnel ceiling. To reinforce the latter point, Starry declared that the personnel-constrained Army could not rely on additional troops alone to generate combat power. And he reiterated his view that, for out-of-NATO contingencies, the division needed sufficient combat capability to spearhead the entry into a secured landing zone, seize and hold terrain, and prepare for the arrival of heavy mechanized units. A second design (see Figure 7) was readied for General Meyer’s review three months later, on 3 April 1980. This design

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8 Ibid., 25-26
9 Ibid., 26-28.
10 The official Army history of the Army 86 effort makes frequent reference to this problem and the frustration it induced in the TRADOC planning community; see, for instance, Ibid., 30, 40, and 56-57.
11 Ibid., 33.
too was rejected, this time by the Chief of Staff himself, for three reasons. First, with only sixty TOW launchers per brigade (along with assorted smaller anti-tank weapons), Meyer felt that the design did not have the anti-armor capability necessary for a central European scenario. Second, the division lacked tactical mobility, with two of three infantry brigades still forced to travel on foot. Finally, the division was still nearly sixteen hundred troops over the stated manpower ceiling.\(^\text{12}\)

![Diagram of Infantry Division 86, TRADOC's Second Design, 4 April 1980](image)


Figure 7: Infantry Division 86, TRADOC’s Second Design, 4 April 1980

Before the month was over, General Starry added a new set of contingencies for which the division was to be designed. The turbulent fall and winter of 1979-80 had witnessed the fall of the Shah of Iran, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the declaration of the Carter Doctrine, and the seizure of the American Embassy and its personnel by militant Iranian students. Prompted by these crises, the Carter administration soon announced the formation of the Rapid Deployment Force. On

\(^{12}\) Ibid., 36-40.
30 April 1980, General Starry approved an amended operational concept for the Light Division which declared contingencies involving the Rapid Deployment Force to be a part of the division’s mission.\(^\text{13}\)

![Diagram of Infantry Division 86, TRADOC’s Third Design, 1 August 1980]

TRADOC planners, meanwhile, drew up a third light division design (see Figure 8), this time consciously sacrificing combat capability in an attempt to drive manpower requirements below the mandated ceiling. In particular, the new design had weakened air defenses, poor maintenance and engineering capabilities, and little or no capability to delay armored forces on open terrain. Although a capability to defeat heavily-armored forces had been one of the two major requirements for the new division, General Starry got around the problem by announcing that the division simply

\[^{13}\text{Ibid., 41.}\]
was not designed for such a purpose. Following an intensive four month analytical effort, and despite these sacrifices in capability, the TRADOC planners remained 855 personnel above the desired 14,000 personnel ceiling. Improvements had been made in the division’s tactical mobility, with two vehicle-borne infantry brigades and one air assault brigade. The effort required to support this mobility, however, was a major reason the division remained above the manpower ceiling.¹⁴

Not surprisingly, given its acknowledged weaknesses, General Meyer rejected this design as well when it was presented to him on 1 August 1980 as one element of the larger Army 86 presentation. In calling for a fourth design attempt, Meyer removed the manpower ceiling from the planning requirements, stating that the size of the division should instead be driven solely by the required capabilities: i.e., high battlefield mobility and sufficient anti-armor punch. He reiterated that the division had to be capable of successfully stopping an armored force. Over the next two weeks, General Meyer became heavily involved in the design effort. He suggested a nine or ten battalion division, with seven or eight battalions to be highly mobile, motorized infantry and two to be equipped with a new air-transportable protected heavy gun system capability of defeating T-72 tanks. The search for a light anti-armor, mobile protected gun system was to remain a priority goal throughout the HTLD process, but would prove to be an elusive one.¹⁵

Thus freed by General Meyer from the manpower constraints, the TRADOC planners produced a 17,773-man division (See Figure 9). Beefing up all elements of the design, the planners arrived at a division with eight motorized infantry battalions equipped with eleven-man light armored wheel combat vehicles (LAWCV) armed with a 25mm automatic cannon. Each motorized battalion also contained an anti-tank company equipped with sixty TOW launchers. Planners rounded out the division with two mobile protected gun battalions, each with fifty-eight Mobile Protected Gun systems (MPGs) with a projected capability to defeat T-72 tanks.¹⁶

During TRADOC’s presentation of this new division design to General Meyer, on 18 September 1980, the designers recommended its approval as the objective Infantry Division 86 (ID86) design for the Army’s three remaining non-mechanized infantry divisions: the 9th, 7th, and 25th. Moreover, they suggested accelerated acquisition of the new equipment required by the division, noting especially the need for four vehicles: the light armored wheeled combat vehicle, a light air defense gun, the mobile protected gun, and a combat engineer excavator. General Meyer approved this division design for planning and testing purposes only; he did not authorize

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¹⁴ For a discussion of the third redesign effort, see Ibid., 43-46.
¹⁵ Ibid., 46-48.
¹⁶ Ibid., 48-55.
programming the equipment in the Army’s budget or the development of schedules for transitioning
the remaining non-mobile divisions to the new design. Instead, Meyer mandated that the division’s
concepts and organizations be tested by the 9th Infantry Division and its newly formed High
Technology Test Bed (HTTB). His decision was to mark a departure from the Infantry Division
86 design.

Figure 9: Infantry Division 86, TRADOC’s Fourth Design, 18 September 1980

SETTING UP AN INDEPENDENT DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

General Meyer was clearly dissatisfied with infantry design effort up to that point. Again,
TRADOC, like the other Army institutional organizations, was an arena for intra-service
community politics and, reflected the dominance of members of the service’s oligarchy. General

17 Ibid., 55.
Meyer viewed all these institutional organizations as ponderous, tradition-bound creatures of the armored, heavier side of the service. As he later explain to an interviewer:

I felt that if we wanted to push on we had to be able to cut through DARCOM, TRADOC, the Army staff and everybody else or it would take forever.

In response, General Meyer sought to develop a design effort outside of this official structure. His intent was to create a development organization patterned along the free-wheeling style of the innovative 11th Air Assault Test Division, to which General Meyer was assigned as the action officer on the Department of the Army’s staff during the early 1960s. Like the HTLD, the 11th Air Assault Test Division focused on developing an innovative concept that was outside of the then powerful set of intra-service communities. General Meyer looked to the 9th Infantry Division and the HTTB be the prime developers of the HTLD. In this manner, he hoped to remove the HTLD from the intra-service community influences. He hoped that with the new development process ideas could “bubble up from below;” that the new division’s organization, tactics and equipment could be developed and tried out by the men who would have to fight with them. However, creating this independent organization would generate a host of conflicts between it and the Army MACOMs. This conflict, in turn, added to the intra-service community oligarchy’s opposition to the HTLD concept.

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18 General Meyer interview with author.
19 “General Meyer interview with Huddleston,” 5.
20 General Meyer interview with author. General Meyer also served in the 101st Air Assault Division during its first year in Vietnam in 1965. He gave a similar account regarding the origins of the HTTB in “General Meyer interview with Huddleston,” 6. Indicative of his efforts to pattern the HTTB on the 11th Air Assaults experiences, among the personnel General Meyer sent out to check on the efforts at Fort Lewis were retired Generals Douglas W.O. Kinnard and Hamilton H. Howze, both of whom had been intimately involved in the development of army aviation and the Air Assault test division in the 1950s and 1960s; see Joe D. Huddleston, The High Technology Test Bed and the High Technology Light Division: Inception Through 30 September 1983, Draft (Fort McPherson, GA: Military History Office, Office of the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army Forces Command, 1987), 114-15 (hereafter cited as Huddleston, HTTB and HTLD).
21 Unlike the HTLD, however, the 11th Air Assault already had the backing of broad group of officers within the Army and the support of powerful external actors (e.g., Defense Secretary Robert McNamara and an existing aviation industrial base), as well as meeting the needs of an impending war. Moreover, the Air Assault division was developed within an established, if renegade, portion of CONARC (TRADOC’s predecessor) – at Fort Rucker’s Army Aviation School. On the development of Air Assault division, see Howze, “The Last Three Years of Army Aviation,” 2-60; Griminger, “The Armed Helicopter Story Part II,” 14-18; Vanderpool, “We Armed the Helicopter,” 2-6 and 24-29; Currey, With Wings As Eagles, 78-82; Tolson, Airmobility, 51-62; and Shelby L. Stanton, “Lessons Learned or Lost: Air Cavalry and Airmobility,” Military Review 69, no. 1 (January 1989): 74-86. For an interpretation of this innovation as one where civilian outsiders came to the aid of Army rebels, see Bergerson, The Army Gets an Air Force, 110-17; for a slightly different view on the role of civilians see Rosen, Winning the Next War, 71-75 and 85-95.
General Meyer chose the 9th Infantry Division to be the testing division for the new infantry design for several reasons. As mentioned earlier, the 9th Infantry was originally the next infantry division scheduled to be “heavied up” to a mechanized unit. In addition, its location next to a major air base and its geostrategic positioning half way between Europe and Asia were both considered ideal for a unit designed for worldwide deployments. The 9th Infantry also had suitable training facilities at its home base, Fort Lewis, as well as at the nearby Yakima Range, the latter with its wide variety of different environmental conditions (desert, mountains, etc.). Finally, the 9th Infantry had a well-deserved reputation, thanks to the emphasis of a number of previous division commanders, for focusing on light infantry tactics. All of these factors made the 9th Infantry, in General Meyer’s view, the ideal unit for a role in the development of the new light division concept.

The official beginning of the HTTB dates from a telephone call on 19 June 1980 to the Division Commander of the 9th Infantry, General Howard Stone, from a member of the Department of the Army staff directing him to organize the Test Bed. On that same day, a meeting was held involving the service’s top uniformed leadership to finalize how responsibilities were to be divided amongst for the Test Bed, the 9th Infantry Division, and the MACOMs. Among those present at the meeting were General Meyer, his Vice Chief of Staff, General John Vessey, and the commanders of TRADOC, DARCOM and FORSCOM. The results of this meeting were announced publicly in a Department of the Army (DA) message to the service’s chief agencies announcing the formation of the HTTB on 18 July. This message became the basic guidance for the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) completed later that summer detailing the responsibilities of the three MACOMs, the Department of Army Staff, and the 9th Infantry Division in the HTLD development process.

According to the MOU, responsibilities were to be divided in the following manner: FORSCOM would continue to command the 9th Infantry Division, while the commander of the 9th would also act as the HTTB’s Test Director. As Test Director, the 9th Infantry’s commander would develop detailed test plans, conduct the actual tests, and write the test reports for submission to the TRADOC commander. TRADOC, in turn, would provide a Deputy Test Director for the Test Bed, establish “a small permanent test group” at the Test Bed, and develop “outline test plans, organizational and operational concept alternatives and doctrine” for the HTLD. DARCOM would supply the Test Bed with a Deputy Test Director for Support, who would be in charge of a small

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23 Word that the division would create such a Test Bed had been unofficially sent to General Stone as early as the previous April. A single officer from the division’s staff had been assigned to work on organizing the Test Bed at that time; see Huddleston, _HTTB and HTLD_, 1 and 8.
materiel development support team stationed at the Test Bed, and would provide “advice on materiel related items” for the HTLD. In addition, a High Technology Coordination Office would be established within the office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans (DCSOPS) at the DA-level to provide “a channel for Chief of Staff guidance.” The MOU presented two major problems that would plague the HTLD throughout its development. First, the 9th Infantry was given the dual responsibility of developing and testing a new division design concept while simultaneously maintaining its readiness for deployment under FORSCOM. Second, TRADOC and DARCOM were tasked with giving up a major portion of their responsibilities (organizational design and materiel development, respectively) to a new independent organization, and asked to cooperate fully with the activities of this new organization.

Confusion over the precise function of this composite organization, the 9th Infantry/HTTB, only added to its first year woes. Specifically, was the HTTB and the 9th Infantry Division expected to merely test the ID86 concept already developed by TRADOC? Or, was it to develop a wholly new division concept? Despite General Meyer’s clear and early preference for the latter, the 18 July DA message on the HTTB was vague on this point. In describing the purpose of the HTTB, the message stated:

Given the standard infantry division as a base, and employing the emerging results of the Light Division 86 study effort as a guide, the activities associated with the High Technology Test Bed will be directed toward developing a light division designed to facilitate rapid deployment, exploit technological opportunities, and meet the requirement for lean, hard-hitting forces.

The commander of CAC, General William Richardson, whose organization remained the action agency within TRADOC for HTTB matters, clearly saw the HTTB as a testing organization for ID86 concepts. In an October message to the TRADOC commander, General Richardson wrote:

We need to push the planning effort for the 9ID HTTB to ensure that the overall plan fully incorporates near-term enhancements, the field testing of ID86 concepts and organizational designs, and eventual conversion of the 9th ID to ID86 organizations.

24 Message, HQ Department of the Army to dist, Subject: 9ID High Technology Test Bed, 181555z July 1980; quoted in Huddleston, *HTTB and HTLD*, 10-12, n. 11.
25 Ibid., 9.
26 Message, Cdr CAC to Cdr TRADOC, subject: 9ID HTTB Plan, 081700z October 1980; quoted in Huddleston, *HTTB and HTLD*, 44, n. 3.
The 9th Infantry Division commander, General Stone, saw his mission quite differently, as one of developing an entirely new design. His view as much more in line with General Meyer’s desire for a design process in which “ideas bubbled up from below.” During the summer of 1980, while the MACOMs were reaching consensus on the MOU, General Stone was busy writing down his own thoughts on the direction of the HTTB. In his view, the 9th Infantry Division and the HTTB were to undertake: “[o]rganizational rather than equipment testing, which would include DA, FORSCOM and 9th ID ideas and initiatives.” Following this view, in early September, General Stone formed several committees at the 9th Infantry Division headquarters, and gave them the task of “developing candidate organizational arrangements and operations concepts.” The reason for creating these committees, according to General Stone, was that:

The Chief of Staff of the US Army expects that many of the operational and organizational concepts to be evaluated as part of the High Technology Test Bed Program will emanate directly from the 9th Infantry Division.

This conflict of views, responsibilities and purpose was to be fought out at Fort Lewis itself once a Deputy Test Director for the HTTB was assigned by TRADOC. The officer personally selected by General Richardson to fill this position, Colonel Harold C. Van Meter, was given clear marching orders by his commander. When later asked by an interviewer what had been his understanding of the HTTB’s initial mission, Colonel Van Meter responded:

That was very clear to me, and it was made very clear to me by General Richardson. . . . HTTB was to examine, in the field, the organization that had been charted and approved by the Pentagon and by TRADOC Headquarters. . . . Division 86 was clearly the structure from which we were to launch the test.

Clearly, Col. Van Meter felt his responsibilities were to TRADOC. He commented in the same interview:

I was wearing a TRADOC patch on my left shoulder. General Richardson’s comment to me was that I was to look at structure and run tests against the Infantry Division 86 organization. General

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Stone felt that this was an opportunity for he and his Division staff to take whatever they wanted out of Division 86, and structure it as they saw fit.  

Adding to the ambiguity of Col. Van Meter’s position was the fact that he was being evaluated in his position by General Stone, his commander at the HTTB, but then “senior rated” by General Richardson at CAC/TRADOC. These personal and professional conflicts led quickly to the development of an “us-versus-them” attitude between the 9th Infantry Division and the HTTB. This feeling was heightened by the fact that the bulk of General Stone’s HTLD development activities were taking place at the 9th Infantry’s headquarters, while the HTTB’s facilities were located three miles away across Interstate 5 which cut through Fort Lewis.

During December 1980 through January 1981, General Stone, frustrated at the slow progress of the division redesign, began organizing informal meetings in his quarters in an attempt to jump-start the process. Known as the “kitchen cabinets,” these meetings were held largely with 9th Infantry Division staff members; Col. Van Meter and others from the HTTB were rarely invited. One outcome of these meetings was the formation of “Task Force Stone,” headed by the 9th Infantry’s recently retired Operations Officer (G-3) and tasked with acting as General Stone’s personal “Think Tank.” Task Force Stone was followed in mid-May by the formation of the Concepts Group, again within the division headquarters. This unofficial, off-line group, staffed with division officers and headed by the division’s Executive Officer, Col. Courtney Prisk, was tasked with developing a new structure and operational concept for the 9th Infantry Division. Both of these moves were described by Col. Van Meter as smacks in the face of the High Technology Test Group. Both of those organizations were formed to place the direction of the 9th Infantry Division directly under Colonel Felter [the division’s Chief of Staff] and General Stone, as opposed to allowing the High Technology Test Bed to do what we felt we had been sent there to do.  

In the midst of this confusion, General Meyer again attempted to make clear his intentions for the 9th Infantry Division and the HTTB. In a message to the MACOMs and the 9th Infantry on 9 March 1981, General Meyer stated that:

The prime responsibility for execution of the High Tech Test Bed efforts rests with the Test Director – MG Stone. I am convinced that the fundamentally important and critical contributions to this project will be made by the leaders and soldiers at Fort Lewis. . . . The

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30 Ibid.
31 Ibid., 5.
pinpointing of responsibility is not intended to obviate the traditional roles performed by the combat developer – TRADOC, the material developer – DARCOM or the readiness agent – FORSCOM, but to place squarely the prime responsibility for success and execution.

Concerning the relationship between the ID86 and the efforts at Fort Lewis, General Meyer described ID86 “as a guide. I see ID 86 as a well-thought out point of departure but not as a constraint.” At the next quarterly Interim Program Review (IPR) for the HTTB, held at Fort Lewis in April 1981, General Meyer took this point even further, commenting that General Stone was “not obliged to do anything with regard to ID86 as a start point if it does not make sense.”

Besides the Concept Group, the 9th Infantry/HTTB undertook a series of other innovative steps to streamline design and procurement procedures and practices, and to circumvent the normal Army development community. These steps were taken in order to free the HTLD from the “old style” of thinking and to hasten its deployment. Previously, divisions were converted to new concepts in a sequential process, requiring that concepts and equipment be first tested and validated, and only then were divisions converted to the approved design; a process that could require up to fifteen years to complete. With the HTLD, testing and conversion of the division occurred concurrently, with the intent of reducing the time required for completing the transition of the division to the new design down to as little as five years. Moreover, due to the high priority attached to the HTLD by the Army Chief of Staff, the time required to produce doctrinal manual for the HTLD components also was drastically reduced from the typical 24- to 36-month timeframe down to as little as 120 days.

Many of the new division’s design and operational concepts relied in many instances on equipment and weapon systems which were not yet fielded or readily available off the shelf. To speed the testing process for the division’s design and war-fighting concept, surrogate equipment often was used until the actual weapon systems were available; the assault gun being the prime example. Fort Lewis also had its own “skunk works” facility to adapt and experiment with currently existing equipment. Reminiscent again of the efforts undertaken in the 11th Armored Division development, the skunk works facility, staffed by military and civilian engineers, was an element of the Installation Maintenance Office at Fort Lewis. Among its efforts was the modification of the service’s new utility vehicle, the High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle

32 Message, HQ Department of the Army to dist, Subject: 9th ID High Technology Test Bed, 092257z March 1981; quoted in Huddleston, HTTB and HTLD, 48-49, n. 7.

33 Message, HQ Department of the Army to dist, Subject: Illegible, 221800z April 1981; quoted in Huddleston, HTTB and HTLD, 49, n. 7.

(HMMWV), to accommodate six to nine soldiers and the addition of a weapons mount atop the vehicle. The facility also developed and tested the palletized load concept, which was later adopted throughout Army. Another effort was the modification of commercial dune buggies for combat use (known as Fast Attack Vehicles or FAVs), which included adding a weapons mount and improved suspension system to allow the firing of TOW missiles and other weapon systems from the vehicle.\(^\text{35}\)

The Department of the Army also provided the HTTB Director with a small pool of discretionary funds (several hundred thousand dollars) to purchase small amounts of off-shelve items or for other types of expenses to facilitate testing. Known informally as “screw around” funds, the idea also had originated with the 11th Air Assault Test Division.\(^\text{36}\) While successful at moving along the testing program, these funds eventually raised questions in Congress over their authorization, proper use, and oversight.\(^\text{37}\)

Procurement was sped up in other ways as well. As early as the summer of 1981, General Stone had come to recognize that the materiel acquisition process operated by DARCOM would be far too slow to meet the HTLD’s equipment needs for a 1985 initial operating capability. As a result, he requested, and General Meyer approved, the development of a Quick Response Program (QRP) to eliminate many of the cumbersome steps in this process. Eventually a QRP program was initiated, although it took another six months after General Meyer’s approval before the program could be put into place.\(^\text{38}\) Despite this program, officers at the HTTB were never satisfied with the participation of DARCOM. The quality of personnel sent by the command to liaison with the HTTB was often questioned by members of the HTTB. And, even with the QRP program in place, the view among HTTB participants was that DARCOM was generally unwieldy and unresponsive to the needs of the 9th Infantry/HTTB.\(^\text{39}\) For example, there were many instances where the HTTB


\(^{37}\) “General Meyer interview with Huddleston,” 15-16.


\(^{39}\) These views can be found in Ibid., 52.
mounted and tested a weapon system on a vehicle long before the proponent element at DARCOM had been able to complete the lengthy process required to grant approval for such a test.  

Several personnel and organizational changes occurred at Fort Lewis during August 1981 that eventually helped to clear up some of the conflict between the 9th Infantry Division, the HTTB, and Fort Leavenworth. First, the conflict between Col. Van Meter and the senior officers of the 9th Infantry finally came to a head. For many months, in addition to the struggle over competing goals for the HTLD project, General Stone and his officers felt that Col. Van Meter had failed to keep them informed of his communications with TRADOC, had intentionally kept them out of the loop in his dealings with other elements of the Army, and had failed to cooperate with the Concepts Group. By mid-August, Col. Prisk had gone to General Stone complaining that the situation had become intolerable, and that he or Col. Van Meter or both officers should be asked to leave. General Stone choose to relieve Col. Van Meter of his duties, and the Colonel soon thereafter retired from the service.  

General Stone, himself, soon left Fort Lewis to take over responsibilities as head of CAC at Fort Leavenworth from General Richardson, who in turn was promoted to DSCOPS by General Meyer. After this change, relations between the 9th Infantry Division and Fort Leavenworth improved dramatically, though the same would not often be the case between the 9th Infantry and other elements of TRADOC. Back at the Fort Lewis, the incoming commanding general of the 9th Infantry Division, Lt. General Richard Elton, was given permission to choose his own successor to Col. Van Meter as deputy director of the HTTB. Not surprisingly, the new deputy, Col. Paul Cerjan, was fully in agreement with the senior leadership of 9th Infantry Division on the HTTB and the HTLD. At the same time, the Concepts Group moved into the HTTB spaces and the two

40 The best examples of this related to the various configurations of the Fast Attack Vehicle; see, for example, Ibid., 79-80.


elements became fully integrated by the end of the 1981. Conflict between the 9th Infantry and the HTTB soon came to an end.

Members of FORSCOM also opposed the 9th Infantry/HTTB throughout the HTLD design process because of concerns over readiness issues. They only reluctantly allowed elements of the 9th Infantry Division to test and transition to HTLD equipment and organization, and were always concerned that FORSCOM was losing one of its divisions for an indefinite period of time. Also, they opposed General Meyer’s decision to give the 9th Infantry Division highest priority for new equipment coming into the service, for example the HMMWV. Instead, they felt that new equipment should first go to units most ready of combat and most likely to be deployed.

Later comments made by General Starry about the 9th Infantry/HTTB – which he had described as a “hobby shop” – sum up the views of many in the institutional side of the Army and within the service’s dominant communities:

I was opposed to it, although I didn’t fall on my spear. In an Army our size, we can’t afford to have a whole division that is a test activity….There were some good ideas that came out of it, I’m not denying that. I’m just saying there’s a better way to do it.

In the spring of 1983, a final decision was made on establishing the HTTB on a permanent, formal basis. For several years, General Meyer had been receiving complaints from Congress about the unusual funding arrangements for the HTTB (such as the director’s discretionary fund). In response to these pressures, as well as owing to a desire to see the effort continued after his retirement, General Meyer decided to reorganize the interim HTTB as the permanent Army Development and Employment Agency (ADEA). In the future, ADEA would perform testing not just for the 9th but Army-wide. This led to yet another battle with the MACOMs concerning where the ADEA should reside organizationally within the Army. In a view shared by TRADOC and DARCOM, the FORSCOM commander wrote: “We don’t need ADEA, but if we must have it, ADEA should be organized under the TRADOC Combat Developments umbrella.” Reflecting these views, the memorandum from DSCOPS establishing the ADEA recommended that it be made an agency within TRADOC. General Meyer rejected this choice and, in a hand-written comment on the memorandum, set up ADEA as a separate Field Operating Agency directly under the

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44 These issues are discussed in more detail in Huddleston, HTTB and HTLD, 139-43.
46 Msg, Cdr FORSCOM to DA, 251310z March 1983, subject: Organization of the Army Development and Employment Activity (ADEA); quoted in Huddleston, HTTB and HTLD, 35, n. 6.
Department of the Army.\textsuperscript{47} In General Meyer’s view, having ADEA report directly back to the Chief of Staff was the only way to ensure “revolutionary/evolutionary changes.”\textsuperscript{48} The full transition to the ADEA was set for October 1983.

**DESIGNING THE HIGH TECHNOLOGY LIGHT DIVISION**

In the spring of 1981, the Concepts Group began its design efforts by examining the ID86 design, but quickly came to realize that the TRADOC-developed force was far too heavy for the 9\textsuperscript{th} Infantry Division’s stated mission. Instead, under the direction of General Stone, the Concepts Group turned to designing a completely new type of division. This effort was given further impetus following General Meyer’s admonishment at the July 1981 IPR that the 9\textsuperscript{th} Infantry Division must focus on force structuring, tactical and deployment concepts rather than on equipment alone.

Most of the Concepts Group’s early design efforts involved three 9\textsuperscript{th} Infantry Division officers – Col. Prisk, Lt. Col. James Channon, and Major Robert Testerman – and one civilian – Mr. Thomas Rorstad – who acted as the group’s scientific advisor.\textsuperscript{49} Given General Meyer and General Stone’s directive after the July IPR to focus on a new division design, the group went into an intense period of work. After roughing out the new structure, which with its 10,000-troop objective was seen as simply a starting point for the division, Major Testerman was assigned the role of fleshing out this design for a “Contingency” or “Quick Strike” division. Over an intense seven to ten day period, Testerman, in coordination with other members of the group, completed a task normally requiring the efforts of major portions of TRADOC’s development community many months to perform.

The resulting Quick Strike Division contained an ACAB and two maneuver brigades. Each of the latter brigades contained two Light Attack (then known as Quick Kill Vehicle) battalions equipped with FAVs and one heavier Assault Gun (then known as a Mobile Protected Gun) battalion equipped with light, tank-killing assault guns. Failure to acquire a suitable version of this latter weapon would become one of the major stumbling blocks for the division. At the same time as they were developing the division’s design, the Concepts Group also was devising a deep strike

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\textsuperscript{47} Huddleston, *HTTB and HTLD*, 35.
\textsuperscript{48} “General Meyer interview with Huddleston.” 15.
\textsuperscript{49} Lt. Col. Channon had been recently assigned to the 9th after completing a tour of duty with the motion picture industry. Some of the division’s more innovative concepts came jointly from Lt. Col. Channon and Major Testerman. The former officer’s excellent skills as an illustrator also were used extensively by the Concepts Group; see “Major Testerman interview with Huddleston,” 2. Mr. Rorstad, who had been assigned by TRADOC to be the scientific adviser for the HTTB, was diverted to the Concepts Group; see Huddleston, *HTTB and HTLD*, 106.
\end{flushleft}
war-fighting concept for the division, one consistent with the Army’s emerging AirLand Battle doctrine.

General Stone tentatively approved elements of the new division design shortly before his departure from the 9th Infantry at the end of August 1981. He authorized the testing of some of the division’s war-fighting concepts and organization as well as the procurement of the FAV for testing purposes. Work continued, meanwhile, to complete the HTLD design. By the end of 1981, an initial HTLD division design was ready, with a troop strength set at approximately 15,500 personnel. This organization was to be the starting point for more detailed design work.

It was only at this time that elements of the Army’s design community were brought back into the HTLD’s development process, but even now the 9th Infantry Division and HTTB retained tight control over the process. Working groups were formed, each headed by a HTTB project manager, with representatives from a variety of TRADOC and DARCOM organizations. Also participating in the working groups were the battalion commanders of the 9th Infantry, or their S-3s (operations officers), whose units were already identified as test battalions for the emerging design. Each working group was assigned a specific unit, and tasked to flesh out the operational concept and structure outlined by the Concepts Group and the HTTB.

During 3-5 March 1982, an off-site conference was held to evaluate the efforts of these working groups, with attendance limited once again to the senior officers of the 9th Infantry Division and the HTTB. Known as the Alderbrook Conference (named after the inn on Puget Sound where the meeting was held), the HTTB design teams presented a new division structure consisting of three different types of maneuver battalions: the assault gun battalion, the light attack battalion, and a new battalion of motorized infantry known as the light motorized battalion. By this time, however, the division had also grown far beyond the original December 1981 design of 15,500 troops to over 17,700 personnel. Similarly, the number of sorties required to deploy the division had grown as well. One objective of the conference was to whittle these numbers down to an interim level of 16,000 troops and 1200 sorties. While the former goal was reached (at 15,977 personnel), the conference ended with the division still requiring 1347 sorties to fully deploy. The teams also presented operational concepts for these units at the conference, paralleling very closely the original concept developed the previous summer by the Concepts Group. The division, being fully motorized, would be able to keep up with accompanying mechanized and armored units. Moreover, it would be trained to fight along a wide front and in a fluid, highly mobile style of warfare (ranging from deep within the enemy’s rear areas to deep within its own). The division was to use its tactical mobility to best advantage by attacking unsuspecting enemy forces from the flanks.

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50 This sortie level remained 200 flights above the division designers’ desired 1000-sortie ceiling.
Contain Enemy Strength:
- Fix enemy with minimum combat power
- Shape enemy penetrations – terrain, obstacles
- Deny enemy front line success
- Conduct dynamic defense/delay
- Position defense only: to hold critical terrain and to protect vital installations
- Prevent/counter enemy tactical envelopment
- Capitalize on superior mobility

Fight As Deep As Possible
- Engage early with highly mobile force
- Strip away recon elements
- Force early deployment/expenditure of POL, ammo, time
- Prevent forward elements from securing critical point
- Degrade enemy combat effectiveness

Attack Critical/Vulnerable Subsystems
- Achieve real time ID of high value targets
- Employ superior mobility/lethality
- Conduct rapid (EW, indirect fire, USAF, aviation, maneuver elements) constant flank/rear attacks throughout area of influence
- Penetrate forward combat echelons through: stay behind, ground infiltration, helicopter insertion, and USAF insertion
- Organize strikes to cause complete system collapse

Fight In Own Rear Areas
- Screening/surveillance – intelligence system must see rear area also
- Competent DC3I, C3CM for rear area
- Highly mobile lethal rear area elements
- Degrade enemy capability to attack our rear

Deceive The Enemy
- Provide a myriad of deceptive images
- Integrate deception operations
- Frustrate enemy acquisition
- Blind or destroy sensor systems we can not deceive

Sustain The Force
- Support fluid operations/non-linear battlefield with flexible logistics structure

HTLD/Air Force Integration
- Deployment of the force
- Joint C3I-preparation of the battlefield
- Joint targeting: SEAD, attack of second echelon and EW
- Integration/complementary employment of firepower
- Sustainment of the force

Source: 9th ID/HTTB, “9th Inf Div ‘Old Reliables’,” HTLD IPR brief to General Meyer (1 April 1982), 6-13.

Figure 10: HTLD Operational Concept

and rear. Utilizing speed and mobility to surprise the enemy, the division’s widely dispersed units would move rapidly and then concentrate quickly for strikes against the opponent’s weak points (see Figure 10). With a few minor changes, General Elton approved these structures and concepts.
The HTLD design (see Figure 11) arising from the Alderbrook Conference was presented to General Meyer at the next IPR, in April 1982. It consisted of five light motorized infantry battalions, two light attack battalions, and two assault gun battalions. All the ground maneuver brigades were fully motorized and most units were able to fight mounted. Each light motorized infantry battalion contained three light motorized infantry companies, equipped with enough of HMMWVs, to mount the battalion’s entire complement of infantry. Each motorized battalion also included one anti-armor company of TOW-equipped HMMWVs. Each light attack battalion contained three light attack companies equipped with light attack vehicles (the FAV). The FAV could mount one of four types of armament: TOW anti-tank missiles, 30mm cannon, .50 caliber machine guns, or grenade launchers. The assault gun battalions contained three assault gun companies each, equipped with some (as yet undetermined) version of an assault gun. A fourth brigade, the Cavalry Brigade (Air Attack), a version of the heavy division’s
ACAB, consisted of two attack helicopter battalions and a cavalry squadron. The cavalry squadron was made up of two troops of airmobile ground forces and two air cavalry troops.\footnote{The 9th’s air combat brigade was formed in December of 1980, and through the HTTB had helped validate the ACAB approach for Army-wide use.} Other division assets included an artillery brigade containing forty-eight M198 towed 155mm howitzers and eighteen MLRS rocket artillery systems. Because deception was a key operational concept of the division, the division also contained a unique 21-troop Deception Detachment, which included a “Special Effects” section. Overall, the division design made innovative use of computers for battle management and command-and-control. However, unable to meet the mandated personnel and sortie levels, HTTB officials hoped to reduce personnel levels to 13,698 and requisite sorties down to 1093 in the next round of cuts.\footnote{The details of the division design are taken from the 9th Division/HTTB 29 April 1982 IPR Briefing Slides presented to General Meyer, in Huddleston, \textit{HTTB and HTLD} 195-96.}

At this IPR, General Meyer approved the 16,000 interim design as well as a number of recommendations set forth by the 9\textsuperscript{th} Infantry/HTTB. These included:

- “Approv[al of] the operational concept/structure [of the HTLD] for planning, programming, evaluation and transition;”
- “Authoriz[ing] the provisional reorganization of three current battalions into assault gun, light attack, and light motorized battalions commencing 1 Jul 82;” and
- “Authoriz[ing] the lease of surrogate equipment for the three maneuver battalions.”\footnote{Ibid.}

Overall, the April IPR proved a turning point for the HTLD development process.

**INTERNAL OPPOSITION TO THE HTLD**

With the Chief of Staff’s approval for transitioning the 9\textsuperscript{th} Infantry into the HTLD design and for putting the division into the Army’s planning and programming cycle, elements throughout the Army at last understood the depth of General Meyer’s commitment to the HTLD program. As one participant in this process later put it:

[General Meyer’s] actions sent one tremendous shudder of signals throughout the United States Army, particularly at DA staff level. It is at that time they started to realize that the Chief was serious about this. For the first time, I might add – for the first time. Up until that point, I got the feeling that people thought they would wait the Chief out. . .\footnote{“Colonel Cerjan interview with Huddleston,” 5.}
As will be seen, however, this awareness of the seriousness of the Army Chief of Staff’s intent failed to prevent continued opposition to the HTLD from many quarters in the Army. The opposition serves to illustrate the weak position occupied by the Army’s senior leadership.

Immediately following the April IPR, the TRADOC elements finally were given their first chance to independently review the HTLD design. Led by CAC, the proponents for the division’s various units and functions, represented by the TRADOC Centers and schools, critiqued and identified a variety of “weaknesses” in the design. For the next year, the 9th Infantry/HTTB was engaged in a constant struggle to prevent these TRADOC elements from inflating the already too high personnel levels in each functional area or unit, as nearly all the “fixes” identified by TRADOC led to increases in troop strength. By the August 1982 IPR, the division design had leapt to 17,742 troops and required 1,356 C-141 sorties to deploy.\textsuperscript{55} While the ultimate decision for design changes rested with General Elton (with General Meyer’s concurrence), various proponents centers were continually criticizing and attempting to stonewall efforts by the 9th Infantry/HTTB to downsize the division by eliminating personnel or entire units from the design. By December, the Department of the Army issued yet another set of personnel guidelines, raising the HTLD personnel limit to 16,000 troops.

The 9th Infantry/HTTB held a second Alderbrook Conference in March 1983, where the HTLD personnel levels again were cut, now down to 16,142 soldiers.\textsuperscript{56} Also during the spring of 1983, the first brigade-size exercise was held of the HTLD design. While the 9th Infantry/HTTB evaluation of the exercise was very positive, TRADOC observers were less enthused. Both the chief of CAC’s Force Development, Test and Evaluation Division and the exercise observer from the Infantry School issued biting critiques of the brigade’s organization, training, and performance.\textsuperscript{57}

Internal service opposition to the HTLD concept also can be seen in the problems the HTLD developers had in acquiring many of the division’s unique weapons and equipment. The 9th Infantry/HTTB was widely derided within the Army as the “Toy’s R Us” gang.\textsuperscript{58} Many officers

\textsuperscript{55} Huddleston, \textit{HTTB and HTLD}, 209.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 226.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 234.
feared that the costs of equipping this division could easily take resources away from the Army’s Big Five and other programs favored by the service’s dominant communities. Unfortunately for the HTLD, responsibility for identifying requirements and specifications for much of this equipment resided in the organizations controlled by the service’s dominant communities, especially DARCOM’s armored-dominated Tank and Automotive Command (TACOM). The fate of two of the HTLD’s key weapons systems illustrates the issue.

The light attack battalions, equipped with the Fast Attack Vehicle, turned out to be the division’s most innovative organization. And, the FAV, basically an armed version of an all-terrain dune buggy similar to those ridden by weekend vacationers in the deserts of Southern California, quickly became the symbol in the public’s mind of the exciting possibilities of the HTLD. Several of these vehicles were obtained by the 9th Infantry Division on loan from the Navy, and eventually a battalion’s worth of vehicles was purchased from the manufacturer, Emerson/Chenowith. During 1984 and 1985, CAC was assigned the task of identifying an Army-wide requirement for such a vehicle. In the end, TRADOC’s schools and centers, and elements of DARCOM were unable to agree on any requirement, leaving the 9th Infantry Division as the lone FAV-equipped force. By 1985, the division retained only half the required inventory of FAVs (MP units as well as elements of the artillery were also equipped with these vehicles). But with such a small number of vehicles required, the unit cost would have been at least one and half times higher than the division’s commander (now Major General Donald Pihl) felt Congress would approve. Rather than spread the FAVs throughout the division, it was decided for maintenance and logistics reasons to retain these vehicles in one Light Attack Battalion and equip all the other units with the HMWWV. By 1988, the last of the FAVs had been removed from the division, and both light attack battalions were

59 Higgins interview with author; and General Meyer interview with author.

60 Lt. General Robert W. RisCassi, “Army Development and Employment Agency Oral History Interview with Lieutenant General Robert W. RisCassi, Commander, 9th Infantry Division (Motorized), and Commander, Army Development and Employment Agency, 27 May 1983 - 30 May 1985,” interview by Joe D. Huddleston, 15 July 1985; transcript, High Technology Test Bed/Army Development and Employment Agency Oral History Papers, Archives, U.S. Army Military Institute, Carlisle, PA, 2 (hereafter cited as “Lt. General RisCassi interview with Huddleston”). The vehicle’s popularity, however, also caused problems for the HTTB developers as they sought outside support and understanding for the overall effort at Fort Lewis; see “Colonel Cerjan interview with Huddleston,” 11. The use of dune buggies in the attack role was purportedly the brainchild of a Lt. Col. Channon, who had recently been assigned to the HTTB design group following assignment as Army liaison to the Hollywood film industry; “Major Testerman interview with Huddleston,” 2.

61 “Lt. General RisCassi interview with Huddleston,” 2.


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similarly equipped. Each of the company’s three platoons contained three TOW II launchers and five Mark 19 40-mm grenade launchers mounted on HMMWVs. The new light attack battalions, with no dismounted infantry capability, were designed to act as a covering or flank force, or to operate deep behind enemy lines in a concept similar to the original HTLD design. 63

A similar fate befell the division's armored gun system. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the search for an AGS focused on the joint Army-Marine Corps Light Attack Vehicle (LAV) program. However, the armored community, mainly represented by TACOM, was assigned this task with the Army. Given their backgrounds and community interests, this group naturally decided on the necessity for a light tank. Much time was spent arguing with the Marines over whether the vehicle should be tracked or wheeled, and on the size of the gun that should be mounted upon it. In the latter case, the Army insisted on a 105mm gun, quite heavy for a light vehicle, while the Marines were willing to examine a 75mm automatic cannon and 90mm guns. Once a 105mm gun was successfully fired from an LAV, the Army's tankers complained that this too was inadequate; the turret was unable to slew to the right or left, requiring the vehicle to move instead. As an interim solution, the Marines and the 9th Infantry/HTTB were willing to look at mounting the 25mm Bushmaster gun on a version of the Marine's LAV (the LAV-25), and then “up-gunning” as technologies allowed; TACOM, however, refused to agree to this option. For the next several years thereafter, the AGS program was dead within the Army. 64 The importance of the AGS to the fate of the HTLD design was described later by General Elton:

If we could have gotten an assault gun...if we could push the technology to give us light stuff and in doing so, retain the lethality of the heavy divisions, I think we would have been farther along and would have kept the concept. 65

63 For more information on 9th’s final motorized division structure, see Lt. Col. Stephen L. Bowman, “The ‘Old Reliables’: One of a Kind.” Army, February 1988, 26-34.

64 General Wickham attempted and failed to revive an armored gun system in the mid-1980s, with the intent of replacing the aging Sheridan tanks in the 82d Airborne and providing his Light Infantry Divisions with additional anti-armor capability. Later in the decade, the AGS again became a “top priority” for the Army; but, by the mid-1990s, the service once again had dropped the program from its procurement budget. In the meantime, and in contrast to the Army's failures, the Marines acquired a family of LAVs, including the LAV-25. By the early 1990s, technology had advanced enough to allow the Corps to examine a 105mm gun for its anti-armor version of the LAV. For more on this tortured history, see: Benjamin F. Schemmer, “9th Infantry Works Toward 1986 IOC as High Technology Light Division, Armed Forces Journal International, October 1983, 80; Jim Tice, “Improved Sheridans Will Roll Once More With 9th Inf Division,” Army Times, 29 April 1985, 27; “Armored Gun System to Give Light Units Antiarmor Punch,” Army, July 1987, 57; and Adelsberger, “Motorized Burnout,” Army Times, 15.

65 Ibid. General Meyer expressed similar sentiments; General Meyer interview with author.
LACK OF EXTERNAL SUPPORT

In the face of this internal opposition, General Meyer and the HTLD supporters failed to generate much support for the concept outside of the Army. Although, with the exception of the Carter-era OSD PA&E office, the HTLD generated little open opposition within the Pentagon during either the Carter or Reagan Administrations, it also generated little open support. Elsewhere in the executive branch, the program was largely seen as an internal Army experiment and an internal Army concern. However, the opposition from the service’s ruling communities and the resulting inability of TRADOC and DARCOM to decide on appropriate requirements, functions or missions for HTLD was a further factor in lukewarm response to the concept outside the service.

Confusion within the Army over the HTLD also led to a lack of strong congressional support for the concept. Although generally supportive of Army efforts to experiment with combat organizations like the HTLD, Congress frequently withheld or reduced funding for elements of the HTLD in favor of better justified programs. Such was the case, for example, with the AGS system on Capital Hill. And, as already mentioned, Congress frequently expressed concerns with the unorthodox financial arrangements at Fort Lewis. Few members of Congress raised their voice in protest when the HTLD was replaced.

FALL OF THE HTLD

The final HTLD IPR for Generals Meyer and Stone was held in mid-May. General Elton was scheduled to be reassigned later in the month, with Col. Cerjan having already left the HTTB in the previous February. Likewise, General Meyer was set to retire from the Army in June 1983. At the IPR, the 16,000-troop level was reaffirmed, as was an eventual deployment goal (by 1990) of 1000 C-141 equivalent aircraft sorties. An interim level of 1200 sorties was approved by General Meyer, based on the recommendation of General Elton. And, the transition date for the full division was moved back to 1986, apparently due to equipment procurement delays. This was General Meyer’s last official action involving the HTLD. While many problems remained, especially in regards to identifying and procuring a suitable armored gun for the division, General Meyer left the

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66 According to General Meyer, PA&E opposed the HTLD because “the ‘bean counters’ down there said ‘It doesn’t have the same fire power effectiveness as a heavy division’”; see “General Meyer interview with Huddleston,” 16. The February 1983 Defense Science Board task force found that the HTLD effort was not well understood by and lacked necessary support from people in OSD or Congress; see Defense Science Board, Assessment of High Technology Test Bed, 40.

67 Huddleston, HTTB and HTLD, 227.
Army feeling that the HTLD was well in place. He, therefore, was surprised and disappointed – bordering on a sense of betrayal – by what happened next. 68

His successor, General Wickham, had very different views on the future of the light divisions. In a July 1983 interview, given shortly after his ascension to the position of Army Chief of Staff, General Wickham expressed doubts that the 9th Infantry Division would serve as a prototype for future units:

Whether or not the actual structure of the 9th Div becomes the basis for replication in other light divisions, we’re not sure... if we are in the mold of innovation, we need to be willing to look at other changes. 69

He later expressed concern that the division was too large and lack an adequate “teeth-to-tail” ratio. 70 Confusion within the Army continued as well over the service’s requirement for the LAV, leading to a multitude of errors in its presentations to Congress. Deciding that the service was not serious enough about the effort, both the House and Senate Armed Services Committees zeroed out Army participation in the LAV program in the fall of 1983.

Also by the fall of 1983, development work on the HTLD design had largely ceased within the Army. Consistent with other mandated cutbacks in division troop strengths, the Army of Excellence study cut the authorized strength of the HTLD down to 14,500. The sortie limit, however, was raised to 1400 C-141 equivalents. 71 To avoid confusion with General Wickham’s own Light Infantry Divisions, the name of the High Technology Light Division was changed to the “High Technology Motorized Division” or HTMD. And, rather than have a worldwide mission profile, the division was given a single primary mission of defending Southwest Asia as part of the force assigned to Central Command. General Wickham’s lack of interest in the HTLD is best illustrated by the fact that no Chief of Staff-led IPRs were held for the division after he assumed office. By the following spring, the Army declared that the 9th Infantry/HTMD would serve simply as “a test bed for evaluating emerging technologies and new operational, organizational, and

68 General Meyer interview with author.
70 Schemmer, “9th Infantry,” 80.
equipment concepts applicable to other types of divisions within the force, but that no other divisions would be converted to the HTMD design.  

Following one more design change in the fall of 1983, this one instigated by the new 9th Infantry/HTTB commander, General RisCassi, the final division design for the High Technology Motorized Division was set (see Figure 12). This design once again consisted of four maneuver brigades – three ground brigades and one combat aviation brigade. However, rather than “pure” battalions as before, the ground units now were composed of five heavy combined-arms battalions, two light combined-arms battalions, and two light attack battalions. The heavy combined-arms

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73 Huddleston, HTLD and HTTB, 240.
battalions contained two assault-gun companies and one light motorized infantry company, while the light combined-arms battalions contained one assault-gun company and two light motorized infantry companies.

Over the next year, as work on an assault-gun ground to a halt within the Army, the nearly obsolescent Sheridan tank, then assigned to elements of the 82d Airborne, was considered for use as a substitute for a heavy anti-armor system. This idea quickly was vetoed by the Army Vice Chief of Staff General Max Thurman on the grounds that the Army did not have enough spare parts in its inventory to support additional Sheridan-equipped units, while the original manufacturers had long since stop producing this equipment. In the end, the 9th Infantry Division was left with a “heavy” anti-armor capability consisting of HMWWVs armed with TOW II launchers. Each assault-gun company contained twenty TOW II launchers atop HMWWVs, while the infantry companies were armed with SAW light machine guns and Dragon anti-tank missiles.

After its official transformation, the High Technology Motorized Division never left its home at Fort Lewis. As the Cold War drew to a close and defense budget began to fall dramatically in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the 9th Infantry was one of the first of the Army’s divisions to be deactivated. In the first round of reductions, one of the division’s three maneuver brigades was cut from the active-duty force structure in fiscal year 1988, to be replaced by a National Guard brigade. The last of the division’s units was inactivated in late 1991. Ironically, many of the operational concepts central to the HTLD were embraced many years later by the Army’s heavy communities as they attempted to adapt to a new expeditionary role in the post-Cold War era.

CONCLUSIONS

General Meyer was disappointed in the design developed by TRADOC, which is not surprising given the opposition to the concept by the very communities dominating TRADOC. He responded by building a separate, independent organization, the 9th Infantry Division/HTTB hybrid, to design and test the HTLD concept. This organization, not surprisingly given its mission and structure, found itself in frequent conflict with the Army’s MACOMs, in particular TRADOC and DARCOM. This situation, in turn, merely increased the opposition to the HTLD among TRADOC, DARCOM and their dominant communities members. As a result, when the 9th and the HTTB had to turn back to these organizations for help in developing the HTLD design and

75 Tice, “10,300 Spaces to Be Sliced,” 1.
76 One of the division’s brigades remained as an independent brigade, the 199th (Motorized), until it was converted to the 2d ACR and sent to the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, Louisiana in the summer of 1993; see Naylor, “On the Fly,” 28.
procuring the necessary equipment, obstacles and criticism inevitably arose. Examples of such problems include the 9th Infantry/HTTB’s friction with DARCOM over cumbersome materiel development procedures, and the inability or unwillingness of TACOM to establish requirements for key HTLD vehicles. The confusion and conflict over requirements, concepts and missions for the HTLD within the service led to equal confusion among potential supporters outside the service. It caused, for example, frequent congressional cutbacks in funding for crucial HTLD weapon systems. No where is this better illustrated than in the case of the armored gun system (AGS).

Several reasons can be put forward for the ultimate failure of the HTLD concept; many related to intra-service politics. First, the HTLD originated with the service’s weak senior leadership, it was clearly a top-down initiative. The concept had no natural constituency within the Army’s existing communities, nor did it develop any base of support outside the service. Moreover, the technologies needed to implement the division’s war-fighting concepts – in particular the information systems – may have been beyond the then current state of the art. Finally, the concept began as a means for countering a trend supportive of the interests of the reigning intra-service oligarchy: the “heavying-up” of the remaining Army infantry divisions. And the HTLD was seen as a direct competitor with the dominant communities for resources. Specifically, the heavy, armored community within the service feared that HTLD would compete for funding dollars and priorities with its Big Five and other modernization programs. As a result, this dominant intra-service community, in particular, opposed the HTLD program and succeeded in the blocking the efforts of the service’s senior leadership.

According to the framework of intra-service politics proposed in Chapter One, when a combat organization and its missions fall outside the purview of the community oligarchy, the design effort will fail. The more expensive or otherwise disruptive such an organizational design and its associated programs are to the reigning community oligarchy, the more likely it will be that the overall effort will simply fail. The HTLD clearly fell outside the purview of the members of the community oligarchy. Indeed, it was proposed specifically as a counter to the prevailing emphasis on heavy forces; i.e., as a counter to the reigning intra-service community oligarchy in the Army of that time. In fact, the design had no natural constituency in any of the service’s communities. The HTLD was not an initiative that “bubbled-up” from the midst of the Army, but was instead a “spur of the moment” suggestion by the senior Army leadership. It was proposed and promoted by the Army Chief of Staff, and was widely (and correctly) seen as his favored project during his tenure.

In the end, the HTLD program was a failure. The Army failed to procure any of the major weapons systems considered crucial to the success of the concept. Only a single division was ever
activated, and that only a pale imitation of the original design. The division was considered unfit for combat and never deployed after its activation. Within a year or two after its activation, the 9th Motorized Division was one of the first units sacrificed to budget reductions of the post-Cold War era. Again, the outcome of this division design effort, given its relationship to the intra-service dominant communities, is consistent with the propositions suggested by the framework outlined in the opening chapter.
CHAPTER SIX
CASE 3: LIGHT INFANTRY DIVISION

INTRODUCTION

General John Wickham became Army Chief of Staff on 23 July 1983, following a short-term appointment as the service’s Vice Chief of Staff. Less than a month later, at a mid-August conference of senior Army commanders, General Wickham stunned many inside and outside the service when he ordered the immediate creation of a new type of foot-mobile infantry unit – the Light Infantry Division. The Light Infantry Division was to be very light and strategically deployable. It was to contain approximately ten thousand troops and be capable of deploying in about five hundred C-141 sorties. The division was to be a primarily foot-mobile infantry organization, with at least fifty percent of its strength consisting of infantrymen. This effort was designed to revitalize the service’s moribund non-mechanized infantry by enhancing its image and, more fundamentally, by emphasizing long-neglected basic dismounted infantry skills. The senior Army leadership specified that the division was to be optimized for the lower end of the conflict spectrum, but would also have utility in the NATO environment. Like the HTLD, the LID program was outside of the purview of the Army’s reigning intra-service oligarchy as described in the opening chapter. Indeed, in this view, it directly promoted the interest of one of the service’s weaker communities – the traditional, foot-mobile infantry. Moreover, again like the HTLD, it appeared to be a design concept originally promoted by the service’s weak senior leadership, in particular the Army Chief of Staff. If the intra-service political framework described in Chapter One is true, the light infantry design effort should have failed as quickly and obviously as did the HTLD.

CREATION OF THE LIGHT INFANTRY DIVISION

The first years of General Wickham’s tenure as Army Chief of Staff were a time of triumph for the Light Infantry Division and their chief benefactors, the foot-mobile infantry. The apparent success of this initiative, in terms of fielded divisions, contrasts starkly with the failure of the High Technology Light Division. However, the creation of the Light Infantry Division also exposed the intra-service weaknesses of the non-mechanized infantry, molding the development and shape of the LIDs.

General Wickham was uniquely qualified to oversee the creation and implementation of a concept like the Light Infantry Division. His professional experience gave him a credibility and wide familiarity with issues pertaining to light infantry. Except for an assignment as commander of a mechanized infantry brigade in Europe and numerous “political” assignments, General Wickham’s career had been spent on the light side of the Army’s infantry branch, including stints as
commander of the 101st Airborne (Air Assault) Division and battalion commander of an airmobile unit in Vietnam. Such a career path undoubtedly instilled in the Wickham a strong sense of loyalty to this community. During his Vietnam command, General Wickham was severely wounded by grenade fragments, further enhancing his prestige and combat credentials within and outside the service.

Besides his light infantry background, General Wickham possessed an unusual perspective on the political side of low-intensity conflict, having served as Deputy Chief of Staff for economic affairs to the U.S. Military Assistance Command in Vietnam and as U.S. representative to the Four-Party Joint Military Commission on Vietnam in 1973. Extensive tours in the Joint Chiefs of Staff secretariat and a three-year assignment as military assistant to the Secretary of Defense during the 1970s provided General Wickham with considerable insight into the politico-military workings of Washington. Of particular value to the LID program, Wickham was able to observe at first hand the negotiations and results of the fabled Schlesinger-Abrams “Golden Handshake.” All of these experiences were to serve him well as he fought for the LID concept.

Finally, General Wickham came into office with a clear vision of the management style required for a successful Chief of Staff. According to his view, the first year of a Chief’s four-year term was crucial for initiating his chosen programs. During the second and third years, time would be spent overseeing and pushing along the implementation of the elements of this program. The fourth year was seen by General Wickham as essentially a useless “lame-duck” period. This view of the time-constrained nature of the Chief of Staff’s power to successfully embed initiatives within the service was a major driver of the LID development deadlines.

Origin Of The LID Concept

The surprise expressed throughout the Army over the formation of the LID was understandable – like the HTLD, the concept was very much a top-down initiative. There had been little or no groundswell from within the service for such a concept nor had most civilian agencies within DoD ever pushed for an organization similar to the LID. Moreover, this effort largely ignored the immediate problems then facing the service, as identified by a number of Army internal studies.

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1 Biographical material from William Gardner Bell, Commanding Generals of Chiefs of Staff: Portraits and Biographical Sketches (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1987), 152.

2 Wickham himself viewed these experiences, including his wounding in Vietnam, as enhancing his prestige over the LID within the service; author interview with General John A. Wickham.

3 Ibid.
For example, prior to becoming Army Chief of Staff, General Wickham tasked a young up-and-coming Brigadier General at Fort Leavenworth, Colin Powell, to form a study team to look at Army force structure issues. Known as Project 14, this study summarized the growing imbalance in the Army’s force structure in the early 1980s, and the mismatched relationship between manpower and force structure. On the heavy side of the equation, the study concluded that the service maintained an efficient two division-type force: armor and mechanized infantry. On the light side, however, there were far too many different kinds of divisions: a heavy/light (the 2d Infantry), a high-technology light, non-mechanized infantry, airborne and air assault. The study concluded that the light divisions needed to be normalized and standardized, especially the 2d, 7th, 9th, and 25th Infantry Divisions. Moreover, while the Army should try to maintain its current number of divisions (sixteen), the study stated that – due to manpower constraints – it would be unwise to add more divisions to the Army’s force structure.4

Confusion persists, therefore, over the birth of the LID concept. We will begin by tracing the origins of this concept.

A requirement for light infantry divisions did not originate from a government sources outside of the Army. Many in the national security apparatus of the Reagan administration expressed a desired to shift the American military away from its strong focus on Europe towards what were viewed to be equally vital U.S. interests elsewhere around the world. However, the preferred instruments for protecting and promoting these interests appeared to be naval forces (witness the fanfare given to the Maritime Strategy and the 600-ship Navy), proxy forces (the Contras in Nicaragua, UNITA rebels in Angola, and the Muhjahadeen in Afghanistan), or – if the use of U.S. ground forces was unavoidable – the Marine Corps (involved in 1982-1983 in an ostensible peace-keeping mission in Beirut). The need to add capability to the Army in order to meet these threats was rarely considered. The March 1983 Defense Guidance, for example, sent to the services for preparation of the fiscal year 1985 defense budget, did not mention a requirement for additional light divisions within the Army.5

Nor prior to Wickham’s announcement was there a hint from the Army itself that it was preparing to develop light infantry divisions. The service’s fiscal year 1985 program objective memorandum (POM) drafted in May of 1983 failed to mention light infantry divisions, as did the service’s initial proposed 1985 budget, first circulated in the Pentagon the following September.6

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4 General Colin Powell interview with the author, phone, 26 April 1989.
This is understandable as both documents were prepared wholly or in part under the guidance of General Meyer. There is no evidence, moreover, for suggesting that the Army, prior to General Wickham’s tenure as Chief of Staff, saw any requirement for light infantry divisions. According to members of the Army’s force design community, there was never any requirement identified during the eight-year Army 86 study for forces with the characteristics of the Light Infantry Division.

Already existing “contingency” forces, in particular the 82d Airborne, and special operations forces (Special Forces and Ranger units) were considered sufficient to meet the Army’s low-intensity conflict requirements. The initial response of many individuals within the service’s force design and plans/operations communities to the announcement of the LID concept was one of shock and surprise to learn that such a force was suddenly required. Indeed, an ardent supporter of the LID concept has admitted that

the decision to create light infantry divisions caught the Army as a whole largely by surprise. Except for some consultation among the Army’s most senior leaders, there had been little prior consideration given to the project by the Army staff or by the various branch schools.

Finally, despite suggestions to the contrary, General Wickham’s transition study, Project 14, did not call for the creation of the Light Infantry Divisions. Instead, as we have seen, among the conclusions of the study were that the Army, as then structured, required more personnel spaces than it could hope to support and that the light side of the force was too diverse. The development

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7 However, as late as 1985, nearly two years after Wickham’s LID announcement, one author noted that: “A review of the primary PPBS (Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System) documents provides no concrete analysis or reason for the five light infantry divisions the Army has publicly stated it is pursuing. … Nor is there a means to logically track from the Joint Strategic Planning Document (JSPD) to the Army Program Objective Memorandum (POM) a requirement for light infantry divisions in terms of what, where, or how many.” Major Richard R. Babbitt, The Light Infantry Division: How Many Are Needed? (Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Command and General Staff College (thesis), 1985), 55.

8 Keller interview with author.

9 General Powell interview with author; Keller interview with author; and Higgins interview with author. Note that Lt. Col. William Higgins was the former LID action officer in the office of the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans (DCSOPS). The Army essentially admitted to the failure to identify formally a LID requirement when it stated in its official history of the LID design effort that “the initial impetus for the Light Infantry Division requirement was provided as a result” of the August 1983 Commanders’ Conference, in which General Wickham first formally presented the LID proposal to the Army community; Captain Timothy Hassell, Army of Excellence Final Report, Volume II: The Light Infantry Division (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Force Design Directorate, Army Combined Arms Combat Development Activity, Department of the Army, 1 October 1984), 1-3.


11 For speculation on Project 14 as the source of the LID concept, see, for instance, Michael J. Mazarr, “The Light-Heavy Debate Rears Its Head Again,” Armed Forces Journal International, October 1989, 100. General Colin Powell, the study’s leader, vehemently denied that this was the case; General Powell interview with author.
of the LID failed to deal with the issues raised by the study, and, in fact, helped to exacerbate many of them.

Many Army officers were proposing new force designs with increased strategic deployability during the early 1980s. Indeed, there was a deluge of force designs involving some combination of infantry and light armored/mechanized forces, including General Meyer’s HTLD. Designed to be lighter and more strategically deployable than the service’s armored and mechanized divisions, such units emphasized tactical speed and anti-armor punch. However, all of these proposals and programs were oriented and optimized towards mid- to high-intensity conflict such as one might find in Europe or around the Persian Gulf region, not the low-intensity conflicts that were the purported focus of the LID.\(^\text{12}\) And, under the rubric of “low-intensity conflict” (LIC), many national security experts expressed increasing interest in maintaining capabilities for use in military operations other than in Europe, Korea, and Southwest Asia. These alternative missions included counter-terrorist and counterinsurgency operations in the Third World. While much of the thrust for counterinsurgency came from academics or retired military personnel, there was interest in this subject as well within the U.S. Army, particularly among those officers with responsibilities in the U.S. Southern Command (SouthCom).\(^\text{13}\) Counter-terrorism, spurred by the Desert One debacle, also gained supporters within the Army and was of particular interest to General Meyer.\(^\text{14}\) Both counter-terrorism and counterinsurgency, however, were viewed within the Army as the province of Special Forces or other elite units.

Foot-mobile light infantry were receiving increasing attention outside of the U.S. Army in the early 1980s. Officers in several Western militaries were writing about infantry and, specifically,


\(^{14}\) General Meyer had been instrumental in the early formation of the Army’s counter-terrorist Delta Force unit in the mid-to-late 1970’s; see Colonel (Ret.) Charles A. Beckwith and Donald Knox. *Delta Force* (New York: Dell, 1983), 133-35 and 158-59.
light infantry at this time. Likewise civilian defense analysts within the United States, some under contract from the Army, were writing both on the light infantry and on low intensity conflict.16

Evidence (or absence thereof) suggests, however, that the LID concept, like the High-Technology Light Division before it, was borne of the initiative of the Army’s senior leadership in

15 For example, Canadian Army Major John English’s 1981 book On Infantry, made a forceful argument for giving increased prominence to foot-mobile infantry; see English, On Infantry. Similarly, current and retired officers within the West German military were arguing for greater use of light infantry units in the increasingly urbanized landscape of Western Europe, such as Major General Franz Uhle-Wettler, whose book Battlefield Central Europe, though not published in English until the late in the decade, was translated and widely circulated informally throughout the U.S. Army during the early 1980s; see Major General Franz Uhle-Wettler, Battlefield Central Europe. Danger of Overreliance on Technology by the Armed Forces. (Gutersloh: 1980; reprint, Fort Leavenworth, KS: Command and General Staff College, 1987). German defense analyst Otto Munter similarly wrote in 1980 about the utility of light infantry in Central Europe given the percentage of close terrain such as forests, mountainous areas, and increasing urbanization; Otto Munter, “Do We Need the Light Infantry,” Europaische Wehrkunde, February 1980, 2-11. Also see a series of papers, some from U.S. Army officers, presented at a symposium sponsored by the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) and the Commander ACE Mobile Forces (Land) on the “Employment of Non-mechanized Infantry” in April 1980; these were subsequently published in the RUSI journal: Brig. General G. Brugmann, “Setting the Scene – The European Battlefield,” RUSI Journal 125 (December 1980): 56-59; General Sir William Scudder, “A Role for Non-Mechanized Infantry,” RUSI Journal 125 (December 1980): 59-62; General Frederick J. Kroesen, “The Ultimate Weapon of War,” RUSI Journal 125 (December 1980): 62-64; Lt. General William R. Richardson, “Light Infantry,” RUSI Journal 125 (December 1980): 64-67; and Brig. General G. Brugmann, “The German View of the Role of Infantry on the Battlefield,” RUSI Journal 125 (December 1980): 67-69.

16 As early as 1980, Steven Canby began arguing for the use of specialized “classic light infantry” designed to fight optimally in terrain where heavier forces found their mobility severely constrained: i.e., closed terrain, such as jungles, cities, mountains and heavily forested regions. In particular, Canby argued that such forces would be useful in mixed terrain such as Europe, where the ability of these forces to defend in cities and forests would free up armor forces, enabling NATO commanders to marshal these latter forces for decisive counterattacks. He later criticized the Army’s LID concept for not adopting the classic light infantry style. For Canby’s work, see Steven L. Canby, Classic Light Infantry and New Technology (Arlington, VA: C&L Associates, Study for DARPA, December 1981); Steven L. Canby, “Territorial Defense in Central Europe,” Armed Forces and Society, vol. 3, no. 2 (Fall 1980): 51-67; Steven L. Canby, “Light Infantry in Perspective,” Infantry, vol. 74, no. 1 (March/April 1984): 28-31. Canby’s colleague and business associate, Edward Luttwak, likewise advocated the development of light infantry. In the concluding volume of a multi-volume work written under contract for TRADOC, Luttwak outlined the need for light infantry units in the U.S. Army, focusing largely on their utility in mid to high-intensity conflicts such as the European theater; see Edward N. Luttwak, Historical Analysis and Projection for Army 2000. Volume 2. Analysis and Conclusions (Chevy Chase, MD: Luttwak Inc., 15 May 1983). Turning to the opposite end of the conflict spectrum, Robert Kupperman led a study effort, again under TRADOC tasking, that concluded that the main threats against which the U.S. Army would have to plan in the coming decades would arise from low-intensity conflicts (LICs) throughout the Third World. The study recommended that the Army begin the development of a “large LIC combat organization” that included light forces organized as light infantry brigades, each tailored to a specific regional environment and a specific narrowly defined set of scenarios. It also stated that the requirements for such an organization were “sufficiently specialized to warrant a separate, independent R&D program.” Kupperman and Associates, Low Intensity Conflict, Volumes 1: Main Report (Washington, DC: Kupperman and Associates, Inc., 30 June 1983), 47 and 50. Also see supporting documents in Kupperman and Associates, Low Intensity Conflict, Volumes 2: Appendices (Washington, DC: Kupperman and Associates, Inc., 30 June 1983). A similar assessment on the future threat posed by LIC can be found in Robert H. Kupperman, and William J. Taylor, Jr., eds. Strategic Requirements for the Army to the Year 2000 (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 1982. Reprint, Cambridge, MA: Lexington Books, 1984). This latter study had originally been prepared for the Army’s DCSOPS; Gordon, “Charge of the Light Infantry,” 968.
the person of its Chief of Staff, General Wickham. He has told several interviewers that, upon taking over as Chief of Staff, he felt that the Army was too heavy and inflexible for the potential missions it might be called upon to perform. Whether General Wickham entered office with some vague notion of improving the foot-mobile infantry is difficult to assess at this date, although subsequent events may shed some light on his earlier thinking. The specific events which ultimately led to the decision to create the LID, however, can be described.

The story begins, ironically, with Brigadier General Colin Powell and Project 14. Although the Project 14 study team did not contribute directly to the LID concept, other efforts directed by General Powell might have inadvertently done so. The Project 14 study concluded that the Army faced two problems: its current force required more manpower spaces than the service could sustain, and there were too many different light division force designs. In an attempt to deal with both of these shortcomings, Powell, then head of the Army’s Combined Arms Combat Development Activity (CACDA) at Fort Leavenworth, presented General Wickham with a tentative force design for Army light divisions a week or so after completion of Project 14. This rough design, which Powell and a few subordinates had been working on informally outside the framework of the Project 14 study and the regular design directorate hierarchy, consisted of a 10,000-man force. However, this division was structured very differently from the eventual LID design and was not sized according to an airlift-sortie constraint as would be the LID effort. Its main goal was simply to bring manpower space reductions to the “over-structured” Army – i.e., to

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17 Despite the timing of these studies and the fact that many were performed under contract from TRADOC, it is unclear what influence, if any, they played within the U.S. Army. While both the Luttwak and Kupperman studies were begun under TRADOC Commander General Morelli, by the time they were completed, General William Richardson had become the new TRADOC Commander (Morelli retired early due to ill-health and died in July 1984). And, while the new commander may have had some informal discussions with the two studies’ principal authors, General Richardson maintains that the first that he heard of light infantry divisions was from General Wickham himself. General Meyer, then in his final months as Army Chief of Staff, had apparently heard of Luttwak’s work, though he was far from supportive; author interview with General Meyer. General Wickham too denies that the LID concept came from any source outside of the Army; author interview with General Wickham. There is no evidence that General Wickham was briefed by Dr. Luttwak or the Kupperman study participants prior to the August 1983 Commanders’ Conference. Moreover, according to several persons familiar with the situation, personal relations between General Wickham and Dr. Luttwak have been described as having never been warm.


19 General Powell interview with author.

20 This meeting probably took place on 30 June, while General Wickham was visiting Fort Leavenworth to address the Pre-Command Course at the Command and General Staff College; see General John Wickham, “Remarks to Pre-Command Course, Ft. Leavenworth, KS,” delivered on 30 June 1983; Box 9/Contents: June83-Feb85 CSA Files; John A. Wickham Papers; Archives, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA.

21 The then-head of the force design directorate, Robert Keller, a civilian who reported directly to General Powell, knew nothing of Project 14 or the light infantry division effort prior to General Wickham’s public announcement of the latter in August 1983; Keller interview with author.
reduce the shortfalls created by Division/Army 86. The design represented a considerable reduction from the 14,000 to 17,000-man light divisions then existing in the Army, and was meant as a possible template for all divisions on the light side of the force. The object of Powell’s briefing was merely to give General Wickham some sense as to how personnel spaces might be reduced on the light side of the Army while simultaneously standardizing these forces.\textsuperscript{22}

The one idea General Wickham apparently took from this briefing was the notion of a light division composed of ten thousand troops, as a week or so later he informally suggested to the TRADOC Commander, General Richardson, that his agency begin to examine a light infantry division of just that size.\textsuperscript{23} In addition, in a 7 July 1983 interview, Wickham spoke of the need to do a better job of resourcing on the light side of the force, and give more attention to organization and structure that will be consistent with the nature of warfare that the light forces are likely to be involved in.\textsuperscript{24}

He went on to state that:

It’s not inconceivable that we may be examining smaller divisions that would be more highly deployable and more potent in terms of tooth-to-tail than we have thought of previously. This means, if you make them more potent in terms of tooth to tail, somebody’s got to provide the tail and the tail might have to come from corps support.\textsuperscript{25}

When asked if this meant “a smaller and lighter” 82\textsuperscript{d} and 101\textsuperscript{st} Divisions, Wickham responded in the affirmative, but added mysteriously “[o]r other light divisions.”\textsuperscript{26}

In a backchannel communication to General Wickham, dated 12 July 1983, General Richardson indicated that TRADOC’s initial efforts on the LID were “moving ahead”.\textsuperscript{27} Richardson noted that concept development and force design would proceed serially and would use the identical BDP development process involved in the Division 86 design; both of these notions were soon to be sacrificed to the overriding need to complete the design process quickly. Two

\textsuperscript{22} General Powell interview with author.


\textsuperscript{24} Wickham, “Wickham Discusses Changes,” 4.

\textsuperscript{25} This last comment was a hint of the LID’s soon to be developed “corps augmentation” concept. Ibid.

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{27} Richardson, “The Force Structure and Army 86.”
additional things should be noted about this message. First of all, Richardson explicitly states that TRADOC assumed a sixteen division Army force structure; the notion of adding additional divisions had not yet been raised. Second, the only LID design constraint mentioned in the message was the personnel limit of ten thousand; the sortie limit apparently had yet to be set.

Both elements were to change a few days after Richardson’s message was sent. On Saturday morning, July 16th, General Wickham, General Maxwell Thurman (the newly-installed Vice Chief of Staff), and Army Secretary John O. Marsh, Jr. met at Fort McNair.28 The meeting, which was the first for the uniformed participants in their present roles, was initiated by Secretary Marsh in order to lay out the “major thrust areas” for the service over the next four years. As the meeting began, General Wickham quickly discovered allies for his emerging LID concept.

Secretary Marsh had long been favorably predisposed to light infantry. The Secretary had served as an infantry officer in both the active-duty Army and, for many years, in the Virginia National Guard.29 Moreover, he had long been a promoter of light infantry-type units; he was an enthusiastic supporter, for example, of the Vermont National Guard’s efforts to create a ski-borne alpine battalion.30 General Thurman too came into the meeting already convinced of the need for improvements to the service’s dismounted infantry; indeed, General Thurman later claimed that it was he who first brought up the light infantry concept at the meeting. Though he rose through the ranks of the artillery branch, General Thurman recently had visited facilities throughout the service in his capacity as Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, providing an opportunity to observe the state of Army training and readiness up close. Through these travels he gained the impression that the infantry had lost the ability to fight effectively when dismounted from their vehicles. He felt, moreover, that the Army – and especially its two remaining active-duty standard infantry divisions (the 7th and 25th) – had become too heavy.31

General Thurman made three arguments that day for why the Army needed to create light infantry. First, if the Army was to become a truly “world-class, premier” military force, it needed both effective armor and infantry forces. At that time, the M-1 tank was just coming on line – this would make the armor force very capable. The Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle would be coming

28 The only other person present at the meeting was a note-taker, Lt. General Art Brown, Director of the Army Staff in the Army Chief of Staff’s Office; General Maxwell R. Thurman interview with the author, Arlington, VA, 29 May 1992; and Desk Calendar 1983, Box Title: “Day-at-a-Glance’ Desk Calendars 1983-1987,” The Maxwell R. Thurman Papers, Archives, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA.
30 Ibid.; and General Meyer interview with author.
31 This account of the meeting is from General Thurman interview with author.
soon as well, but the system would only help the mechanized part of the infantry. The foot-mobile infantry also had to be effective; but in General Thurman’s view this force needed much work, having lost the necessary dismounted infantry fighting skills. Indeed, according to General Thurman, the infantry generally had become over-burdened with mechanization and, as a result, had lost much of its field prowess and strategic mobility. Finally, elements of United States Army, Europe (USAEUR) had in the past argued for additional infantry to fight in the forest, cities and urban sprawl of Europe, tasks for which light infantry would be well suited.

Thurman’s assessment was readily accepted by Secretary Marsh and General Wickham, and a two-part response was decided upon. First, the Army would add a third Ranger battalion and create a Ranger Regimental HQ. Both of these actions (taken on behalf of an elite sub-element of the infantry) were done with the intent, according to General Thurman, of “increasing the élan” of the Army’s infantry forces overall. Second, the participants agreed that it was necessary to change the character of the Army’s non-mechanized infantry divisions. To undertake this change required redesigning these divisions, which in turn meant, in the view of the participants, reducing the weight of these divisions.

There are several things to note about this meeting, later described by Thurman as the “birth of the light infantry division.” First, the arguments for enhancing the foot-mobile infantry related largely to internal Army concerns: the poor shape of this community relative to the heavy side of the service, and the loss of basic foot-mobile infantry skills. Absent from these discussions, if General Thurman’s account is complete, was any talk of the alternative externally-directed motivations often ascribed to the service for creating light infantry divisions: e.g., to counter Marine Corps efforts to capture the Third World missions, or the need by the Army for a politically popular program to secure a larger share of funding from the other services. Second, despite the initial public rationale for the Light Infantry Divisions – their need in and suitability for low-intensity conflict missions in the Third World – there was no mention of the Third World contingencies during this meeting. Instead, the only strategic need purportedly raised by the

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32 During his 7 July interview with Army Times, General Wickham had stated a similar view concerning the state of the Army’s heavy forces: “The heavy side of the Army is very healthy. We have a number of organizational changes that are already under way in Europe. We have solid acquisition programs – the M-1 tank, the Bradley Fighting Vehicle, the Cavalry Fighting Vehicle, the Multiple Launch Rocket System, self-propelled artillery, FAASV [Field Artillery Ammunition Support Vehicle] and FIST-V [Fire Support Team Vehicle], all designed to create a solid heavy side of the force.” See Wickham, “Wickham Discusses Changes,” 4.

33 Indeed, as early as 1979, the chief of U.S. Army forces in Europe Gen. Frederick J. Kroesen reportedly was telling Army leaders that he needed “additional light infantry” in Europe; see “Light Infantry Boosted,” Army Times, 3 December 1979, 40; and Kroesen, “Ultimate Weapon of War,” 62-64.

34 See, for example, Gordon, “Charge of the Light Infantry,” 969; and Damon and Krisler, “Army of Excellence,” 86-87.
participants at this meeting was for additional foot-mobile infantry in the Army’s main theater and “organizational mission” – Europe. Finally, the existence and results of this meeting were kept very quiet.\(^{35}\) Not even such a key participant in the LID’s creation as General Richardson could recall hearing of such a meeting.\(^{36}\) By keeping the true source of this decision hidden, the LID effort could later be made to appear as a wider Army initiative, one with a more solid basis of support within the Army.

A few days after the 16 July meeting, General Wickham again met with General Richardson. General Wickham now stated a preference, if enough personnel spaces could be made available by reducing the size of the non-mechanized standard infantry division to ten thousand troops, for creating an additional seventeenth division within the active-duty Army’s force structure while maintaining the service’s fixed end-strength. General Richardson responded that this could be done, but only if he were empowered to look at the overall Army force structure and manpower requirements.\(^{37}\) Wickham agreed, and yet another Army-wide design effort, the Army of Excellence (AoE), was born.

The question remains: “Why add an additional division to an already over-structured force?” Although no adequate answer to this question has been provided by the Army senior leadership, three factors may have combined to drive this decision. First, division strength had long been a key figure of merit in comparisons of ground armies; this was particularly true of the U.S. Army. So, any effort that would lead to additional division “flags” would be welcomed. Second, creating new light infantry divisions would increase the proportion of the light infantry within the overall force structure and, perhaps, enhance the power the foot-mobile infantry community within intra-service Army politics. Increasing the number of light divisions also increased the number of command slots available for light infantry officers. Finally, adding more divisions to the Army’s force structure would require congressional approval. While this latter strategy might prove risky (e.g., Congress might reject adding more divisions), requesting such approval provided an opportunity to garner external support for the light infantry division concept, support which might proved useful against any internal Army opposition to the concept.

To flesh out the required changes to the infantry division, a study group was formed in Washington under the leadership of Lt. Col. Wesley Clark and with the active participation of

\(^{35}\) When told that the birth of the LID was a mystery to most observers, General Thurman chuckled and said, “I not am surprised;” General Thurman interview with author.

\(^{36}\) General Richardson interview with author.

\(^{37}\) Ibid.
Generals Wickham and Thurman. This group’s efforts eventually would produce the Army’s 1984 “White Paper on the Light Infantry.” The group drew up a set of tight design criteria for the new divisions which would serve as the basis for TRADOC’s LID development concept: a 10,000-man force, half of which would be combat soldiers, capable of deploying anywhere in the world in five hundred C-141 sorties. These criteria, however, were not arrived at through any detailed analysis. The ten thousand-troop figure, for instance, had already been settled on by General Wickham, and was accepted without further analysis. The sortie figure was arrived at by the simple, though arbitrary, assertion that the new division should be capable of traveling to trouble spots with one-third fewer flights than the approximately fifteen thousand sorties then required for standard infantry divisions. The group also decided to refocus LID operations on low-intensity conflict, carving out a special niche for the new organization and making it independent of the stronger Army unions whose principal focus was Europe.

With the experience of the HTLD fresh in his memory, Wickham recognized the need to garner early support for the LID concept from the Army’s dominant intra-service communities. As a first step, he carefully chose the proper moment to announce the project to the Army: the August Four Star Commanders’ Conference. The conference, bringing together the senior commanders of the Army’s three MACOMs – TRADOC, DARCOM, and FORSCOM – provided Wickham with the opportunity to make his case for the light infantry concept before the service’s senior uniformed leadership and within the principle arenas of intra-service politics. In so doing, he could gain the institutional assent of the very same organizations that had impeded General Meyer’s HTLD. Such a move also would help lift the label of the “Chief of Staff’s pet rock” from the LID concept, again making it appear to be a wider Army initiative. The effort, in part, worked; later Army publications referred to the LID concept as actually having been initiated at this August Conference. According to General Wickham, the light infantry concept received unanimous and enthusiastic support from those present. With this support in hand, the effort could now begin to develop the detailed concepts by which the LID would fight and to design the division’s internal organization.

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38 Lt. Col. Clark had been the principal deputy under Gen. Powell on the Project 14 Study. This assignment might have given rise to the inaccurate perception that it was Project 14 itself that recommended developing light infantry divisions.

39 General John Wickham, Jr., *Light Infantry Divisions*, Army White Paper (Washington DC: U.S. Army Chief of Staff, April 1984). Though the white paper was eventually released under General Wickham’s name, its principal author was Lt. Colonel Wes Clark; General Thurman interview with author.

40 Ibid.

41 See, for instance, Hassell, *Army of Excellence*, 1.
Developing the Light Infantry Division Design

The emphasis throughout the LID development process was on speed: develop the concept, create a force and get it into the field quickly before effective opposition to it could crystallize within the service. Foremost in his mind, General Wickham wanted the process well underway while his political capital was still high and early enough in his term of office to enable him to see it through to completion.42

Also, unlike the HTLD, the LID design and development process would take place within the heart of the Army’s force design community (i.e., TRADOC), requiring early and intimate cooperation between the dominant unions (rather than against or outside these unions) on the design and detailed contributions from the various schools and centers concerned with the division’s diverse elements.43 The Infantry School, for example, helped design the rifle battalions, while the MP School led the design of the division’s MP units. At all stages in the process, the views of these TRADOC organizations were sought and deference paid to their opinions.44 Undertaking the design process in this manner served several purposes. First, it helped ensure its speedy completion by going to the agencies with prior knowledge and experience with the division’s organizational elements. It also ensured that those agencies assigned the responsibility for developing LID training and instruction, specifically the schools, would have a good working knowledge of the LID concept and design, and, as co-developers of the organization, the enthusiasm to see this training successfully carried out. Thus, this development structure also served the senior Army leadership’s goal of enhancing Army training in foot-mobile infantry skills. Finally, this structure helped to ensure support for the LID concept within the Army, at least among those branches and agencies closely involved in its development.

The LID design and development process was one half of General Wickham’s Army of Excellence (AoE) initiative. The other half consisted of cutting manpower spaces from the Division/Army 86 force designs. The goal behind this effort was both to reduce the gap between the service’s required personnel spaces and its fixed end-strength, and to generate enough excess spaces to permit the creation of a new LID division in the active-duty force structure. The

42 And, the fate of General Meyer’s HTLD at the hands of his successor likely served as a useful reminder to Wickham of the cost of allowing a division design process to drag out beyond the tenure of its creator.

43 This was identified by a chronicler of the LID development as one of the explicit strategies used by the senior Army leadership to generate internal support for the concept; see Wray, “Army’s Light Infantry Divisions,” 6.

44 For example, when the Commandant of the Infantry School complained that the original, and innovative, three fire team structure of the light infantry’s rifle squads ran counter to established infantry doctrine, Wickham immediately ordered the squad’s organization returned to the traditional two fire team structure; see Hassell, Army of Excellence, p. 3-7.
identification of space reductions and the initial LID design both were to be completed in time for review by the Chief of Staff at the mid-October Commanders’ Conference, a mere ten weeks from initiation of the effort.

The personnel space reductions were brought about through a number of actions. First, headquarter staffs of non-combat units throughout the service, from the Department of the Army to the MACOMs and their various sub-components, were once again reduced and personnel sent back out into the field; a move reminiscent of Army actions during reorganizations in the early 1960s and 1970s. The focus then shifted to down-sizing the divisions just created in the Division/Army 86 force design.\(^{45}\) Cuts were made to the divisions in part by pulling certain Combat Support (CS) and Combat Service Support (CSS) units out of the designs and consolidating these units at corps level.\(^{46}\) Other CSS functions were simply eliminated from the Division/Army 86 designs, reflecting General Wickham’s believe that CSS had become too large and had not been examined for potential inefficiencies and waste since World War II.\(^{47}\) A capability unique to the Division 86 designs also was eliminated: i.e., “Robustness, Reliability, and Redundancy.”\(^{48}\) Manpower reductions were also achieved through the use of new technologies in a variety of areas, including CSS.\(^{49}\) Finally, many

\(^{45}\) See for example, Bahnsen, “Kaleidoscopic US Army,” 78-88; and Damon and Krisler, “Army of Excellence,” 86.

\(^{46}\) While some overall space reduction was subsequently achieved by cutting back on the capabilities of these units once moved to the corps-level, the biggest savings were gained simply by eliminating the now “redundant” overhead of staff and support personnel formerly associated with these units when they were within the divisions. Among the types of units centralized at the corps level were 8-inch howitzer batteries, Chaparral air defense units (formerly the division’s principle air defense gun) and medium-lift transportation helicopters. This centralization was later justified by senior Army leadership and others as a means for bringing Army force design more in line with the dictates of the service’s new AirLand Battle doctrine which stressed greater control by the corps commander over maneuver units and the direction of combat. Critics of the AoE, however, viewed this doctrinal justification as secondary to the push for manpower reductions; see, for example, Damon and Krisler, “Army of Excellence,” 87; and John W. Wild The Army of Excellence: How Ready? (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 23 March 1987).

\(^{47}\) General Wickham interview with author. Indeed, OSD officials were repeatedly (and inaccurately) told that AoE simply involved the elimination of “grave diggers” and other anachronisms; Korb interview with author.

\(^{48}\) The elimination of these personnel spaces put at risk the ability of the division to operate continuously beyond the initial 72-hour limit; Keller interview with author.

\(^{49}\) General Wickham forcefully pushed the search for “product enhancement technologies” to enable fewer soldiers to perform the same tasks Army-wide. Many of these new technologies failed to work as advertised. Palletized loading systems, for example, were being explored at Fort Lewis to allow a single soldier to unload a truck load of ammunition or supplies; in principle, providing the opportunity to eliminate many personnel spaces per supply unit. However, the palletized loading system was still undergoing testing as late as 1993 and the program was coming under heavy criticism by the General Accounting Office; see U.S. General Accounting Office, Army Acquisition: Palletized Load System Acquisition Quantity Overstated, GAO/NSIAD-92-163 (Washington, DC: General Accounting Office, April 1992). Another change involved the substitution of 5,000-gallon fuel tankers for 7,500-gallon tankers, resulting in savings of one truck driver for every 15,000 gallons of fuel transported. This plan has subsequently been criticized because it failed to consider the Army’s increasing demands for fuel as M-1 tanks and Bradley’s were brought into service. In addition, the plan failed to address practical problems such as the difficulties faced by the larger and longer 7500-gallon tankers when attempting to negotiate roads narrower than major highways; see Lt. Colonel John M. Vann, “The Forgotten Forces,” Military Review 67, no. 8 (August 1987): 14. These and similar savings arising from logistic unit productivity
CS and CSS functions and their associated personnel spaces were transferred to the Reserve Component; a long-standing Army practice, which also would become crucial to the LID design process.\textsuperscript{50} In the final result, the Division '86 heavy divisions, both armor and mechanized infantry, were reduced from over twenty thousand personnel spaces down to near sixteen thousand.

The personnel space down-sizing effort was completed within the mandated ten-week timeframe. Because of the severe time constraints, however, the designers found it impossible to conduct field testing or perform dedicated analyses on the effects of the mandated force reductions on combat performance. Nonetheless, their previous eight years of work on the earlier division designs were not in vane, as they provided the designers with at least a sense of the type and degree of risks involved in making these cuts.\textsuperscript{51} General Wickham approved the space reduction plans at the mid-October’s Commander’s Conference, and implementation of the new designs began immediately. In practice, the approved personnel cuts took several years to complete, and, in case of some non-divisional units, were never accomplished. Nonetheless, force planners immediately used the anticipated savings to develop additional light infantry divisions.

Concurrent with the AoE manpower reductions, work began on the new force design for the light infantry divisions. In his instructions to the Army at the end of the August Commanders’ Conference, General Wickham stipulated three parameters, derived from the Lt. Col. Clark-led study effort. The division was to be composed of at least fifty percent infantry in nine maneuver battalions, be deployable within four hundred to five hundred C-141 sorties, and contain approximately ten thousand troops. The last two constraints, in particular, were imposed to prevent the unit from becoming a “wish list” for force designers and operational users, an organization filled with innumerable “bells and whistles.”\textsuperscript{52} As the process was getting underway in late August, General Richardson provided further guidance for designing the LID, emphasizing innovation in organizational design as well as the ceilings on manpower and airlift requirements. In addition, the

\textsuperscript{50} General Wickham, who was Defense Secretary Schlesinger’s military assistant in 1974, was a close observer of Schlesinger’s and Chief of Staff Abrams’ efforts to increase the number of Army divisions with a fixed end-strength by, in part, moving CSS functions to the reserves; General Wickham interview with author.

\textsuperscript{51} Keller interview with author.

\textsuperscript{52} This tendency, General Wickham believed, had proven fatal to the earlier HTLD concept of strategic deployability; General Wickham interview with author. But note that, once again, the force designers were told explicitly to consider the Army’s resource constraints, defined for the LIDs in terms both of manpower and airlift. For the LID concept, the latter constraint was to prove the most severe.
guidelines specified that only materiel expected to be fielded by 1986 or earlier could be considered for the initial Light Infantry organizations.\(^{53}\)

From the start, like the AoE manpower reduction effort, the emphasis in the LID design was placed on rapid completion of the process. As a result, the Army's formal development process again was circumvented in designing the LIDs. For instance, rather than begin the process with an analysis of threats and the construction of a Battlefield Development Plan characterizing the expected battlefield (the now standard TRADOC force design methodology), the LID designers simply took as a given General Wickham's stated requirement for such a division and his specification that be designed for low-intensity threats as well as NATO contingencies. To further speed the process, General Richardson directed that the next steps in the standard TRADOC design process—concept development and force design—be conducted in parallel; as a result, the groups designing the various elements of the LID division had to work very closely with the agencies undertaking concept development, continually revising their force designs as the tactics of employing these forces became clearer.\(^{54}\) More seriously, efforts to formally test and analytically assess the capabilities of the division's sub-components were eliminated entirely from the design process.\(^{55}\) Instead, reliance was placed on the experience and intuition of the agencies and schools designing individual elements to provide an estimate of the risks and vulnerabilities of their respective designs.

The first major, and continuing, conceptual problem facing the developers was deciding exactly what threat the LID should be designed to meet. The designers had been told by the senior Army leadership to optimize the division to the low-end of the conflict spectrum.\(^{56}\) However, there was little consensus or clear notion within the service over exactly how to define the concept of low-intensity conflict. By 1983, low-intensity conflict primarily had come to mean guerilla and anti-guerilla warfare; the threshold between low and mid-intensity conflict being the introduction of organized mainline units to the threat environment. In the absence of better guidance, the development community chose to design the LID specifically for the break-point between low and mid-intensity conflict, an environment similar to Vietnam where the threat consisted of both guerilla


\(^{54}\) Hassell, *Army of Excellence*, p. 1-3. According to the design process developed by TRADOC during Army 86, the responsibilities, functions and tasks of the division overall and of each of its sub-components were typically described during the concept development phase; including the general organization of each element, its required capabilities and unavoidable limitations. The bulk of the concept development for the LID design process was undertaken by the Concept Development Directorate (CDD) of CACDA; TRADOC schools and centers, however, also provided input in their areas of responsibility.

\(^{55}\) Ibid., p.1-4; and Higgins interview with author.

\(^{56}\) At the same time, ensuring that the unit had some utility in a NATO environment.
forces (Viet Cong) and some mainline units (the North Vietnamese Army).\textsuperscript{57} Even after this assumption was made, the force designers’ confusion over low-intensity conflict did not end. According to one participant, no consensus was ever achieved concerning how the LID would fight in such a low-intensity scenario.\textsuperscript{58} In the end, these differences were merely glossed over, with light infantry units assumed to go into a conflict early to be followed up by heavier units. Alternatively, and consistent with TRADOC instructions to emphasize a “rapid-in/rapid-out” capability, LID units could be used as a show of force, moving rapidly to a region where their very presence was expected to change the military balance and an opponent’s risk calculus, to be followed just as quickly by a rapid withdrawal.\textsuperscript{59}

Despite the difficulty of deciding against whom and how the LID forces would fight, the development and design process hurried on.\textsuperscript{60} In late August, a working group convened at the Combined Arms Center to discuss the desired capabilities of the LID and to develop initial alternative configurations. At a September General Officers’ Workshop, the Commander of the Combined Arms Center, Lt. General Carl Vuono instructed the assembled commanders of the service’s schools and centers that the “normal study time-lines would be severely shortened” and that their organizations were to provide same-day, or at most two-day, responses to taskings from the Combined Arms Center.\textsuperscript{61} Throughout September and into October, a series of “action officer” workshops, consisting of participants from all the schools and centers led by representatives from CACDA, were held to develop the various units and organizations which would go into creating a Light Infantry Division.

As scheduled, General Wickham was able to approve a preliminary LID design at the next Four Star Commanders’ Conference, held on 20 October. Again, the venue lent an appearance of an Army-wide initiative. This light infantry division design generally met the original criteria, containing 10,023 troops and requiring fewer than 500 sorties of C-141 aircraft to deploy.

\textsuperscript{57} Keller interview with author.

\textsuperscript{58} Higgins interview with author.


\textsuperscript{60} The following chronology is derived from Hassell, \textit{Army of Excellence}, pp. 1-3 to 1-4.

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., p. 1-3.
Figure 13: Light Infantry Division, October 1983

The preliminary design (see Figure 13) consisted of three brigade headquarters and nine rifle battalions, with 544 troops per battalion. Reflecting the expected absence of enemy armor from the LID’s low-intensity conflict mission, the rifle battalions consisted of only three rifle companies each. The fourth rifle company and the antiarmor company of the Division/Army 86 mechanized infantry and non-mechanized infantry designs was replaced by a single antiarmor platoon of four TOW launchers, located at battalion headquarters. This platoon was the sole antiarmor capability organic to the battalion. The division included a combat aviation brigade (CAB) with the same

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62 To reduce personnel spaces further, dining and immediate maintenance functions for maneuver forces were concentrated at brigade headquarters, rather than, as more typically the case, down at the battalion level. The battalion’s only indirect fire systems consisted of four towed 107mm mortars contained in the battalion headquarter’s heavy mortar platoon; company level mortars, as found in other Army ground combat units, were eliminated to reduce personnel and weight. The battalions had little tactical mobility, as their transportation assets were concentrated in a support platoon at
general design as that found in Division/Army 86 divisions. However, reflecting the need to limit the division’s weight (and the required number of sorties), the CAB was limited to a single combat aviation company with fifteen UH-60 aircraft for moving troops and supplies by air. The division’s artillery brigade was also severely constrained due to weight and transportation concerns. Unlike heavier divisions, with general and direct support artillery battalions, the LID artillery brigade consisted solely of three artillery battalions, each designated to provide direct support to one of the division’s brigades. The firepower available in the artillery battalions was reduced further by keeping the size of individual batteries down to six howitzers each (rather than the Division/Army 86 design of eight), again on the grounds of weight and personnel costs. The division design also contained an austere engineer battalion and a much reduced Combat Service Support organization.

A slightly larger, revised design of 10,212 men was approved on 10 November 1983 (see Figure 14). Again requiring fewer than five hundred sorties to deploy the basic force, the major differences between this design and the October design were the addition of one more Combat Aviation Company (CAC) and increases in the size of the division band and signal battalion. General Wickham ordered the additional aviation company to enable the division to move by air the assault battalion headquarters consisting of twelve HMMWs and nine motorcycles. Out of this pool, one HMMW was dedicated to each rifle company commander for such uses as a radio carrier or to conduct re-supply. The rifle companies themselves were provided with no organic transportation other than foot power. See Ibid., p. 3-6.

Moreover, the towed 155mm howitzer (the M-198), which required a 5-ton truck to move and whose basic ammunition load required a significant support structure, was replaced with the nearly obsolescent M102 (105mm) howitzer. The reasons for choosing the shorter-range M-102 lay in its smaller deployability profile, its ability to be towed across the battlefield by the HMMWV and carried through the air by the UH-60, and its reduced support requirements. Similar considerations led to the elimination of the general support artillery battalion, consisting of 155mm howitzers and the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) found in heavier divisions. See Ibid., p. 5-7.

The engineer unit contained only eighteen Small Emplacement Excavators and six M-9 Armored Combat Earthmovers (ACE) for preparing positions and creating obstacles. The tracked earthmovers, the division’s only armored vehicles, were initially left out of the LID design, only to be included after CAC determined that some heavy digging capability was required and after the Engineer School stated that no wheeled vehicle existed that could satisfactorily perform the task. Engineers themselves were so few in number that, when supporting infantry, these personnel simply were to provide technical expertise to the troops; all the heavy lifting and muscle power were to be provided by the infantry themselves. The division’s Combat Service Support was designed to allow the division only to operate for up to forty-eight hours in a low-intensity combat environment without external support. Reflecting this limit, and given the dearth of ground vehicles, the maintenance and supply units contained within the division’s DISCOM were small in terms of personnel and vehicles. Less manpower-intensive logistical capabilities and extensive use of microcomputers were expected to further reduce personnel requirements. To cut down further on the weight requirements, many trailers and vans had no dedicated haulers. This was identified as a risk by the LID designers and necessitated “echelon” or phased movement of this equipment: a tractor trailer, for example, would first move one van to a new designated location and then go back for a second. This situation obviously put a severe constraint on rapid movement of many of the division’s CSS vehicles. See Ibid., pp. 6-3, 6-5, 8-1 and 8-14.
elements of one infantry battalion. The October design contained a 29-man divisional band as part of the headquarters company. Upon the recommendation of the Soldier Support Center, General Richardson brought the band up to forty-one personnel and made it a separate organization. Band members were also given the secondary mission of aiding the division’s MP company in securing the division’s tactical operations center. Finally, the signal battalion underwent an increase of eighty personnel when it became clear that manpower-saving equipment contained in the earlier design would be unavailable within the mandated 1986 time frame.

Figure 14: Light Infantry Division, November 1983

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66 A battalion’s “assault elements” consist of three rifle companies, a scout platoon, and a small command and control element; see Ibid., p. 4-9.

67 Ibid., p. 2-8.

68 Ibid., p. 2-9.
The drive to keep lift costs down led the LID designers to create a division weak in many areas of modern combat. Like the U.S. Army divisions of World War II, the LID was designed to contain only personnel and equipment that would normally be required by the division in its principal threat environment – i.e., low-intensity conflict. But this led to a number of limitations and vulnerabilities in the organization’s design. For example, because of the limited numbers of ground and air transport vehicles, the division had limited tactical mobility beyond the foot power of the infantrymen; bringing to bear all available ground transport allowed for the movement of a single infantry battalion, while less than a battalion could be moved at one time by air. The division’s limited air defense capabilities were designed solely for an air threat consisting of helicopters and low-performance close support aircraft. The dearth of anti-armor capability (basically limited to the four TOW-equipped HMMWVs at each battalion and the CAB’s twenty-nine AH-1 attack helicopters) made the division very vulnerable to attack by armor and mechanized forces, particularly if an engagement took place on open terrain. Whether these limitations posed a threat in a low-intensity conflict were questionable; in a mid to high-intensity conflict they could prove lethal.

The combination of these limitations with the directive to give the division some usefulness for the higher intensity battles in Europe, led the LID designers at CACDA, again harkening back to the Army’s World War II experiences, to the concept of corps augmentation. Under this concept, less-frequently used organizations would be consolidated at the LID’s parent corps and would be attached to the division as the situation warranted. To permit rapid integration of the augmenting units, headquarters within the division’s relevant sub-components would maintain the capability to accept these forces, allowing them rapidly to “plug” into the division. Among the common types of augmenting forces were armor, mechanized infantry, anti-armor battalions, aviation, artillery, air defense, engineers, medical, and transportation units. Interestingly, given the division’s focus on low-intensity conflict, neither civil affairs nor psychological operations were part of the division’s organic assets, but were instead part of the division’s corps-level CSS augmentation forces.

69 The division’s primary air defense capability was provided by a limited air defense battalion, consisting of eighteen Vulcan guns and forty Stinger missile teams. To increase the density of air defenses on the ground, fifty additional Stinger systems were allocated to personnel in other units throughout the division; for example, each infantry battalion heavy mortar platoon would have a Stinger assigned to it. Personnel operating these systems, however, would have other primary responsibilities and would only fire in self-defense of their unit. Such a minimal air defense capability was considered sufficient by the developers (though criticized by others) as the low-intensity air threat was by definition assumed to come from helicopters and low-flying close support aircraft. Should more sophisticated aircraft become involved in the fighting, according to the LID developers, the intensity level of the conflict would “automatically” escalate, requiring the deployment of additional augmenting air defense units – hardly an immediate comfort to the troops on the ground; see Hassell, Army of Excellence, pp. 7-1, 7-2, and 7-4.

In practice, many of these augmentation forces resided in the reserves, enhancing the value of the reserve components but also raising serious questions about the speed at which they could be made available to augment the LIDs. In the case of the 7th Infantry Division, the first division to be converted to the LID design, many of these units had been round-out elements (and, in a few cases, active-duty component units) of the division in its standard infantry division configuration. They were simply transferred to the division’s parent corps during the conversion to the LID format. While the basic LID configuration could be flown to a trouble spot within the five hundred C-130 sorties limit, even active-duty augmenting forces required additional time and sorties for deployment. Heavier augmenting equipment, such as tanks and APCs, would have to arrive by sea, further negating the LID’s vaunted rapid deployability.

The division’s Tables of Organization and Equipment (TOEs) were presented to review boards in January and February of 1984. The boards quickly approved the LID organization. Though additions and modifications continued for several years, the basic design and structure of this division was firmly established within the initial six-month time frame. 71

Conversion of the 7th Infantry Division to the light infantry format began even as the LID’s initial overall structure and equipment holdings were still being approved by TRADOC’s TO&E Review Boards. 72 Although the Army now had an operational concept and initial design for the LID, actual doctrine detailing how the division would fight, as well as final details of its organizational structure, would be written concurrently with the conversion of the 7th Infantry Division. As a result, while the TRADOC schools and centers officially were assigned the key tasks of developing the light infantry concept, members of the 7th Infantry Division played a crucial role in this stage of the development process, presenting their own ideas to the TRADOC elements as the division’s sub-components underwent initial field exercises. Unlike the HTLD, however, TRADOC remained firmly in control of the doctrine development process, just as it had retained control of the LID design process.

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71 Finally, in an effort to reduce further the required manpower spaces in the Army overall, the force designers were tasked to examine the degree to which the Airborne and Air Assault divisions could be drawn down and repackaged in a manner similar to the LIDs. Their rather tepid conclusion was that some standardization among the light forces was possible but that “the Light Infantry Division derived designs are not capable of doing all those things that the current divisions can do.” In the end, the Airborne and Air Assault divisions were reduced by about two thousand spaces each, but both retained most of their specialized equipment and functions; see Hassell, Army of Excellence, pp. 9-6 to 9-7.

72 Colonel (Ret.) David H. Harris, “Light Infantry Division Oral History Interview with Colonel (Retired) David H. Harris, Commander, 2nd Brigade and Chief of Staff, 7th Infantry Division (Light), 1982-1 May 1986;” interview by Joe D. Huddleston, December 1986; transcript, Light Infantry Division Certification Oral History Papers, Archives, U.S. Army Military Institute, Carlisle, PA, 1.
In late December 1983, General Thurman convened a conference whose purpose was to identify the issues to be examined during the “concept validation” or certification phase of the LID design implementation. Certification was yet another “innovation” intended to speed-up the LID design process: The overall LID concept and structure never was to be fully field tested to see if it could effectively meet the threat against which it was designed.\(^{73}\) Rather, the division and its individual components were to be tested and assessed, using the 7th Infantry Division as a test unit, with the objective of merely refining the division design; the basic structure and concept were assumed to be sound. The December conference developed a set of ninety-one questions, based upon information gathered by TRADOC from the schools and major commands, which the certification process was designed to answer. The questions were divided among combat (twenty), combat support (thirty), combat service support (forty), and training (one) issues, and included broad as well as very specific matters.\(^{74}\) Among the broader issues dealt with were the number of aircraft sorties required to deploy the division and the sufficiency of the infantry battalions’ firepower capabilities. More specific questions concerned the ability of individual components to perform their assigned missions: for example, the capability of the air defense units to provide sufficient protection against expected enemy air threats, or the ability of the division’s maintenance battalion materiel section to manage the division’s maintenance tasks.

As soon as the first units of the 7th Infantry Division completed their conversion to the LID format, they began undergoing the certification process. Begun in the summer of the 1985 with the division’s smallest units, the certification process culminated in a May 1986 field exercise, known as Celtic Cross IV, involving the complete newly-converted division. This would prove to be the only exercise in the entire certification process in which all elements of the light infantry division fought together as a single unit. Following another set of minor tests involving separate division elements in the fall of 1986, the certification process was judged complete. Again, TRADOC and the various branch schools and centers were intimately involved at every step of the certification process, including the conduct of the exercises themselves, providing subject matter experts to observe and report on the certification exercise results. Unfortunately, such involvement in the approval of the LID organization by those who had helped design it left little room for an independent evaluation of the merits of the LID program. The lone certification organization not to


have been involved in the development of the LID, TRADOC’s Independent Evaluation Directorate (TIED), did write the final evaluation report based on its own independent observations as well as those of the other participating organizations. This report pointed to another set of problems with the certification process: the field exercises involved similar combat situations and all were conducted at a single location (Fort Hunter Liggett, CA) where terrain and weather were favorable to the division’s design. As a result, the TIED report noted that the testing did not provide the opportunity to identify shortcomings in the division’s design or operational concept that might occur in other combat situations or climates. As part of its separate evaluation of the certification process, GAO criticized the process for failing to test the performance of corps “plugs” and to examine the rapid deployment capabilities of units composed of a mix of active-duty and reserve forces.

Nearly four thousand changes in organization and equipment were suggested as a result of the certification process. Almost half of these changes, in turn, were accepted by TRADOC in the final division design (see Figure 15). The changes, many of which involved sacrificing strategic mobility for firepower, brought the total manpower requirements for the division to 10,778 and airlift requirements to 516 C-141s. Among the more important modifications, the division’s short-range indirect fire support capabilities were strengthened in a number of ways: older mortars were replaced with lighter, more accurate versions; the total number of mortars were increased (from seventy-two to ninety); and the lightest mortars (the 60mm M-224) were brought back down to the company level. The division’s longer range indirect fire capability also improved with the scheduled replacement of the M-102 (105mm) towed howitzer by the soon-to-be acquired lighter, more accurate, and longer range M-119 (105mm) howitzer; as well as with the addition of a battery of eight long range M-198 (155mm) towed howitzers. Finally, the division’s anti-armor capability was enhanced through the substitution of the Swedish-designed, short-range AT-4 anti-armor missile for the older Light Anti-armor Weapon (LAW); the addition of eight more medium-range

75 See Government Accounting Office, Army Needs to Further Test, 14.
76 Ibid., 18-22. Moreover, as another critic of the process has pointed out: “The subjective and unquantifiable nature of the data collected left the argument open as to whether or not the data collected was valid and, thus, did not lead to clear and concise conclusions.” TRADOC’s Combined Arms Test Activity (TCATA) complied and summarized the certification test results in a report subsequently used by TIED in its final report. However, “[t]he recommendations and findings [of the TCATA report] did not necessarily agree with what was reported by either the test evaluators or other TRADOC schools.” See Major Lauren S. Davis, Jr. The Light Infantry Division Regionally Focused for Low Intensity Conflict (Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies, Army Command and General Staff College (thesis), 1990), 11.
78 The 7th Infantry Division (Light) took possession of its first M-119 in December 1989; see Gourley, “Light Infantry Division,” 40.
TOWs to the division’s arsenal; and the expansion the HMMWV fleet to allow all the division’s TOW launchers to be vehicle-mounted.⁷⁹

Official Army publications describing the Light Infantry Division, both in the wake of the certification process and long afterwards, identified a number of limitations in the LID design, including: the dearth of tactical mobility; the lack of redundancy; the scarcity of intelligence assets; the shortfall in indirect fire, anti-armor, and anti-air assets; and the absence of force entry capabilities. As a result, the documents recognized that the divisions were particularly vulnerable to NBC attack, indirect fire attacks, attacks by armor and mechanized forces, attack from enemy aircraft. In addition, they identified the need for external combat service support after forty-eight hours of operations. While acknowledging these limitations and vulnerabilities, the documents

⁷⁹ All of these changes are described in David Segal, “Army Light Infantry Divisions: Are They Fit to Fight?” Armed Forces Journal International, October 1988, 84-86.
would occasionally offer solutions; for example, when light infantry units were to be deployed in a “hostile environment,” they would “normally require local air superiority and naval gunfire if available.”

With its final design in place, the 7th Infantry Division (now officially designated as the 7th Infantry Division (Light) or 7th ID(L)) prepared for its first rotation through the new Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC), at Fort Chaffee Arkansas. But the actual design of the new division was only the initial, and easiest, step in the LID development process.

**Efforts to Build Internal Support for the LID Concept**

The rapidity of the conversion to the LID format was consistent with General Wickham’s management views: i.e., he only had a limited amount of time to push his initiatives through the service’s bureaucracy and to oversee their implementation. This view suggests that Wickham anticipated a lack of support within the service for his initiative, especially since it was outside the purview of the dominant intra-service communities, and that he hoped to gain the initiative before effective opposition could arise. He also feared that, unless it was solidly entrenched before he stepped down, the LID concept – like his predecessor’s HTLD – might not survive beyond his tenure as Chief of Staff.

It should also be noted that, with the exception of removing personnel spaces from Division/Army 86 designs, a move that may have taken place regardless of the existence of the LID concept due to the Army’s personnel constraints and earlier budgetary decisions, the heavy side of the force along with such political heavy-weights as the aviation branch and the reserves were little effected by the development of the Light Infantry Division. The acquisition programs for these forces, in particular, the service’s Big Five modernization program, were scheduled to continue unimpeded by the LID program. And, the heavy divisions retained their overall force structure and

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81 The JRTC, designed to be the light counterpart to the National Training Center, opened in September 1987 and signaled further the Army’s renewed commitment to foot-mobile infantry training. The center, expected to cost $154.8 million over its first six years of operation, was designed to prepare light infantry and other forces specifically for low intensity conflict; see Walt Morrissette, “Joint Training Center to Open at Fort Chaffee,” *Army Times*, 17 November 1986, 3.
numbers after an early proposal to convert a mechanized division to the LID formation was quickly scrapped.\footnote{82}{“DoD OK’s Light Division For FY’85,” \textit{Army Times}, 5 December 1983, 1 and 30.}

Indeed, the Army’s leadership seemingly went out of its way to reassure the dominant communities, as well as Congress, that the LID program would not affect previous plans nor entail new expenses. At the Association of the United States Army’s 1983 convention, held in October of that year, General Wickham noted that

\begin{quote}
the Army is enthusiastic about adding several new light divisions to its structure but doesn’t want the effort to slow the distribution of new equipment to the heavy divisions committed to NATO or to the Reserve Components.\footnote{83}{Larry Carney, “Wickham Says ‘Time Is Right’ to Create Light Divisions,” \textit{Army Times}, 31 October 1983, 24.}
\end{quote}

Likewise, in 1984 testimony before the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, Army DCSOPS General Fred K. Mahaffey, referring to the LID initiative, stated that:

\begin{quote}
Based on the analysis that we have done to date...we see no reductions in the major procurement programs for the major items of equipment that previously have been presented to the Congress.\footnote{84}{House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, \textit{DoD Appropriations for 1985, Part 3}, 62.}
\end{quote}

Later on, he added that “the light infantry division will be equipped primarily with items that are standard throughout the Army.”\footnote{85}{Ibid., 67.} General Wickham reiterated this last point a year later, in testimony before the Senate Armed Service Committee:

\begin{quote}
[The Light Infantry Division] does not require appreciable new equipment. We tried to design light divisions to capitalize on the generic equipment coming into the Army....If there are any new items, it deals with night vision capability.\footnote{86}{U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, \textit{Army’s Light Division}, Hearings, 99th Cong., 1st sess. (20 June 1985), 23-24.}
\end{quote}

Night vision equipment, primarily goggles and scopes for rifles, could hardly be described as a major new expense.

Although elements of the armor/mechanized community may have feared future cuts in procurement programs, especially as funding levels began to fall starting in fiscal year 1985, there were no explicit resource trade-offs between the light infantry and this community before March 1987. The senior Army leadership, in fact, strongly emphasized during this period that such trade-offs would not take place: The Army could have its expensive heavy modernization program and a
“cheap” light infantry program too. And, in the bargain, these light infantry would be made available to the heavy forces as needed. This reticence to have the LID be seen as infringing on other union’s programs can be ascribed to General Wickham’s desire not to “upset the apple cart,” and garner further opposition to the LIDs, by taking resources away from the more powerful communities.

Moreover, the light infantry went even further to accommodate the dominant communities by being drawn into a support role for these communities’ primary mission – the defense of Europe. Despite the light infantry’s purported focus on the low-intensity conflict, attention swiftly returned to the NATO mission. Following a summer 1985 article by General Wickham describing the utility of light forces in a NATO context, most of the LID-related articles in service journals were devoted to examining employment of light infantry units in European contingencies. General Wickham made clear his preferences in comments about the division-level certification field training exercise in May 1986. First, he stated that the division’s mission did not include going around “chasing VC,” and he further stated a preference for reorienting the exercise scenario to bring in the “tentacles of mid to high intensity technology…from the very beginning.” Justifying light infantry by pointing to their utility for heavier forces did help to quell opposition from this latter

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88 General John A., Wickham, taken from a letter written to the commanders of each light infantry division in the spring of 1985, included in Major Ben Harvey’s, “Feedback from Visits and Conversations with United States Army Light Infantry Divisions” (Memorandum for the Commanding General, Fort Benning, Georgia, 15 October 1986, A1; quoted in Major Michael E. Haith, Thickening the Light Division: The Need for a Fourth Rifle Company in the Light Infantry Battalion (Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies, Army Command and General Staff College (thesis), 1990), 12-13, n. 32.
community. A number of exercises combining heavy and light forces were conducted at the National Training Center (NTC), elements of both the newly LID-converted 25th Infantry and 7th Infantry Divisions participated in heavy-light exercises during the annual U.S.-Korean Team Spirit program, and elements of the light infantry divisions participated in NATO exercises through the latter half of the 1980s. While these exercises pointed to a number of problems with heavy-light forces, the armor/mechanized community appeared enthusiastic over the prospects of acquiring more infantry. A review of the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP) revealed that “nearly all . . . [light force] (JSCP) missions reflect employment in Europe, Southwest Asia or Northwest Asia in a mid to high intensity conflict.” Upon assuming command of TRADOC in 1988, General Thurman began a “Heavy/Light Assessment” designed to improve the LID’s capabilities for fighting in Central Europe and other mid- to high-intensity operations.

However, if all else failed, the senior Army leadership was not reticent about trying to stifle dissent within the service. According to officers in the service at that time, word was sent down through the ranks that this initiative was special to the Chief of Staff, so that everyone had better “get with the program.” Or, as one LID supporter later described it more diplomatically, the senior Army leadership “ordered” officers to advocate for the LID concept, with the DA putting out a series of talking points in support of the concept for officers’ use, and with Generals Wickham and Richardson “enjoin[ing] officers throughout the Army to defend the light divisions from their detractors.” The resulting pressures for conformity could lead to some comical situations:

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91 Haith, Thickening the Light Division, 2 and 19.

92 Higgins interview with author; Keller interview with author; Nelson interview with author; and Damon and Krisler, “Army of Excellence,” 87.

Lieutenant General Walter Ulmer, the commanding general of III Corps at Fort Hood, Texas, for example, was reprimanded by senior Army staff when a jocular comment of his regarding stationing a LID at Fort Hood was taken by visiting Deputy Secretary of Defense, Robert Taft, as a criticism of the LID concept. Such pressures also forced two active-duty general officers to use pseudonyms when writing a biting critique of the Army of Excellence and the LID concept for a leading defense journal in 1985.

Opposition Within the Army

Despite the LID promoters’ best efforts, the concept became a major point of dispute among the Army’s officer corps. General Wickham later identified three sources of opposition to the LID program – the armor/mechanized community, the Combat Service Support (CSS) community, and an amorphous group of so-called “doctrineire resistors of new ideas.” Criticism centered around the specific capabilities of the light infantry division, the philosophy underlying the light infantry concept, the missions assigned to these units, and its deleterious effect on the Army overall. Much of the criticism came, as Wickham noted, from the service’s other communities, though original LID supporters also criticized aspects of the concept as it began to evolve away from its initial tenets.

Among the specific criticisms of the LID capabilities were many acknowledged by the Army as mere limitations, but seen by critics as fatal flaws in design. For example, many critics

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94 According to LTG Ulmer, in a message to DA that was “CCed” to General Sennewald, the FORSCOM Commander, when asked by someone at the lunch given to Secretary Taft whether a LID would be coming to Fort Hood, the general jokingly responded: “We don’t have any at Hood and don’t need any at Hood.” Then, aware of the sensitiveness of this issue within the Army, General Ulmer’s message goes on to state: “Then in slow and careful words, being mindful of what the Army is trying to do, I stated the need for a balanced force wherein light forces were absolutely essential, and noted that the Army’s current move in that direction was timely.” While the message goes on to discuss other issues raised during the Secretary’s visit, General Ulmer returns finally to his LID comments: “Querying other attendees here regarding the lunch conversation, none can understand how any portion of the discussion could be taken as non-support of light forces. I called MG Lary and asked him how any such interpretation could be derived, and at least in conversation with me he indicated that to the best of his knowledge our negative response was to the FT Hood stationing, and that my comments on the need for a mix were remembered. Give me a call if you want more. Upset, I am. And I’ll be glad to go eyeball to eyeball with Sec Taft if there is any doubt remaining about what was said, implied, or conveyed about light forces. (But, I don’t have room for any of them being stationed at FT Hood right now.)” Communication for LTG Brown, Dir Army Staff, OCSA, Wash DC; Info for GEN Sennewald, CG, FORSCOM; from LTG Ulmer, CG III Corps and FT Hood; Subj: Visit of Dep Sec Def, 29 June 1984; Folder: Backchannels – Incoming – June 84; Box: Backchannel Messages, CSA, June 1983-March 1985; The John A. Wickham Papers; Archives, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA.


97 The three sources were identified in General Wickham interview with author.
pointed to the division’s limited firepower capabilities. In terms of indirect fire capabilities, the original design was described as dangerously weak in indirect fire support, with only seventy-two out-dated mortars (81mm and the heavier 107mm) in the entire division and all at battalion level, backed by a company of obsolescent M102 (105mm) towed howitzers, the latter easily out-ranged by the type of Soviet artillery prevalent throughout Third World armies. Another later critic pointed out that the general support artillery battery, with two platoons of four towed 155mm guns, was unable to simultaneously support the division’s three brigades. It was also widely acknowledged that the division was woefully deficient in armor-killing weaponry. While supporters claimed that this simply constrained the division – in the absence of augmenting anti-armor units – to fight against armor-weak opponents, critics agreed but pointed to the ubiquitous nature of such armored forces in Third World armies. One critic pointed out that a light infantry battalion could only fire a total of 140 anti-tank missiles from their basic load, but would face 160 armored vehicles if attacked by a Soviet-style motorized rifle regiment. In response to the anti-armor shortfall, a search continued for an adequate replacement for the Dragon anti-tank weapons, as did the on-again, off-again program for a light anti-armor vehicle. The ADA battalion also was criticized for having only two Stinger batteries, but responsibility for covering three combat brigades. Critics also pointed to dangers arising from the effort to reduce personnel slots in the division, and to resulting shortfalls in infantry squads as commanders tried to correct some of these problems by stealing personnel from such squads for use in other units.

98 According to one critic: “The limited firepower of the ID(L) is probably the strongest and most frequently voiced argument against employment of the ID(L) in Central Europe;” see Lt. Colonel Gerald E. Thompson, The Infantry Division (Light): Did We Read the History Book? (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 22 March 1987), 7.

99 The range for the M102 was 11,600 meters versus, for instance, 15,300 meters for a Soviet 122mm D-30 howitzer.


101 According to one author: “The consensus of critics and supporters alike is that the LID needs improved antiarmor capabilities;” see Haith, Thickening the Light Division, 2. Other criticism of the divisions lack of anti-armor can be found in Major Charles T. Crenshaw, Volume of Fire as an Effective Measurement of Infantry Performance in Battle – The Impact on the U.S. Army Decision to Organize Five New Light Infantry Divisions (Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies, Army Command and General Staff College (thesis), 1986); and Captain Steven J. Eden, “Letters: Light Infantry is Too Light!,” Military Review 71, no. 2 (February 1991): 86-88.

102 See, for instance, Foss, “Exclusive AFJ Interview,” 84.

103 Tiffany, “‘Light’ Infantry Division,” 50.

104 For example, according to one critic, the reduction by one soldier from the four-man HMWWV-mounted TOW squad, had “seriously degraded the operational effectiveness” of this unit; Tiffany, “‘Light’ Infantry Division,” 48. Infantrymen also were being pulled out of rifle squads to perform other tasks. In some cases, they were being used to make up for shortfalls at the various unit headquarters; one survey of 81 squads in one light infantry division found that, on average, each squad contained only 6.75 troops rather than the authorized nine. In other cases,
Another general set of criticisms revolved around the division’s lack of tactical mobility beyond foot-power. Many critics feared that the division could be easily out-maneuvered on any modern battlefield, assuming it could even reach the battlefield in the first place. In a European scenario, critics charged that the division’s lack of organic transport meant that they could not deploy from their aerial ports of debarkation to their assigned assembly areas, nor would enough inter-theater transportation immediately be available to permit such a move. In any scenario, aggregating all of the division’s ground and air transportation assets would allow at most for the simultaneous movement of two battalions by ground and one battalion by air. The dearth of vehicles meant as well that soldiers had to carry nearly all of their supplies and equipment themselves, leading to excessive loads on the backs of already overburdened individual infantryman.

Cuts in the division’s combat service support capability were criticized for leading to an inadequate logistics tail, with the division’s dependence on corps-level CSS after forty-eight hours often seen as particularly risky. Shortfalls and inadequacies were found as well in the division’s engineer units and its reconnaissance and intelligence assets. And, the division’s increased reliance on reserves, both as round-out and augmentation units, was deemed inappropriate for units infantrymen were being given secondary tasks as Stinger gunners or being used to provide security for austerely resourced support forces; Tiffany, “‘Light’ Infantry Division,” 49-52.

105 PA&E analyst Greg Nelson claimed that any light infantry unit could easily find itself stranded at the airfield to which it was ferried; Nelson interview with author.


107 Caldwell, Not Light Enough to Get There, 43. One disgruntled light infantry soldier commented to a reporter that: “[t]he light division only means that they’ve taken away our vehicles and now we have to hump all that fool stuff,” quoted in Richard Halloran, “U.S. Army Puts the New Foot Soldier Back on His Feet,” New York Times, 3 January 1988, E4.

108 For more criticism of the CSS, see Major William A. Godwin III, The Operational Employment of the Light Infantry Division (Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies, Army Command and General Staff College (thesis), 1986), 124; Thompson, History Book, 8; Wayne, Light Division, 48; and Major Robert J. Reese, Operational Considerations for the Employment of a Light Infantry Division in a Contingency Scenario (Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies, Army Command and General Staff College (thesis), 1987), 33.

109 On problems with the engineer assets, see Godwin, Operational Employment, 123; Tiffany, “‘Light’ Infantry Division,” 50; and Frank P. Janecek, Improving Light Infantry Divisional Engineer Agility – The Key to Enhancing Their Mission Capability (Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies, Army Command and General Staff College (thesis), 1986). On reconnaissance and intelligence shortfalls, see Major Albert Bryant, Jr. Blind Man’s Bluff? A Look at the Tactical Reconnaissance Capabilities of the U.S. Army’s Light Infantry Division (Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies, Army Command and General Staff College (thesis), 1987) and Major Nathan W. Noyes, Assessment of the Adequacy of the Reconnaissance and Security Forces in the Infantry Division (Light) (Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies, Army Command and General Staff College (thesis), 1985).
designed for rapid and early deployment. Some critics also pointed out that the political leadership would be very hesitant to mobilize reserves for low-intensity conflict operations, and that would be very difficult to train reserves up to the high standards required of light infantry.\footnote{on the misuse of the reserves, see Damon and Krisler, “Army of Excellence,” 92; Major Peter N. Kafkalas, “The Light Divisions and Low-Intensity Conflict: Are They Losing Sight of Each Other?” Military Review 66, no. 1 (January 1986): 21-22; General Edward C. Meyer, “Ex-Chief Gen. Meyer Warns of ‘Hollow’ Army,” interview by Larry Carney, Army Times, 2 February 1987, 8; Captain Jeffrey A. Jacobs, “The Use of Light Infantry in RC,” Army, December 1989, 16-17. and Major Donald A. Osterberg, Reserve Component Round-Out of Light Infantry Divisions (Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies, Army Command and General Staff College (thesis), 1990).}

Criticism was also leveled against the LID’s “corps plug”, or augmentation, concept.\footnote{Among the many criticisms of augmentation, see, for example, Reese, Operational Considerations, 10 and 32-33; Tiffany, “Light’ Infantry Division,” 46; Kirkland, Offensive Operations in Urban Europe, 35; and Major William K. Sutey, Light Infantry, Augmentation, and the M113A3 Armored Personnel Carrier: A Step in the Direction of Versatility (Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies, Army Command and General Staff College (thesis), 1992).}

Citing both the Army’s experiences during World War II as well as his own experiences during the 1970s, General Meyer consistently voiced the view that augmentation was unworkable short of “some very, very strong training relationships.”\footnote{Gordon, “Charge of the Light Infantry ,” 971. General Meyer expressed a similar view during the author’s interview with him as well as in Bernard J. Adelsberger, “Light Fighters: Built on a Doctrine of Small-Unit Actions,” Army Times, 13 June 1988, 16. Moreover, it was a view he held as far back as 1979; see Caldwell, Not Light Enough to Get There, 15. During the 1970’s, General Meyer was involved in efforts to develop air defense augmentation units for the 1st and 5th Infantry Divisions. The effort was abandoned, and units organic to the divisions were created instead, when exercises reveal that the augmented parent divisions were “terrible in knowing how to operate in air defense environments”; General Meyer quoted in Gordon, “The Charge of the Light Infantry,” 971. During World War II, the effort to pool tank battalions at the corps level for use by infantry divisions on an “as-needed” basis also failed; in the end, tank battalions oftentimes became permanently attached to the infantry divisions. For more on the World War II experience, see Greenfield, Palmer, and Wiley, Organization of Ground Combat Troops, 273, 293-97, 307-12, and 331-34; and Weigley, Eisenhower’s Lieutenants, 22-23.}

However, evidence for the absence of such relationships was found by the U.S. Army Training Board, which reported that

[light infantry] divisions...indicated uneasiness about the [augmentation concept] because they do not know who the “plugs” are, where they are locate, how long it will take them to get there, and in case of CSS assets who has control over them when they arrive.\footnote{Major Ben Harvey, “Feedback from Visits and Conversations with United States Army Light Infantry Divisions,” (Memorandum for the Commanding General, 15 October 1986), 2; quoted in Caldwell, Not Light Enough to Get There, 27, n. 66.}

Finally, officers derided the LID concept for its low-tech emphasis on modern warfare. From retirement, General Starry derisively termed the approach: “a manpower-intensive solution in an era of manpower shortages.”\footnote{General Donn Starry quoted in Army, “Armored Gun System,” 57.} More charitably, General Meyer agreed that infantry divisions
needed to be made lighter, but “...that you have to offset heaviness with some kind of high tech.”

On a more general level, debate arose concerning the philosophical underpinnings of the LID concept. Specifically, were “true” light infantry divisions fundamentally different from conventional infantry forces (as Steven Canby argued) or, if given the proper augmentation, could these forces perform missions identical to those undertaken by conventional infantry? In a 1987 monograph, Army Major Scott R. McMichael criticized the Army for improperly thinking about and developing the light infantry division as simply a standard infantry division minus the heavy equipment. He cited, in particular, Field Circular 71-101, *Light Infantry Division Operations*, which he claimed described the light division as “essentially” a general purpose force. Major McMichael argued, instead, that a light infantry ethos existed that was “unique and distinct” from standard infantry. He asserted that “true” light infantry possessed a distinctive tactical style...a special attitude toward the environment...a freedom from dependence on fixed lines of communications, and...a strong propensity for self-reliance.

To bolster his argument, McMichael’s study examined several historical cases where light infantry had been mistakenly employed as standard infantry, with fatal results. Other studies during the latter half of the 1980s also spoke of the catastrophic consequences of misusing light infantry. One officer, after examining Army plans to employ light infantry divisions in a NATO context, concluded that: “If we persist in our belief that the light divisions are just general purpose forces we may pay with the lives of our soldiers on the battlefield of the future.”

Controversy also arose over the dual nature of the light infantry mission: a primary focus on low-intensity conflict (LIC), but with a capability to operate in mid to high-intensity conflict as well. Early on, some LID supporters became concerned with what, in their view, had become an over-emphasis in the service on LID employment in higher intensity scenarios at the expense of the LIC

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115 General Edward Meyer quoted in Gordon, “Charge of the Light Infantry,” 971. This view is consistent with General Meyer’s approach to the HTLD (see chapter five).


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mission. Other Army officers argued, in contrast, that too much emphasis still remained on employing light infantry units in low-intensity conflict – an area where sufficient Army force already resided in the Special Forces and Rangers. Instead, light infantry should be focused solely toward mid- and high-intensity conflict environments; environments where, in these critics’ view, the potential of the LID might be high, but its shortcomings possibly fatal. One study, for example, claimed that official Army publications provided little doctrinal guidance for LID employment in mid- to high-intensity environments.

Finally, some Army critics took a broader view, attacking the LID and the AoE program for its deleterious effects on the Army overall. For instance, critics derided the AoE program for disrupting the service just as it was in the midst of undergoing its largest modernization program in decades. Others dismissed the effort as a mere shell-game, giving the false impression of improving combat capabilities by adding more divisions while holding manpower constant. Many would have agreed with General Meyer’s assessment that, without additional manpower, the

119 See, for example, Kafkalas, “Light Divisions and Low-Intensity Conflict,” 18-27; and Major Louis D. Huddleston, “Light Infantry Division: Azimuth Check,” Military Review 65, no. 9 (September 1985): 14-21. Major Huddleston, who was coordinating officer for the Army’s Light Infantry Division Operations Field Circular 71-101, stated that “[t]he light infantry division was not intended primarily to fight in Europe,” but rather that its “stated purpose and intent” was “employment in undeveloped theaters and contingency areas at the lower end of the threat spectrum;” see Ibid., 16-17. One piece of evidence for the LID’s focus on mid- to high-intensity conflict cited by Major Kafkalas was the then current “Low-Mid Intensity Scenario” developed by the Army Command and General Staff College’s Department of Tactics. According to the department, the purpose of the scenario was “to help clarify emerging doctrinal principles which explain how to fight...the light infantry division...in a contingency environment;” U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Department of Tactics, “Low-Mid Intensity Scenario,” Briefing Packet (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and General Staff College, 10 April 1985), 1; quoted in Kafkalas, “Light Divisions and Low-Intensity Conflict,” 22, n. 17. Major Kafkalas criticizes this scenario because the major opposing force is a motorized rifle division, while operations against guerrilla forces were only considered in terms of local security. True, this is not necessarily a low-intensity conflict scenario; however, it mirrors precisely the type of scenario against which the Combined Arms Command Development Activity (CADCDA) developed the light infantry division – at the break point between low and mid-intensity conflict – in lieu of a consensus view within the community of low-intensity conflict; Keller interview with author. Interestingly, during the 7th Infantry Division’s Celtic Cross IV certification exercise, opposition guerrilla forces played havoc with the division’s rear area and lines of communications. Ask to comment by an Army Times reporter, the division’s officers brushed off “guerilla raids as little more than a persistent irritant.” The division’s 2d Brigade commander comment: “You’ve got to protect against the situation that can defeat you – the armor. The guerrillas harass, but they aren’t going to be a threat.” Celtic Cross IV quotes in Daniel Greene, “Light Fighters Train for Battles of Future,” Army Times, 8 September 1986, 14.

120 See, for instance, Bahnsen, “Kaleidoscopic US Army,” 78-88; and Brig. General (Ret.) John C. “Doc” Bahnsen, Jr., “The Army’s in Third Place – It Better Try Harder,” Armed Forces Journal International, May 1987, 74-82. Its interesting to note, in light of his caustic comments about the LID program, that General Bahnsen’s Army career was spent in the armor branch.

121 According to one author, the light infantry division Operational Concept “...sheds no light on details of employment in mid to high intensity combat;” Gardner, Tactical Employment of Light Infantry, 1.

122 Damon and Krisler, “Army of Excellence,” 86.

123 Ibid.; and Higgins interview with author. One, overly dramatic, critic even described it as print as “the Rape of Army 86;” see Bahnsen, “Kaleidoscope US Army,” 78.
Army risked creating another “hollow army” by attempting to fill the two new LID divisions without adding to the service’s overall personnel levels.\(^\text{124}\) Even elements of FORSCOM agreed with this assessment. In the spring of 1985, citing manpower shortages, FORSCOM requested that only five of the six scheduled active-duty battalions for the fourth light infantry division, the 6\(^{th}\) Infantry Division, be manned with active-duty personnel.\(^\text{125}\)

Meanwhile, some of the Army’s politically weakest communities, under the general heading of Combat Service Support (CSS), continued to argue that the Army overall lacked adequate support capabilities and that the service’s AoE and LID programs merely exacerbated this problem. The Army of Excellence program mandated deep cuts in CSS across all the service’s combat divisions. The LID concept itself called for a radical restructuring of support functions, favoring combat spaces over support. LID supporters argued that the service would always lack adequate “tail” for a long war, and that maintaining as much combat strength (“teeth”) as possible was far more important for deterrence.\(^\text{126}\) Members of the CSS communities countered that the “teeth-to-tail” pendulum had definitely swung too far.\(^\text{127}\) They received renewed support for their view from a number of senior active-duty and retired officers. During a December 1985 Senate Armed Services Committee hearing, for example, then NATO Commander General Bernard Rogers stated that U.S. ground forces in Europe lacked sufficient combat service support. When asked where spaces could be found for CSS, General Rogers suggested that some of the LID personnel could be suitably sacrificed.\(^\text{128}\) Testifying again on Capital Hill a year and a half later, this time before the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, General Rogers again stated his preference for additional CSS manpower over light infantry:

Nor, in my opinion, with a fixed end-strength, should we continue creating additional Army combat units – badly needed though they may be – until we can provide adequate support for the Army units that already exist.\(^\text{129}\)


\(^\text{125}\) Larry Carney, “Cut in Active Strength of Light Division Sought,” Army Times, 6 May 1985, 6.

\(^\text{126}\) General Wickham interview with author

\(^\text{127}\) See, for instance, Vann, “Forgotten Force,” 2-17.


\(^\text{129}\) General Bernard W. Rogers, Commander in Chief, U.S. European Command, Hearings before the House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Defense, 100th Cong., 1st sess. (26 March 1987); quoted in Bahnsen, “Army’s in Third Place,” 74.
Similarly, General Paul F. Gorman, former SouthCom commander, commented in a public forum that “he would rather have four more engineer battalions than four light divisions and that the Army needed combat service support far more urgently than shooters.” General Meyer expressed particular concern over the potential future effects on CSS, recognizing long-standing congressional preference for combat over support services:

Once you have a division, with a location and a flag, it’s difficult to take it out. The first thing Congress will cut out when you go about having reductions in end strength is combat support. So you run the risk that you will have an unbalanced combat support structure.

**Building External Support in the Executive Branch**

General Wickham recognized early on the need to garner support for the LID effort from outside the service, as a hedge against internal opposition. He found his first key supporter outside of the Army in early August 1983, when, after being briefed on the concept, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Thayer approved up to five light infantry divisions. Thayer was to play an important role in stifling early efforts to scuttle the program within OSD. The Deputy Secretary’s motives behind his endorsement of the LID concept, however, had little to do with the substance of the project. Instead, Thayer, who felt that the Navy’s programs were over-funded relative to those of the Army, had sought to transfer tens of billions of dollars from the Navy to the Army since coming to the Pentagon in January 1983. Thayer’s approval of this new Army program was in preparation for a renewed assault on the Navy’s budget during the summer Defense Resources Board (DRB) meeting, held during the first two weeks of August. Thayer’s DRB offensive against the Navy ultimately failed, but Wickham now had the imprimatur of the number two civilian at the Pentagon to continue with the LID program.

Despite Thayer’s support, opposition arose to the concept on the civilian side of the Pentagon from two sources: the Policy Analysis and Evaluation (PA&E) office, headed by David Chu, and the office of Forces, Manpower, and Reserves (FM&R), headed by Assistant Secretary of Defense Lawrence Korb. The Army’s intentions to develop the LID concept and create a seventeenth division first officially surfaced in its September 1983 budget submission for fiscal year 1985, hidden under an otherwise innocuous budget heading. Simply converting already existing

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133 So “innocuous” was the heading that one PA&E analyst claims that his office would have failed to recognize its significance had he not been informally tipped-off before as to the Army’s LID program; Nelson interview with author.
divisions to a new format—without the need for more authorized personnel spaces or substantial new spending on equipment—was a purely internal Army matter, one not requiring OSD approval. A move to increase the Army force structure, however, was a matter of OSD concern. Both PA&E and FM&R immediately rose up to oppose the LID.

Consistent with its mission, PA&E argued against the concept from both a force structure and a capabilities standpoint. First, it examined past cases of intervention, noting that most required less than one division and that oftentimes the Marine Corps was called upon to provide those forces. In the rare instances where mixed Army and Marine Corps forces were deployed, again less than one division of each was typically used. Turning to the present force structure for contingency operations, PA&E argued that the seven divisions available (three Marine and four Army divisions) were wholly adequate to meet any foreseeable threat. It also noted that, given the amount of airlift available, at most two divisions could be deployed by air within a minimum of two weeks. After that time, heavier forces could begin arriving by sea. Finally, the office questioned whether the LID, lacking in tactical mobility and anti-armor punch, would be effective in many potential scenarios. One critic was anonymously quoted as declaring that: “[The LID] was not a very good division against anything but Zulu nations.”

Korb’s office made the case against a seventeenth division from a manpower standpoint. Korb had long argued that the Army had a manning shortfall in support services. In light of the Army of Excellence program, the addition of a new ten thousand-troop division obviously would come at the expense of support spaces in other divisions, further exacerbating this problem in his view. Both Korb and PA&E suggested a go-slow approach: convert and test the LID concept with one or both of the Army’s current, under-strength non-mechanized infantry divisions (the 7th and 25th), while abstaining from adding a new seventeenth division.

For a variety of reasons, however, neither Korb’s office nor PA&E were in the best position to argue against the Army’s case for the LID program. To begin with, one of the tenets of the Reagan Administration since it entered office, and championed by Secretary of Defense Weinberger throughout his tenure, was that civilians in the Pentagon and at the Office of Management and Budget for too long had meddled in areas best have been left to military decision-makers.

134 Indeed, when asked why he chose not to beef up the light infantry divisions by asking for additional personnel spaces in the Army overall, General Wickham commented that to do so would have required OSD approval; Korb interview with author.

135 Nelson interview with author; and Gordon, “Charge of the Light Infantry,” 970.

136 Quoted in Ibid.

137 Ibid.; and Korb interview with author interview.
Weinberger came into office determined to increase the power of the individual services in the budget process at the expense of civilian officials in OSD; in his words:

people with the responsibility for a particular activity should have the authority to participate actively in the budget process, as well as in the allocation of any funds that may be appropriated for the activities for which they were responsible.\(^{138}\)

Under Weinberger’s decentralized management style, senior civilian defense officials provided little guidance or oversight to military programs. Service preferences over budget decisions generally won out over arguments presented by civilian offices such as PA&E and FM&R.\(^{139}\)

Moreover, PA&E, as the direct descendant of former Secretary of Defense McNamara’s Office of Systems Analysis, had become a special target of the Republican Party’s wrath against alleged civilian micromanagement of the military. Indeed, the 1980 Republican Party platform had called for its elimination. Although PA&E survived the entry of the Reagan Administration to power, Weinberger downgraded the agency’s head from an assistant secretary down to a mere director shortly after assuming office.

Further hindering OSD efforts to oppose the LID was a directive from the senior OSD leadership prohibiting PA&E and FM&R from exchanging views on the program.\(^{140}\) The source of this directive was most likely Deputy Secretary Thayer, who was at the time the senior civilian supporter of the concept within OSD. The effect of this prohibition was to inhibit the two offices’ analysts as they struggled to develop an effective strategy against the LID. Again, General Wickham’s early efforts to gain support for his light infantry initiative paid off.

In order to head off further OSD criticism, Army Secretary Marsh and General Wickham, armed with the preliminary results of the Army’s LID design effort, met with Weinberger on 21 October to seek his approval for the program. After much effort, PA&E director David Chu too was allowed to attend this meeting. Any arguments he was able to make, however, had little effect, as Weinberger ended the meeting by accepting the service’s proposal for the tentative LID design and for the organizing of the first LID unit in fiscal year 1985.\(^{141}\)

\(^{138}\) Caspar S. Weinberger, Fighting for Peace: Seven Critical Years in the Pentagon (New York: Warner Books, 1990), 43. In one of his first acts as Secretary of Defense, Weinberger added the three service secretaries to the aforementioned Defense Resources Board, which was assigned the task of resolving budgetary disputes between the services and making final funding recommendations to the Secretary; Ibid., 44.

\(^{139}\) Korb interview with author; and Stubbing, Defense Game, 392-93.

\(^{140}\) Nelson interview with author.

Despite this victory for Wickham, PA&E and FM&R continued to argue against creation of the seventeenth division. Their arguments may have had some influence on Deputy Secretary Thayer. In early or mid-December, he began having second thoughts and reportedly suggested to General Wickham that the service needed to go back and carefully study its proposed plans. Fortunately for General Wickham, this recommendation could be safely ignored: Thayer shortly thereafter went home to Texas for the Christmas holidays and, days after his return, was forced to resign as a result of a Security and Exchange Commission’s investigation into insider trading.

While Thayer and others took time off to enjoy the holidays, General Wickham was preparing to lock in his LID program. The final days of the year are always a hectic time at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and nowhere more so than in its national security division, as last minute decisions are made on the national budget to be submitted to Congress the following month. General Wickham chose this moment, late in December, to introduce the Army’s plans for the LID and the seventeenth division into the budget process. As one White House official put it: “It happened late in the budget season and was never really fully examined here.”

Initially, OMB argued that the LID proposal had foreign policy implications and, therefore, could not be included in the fiscal year 1985 budget proposal without President Reagan’s explicit approval. As a result, during the last week of December, with few other OSD officials aware of the meeting or even in town, General Wickham and Secretary Weinberger went to the White House to present the LID program to the President. Not surprisingly, President Reagan quickly approved and the program was inserted into the budget.

Suddenly made aware of the President’s approval, Korb and Chu wrote one last set of memos to the Deputy Secretary of Defense urging a go-slow approach to the LID program. Despite his previous caution regarding the LID proposal, Thayer rejected these arguments and signed the program into the Proposed Budget Document for submission to Congress, just days before he resigned. The conversion of an existing division (the 7th Infantry) to Light Infantry Division design and the activation of a fully manned seventeenth division to a LID design were now officially part of the Army’s fiscal year 1985 budget. At the same time, the service announced that

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142 Nelson interview with author.
143 Gordon, “Charge of the Light Infantry,” 970.
144 Ibid.
145 Ibid.; and Nelson interview with author.
a second existing active-duty division (the 25th Infantry) would be converted to the LID design in later years and that a light infantry division would be formed in the reserves. 146

The budget also made clear that the new division would be added to the Army's active-duty force structure while the service maintained a constant end-strength. As far back as the previous summer, General Wickham had made clear to General Richardson his view that the service would likely be unable to garner additional manpower resources; indeed, such concerns lay behind the AoE effort. 147 General Thurman also was intimately aware of the Army's difficulties with increasing its personnel resources, given his recent tenure as the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel. An October 1984 internal Army "Information Paper" identified the rationale behind the decision to keep end-strength constant: Congress was unlikely to support future increases in active-duty component end-strength because of their cost. And, continuing to program growth in end-strength only to have it later fail to win approval from Congress "created unnecessary turbulence" as the service worked to allocate resources and determine its future force structure. 148 Therefore, the fiscal year 1985 defense budget finally submitted to Congress maintained a fixed Army end-strength of 780,800 through fiscal year 1989. 149 The decision-making arena now shifted to Congress, where many of the details of the LID program would be dramatically altered as General Wickham sought a new source of external support for his light division effort.

Building External Support in Congress

Light Infantry Divisions and Home Basing Politics

Simply converting the two existing under-strength divisions to the Light Infantry Division format, as recommended by Korb and Chu, likely would have generated little notice in Congress. For example, General Wickham testified to Congress that the new division design would require few new funds, and would not affect any ongoing Army procurement programs. Those congressmen with a strong interest in defense issues would probably have applauded General

146 Larry Carney, "Army Seeks 2 New, 2 Converted Light Divisions," Army Times, 9 January 1984, 2. Finally, there was some discussion of converting the 193rd Brigade, stationed in Panama, to a light infantry format at some later date; see Larry Carney, "193d Inf to Become Light Div.," Army Times, 16 January 1984, 1.

147 Richardson, “Force Structure and Army 86.”

148 DAPE-MBC, “Strength of the Total Army C-2-84,” Information Paper, October 1984; Folder: #17; CSA Box 1/Contents: CSA Subject Files; The John A. Wickham Papers; Archives, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA.

149 However, the initial 1985-89 Army POM, developed earlier in 1983, programmed an active service end-strength of 784,600 in fiscal year 1985, rising to 792,600 in fiscal year 1989, while the comparable figures in the OSD budget initially submitted to OMB were 788,200 and 796,200; DAMO-FDF, “Active Army End Strength,” 23 January 1984; Folder: #17, Insert A-1; CSA Box 1/Contents: CSA Subject Files; The John A. Wickham Papers; Archives, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA.
Wickham’s efforts to reinvigorate the service’s two remaining, poorly equipped, and under-strength infantry divisions. Moreover, the overall AoE effort placed ever greater responsibilities on the Army’s reserve component, always a favorite move within Congress.

The activation of a new division, however, provided Wickham the opportunity to achieve strong support for the LID project from elements within Congress, support which might prove crucial in overcoming further opposition inside and outside the service. This opportunity arose because the activation of a new division gave rise to the requirement to decide on a location for the division’s basing. The potential economic benefits to the region which acquired this base brought strong attention to bear on the LID concept, and led to an all-out political struggle within Congress over the rights to the division’s home. General Wickham later was to describe this episode as “building a base of support” for the LID program on Capital Hill.150

The strategy of using basing decisions as a means for gaining congressional support for a particular program or a service overall was hardly a new one. The Navy, under its Secretary John Lehman, had been adding new naval facilities through its “strategic home porting” program since the start of the Reagan administration.151 And the strategy had a long tradition within the Army as well.152 As early as 1820, for instance, Army Major General Jacob Brown suggested in a letter to Military Secretary John C. Calhoun that the army should consider “stationing additional troops in Maine in order to make that state’s congressional delegation more favorable to the army.”153

Returning to the case of the LID, FORSCOM headquarters was assigned the task of examining alternate sites for the new division, with environmental impact statements to be generated by the Corps of Engineers. A final decision on the division’s new home would be made by senior Army leadership. Among the factors considered by FORSCOM in assessing alternative basing sites were proximity to airfields, the amount of training area available, the availability of

150 General Wickham interview with author.
151 Through this program naval surface ship groups were newly based in such places as Staten Island, New York; Everett, Washington; Corpus Christi, Texas; Pascagoula, Mississippi; Lake Charles and New Orleans, Louisiana; Mobile Alabama; and Pensacola, Florida; see Lehman, Command of the Seas, 183. Local economies in these regions were enhanced through dispersal of construction contracts, hiring of civilian personnel to carry out these contracts, and long-term employment of local civilians both on and off-base in support of these facilities.
152 Besides boosting local economies, stationing of divisions could strength grass-root support for the service and, if accompanied by promises to new recruits of deployment to the local post, also improve regional recruiting efforts. This argument was made by two Army officers in a 1979 article, with particular emphasis on recruiting and stationing efforts in the Northeast; John R. Witherall and Andrew P. O’Meara, Jr. “The Army and the 1980’s,” Parameters 9, no. 4 (December 1979): 50.
housing and family facilities, and the potential effects on the surrounding community and environment. The alternatives considered by FORSCOM in the first round of the basing decision, begun in January 1984, included Fort Benning, Georgia; Fort Campbell, Kentucky; Fort Drum, New York; Fort Ord, California; Fort Lewis Washington; and Forts Richardson and Wainwright in Alaska.154

By the time of a mid-March 1984 appearance by the Army DCSOPS, Lt. General Fred Mahaffey, before the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, the Army had indicated that the list of sites had been narrowed down to three alternative basing schemes: a West Coast basing, with the division divided between Forts Lewis and Ord; and a pair of options on the East Coast consisting of dual basing at Forts Campbell and Drum, or basing the complete division at Fort Drum.155 These four sites (Forts Lewis, Ord, Campbell and Drum) remained in the running as each was “near big airfields” and each contained “good training areas.”156 General Mahaffey went on to declare that the sites in Georgia and Alaska “just don’t look as good as” the remaining four posts.157 He stated that FORSCOM would be completing its basing study soon, with recommendations to be forwarded to the senior Army leadership for a final decision. A final determination of the basing scheme for the seventeenth division was expected, according to Mahaffey, by the end of April.158

Despite these claims by the Army’s DCSOPS, the Army, on 4 April, announced that a total of eight posts still were in the running for hosting the new division: Fort Campbell, Fort Drum, Fort Lewis, and Fort Ord, as well as Fort Benning in Georgia, and Forts Greely, Richardson and Wainwright, all in Alaska. Moreover, instead of making a decision by the end of April, the Army Corps of Engineers now would not be able to release environmental impact statements on the eight sites until May, with public hearings to follow in June near each of the eight posts to gain local input.159 A final basing decision now was put off until September.160

154 Initial indications suggested that the Army was likely to base the new division somewhere in mid-west, which was revised a few weeks later to dual-basing at Fort Ord, California (home of the 7th Infantry Division) and Fort Lewis, Washington; see Carney, “Army Seeks 2 New,” 2; and Carney, “193d Inf,” 1.
157 Ibid. Interestingly, in light of subsequent events, these comments by Lt. General Mahaffey appear in the Army Times article but not in the final, published version of the House Appropriations Subcommittee hearings.
159 “Eight Posts Are Being Considered For New Light Division’s Home Base,” Army Times, 30 April 1984, 3.
According to “Army sources,” the Fort Benning and Alaska sites were again under consideration “only after pressure from legislators in the states concerned.”

According to one Army official at the time:

There’s an awful lot of political pressure being brought to bear on the Army on where to locate the new division. The Army is going to be extremely cautious on where it stations the new division because of this interest.

Given the personalities and the key positions occupied by members of the state congressional delegations, the pressures for and potential rewards of basing the new division were strongest from Alaska, Georgia, and New York. Alaskan Senator Ted Stevens (R), then head of the Senate’s Defense Appropriations subcommittee, long had been an especially forceful advocate of Alaskan interests. His personal intervention in the basing decision was to become the deepest and most public of any member of Congress. In the Georgia delegation, Senator Sam Nunn, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Armed Service’s Committee, was a well-respected and influential leader in his party on defense issues. The New York delegation contained a host of potentially powerful supporters of the LID project. On the House side, the congressman for the district surrounding Fort Drum, David Martin, was the ranking Republican on the House Armed Services Committee’s Defense Investigative Subcommittee, while Rep. Joseph Addabo (D) was the powerful chairman of the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. In the Senate, Alfonse D’Amato (R) (who had earned the nickname “Senator Pothole” for his focus on garnering federal projects for his home state) was a member of the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. In the case of Fort Drum, moreover, the potential political rewards extended beyond the New York delegation. Congressional delegations from all over the Northeast and Midwest had long complained about the dearth of military installations and military spending in their region, especially as the failing economic fortunes of the 1970s led to the growth of the region’s “Rust Belt.”

161 “Eight Posts Are Being Considered,” 3.

162 Ibid.

163 In the late 1980’s and early 1990’s, Senator Stevens was at the forefront of inserting last-minute amendments to defense spending bills for projects of local interest that had failed to be considered or approved by the appropriate committees of Congress (in this case Armed Services and Defense Appropriations), so-called “earmarks.” In Senator Stevens’ case the projects, usually designed to aid Alaskan institutions of higher learning, were technical projects of dubious scientific merit; see Susan Cohen, “Pork in the Sky,” Washington Post Magazine, 10 November 1991, 15-17 and 36-39. When asked about his reputation for garnering questionable funds for Alaska, Senator Stevens responded, in a manner suggestive of its actions on behalf of the LID basing issue as well, that “I am the senator from Alaska [emphasis in the original].” Ibid., 38.

164 The Northeast-Midwest Institute, a non-profit think tank serving the Northeast-Midwest Congressional and Senate Coalitions (representing Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Wisconsin), first published a report in 1977 decrying the relatively small amount of defense dollars and the paucity of defense bases and
division at Fort Drum provided the opportunity to answer the concerns of this broader audience as well.

The economic rewards to the locale awarded the new division’s base were potentially substantial. In the economically depressed area surrounding Fort Drum, the Corps of Engineers, for example, estimated that the annual total business volume in the region would increase by 11.9 percent and that annual local personal income would increase by 21.9 percent. Stationing the division at Fort Drum was estimated to create almost 5500 total permanent jobs, including direct hires on the base and indirect hires throughout the community.165

The Corps’ public hearings on the basing issue illustrated the strong congressional and local interest in the decision. Senator Nunn appeared at the hearings in Columbus, Georgia, where he strongly made the case for basing at least a portion of the new division at Fort Benning. Meanwhile, Congressman David Martin attended the Fort Drum hearings in Watertown, New York. New York Governor Mario Cuomo also attended the hearing, and declared the appointment of an executive committee to help plan, finance and expedite additional off-post housing in the Fort Drum area. Pushing strongly for the division, Governor Cuomo declared: “What you need, we can provide.”166 Strong letters of support for basing the new division in New York were also read at the hearing from Senator Daniel Moynihan (D), Senator D’Amato, and Rep. Addabo.

The Corps of Engineers’ May environment impact statement concluded that due to housing and training space constraints the seventeenth division would need to be split between different sites. Among the options being considered were split basing at Forts Wainwright and Lewis, at Forts Lewis and Ord, at Forts Drum and Campbell, or at Forts Drum and Benning. Only Fort Drum was considered by the Engineers to be of sufficient size to base the entire division, although even at Fort Drum the housing situation would be tight.167

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165 Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, DoD Appropriations for FY85, Part 5, 38.
Faced with strong congressional pressure from the triad of the Alaska, Georgia and New York delegations, the Army decided on a three-way solution, seemingly the better to garner the widest possible congressional support. In early August, the service sent to the Secretary of Defense a plan for basing not one, but two, new divisions: the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, beginning in early 1985, and the 6th Infantry Division at Forts Wainwright and Richardson, in fiscal year 1986. The Georgia delegation would be compensated with assignment of the third Ranger battalion and the new Ranger regimental headquarters to Fort Benning. In addition, until housing could be made available at Fort Drum, the 10th Division’s second brigade would be based temporarily at Fort Benning.

Sacrificing LID Capability for Congressional Support

The Army was able to create two new divisions from the original single new division by falling back again on the reserves. Despite the claim by General Wickham in his April 1984 White Paper on the Light Infantry that a new LID division must be fully manned to performed its rapid deployment missions, the 10th Mountain Division lost its third active-duty brigade. The resulting substitution of a round-out brigade from the New York National Guard meant that the complete division would never be able to achieve a short-notice, rapid deployment capability. It would, however, enhance the role of the Army’s reserves. The active-duty personnel spaces of the 10th Mountain Division’s lost brigade were reassigned to the 6th Infantry Division and combined with the separate 172nd Brigade, long stationed in Alaska, to become the active-duty component of the Army’s eighteenth division. The eighteen division was completed with the addition of an Army Reserve Brigade based in Minnesota, which had previously been assigned to the defense of Alaska. As a result, this division too would never be capable of a short-notice, rapid deployment of the entire division.

Conflicting rationales were offered for the new Alaskan-based division, many of which ran counter to the original LID mission presented to Congress (i.e., providing a quick reaction force for low-intensity conflicts in the Third World). The Army officially claimed that the need for an

169 Wickham, Jr., Light Infantry Divisions, 3.
170 Carney, “Army Asks Defense,” 41. Even General Richardson was to admit later that the addition of the 6th Infantry Division (Light) “was not necessary.” He went on to state that: “I don’t think from a strategic standpoint, from a war plans or war fighting standpoint that the 6th Division was needed at all. We had sufficient forces in Alaska to take care of any threat there. The brigade then did not need to be increased to division size.” General William R. Richardson, “General William R. Richardson: Senior Officer Oral History Program Interview,” Project 1987-18; interview by Lt. Colonel Michael W. Ackerman (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army Military History Institute, 1987), 356 and 357.
171 See Lt. General Fred E. Mahaffey’s testimony in House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, Army Light Infantry Division, 54-56.
eighteenth division arose from a review of the service’s force structure vis-à-vis the world situation conducted by the Army staff earlier in the summer of 1984. Out of this review, it “became apparent” that an additional division was needed to meet the service’s required missions. And yet, the service’s explanation of the 6th Infantry’s mission made it appear that the sole additional requirement identified by the service during this review was the defense of Alaska.

In later congressional testimony, Lt. General Mahaffey specifically identified the defense of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands as the division’s primary mission, stating that it would be “tailored to facilitate the theater defense” of this region. Specifically, the division would be employed to counter one of the two Soviet conventional threats against Alaska: specifically, the defense of sites such as civil and military communications, early warning stations, airfields, and power generation facilities against small Soviet special forces teams infiltrating Alaskan territory by sea and air.

While this had long been the mission of the 172nd Brigade, the addition of second active-duty brigade in Alaska would increase the number of sites that could be defended, as well as improve response times, according to the DSCOPS.

In his defense of the 6th Infantry, Senator Stevens likewise cited the division’s primary role as being the defense of Alaska, and often spoke as if a new Soviet menace to Alaska had recently appeared. Yet, no evidence existed for this claim. In fact, Army officials disputed Stevens’ contention, asserting that the Soviet threat had not increased in recent years. Even an aide to Senator Stevens disputed the notion that the Army’s basing decision was driven by perceptions of an increasing Soviet threat to the region, concluding that “I can’t see that as much of a factor.”

And, while the 6th Infantry Division might improve the Army’s capability to meet one of two Soviet

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173 Testimony of Lt. General Mahaffey in Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, DoD Appropriations for FY85, Part 5, 5. In announcing to Pacific region military commanders the Army’s decision to base a LID in Alaska, General Wickham also identified “early defense of Alaska and the Aleutians” as the division’s mission; CSA General Wickham, “Army Light Infantry Divisions,” Backchannel Communication to CINCPAC/Adm Crowe; REDCOM/Gen Nutting; FORSCOM/Gen Sennewald; WESTCOM/LTG Lee, 10 September 1984; Folder: Backchannels-Outgoing; CSA Box 5/Contents: CSA Backchannels Jun83-Dec86 Incoming-Outgoing; The John A. Wickham Papers; Archives, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA.


conventional threats, the larger and more likely threats to Alaska lay in Soviet nuclear options, which a LID obviously could do nothing to counter.

Senator Stevens also presented a second rationale for Alaskan basing, arguing repeatedly that it would provide the best strategic location from which troops could be deployed to either Europe or Asia. In a 1985 interview, Stevens stated that

we are capable of deploying troops stationed in Alaska both to the Far East and to the European theater as quickly as those troops that would be deployed from anywhere else in any state.\textsuperscript{178}

Later in the interview, he commented that “I think we’d even get our people to the U.S. Central Command area from Alaska as quickly as you could from anywhere other than Maine.”\textsuperscript{179}

However, the supposedly unrivaled deployability advantages of the Alaskan basing seemingly failed to enter into Army calculations. While service officials acknowledged that the division would be available for deployments beyond Alaska, the Army neglected to examine the amount of airlift needed to move this division outside of the state.\textsuperscript{180} And such “out-of-Alaska” operations for the 6\textsuperscript{th} Infantry were considered far down on the list of Army priorities. An Army spokesman proclaimed that:

The 6\textsuperscript{th} will be keyed on Alaska itself. If we have a worldwide situation, the other light divisions will be sent before the 6\textsuperscript{th}. We retain the option to send the 6\textsuperscript{th} if we are really up against it. But it is not their first responsibility.\textsuperscript{181}

Finally, to properly operate in the Arctic conditions of Alaska, the Army provided the 6\textsuperscript{th} Infantry Division with equipment unique to its cold weather mission. In particular, the division would be equipped with Swedish-made Small Unit Support Vehicle, designed specifically for movement over snow and ice, rather than with HMMWVs like other LID units.\textsuperscript{182} While the division could be re-equipped for operations outside of Alaska, this would be time consuming and further negate any quick reaction capability.

\textsuperscript{178} Stevens, “An Exclusive AFJ Interview,” 38.

\textsuperscript{179} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{180} On the potential for deployment outside Alaska, see Government Accounting Office, Stationing Army’s 6th Infantry, 7. The absence of an airlift study can be found in Gordon, “Third World Strike Force,” 730. This statement, however, applies only to TRADOC and FORSCOM activities prior to the activation of the 6th Infantry Division (Light); once up and running, the division headquarter’s staff would have conducted an assessment of airlift sortie requirements as part of its routine planning.

\textsuperscript{181} U.S. Army spokesman quoted in Ibid.

\textsuperscript{182} Bernard J. Adelsberger, “Equipment Adapted to Tundra Makes Movement Possible,” Army Times, 2 May 1988, 10.
A final rationale for the Alaskan basing was simply to provide the Army with additional cold weather training opportunities. Again, this was an unusual requirement for forces like the LID, whose ostensible primary missions would take it to the warmer weather climes of most Third World countries. Should cold weather training prove necessary for LID operations, the 10th Mountain Division in upstate New York would receive plenty of opportunities for such training. In the end, the best motivation behind the Army’s decision to base a LID in Alaska was summed up by one Pentagon official: “I can put the answer in two words: Ted Stevens.”

Despite the questionable capabilities thus created and the dubious mission of the Alaskan division, the twin basing decision worked in Congress. In his subcommittee’s hearings on the LID concept, Senator Stevens bluntly stated his reason for supporting for the concept: “I am one in support of the decision to create three divisions [two active-duty and one reserve] since the third one is going to my State.” And later in the hearing, Senator Stevens acknowledged his role in the establishment of the eighteenth division, congratulating the Army for deciding to create two new divisions and noting that it was “a matter I urged sometime ago in discussion with the Defense Department.”

One more decision needed to be reached in Alaska: where to base the division headquarters. Senator Stevens’ choice was clearly Fort Wainwright, near Fairbanks, Alaska. Once home to the 173rd Brigade, Fort Wainwright had most recently been home to the small army of construction workers building the Alaskan pipeline. With the pipeline complete, the base currently housed a handful of units from the 172rd Brigade. Completion of the pipeline had also resulted in decreased economic activity in the Fairbanks area surrounding the base. By contrast, Anchorage, near Fort Richardson, was then in the midst of an economic and building boom. With a scarcity of other available real estate in the area for further civilian economic development, Fort Richardson was being greedily eyed by some of the region’s developers. Given the facilities already existing at Fort Richardson, however, the Corps of Engineers determined that locating the division’s headquarters and headquarters’ personnel at this site would be the least expensive option. The Army’s senior leadership failed to accept this recommendation. Instead, in a highly unusual action, the service announced that the basing of the 6th Infantry Division’s headquarters would be left for the members

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184 Ibid., 728.
186 Ibid., 21.
of the Alaskan congressional delegation to decide.\footnote{187} Not surprisingly, Fort Wainwright was eventually chosen as the home of the division’s headquarters.

Also during the summer of 1984, the Army chose a location and designation for the reserve component Light Infantry Division. Never one to miss a public relations opportunity, General Wickham had Defense Secretary Weinberger announce that the 29th Infantry Division would be reactivated as a National Guard LID at a 6th of June commemoration of the Normandy D-Day landings. The 29th Infantry, composed of elements of the Maryland and Virginia National Guard, fought on the beaches of Normandy exactly forty years to the day of the LID announcement. Interestingly, Army Secretary Marsh had been an officer of the Virginia component of the 29th Infantry Division for many years, as well as a five-term member of the U.S. congressional delegation from Virginia.\footnote{188}

Adding a reserve division to the LID force package again was seemingly at odds with the LID’s central goal of rapid deployability. Such a unit, however, would have utility as a follow-on force in a NATO scenario. More importantly, it served a number of political functions. Adding a National Guard division to the LID mix would further increase the role of the reserves in the overall Army force structure, enhancing the program’s attractiveness to reserve supporters in Congress. And, once again, the basing of the division would bring economic benefits to the locale(s) chosen. By choosing the 29th Infantry Division, the Army secured a two-for-one deal: re-activating a National Guard division composed of units from two states doubled the number of state congressional delegations which benefited from this decision. Finally, the 29th Infantry would be headquartered in Virginia, home of the second-ranking Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senator John Warner. During 1985 Armed Services hearings on the Light Infantry, Senator Warner commented to Secretary Marsh that on the subject of the 29th Infantry Division: “We cannot look at this with total objectivity, neither you nor I.”\footnote{189} Such a remark could apply with equal force to the members of the congressional delegations from Alaska and the Northeast as well.


\footnote{188} The 29th Infantry Division was originally formed in World War I and nicknamed “the Blue and Gray Division,” as the division’s Virginia regimental units had fought for the Confederacy during the Civil War, while its Maryland regiments fought on the Union side; see John W. Listman, Jr., Robert K. Wright, Jr., and Bruce D. Hardcastle (eds.) \textit{The Tradition Continues: A History of the Virginia National Guard 1607-1985} (Dallas, TX: Taylor Publishing Company 1987). Secretary Marsh described himself as delighted when told of the Army’s choice for the LID reserve division; Marsh interview with author.

\footnote{189} Senate Armed Services Committee, \textit{Army’s Light Division}, 42.
DECLINE OF THE LIGHT INFANTRY DIVISION

In a little more than year, General Wickham seemingly had been able to firmly embed the Light Infantry Division into the Army’s force structure. By modifying and constricting the service’s design process, the LID operational concept and organization had been created in record time. The conversion of the first active-duty division to the new design was proceeding apace. Approval had been granted at the highest levels of the Reagan Administration for one reserve and four active-duty Light Infantry Divisions. As part of this effort, the Army would increase its active-duty force structure by two new divisions and add a new National Guard division to its reserve component. Four of the Army’s eighteen active-duty divisions now would be Light Infantry Divisions, as would one out of ten National Guard divisions. All of this had been achieved without increasing the service’s end-strength. And outside the Army, General Wickham seemingly had built a powerful political base of support for the LID effort both within the Reagan Administration and on Capital Hill.

Within a few years, however, just as the creation of these units came to completion, two developments took place which would bring about the first serious opposition within the military to the LID concept: the sudden end of the Reagan-era rise in defense budgets and the gradual demise of the Cold War. Both developments would lead the Marine Corps to target the Army’s light infantry concept as the former began its search for a new mission in the changing budgetary and security environment. More serious still, these developments would lead the heavy side of the Army to scramble for its share of funds and to jealously guard its dominant role in the service. In the end, the light infantry concept would fall well short of its creator’s original vision.

Despite the criticism, the LID program maintained its steady course under General Wickham’s watchful eye. By mid-1987, the LID certification was complete and the final organization of the division set. General Wickham gave final approval to the division design in May 1987, shortly before his retirement – meeting the four-year deadline he had set as the LID program got underway. By making a few further minor modifications to the TRADOC-approved design, the division Wickham approved brought total personnel down to 10,778 and airlift requirements down to 516 C-141s.190 By this time as well, all five light infantry divisions were activated, though most were a long way from being fully manned. Up to 1987, the LID program had been kept carefully isolated within the infantry community, developed largely within the service’s normal design organizations, and had, as yet, not seriously threatened the resources or plans of its stronger fellow communities. However, construction costs, the only potentially big-ticket item in the LID program, had already begun to fan renewed debate in Congress and OSD over

190 Gourley, “Light Infantry Division,” 42.
the wisdom of the service’s approach. This debate would intensify as defense budgets continued to fall.

**Falling Budgets and Rising Opposition in Congress**

General Wickham and Secretary Marsh took advantage of every opportunity to build on the congressional support for the LID program. For example, when the 6th Infantry Division was reactivated on 23 March 1986, both Marsh and Wickham were present, as were Alaskan Senators Stevens and Frank Murkowski. Likewise, both officials were in attendance with Senator John Warner during the 29th Infantry Division’s reactivation ceremony on 5 October 1985.\(^{(191)}\) The activation date of the 10th Mountain Division was made dependent on the schedule of its most famous alumnus, Senator Robert Dole.\(^{(192)}\) But, while the Army Secretary and the Army Chief of Staff were busy entertaining Senators, trouble was brewing on Capital Hill.

By 1987, increased concern with the mounting federal budget deficit, passage of the Gramm-Rudman deficit reduction act in 1986, lessening Cold War tensions, and the resulting decline in military spending combined to force the Army and Congress to make some hard choices among competing service programs. The process was kicked off by an unusual presentation from Army Vice-Chief of Staff, General Thurman, to a Senate Armed Services subcommittee in March of 1987.\(^{(193)}\) General Thurman began by restating the service’s long-held position that manpower levels and force structure (including the LIDs) would be held constant in future years, but he went on to note these goals now would be the service’s top priority. He stated, however, that achieving these goals, however, would require sacrifices in the Army’s Big Five modernization program; leaving the service $77-billion short of the funds required over the next five years to re-equip the service’s entire 28-division force. Specifically, the service would be short a total of nearly 3,500 M-1 tanks, over 4,000 M2/M3 Bradley Fighting Vehicles, more than 400 Apache attack helicopters, 700 MLRS rocket launchers, and over 600 UH-60 Blackhawk utility helicopters. Thurman, in part, blamed forces outside the Army for this shortfall: “The Army’s portion of the total defense investment accounts has shown a steady decline, from a high of 21% in FY81 to [a] low of less than

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\(^{(192)}\) Although the Army desired activation of the division in February of 1985, according to an Army official: “...this will depend on when Senator Dole can be present for the ceremony;” quoted in Larry Carney, “10th Division’s Reactivation Depends on Sen. Dole,” *Army Times*, 28 January 1985, 20.

17% [proposed] in FY89.” Nonetheless, he also admitted to serious flaws in the Army’s planning process, which consistently projected future budgets for the Big Five program that were anywhere from 22% to 64% higher than they actually turned out to be two years later.\footnote{General Thurman quoted in Ibid., 16.}

If General Thurman’s strategy in his presentation was to throw down a gauntlet to Congress challenging them to ante up funds for Big Five procurement, it largely backfired. While some additional funding for modernization was forthcoming, Thurman’s admission to “naive” Army planning put the service’s credibility in doubt on Capital Hill.\footnote{One Hill critic described it as “some pretty naive long-range ‘planning,’ if you can dignify it that way;” quoted in Ibid., 20.} Moreover, Thurman presented Congress with too stark and easy a choice: preserve Army manpower levels or preserve defense contracting jobs in their districts. Given this choice, the outcome was never in doubt: Congress voted to cut troop levels. And, cutting manpower spaces would inevitably lead the Army to reductions in force structure as well. Cuts in force structure clearly were coming, and the dominant communities would try to ensure that the LID portion of this force structure took the biggest hit. And, General Thurman’s gambit threatened the dominant communities’ most cherished programs. Although Congress preserved these programs this time around, the service’s dominant communities were put on notice.

Several months after this presentation, many of the LID program’s senior supporters left the scene. General Wickham retired in the summer of 1987. At the same time, General Thurman stepped down as Vice Chief of Staff, to become TRADOC Commander, effectively removing himself from the Washington political wars. November 1987 saw the retirement of another staunch LID supporter when Secretary Weinberger left the administration.

The new Defense Secretary, Frank Carlucci, came into office with a mandate to seek further reductions in service budgets as a result of a just completed White House-Congressional budget summit. He soon directed the Army to cut $9 billion more from its fiscal year 1989 budget proposal.\footnote{Polsky, “Army Claims Victory,” 9.} The service responded, in part, by ordering the reduction of ten thousand active-duty spaces in fiscal year 1988.\footnote{Included in this order was a congressionally-mandate 1.5% cut in total active duty officer strength; see Tice, “10,300 Spaces to Be Sliced,” 1.} To meet this reduction, the service initially proposed cutting one brigade each from the 9th Motorized Division and the 6th Infantry Division, turning those brigades’ missions over to National Guard units. Worse yet for the Alaskan congressional delegation, the
brigade to be eliminated from the 6th Infantry Division was the one to be stationed at Fort Wainwright.198

When word of this latter proposal reached Senator Stevens, the gentleman from Alaska “jumped through the roof” according to one Senate aide, and quickly moved to scuttle it. During a hastily arranged January 1988 meeting with Secretary Marsh, Stevens got the Army to agree to restore the second brigade to Alaska, though now with only two active-duty battalions and a third round-out unit from the Alaskan National Guard. Stevens and Marsh also agreed to delay full manning of the division’s first brigade for one year to fiscal year 1991. Consistent with Stevens’ preferences, however, the division’s fully-manned first brigade was now to be assigned to Fort Wainwright rather than Fort Richardson as earlier planned.199 While the Defense Department agreed to this revised plan, thereby restoring 1,400 personnel spaces to the Army, cuts to the 9th Infantry Division went ahead as planned.

A new round of Army budget and manpower cuts began shortly after the Bush Administration entered office in January 1989. The change in administrations also saw the retirement of the last booster of the light infantry in the top leadership of the Department of the Army – John Marsh stepped down as Secretary of the Army after serving eight full years in the post. This loss came at a particularly inopportune time for the LID program, as it was suddenly faced with a new, and ultimately fatal, opponent – the U.S. Marine Corps.

Marine Corps Opposition

While the Cold War remained, and before defense budgets began to drastically fall, the Marine Corps response to the Army’s LID concept could best be characterized as a “hands-off” approach. The Corps response in these early years was summed up by then Marine Corps Commandant P. X. Kelly who, when asked in an interview to comment on the LID initiative, responded “. . . I really think that General Wickham is probably the best one to comment on that.” 200

For the first half of the 1980s, the Marine Corps succeeded in maintaining its share of a growing DoD budget. They were able to increase troops levels by 25,000 personnel (about twelve percent), and to undertake a large-scale modernization program of amphibious ships, aircraft, and ground vehicles. In particular, the Corps procured large numbers of M-1 tanks, as it sought to

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198 “6th, 9th Infantry Divisions May Lose Active Brigade,” Army Times, 1 February 1988, 1.
199 This account is from Carney, “6th Infantry Deal Saves 1,400 Slots,” 1.
heavy-up its forces to do battle in Southwest Asia and on the flanks of NATO. With such success, the Corps had little need to concern itself with an Army program like the LID.

The Marines’ attitude of indifference began to change in late 1980s, as it became clear that the Reagan-era defense build-up was over and as the Soviet threat began to recede from Europe. The first hints of a change came in the new Marine Commandant’s 1988 annual report to Congress. Here General Alfred M. Gray, Jr. clearly stated that the Corps was refocusing its efforts on the Third World:

While we are fully prepared for the most challenging conflict, your Marine Corps must also stand ready for the most likely conflict – that in the Third World. The reason the nation has a Marine Corps is to project power into areas where we do not have forces stationed in peacetime...this is the major contribution we provide the nation.

A few paragraphs later, General Gray asserted that: “The availability of amphibious forces and their capability to respond across the spectrum of conflict make them the forces of choice in crisis response.” No clearer warning could have been given to the Army LID supporters of what was to come.

In January 1988, General Gray convened a force structure study group and gave it the mandate to recommend changes in the Marine Corps to enable it to better fight low intensity conflicts. Specifically, he directed that “the active force will focus on constant readiness for employment for low and mid intensity conflicts.” The group concluded its work by recommending thirty changes, eventually known as the “Warfighting Enhancement Initiatives,” to better prepare the Marines to fight as an expeditionary force.

Always adroit at public relations, the Marines moved quickly to make cosmetic changes to their force. In February 1988, all Marine Corps combat organizations, known as air-ground task forces, replaced the term amphibious with expeditionary in their title (thus, the Marine Amphibious Units became Marine Expeditionary Units, Marine Amphibious Brigades became Marine Expeditionary Brigades, and Marine Amphibious Divisions became Marine Expeditionary

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203 Ibid.

204 Quoted in Haith, Thickening the Light Division, 39, n. 100.
The Marines’ Light Armor Vehicle (LAV) battalions also underwent a name change to Light Armor Infantry battalions, as the Corps began to emphasize once again its infantry focus. A new four-part training program was begun within the Corps, emphasizing so-called “warrior” skills, and conspicuously reminiscent of the training instituted by the Army for its light infantry. The goal of the program was to bring the Corps back to its traditional ethos of “every Marine a rifleman” and to ensure that every Marine office and NCO could lead in combat. Exercises were conducted throughout the year which demonstrated the Corps’ low-intensity warfare capabilities.

And, the Corps took its case to the public. General Gray began an extensive round of visits across the country, emphasizing the message time and again that

> The Marine Corps is the only military organization in the world that can commit a potent, integrated, and balanced air-ground-logistics force on short notice without mobilizing a single person.

At another presentation General Gray stated that

> The Corps’ ambition to be the premier third world force is not secret. Expeditionary means you have to be light enough to go where you have to go and heavy enough on the other end to win.

The contrast with the highly reserve-dependent, low-firepower Army light infantry division was implicit, but obvious, in both statements.

In July 1988, a two-day Marine Corps conference was held to discuss the Corps “unique” role in low-intensity conflict. The thrust of the conference was clear from one of the papers presented:

> The inherent flexibility of Naval forces makes them especially well suited for the LIC/MIC...requirements of the potential conflict spectrum...This contrasts somewhat with the Army and Air Force, which are best suited to focus on high-intensity conflict: superpower confrontations in Europe and Asia. They do this by organizing and training to fight such a conflict if deterrence fails.

By now, it was clear that the Marine machine was geared up and ready to roll.

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208 Quoted in Haith, *Thickening the Light Division*, 39.

Over the next year, the Marine Corps implemented the Warfighting Enhancement Initiatives to make Marine forces lighter and more infantry intensive. For example, much of the heavy equipment, such as tanks, was moved into the Marine Corps Reserve and a fourth infantry company was assigned to each Marine infantry battalion. These changes were codified in the Marine Air-Ground Task Force Master Plan and the Marine Corps Long-Range Plan, approved in outline by General Gray in July 1989. These planning documents emphasized the Corps’ inherent light infantry capabilities and its renewed focus on low-intensity conflict. Over the next several years the Corps would devote entire issues of their service journal, The Marine Corps Gazette, to such topics as LIC missions, insurgencies, and light infantry operations.

Congressional support for these Marine Corps changes was not long in coming. The 1989 edition of the U.S. Naval Institute’s Naval Review, contained articles by both Senator Sam Nunn and Senator John Warner (the Democratic and Republic leaders, respectively, on the Senate Armed Services Committee) praising the Corps’ shift to Third World contingencies. According to Senator Nunn: “overseas troop drawdowns would naturally lead to greater emphasis on rapidly deployable forces, such as Marine air-ground task forces.”

With the removal of the Soviet threat to Western Europe, the Army too now recognized that “the projection of power from within the continental United States to trouble spots around the world” would be the basis of any future U.S. strategy. Therefore, the Marine Corps claims to be the nation’s “crisis contingency force” were seen by the Army leadership to be a broad attack against the service’s entire force structure, and especially its Light Infantry Divisions. As a result, a vituperative debate began between the two services as they scrambled to redefine their missions in the post-Cold War world.

The immediate argument between the Army and Marine Corps revolve around three sets of issues. First, the Marines claimed that the Army’s rapid response forces had little capability to conduct forced entry operations, and, once on the ground, were deficient in firepower. The Army responded that Marine task forces were limited to over-the-beach operations, and were unable to sustain combat far inland. Second, the Marines faulted the Army’s rapid response logistic support capabilities, criticizing Army efforts to sacrifice support in favor of combat power, and claiming instead that Marine units maintained “a ‘tooth’ to ‘tail’ ratio consistent with a truly expeditionary


force." The Army countered that Marine units were tied to off-shore logistics and were unable to sustain operations much beyond the shore. Finally, Army spokesmen argued that low- to mid-intensity operations in the future would require more than simply traditional combat capability. Instead, special operations forces and combat service support units, like engineers and MPs, were likely to be of equal or more importance in future combat operations – the former were particularly important during the earliest stages of the operation, while the latter were especially relevant in the post-combat "nation-building" phase. The overwhelming majority of these forces resided in the Army. The Corps appeared more than willing to give the Army the combat service support role. The Marines responded by pointing to their special operations capabilities resident in battalion-sized Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs), and claimed that all their combat units had some special operations training. In fact, Marine Corps spokesmen were ultimately willing to concede the utility of all Army units – except the Light Infantry Divisions. One Marine Corps officer, General John Sheehan, was quoted as commenting that the Army’s light infantry units “is light enough to get there but just light enough to get itself into trouble.”

In the midst of this debate, the light infantry got their first taste of combat when the 2nd Brigade of the 7th ID(L) was deployed to Panama as part of Operation Just Cause in December 1989. Interestingly, the SouthCom commander, the officer in charge of Just Cause, was none...

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214 In fact, in 1985 the Marines changed the name of their Marine Amphibious Units (MAU’s) to Marine Amphibious Units (Special Operations Capable) or MAU(SOC) in order to highlight the unit’s special operations capabilities; see Benjamin F. Schemmer, “Commandant Directs Marines to Sharpen Their Inherent Special Ops Capability,” *Armed Forces Journal International*, October 1985, 24-25.


other than General Maxwell Thurman, who had been brought back from near-retirement earlier in the year to head the command. Not only did General Thurman utilize the light infantry, he also managed to exclude the Marine Corps entirely from the operation, a fact which left the Corps fuming. 218

Conflict between the two services became so heated that General Colin Powell, now Chairman of the Joints Chiefs, felt it necessary to invite himself to a congressional hearing, in March 1990, on the future of the contingency force featuring Generals Vuono and Gray. General Powell’s apparent intent was to contain the public acrimony between the two services. Despite the Chairman’s presence, the discussion turned ugly when the Army and Marine leaders were asked to comment on General Sheehan’s earlier disparaging remark on Army light forces. After curtly stating that senior Pentagon officials recognized the need for these forces, General Vuono simply announced “I do not think I need to comment any further on the quote.” Although General Gray’s response was lengthier, he finished up by commenting that “I think [General Sheehan’s] statement speaks for itself.” 219

End of the Light Infantry Division Concept?

As the Cold War drew to a close in the late 1980s, the Army developed plans to transform itself from a armor-heavy, NATO-oriented force to a lighter, crisis-contingency force. As part of these plans, all four light infantry divisions were assigned to the rapid-response XVIII Airborne Corps. Furthermore, the Army intended to shift its force structure in favor of the XVIII Airborne Corps, with future force cuts planned to fall most heavily on armor and mechanized infantry forces. 220 In conjunction with these plans, the senior Army leadership formed a “Light Force Modernization” task force to outline future equipment needs for the light forces. Future procurement would go first to the contingency corps, and only later to the armor and mechanized units. However, this task force was not designed to improve the capabilities of the foot-mobile

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218 While the Army frequently alluded to Operation Just Cause as a better example of future warfare and the service’s capabilities, Marine Corps General Gray stated before Congress that not only could the Marine’s have performed the operation, but that “...Just Cause...was a one-time scenario and the odds of this coming up again in my judgment are very low;” quoted in Tom Donnelly, “Army, Marines Butt Heads Over Contingency Role,” Army Times, 26 March 1990, 3.


infantry, but instead to improve the strategic deployability of the dominant intra-service communities with an emphasis on lighter tanks, helicopters, and anti-aircraft and artillery systems.\footnote{Baker, “Army Proposal,” 4.} Essentially, although their traditional combat units might take cuts in the immediate future, the dominant communities were seeking to retain their position of pre-eminence within the service by “lightening up” their weapons platforms.

The August 1990 invasion of Kuwait by the armies of Saddam Hussein would provide a further boost to the fortunes of these dominant communities. In response to Iraqi attack, the United States began the largest U.S. overseas military deployment since the Vietnam War. Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm would proved to be a major success for all the Army’s combat elements – except its light infantry divisions. Aside from a small number of soldiers sent to the Gulf to perform guard duty, no light infantry unit was even alerted for deployment to the theater.\footnote{The 25th Infantry Division (Light), for example, sent 243 troops to the Gulf “mostly for guard duty;” see Elizabeth Rathbun, “Tropic Lightning: Part Paradise, Part Hell on Earth,” \textit{Army Times}, 2 November 1992, 12.} And, the Army would take from Operation Desert Storm the lesson that that future contingencies likely would involve operations against heavily mechanized opponents – the type of warfare in which the light infantry division design was particularly weak. This insight, coupled with the need for rapid deployability, led the service to renew its decade-long search for an Armored Gun System. One version of the AGS was to be issued to the 82\textsuperscript{nd} Airborne and possibly another version made \textit{organic} to the light infantry, thereby substantially changing the nature of the latter units.\footnote{Sean D. Naylor, “Army Fits Years of Change Into Months,” \textit{Army Times}, 7 January 1991, 24.}

Although the dominant communities and their combat forces had reoriented towards contingency operations (the original mission focus of the light infantry), the LID force structure had remained untouched in the Army draw-down through the end of 1992. The preservation of the light infantry was not to last, as the Army now faced, thanks to congressional legislation, having to support greater than expected levels of reservists within the framework of a declining budget and additional mandated cuts to active-duty personnel. Moreover, the November 1992 presidential election sent into office a Clinton Administration that had ran a popular campaign stressing the need to re-focus the federal government’s efforts onto domestic issues, including a call for further cuts in the defense budget. As head of the House Armed Service Committee, the next Secretary of Defense, Les Aspin had recently released a study describing a number of future force structure options, including ones calling for as few as eight active-duty Army divisions.\footnote{Chairman Les Aspin, \textit{An Approach to Sizing American Conventional Forces For the Post-Soviet Era: Four Illustrative Options} (Washington, DC: U.S. House Armed Services Committee, 25 February 1992), 15. For more on this force-sizing exercise see, Chairman Les Aspin, \textit{An Approach to Sizing American Conventional Forces for the Post-Soviet Era} (Washington, DC: House Armed Services Committee, 24 January 1992); and Mark Gunzinger, “Beyond the
made reductions to the heavy side of the force, with additional cuts to force structure widely expected, and with renewed attacks by the Marine Corps and others against the LID role, it was clear that the axe was next to fall on the light infantry divisions. In a further ill-omen, General Vuono’s retirement in July of 1991 meant that the last senior Army officer with any connection to the early days of the LID’s creation was now gone from the service. 225

In early March 1993, the Army announced the first force structure reductions in the light infantry in order to bring the service down to twelve active-duty divisions. First, the 7th Infantry Division, which had been in the process of moving to Fort Lewis after the announced closing of its Fort Ord base in the 1991 Base Closure Commission Report, would be reduced to a single brigade whose ultimate fate was unclear. And, the 6th Infantry Division again would convert to a less than full-strength single brigade but now stationed at both Forts Wainwright and Richardson. 226 With both bases destined to stay open and with the construction funds he had so eagerly sought spent, no word of protest came this time from Senator Steven’s office.

In addition to cuts in the LID structure, the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment would disband and one brigade each from the two remaining European-based divisions (the 1st Armored Division and the 3rd Infantry (Mechanized) Division) would be withdrawn from Europe to bring Army strength on the continent down to the 65,000-troop level required by the new Clinton Administration. One or both of the withdrawn brigades would be sent to Fort Lewis. 227 Finally, Army Chief of Staff Gordon Sullivan suggested further reductions in active-duty manpower would some be announced, hinting at a future active-duty Army end-strength of only 500,000 soldiers.

Although several Pentagon and congressionally-mandated studies suggested further cuts in the light infantry force during the first several years of the Clinton Administration, the Army retained the 10th Mountain Division and the 25th Infantry Division in its now twelve-division force. 228 The 10th Mountain, however retained a National Guard round-out brigade and only two

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225 General Vuono had been head of Fort Leavenworth’s CACDA in 1983-84.
227 There were suggestions that the two brigades were going to form the core of a new armored division to be assigned to contingencies along the Pacific Rim; see “Two Heavy Brigades to Fort Lewis,” Washington Update, AUSA Institute of Land Warfare Monthly Newsletter (April 1994): 3; and “Chief of Staff Says He Envisions Army of 500,000 Active Duty Troops,” Inside the Army, 22 March 1993, 11.
active-duty ground maneuver brigades. The 25th Infantry remained a fully active-duty division; but, in 1995, its First Brigade was moved to Fort Lewis and became a “detached” brigade of this division. The 29th Infantry Division also remained in the National Guard as a light infantry division.

The retention of these divisions may have been due, in large part, to their frequent use throughout the 1990s for peacekeeping and nation-building operations. For example, in December 1992, elements of the 10th Mountain Division were deployed as quick reaction force in Somalia, and remaining in the country until March 1994. The 10th Mountain’s 1st Battalion generally acquitted itself well during an otherwise unpleasant operation in Mogadishu, gaining valuable experience in peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations. However, the unit’s lack of adequate armor protection became apparent even against such a primitive foe as the Somali warlords, and a mechanized unit needed to be brought in to support the LID force. The eventual failure of UN forces in Somalia produced a public and political backlash within the United States against participation in United Nations-led peace support operations. Nonetheless, from September 1994 through January 1995, the 10th Mountain again participated in peacekeeping operations this time in Haiti following the restoration of Jean Claude Devalier to power. Elements of the 25th ID(L) then rotated in to Haiti from January through June 1995, in that division’s first major deployment. Unlike Somalia, Haitian brigands appeared to be equipped with little more than small arms and possessed little will to fight American forces. In such an environment, the light infantry forces were perfectly suited for carrying out policing and garrisoning duties until a functioning system of order could be restored on the island. However, as was also true for the 10th Mountain in Somalia, the...
lack of organic transport proved to be a problem.\textsuperscript{232} Elements of the 10th Mountain also were deployed in peacekeeping roles in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1997 and again in 1998 through 2000. Indeed, on the unit’s website, the 10th Mountain boasted of being the most deployed Army division during the 1990s; especially ironic given that this division was only at two-thirds strength.

But, being over-stretched and under-resources was symptomatic of the continuing weak influence of the non-motorized infantry union within the Army. The percentage of light infantry in the force structure was reduced from about twenty-two percent during the Cold War 1980s down to about sixteen percent during the post-Cold War 1990s when the light infantry supposedly contingency role became much more prominent. While these units saw frequent deployments, most of Army’s design and development efforts during the 1990s continued to focus on creating new and improved mechanized and armored units capable rapid deployment and with sufficient anti-armor capabilities: e.g., Force XXI, Army After Next, the Digitized Army, and Future Combat Systems.

CONCLUSION

The LID effort was designed to revitalize the moribund non-mechanized infantry by enhancing its élan and, more fundamentally, by emphasizing long-neglected basic foot-mobile infantry skills. The first years of General Wickham's tenure as Army Chief of Staff were a time of triumph for the Light Infantry Division and their chief benefactors, the foot-mobile infantry. The initial success of this initiative, in terms of fielded divisions, contrasts starkly with the failure of the High Technology Light Division.

In a little more than year and through a series of brilliant bureaucratic tactics, General Wickham seemingly had been able to firmly embed the Light Infantry Division into the Army’s force structure. By modifying and constricting the service’s design process, the LID operational concept and organization had been created in record time. The conversion of the first active-duty division to the new design was proceeding apace. Approval had been granted at the highest levels of the Reagan Administration for one reserve and four active-duty Light Infantry Divisions. As part of this effort, the Army would increase its active-duty force structure by two new divisions and add a new National Guard division to its reserve component. Four of the Army eighteen active-duty divisions now would be Light Infantry Divisions, as would one out of ten National Guard divisions. All of this had been achieved without increasing the service’s end-strength. And politically, General Wickham had built a powerful base of support for the LID effort.

\textsuperscript{232} On the Haitian deployment, see Luong, \textit{Light Infantry Battalion}, 34-37. On problems arising from the lack of organic transport in light infantry units deployed to peacekeeping operations, see Major John M. Spiszer, \textit{The Light Infantry Company and Tactical Mobility: A Step in Which Direction?} (Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies, Army Command and General Staff College (thesis), 1997).
Within the service, he won the support and active cooperation of the Army’s MACOMs. The service schools and centers with relevant units and functions in the LID had been intensely involved in its creation. These organizations were now well prepared and motivated to begin developing the training programs necessary for the LID’s success, programs emphasizing basic foot-mobile infantry skills. Moreover, he was able to create these light infantry divisions without threatening to divert programs from other more powerful unions within the service. In fact, he was able, in several cases, to gain support from elements of these unions by promising to make these infantry units available to NATO-based heavy divisions.

Outside the Army, General Wickham also succeeded in building support among powerful constituencies. Within OSD, Wickham had been able to sidestep criticism of the LID from various agencies by seeking out powerful patrons at the highest levels of OSD. The Secretary of Defense, in particular, would prove a staunch supporter throughout his tenure in office, and assure that the LID program remained a fixture in the Army’s budget. In Congress, Wickham was credited with enhancing the role of the Army’s reserve forces and with creating more combat capability without asking for additional resources. More importantly, he gained powerful congressional supporters for the LID program by offering up money and local civilian jobs through the manipulation of the basing decisions for the new LID divisions. Through this process, however, the combat capabilities of one division were seriously degraded, while the primary mission of the second was dubious at best. Nonetheless, the support thus achieved helped the LID program sail easily through Congress its first year, and would provide a temporary buffer against the storms to follow.

General Wickham’s goal of establishing light infantry divisions within the Army’s force structure was well underway before his tenure as Army Chief of Staff came to an end. Just as the creation of these units came to fruition, however, two events took place which would bring about the first serious opposition within the military to the LID concept: the end of the Reagan-era rise in defense budgets and the demise of the Cold War. Both developments increased the pressures on Army force structure, as consequent reductions in the budget led to cuts in active-duty manpower and, in turn, reductions in the number of divisions the service was able to field. Congressional pressures to maintain National Guard and Reserve forces lead to further pressures on Army budget. As a result, the heavy side of the Army scrambled for its share of funds and jealously guarded its dominant role in the service. The scramble over budgets and missions also would the Marine Corps to target the Army’s light infantry concept as the former began its search for a new mission in the changing budgetary and security environment. The Marines adopted their own light infantry program and strongly criticize Army’s Light Infantry Divisions. The Corps described itself as U.S. military’s true light infantry force.
Throughout the 1990s the Army continued to reduce light infantry as a percentage of the service’s overall force structure. And, the focus of the service’s development effort went to examining how the dominant intra-service communities – the armor, mechanized, artillery, and aviation communities – could best be adapted for an expeditionary force. At the same, the Army deployed the remaining, and by now greatly reduced, light infantry with ever increasing frequency as the missions for which foot-mobile light infantry were purportedly designed rose to prominence.

In the end, the Light Infantry Division program looks like a very mixed success. It largely failed to produce an effective combat organization. It also failed to produce resources for its primary community, the traditional foot-mobile infantry; indeed, it literally had to deny itself resources in order to succeed at all. And what success it did have – generating four divisions – was largely lost as soon as the Cold War ended and the Army began downsizing. Of course, this happened just as the missions for which these organizations, given their limited capabilities, were most suited suddenly rose to prominence; leaving the remaining LID forces over-worked and under-resourced. Nonetheless, at a time when the political position of the foot-mobile infantry had seemingly reached a nadir within the Army, General Wickham and his compatriots were able to create four Light Infantry Divisions within the service’s limited force structure; generating spaces and command slots for new generation of light infantry officers; contradicting the theoretical framework’s expected outcome. The case of the LID design suggests that, appearances to the contrary, the foot-mobile infantry may not be quite as weak a community as earlier proposed. The case suggests that – although the propositions regarding oligarchic communities appear correct – the picture of a simple oligarchy needs to be revised, with the internal structure and power relationships among its members more finely described.
CHAPTER SEVEN
CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Intra-service politics is an important factor in understanding behavior and outcomes in military services, particularly during peacetime. The theoretical framework developed in Chapter One suggests a number of propositions concerning intra-service community politics and its effects on the parent organization. First, every military service contains a variety of communities or unions, each focused on specific missions, functions or technologies. These communities compete with one another to determine the service’s dominant culture and missions; and the distribution of the service’s budgets, equipment and personnel. For a service with a strong and independent central leadership, one capable of acting as an honest broker between communities, the intra-service politics can have a variety of benefits.

In services where such leadership is absent, however, one of two patterns can develop: either a single community (or “monarchy”) or an oligarchy of communities dominates the service. As these patterns become established, the service’s resources, doctrine, and dominant roles and missions tend to align with these patterns. Doctrinal developments will reflect the preference of the dominant unions. Likewise, the distribution of resources – including budgets, weapons, programs, personnel and combat organizations – will mirror and tend to reinforce the power of the dominant unions. Consequently, current missions that are best suited to one of the dominant unions will be performed well (i.e., will have appropriate doctrine, organizations, and weapons programs), and new missions suited to these unions will be readily adopted.

In such services, communities other than the dominant ones often are not represented in the service’s mainstream culture or primary mission, and receive far less doctrinal attention. These lesser communities receive far fewer resources and training time as well. As a result, missions and functions associated with these communities tend to be performed less well by the parent service. Likewise, new potential missions and programs that fall outside the jurisdiction of the dominant unions tend to be neglected. The doctrine, technologies or combat organizational designs associated with these new missions or programs often will either be given negligible attention or simply fail unless pressure is brought from outside the organization. And, in those infrequent cases where the lesser communities appear to succeed in getting a new initiative adopted, the dominant communities generally are able to turn the new effort to their advantage or else have it implemented in such a way as to have the least adverse impact on themselves.
FINDINGS

External Constraints and Internal Army Politics

Several constants external to the Army have helped to shape its internal politics and force structure over the latter half of the twentieth century. First of all, the Army has been in continual competition with the other services for missions and budgets; a battle it has oftentimes been ill-equipped to fight. For example, the Army—large and loosely structured—has found itself generally at a disadvantage in inter-service competition against the smaller, more tightly coordinated Marine Corps. Similarly, the Army’s greater reliance—compared to the Air Force and Navy—on manpower rather than technology has adversely affected its chances for success in the inter-service battle against these services for resources.

A second, and related, set of constants and constraints revolves around the Army’s relationship with its reserve forces. Congress, for example, has often favored the interests and budgets of the Army NG and Reserves over those of the active-duty Army. Meanwhile, the active-duty Army developed a reliance on its reserve component for many functions over the post-World War II—especially post-Vietnam War—period. These forces, however, were often unavailable when needed: the active-duty Army usually (and sometimes unfairly) viewed these forces as ill-prepared for combat missions, while politicians often have proven reluctant to mobilize these forces during crises. These conflicting impulses have produced stresses and strains within the Army during both peace and war.

Third, the defense of Western Europe as part of NATO has been the main Army mission in the post-World War II era. Despite this emphasis, the service has several times been call upon to deploy or prepare for missions outside of the NATO context. However, since 1947, the Army has not owned the means for deploying strategically; these assets have been controlled by others outside the Army’s control: i.e., the Air Force and Navy. Consequently, the Army had to adopt one of two strategies: forward basing and/or relying on the Air Force or Navy for transport to the conflict area. Reliance on another service has generated much unease within the Army over the years, an unease enhanced by the service’s emphasis (perhaps at times over-emphasis) on “rapid” deployment.

Several technological and military developments in the twentieth century have profoundly affected the U.S. Army’s intra-service communities. The mechanization of ground warfare eliminated the horse-drawn cavalry, while giving rise to a new armor community. The development of fixed-wing aviation led to the rise of a large, semi-autonomous air corps and then to a fully independent and separate service. Later developments in rotary-wing aviation led to the rise of a second aviation community, firmly embedded within the service and closely tied to the ground
forces (though fears of independence persisted). Both the armor and aviation communities have risen to membership in the service’s ruling oligarchy. At the same time, the introduction of aircraft and self-propelled ground vehicles served to splinter the once-dominant infantry into four separate elements: airborne, air assault, mechanized, and foot-mobile infantry. The airborne infantry has long been accorded a separate, elite status within the service. The air assault forces have largely become associated with the aviation community. The mechanized infantry, meanwhile, joined with the armor branch to form a dominant “heavy” union within the oligarchy. Finally, the artillery – either self-propelled or towed by other vehicles – has remained a dominant community over the years since World War II. Reflecting their essential roles in the Army's core mission, the aviation community, the armor-mechanized infantry union, and the artillery have received the bulk of procurement dollars and doctrinal/design emphasis since at least the end of the Vietnam War.

Aside from the cavalry, the biggest post-World War II loser among the Army communities has been the traditional foot-mobile infantry union, both in terms of its position in the force structure and its relative position in the Army’s internal political power matrix. Two technological trends helped undermine its position: the increasing mechanization of warfare, which occurred in armies worldwide, and, more unique to the U.S. Army, the increasing substitution of firepower for manpower. The introduction of nuclear weapons to the battlefield, related to the latter technological trend, also undermined for a time the infantry’s fortunes. Moreover, its dominant role in two unpopular U.S. wars helped to reduce further the popularity of the infantry among politicians and the public. The traditional foot-mobile infantry was largely a backwater by the early 1980’s, by far the weakest of the Army’s combat communities.

Case Study Summaries

The three case studies of division design can be summarized along three dimensions: force structure, resources, and capability/functionality. The first dimension examines whether divisions with these designs were actually created and made part of the Army’s force structure. This dimension is important for two reasons: divisions have traditionally been the Army’s “coin of the realm;” and divisions provide command slots and promotion pathways for officers and their respective branches/communities. The second dimension examines whether the creation of these divisions resulted in resources (manpower, money, and procurement programs) flowing to the relevant branches or communities represented in the division. The final dimension examines how effective the resulting divisions are at performing their respective combat missions.
Division 86

As expected by the theoretical framework described in Chapter One, the Division 86 design, oriented around the dominant communities within the U.S. Army and its ruling oligarchy, was the central focus of Army design efforts for nearly eight years. It was, in turn, one element of a larger program to integrate force design, major procurement programs (the “Big Five” and other efforts), and doctrine (culminating in the 1983 version of FM 100-5, Operations) to enable the Army to better fight a high-intensity conflict (primarily on the European continent) – the primary mission of the service’s dominant communities. The design process was entirely an internal service process undertaken by the service’s MACOMs (TRADOC and AMC/DARCOM) in which intra-service politics normally occurs and, hence, in which the relative power of the intra-service communities is best demonstrated. The Division 86 design process – encompassing the oligarchy and their major procurement programs – was a major undertaking, requiring eight years to complete. The design process involved most of the institutional Army, either working on the design or developing and procuring the weapons that were to go into it. The Division 86 design process and its associated studies were at the heart of the Army’s combat development and acquisition efforts during the 1970s and early 1980s.

Once complete, and having received Army-wide input during the design process, Division 86 quickly met with wide acceptance within the service. The new divisions were seen as a tremendous advance in firepower, mobility and armored protection over their ROAD predecessors. And the organization was generally judged a successful one in practice: The service’s armor and mechanized infantry divisions successfully implemented the design, although due to budgetary difficulties in the mid-1980s, on a deferred schedule. Aside from some minor adjustments, the design remained essentially unchanged for nearly twenty years. This force design was used in two highly successful combat operations (Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm and the first phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom up to the fall of Baghdad) against a large (but admittedly much less capable) ground army.

In summary, Division 86, supported by the dominant elements of the Army’s ruling oligarchy, can be judged highly successful along all three dimensions. The majority of the Army’s divisions were converted to this design. It consumed the vast bulk of the service’s resources over a twenty-year timeframe. And, the design effort resulted in the development of a highly capable set of combat divisions.
High Technology Light Division (HTLD)

The HTLD was clearly outside of the purview of the reigning union oligarchy. Indeed, it had no natural constituency among the service’s communities. It was proposed by the Army Chief of Staff, General E.C. Meyer, specifically as a counter to the prevailing emphasis on heavy forces. The HTLD was a top-down initiative, resulting from a “spur of the moment” suggestion by the Chief of Staff. And, the HTLD was seen as a direct competitor to the dominant communities for resources. Specifically, the heavy armored/mechanized infantry community feared that HTLD would compete for funding dollars and priorities with its Big Five and other modernization programs. As the framework of intra-service politics developed in Chapter One would suggest, the combination of weak senior Army’s and the opposition of the intra-service oligarchy helped lead to the failure of this design effort.

The program was initially tacked onto to the TRADOC-led Army 86 design effort. After several unsatisfactory attempts, General Meyer attempted to remove the process from the realm of intra-service politics by assigning it to an independent organization – the High Technology Test Bed (HTTB) affiliated with the 9th Infantry Division. This organization, not surprisingly given its mission and structure, found itself in frequent conflict with the Army's MACOMs, in particular TRADOC and AMC/DARCOM. This situation, in turn, merely increased the opposition to the HTLD among TRADOC, AMC/DARCOM and the service’s dominant communities. As a result, when the 9th Infantry Division and the HTTB had to turn back to these organizations for help in developing the HTLD design and in procuring the necessary equipment, obstacles and conflict inevitably arose. Examples of such problems included the 9th Infantry/HTTB’s friction with AMC/DARCOM over cumbersome materiel development procedures, and the inability (or unwillingness) of TACOM to establish requirements for key HTLD vehicles.

The confusion and conflict over requirements, concepts, and missions for the HTLD within the service led to equal confusion among potential supporters outside the service. It caused, for example, frequent congressional cutbacks in funding for crucial HTLD weapon systems. No where is this better illustrated than in the unsuccessful search for an armored gun system.

In short, the HTLD, promoted by the Army Chief of staff alone and with no supporters among the ruling oligarchy, can be judged a failure along all three dimensions: Only a single division was ever activated, and that only a pale imitation of the original design. Moreover, at the first opportunity, the 9th Motorized Division was sacrificed to the budget reductions of the post-Cold War era. Second, the Army failed to procure any of the major weapons systems considered crucial
to the success of the concept. Finally, the division was considered unfit for combat and never deployed following its transition to the HTLD design.

Light Infantry Division (LID)

The LID program, by contrast with the two previous designs, presents a mixed picture of success, one consistent with the position of its supporters. The design effort promoted the interest of the weakest member of the service’s combat communities – the traditional, foot-mobile infantry. Moreover, it too was the “pet project” of a new Army Chief of Staff, General John Wickham. Nonetheless, the effort did succeed at one level – five light infantry divisions were added to the total force structure (four in the active-duty component and one in the National Guard), three newly formed and two modified from existing divisions. In other ways, however, it was far less successful.

The program’s principal sponsor – the Army’s senior leadership – found it necessary to undertake a variety of bureaucratic stratagems for steering the program around internal service opposition. These tactics, while brilliantly executed and ensuring the program’s implementation, often had perverse effects on the capabilities of the light infantry divisions. First of all, the senior leadership forced the pace of the design and implementation of the LID, creating the organization and its operational concept in record time. Within the service, General Wickham won the support and active cooperation of the Army’s MACOMs. The service schools and centers with relevant units and functions in the LID had been intensely involved in its creation. As a result, these organizations were now well prepared and motivated to begin developing the training programs necessary for the LID’s success; programs that emphasized basic foot-mobile infantry skills. While thus outrunning critics, however, the rapid pace set by the Army’s senior leadership led to inadequate analysis and testing of the design.

Besides making the MACOMs and their community representatives key players in the design process, the senior leadership adopted other efforts to garner internal support from the service’s dominant communities for the program. Unlike the HTLD, General Wickham promised to create these light infantry divisions without threatening to divert programs or dollars from other more powerful unions within the service. And, eventually the LID program became a captive of these dominant communities, focusing much of its efforts on supporting their primary mission – the defense of Europe – rather than the low-intensity conflicts for which it was originally designed.

Outside the Army, General Wickham also succeeded in building support among powerful constituencies. Within the Pentagon, he had been able to side-step criticism of the LID from various agencies by seeking out powerful patrons at the highest levels of OSD. The Secretary of Defense, in particular, would prove a staunch supporter throughout his tenure in office, and assured
that the LID program remained a fixture in the Army’s budget. In Congress, General Wickham was credited through the LID program with enhancing the role of the Army’s reserve forces and with creating more combat capability without asking for additional resources. More importantly, he gained powerful congressional supporters for this program by offering up money and local civilian jobs through the manipulation of the basing decisions for the new LID divisions. Through this process, however, the combat capabilities of one of these new divisions were seriously degraded, while the primary mission of the second was dubious at best. Nonetheless, the support thus achieved helped the LID program sail easily through Congress its first year, and would provide a temporary buffer against the storms to follow.

Just as the creation of these units came to fruition, however, two events took place which would bring about the first serious opposition within the military to the LID concept: the end of the Reagan-era rise in defense budgets and the demise of the Cold War. Both developments increased the pressures on Army force structure as consequent reductions in the service’s budget led to cuts in active-duty manpower and, in turn, to reductions in the number of divisions the service was able to field. The post-Cold War inter-service scramble over budgets and missions would lead the Marine Corps to target the Army’s light infantry concept as the former began its search for a new mission in the changing budgetary and security environment. The Marines adopted their own light infantry program and strongly criticized the Army’s Light Infantry Divisions. Congressional pressures to maintain National Guard and Reserve forces led to further pressures on the Army budget.

With the end of the Cold War and the consequent demise of the service’s primary mission of defending Europe, the focus of the Army’s attention remained focused on efforts to promote the interests of the dominant intra-service communities. In so doing, the service shifted most of its development efforts to examining how these communities – the armor, mechanized infantry, artillery, and aviation communities – could best be adapted to an expeditionary force role. The Army’s light infantry divisions, by contrast, suffered from cutbacks and neglect. Throughout the 1990s the Army continued to reduce light infantry as a percentage of the service’s overall force structure. At the same time, the new era’s prominent missions often called for the capabilities best represented by these dwindling light forces, and the frequency of their deployment steadily rose. The two remaining light infantry divisions soon became over-worked and under-resourced.

In summary, the LID program can be judged a mixed success. Owing to a series of innovative and “near-brilliant” bureaucratic and political strategies employed by the senior Army leadership, a number of light infantry divisions were created within the service’s force structure. This provided a number of command slots for light infantry officers and greater opportunities for dismounted infantry training. However, in achieving this success, the divisions received few if any
resources. The resulting combat capabilities of these divisions, likewise, were judged to be poor. And, even as demand for these units increased, their resources and capabilities remained low while their numbers dwindled.

**Revised Picture of U.S. Army Oligarchy**

Overall the evidence from these three case studies suggest the utility of an explanation based on intra-service community politics for certain behaviors observed in military services. Furthermore, they would appear to convey at least a degree of plausibility to the framework proposed in Chapter One, specifically to that portion relevant to these case studies: i.e., services with weak central leadership, ruled by a group of two or more intra-service communities. Though much work remains to be done on this subject, the findings demonstrate that examining intra-service community politics can provide useful and even crucial insights into the inner workings of military organizations.

The results of the LID case, however, suggest a revision to the simple picture previously proposed of a monolithic oligarchy ruling the Army. Instead, a better description might be one of a multi-tiered oligarchy, with some members (e.g., the light infantry) weaker than others. This picture is further supported by examining the pattern of branch/community backgrounds of the Army’s top rank and leadership positions, which are indicative of the relative power wielded by the various branches and communities. The rank of four-star general (also known as “full general” or simply general) is the highest rank attainable in the peacetime U.S. Army.\(^1\) As Table 5 illustrates, over one half of all four-star promotions have been given to the infantry branch since 1950, and officers from this branch have retained, at a minimum, a plurality of the promotion slots to four-star general in each subsequent decade. Moreover, four-star generals with light infantry backgrounds have been present since the 1970s, with two achieving that rank in the 1970s (Generals Meyer and Wickham) and four reaching that rank in each of the three subsequent decades.\(^2\) Table 6, which illustrates the backgrounds of some of the Army’s top leaders in the post-Vietnam era, reinforces this point: during a period of time in which the light infantry

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\(^1\) The ranks of “five-star” and “six-star” generals are either only possible in wartime or are simply honorific titles. During the period from January 1950 to January 2007, 162 U.S. Army officers were promoted to the four-star rank. During this period, we were able to determine the branch affiliation for all but one officer.

\(^2\) Until the latter part of the 1970s, it is difficult to distinguish within the infantry branch officers with a primarily “light” infantry background from those with a mechanized or “heavy” background. Actual mechanization of the infantry did not get underway until the M113 began deploying with the ROAD divisions in the early 1960s. Given the rates of promotion, it should take upwards of fifteen to twenty years before it is possible to identify general officers with a career primarily focused on “light” or “heavy” infantry. Even then, many general officers might have a mixed background with tours and commands in both heavy and light units, especially given the demands and opportunities of the Vietnam War (a primarily light infantry war). As a result, only a few general officers from the infantry branch can be clearly identified as having a purely light or mechanized infantry background.
community appeared to be weakest (i.e., post-1972), two out of ten officers chosen to be Army Chief of Staff, two out of nineteen officers chosen to be Vice Chief of Staff, and two out of twelve officers chosen to be commander of TRADOC all had light infantry backgrounds. Overall, these numbers combined with the LID case study suggests that the light infantry community never fully left the ranks of the ruling oligarchy, but instead was reduced in influence within that oligarchy.

A further examination of the community backgrounds of senior officers clearly supports the notion that the infantry, armor, and artillery are all members of the service’s oligarchy: over ninety percent of the general officers came from one of these three branches since the 1950s. Moreover, by the 1990s (i.e., when the service’s emphasis on the “heavy” forces, begun in the 1970s, should first be reflected at the top general officer level), the number of newly promoted four-star generals from the armor branch nearly equaled those from the infantry branch. Few officers from other branches achieved the rank of four-star general, and, when they did so, it was under unique circumstances or for unique positions. For example, the seven officers from “logistics” backgrounds (e.g., ordnance, quartermaster, transportation) all were promoted to four-star rank in order to become commander of AMC, consistent with the notion of this position as being largely a “technical” one (see Table 7).\(^3\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Engineer</th>
<th>Armor</th>
<th>Infantry/Light Infantry</th>
<th>Artillery</th>
<th>“Logistics”</th>
<th>Special Ops</th>
<th>Aviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>2000s</td>
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<td>11/4</td>
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Table 5: Branch Affiliation of Army Four-Star Generals, January 1950-January 2007

\(^3\) Of the remaining officers promoted to four-star rank since 1950, five came from the combat engineers; however, the last of these officers obtained this rank in the early 1970s, all served in World War II; and all had unusual careers in the army, serving in a variety of positions, commands, and branches throughout their careers. General Schoomaker, the sole four-star with a special operations background, achieved his fourth star upon becoming commander of the joint Special Operations Command; he came out of retirement to become Army Chief of Staff under very unique circumstances.
Table 6: Branch Affiliation of Senior Army Commanders Since 1972

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<th>Infantry/Light Infantry</th>
<th>Artillery</th>
<th>“Logistics”</th>
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Table 7: Branch Affiliation of Senior Army Commanders Since World War II

These three tables also suggest that the position of the aviation community in the oligarchy may not be as dominant as originally proposed. Only one officer from the aviation branch has reached the level of four-star general – General Richard Cody. Moreover, he only achieved this rank upon becoming Vice Chief of Staff in June 2004. He is also, so far, the only officer from the aviation branch to command a combat division: the 101st Air Assault. It would seem as if the aviation community has enough power within the oligarchy to obtain resources and division spaces, but not enough to promote one of their own into the service’s top echelon. A brief review of the history of the aviation branch indicates that this revised picture is probably true, although the promotion prospects are not as bleak as the numbers would indicate.

Until the creation of the aviation branch in 1983, only warrant officers were assigned specifically and solely to aviation. Warrant officers – positioned midway between enlisted personnel and officers – typically are viewed as senior technical experts or managers. In Army aviation, they were mainly helicopter pilots, but were not allow to command anything more than their aircraft. Unit commands were assigned to commissioned officers drawn from other branches (oftentimes the infantry), and designated as having an “aviation expertise” (i.e., they

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were trained to fly aircraft). One of the arguments made for creating a separate aviation branch was to provide a separate career and promotion path for aviation officers. The development of an aviation brigade in the Division '86 design assisted in this effort by expanding the number of command slots for aviation officers in armored or mechanized infantry divisions from a single lieutenant colonel (given one aviation battalion per division) to one colonel and four lieutenant colonels per division. For the first aviation officer to reach four-star rank in 2004 is appropriate given that a career in aviation for commissioned officers only became possible starting in 1983 and that twenty or more years is typically needed for officers to reach the top echelons of their service.

At the same time, however, it is doubtful that the aviation community will ever be truly the equal of the dominant ground force communities within the oligarchy given, for example, arguments expressed by elements of the senior army leadership against a separate aviation branch at the time of the formation of that branch – attitudes and concerns that remain relevant to this day. For example, one widely expressed fear was that the new aviation branch would repeat the history of the Army Air Corps; at a minimum, ignoring the support of ground forces in the close battle for independent deep operations and possibly being taken over by the Air Force altogether. While remaining part of the Army, concerns have been raised that the aviation community has developed too great a focus on the deep battle. Both to prevent a repetition of the service’s experience with the Army Air Corps and because the Army is ultimately a ground-based service, the aviation community will remain in the service’s oligarchy and successfully procure resources, but it will likely stay a tier below the armor-mechanized infantry and artillery communities: not quite separate, but also not quite equal.

Since the latter half of the 1990’s, the artillery community may have suffered some loss in position within the oligarchy as well. Table 5 indicates that only five members of this community achieved the service’s top rank since 1990 versus sixteen armored officers and twenty-two infantry officers during the same period. Moreover, the artillery branch endured major losses in the service’s modularity program: the change from divisions to brigade combat teams (BCTs) meant a

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5 At least one of these officers did achieve four-star rank in the 1970s: General Robert M. Shoemaker.

6 For more on these arguments, see Major Frank W. Tate, Army Aviation as a Branch, Eighteen Years After the Decision (Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College (thesis), 2001), 35-38; and Currey, With Wings As Eagles, 202-203. The focus on “deep battle” occasionally has led to horrific consequences for aviation units, such as in botched attack by the 11th Attack Helicopter Regiment against the Iraqi Medina Division in March 2003 during the first phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom; see Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), 260-81.
loss of one brigade-sized artillery unit per division within the Army’s force structure and their replacement with a battalion-sized artillery unit per BCT. And the artillery battalion went from three batteries of artillery per battalion down to two batteries, resulting in a substantial loss in artillery assets in the service’s combat units. An interesting question for further research would be why the artillery – which had been a key combat element of the Army throughout most of the twentieth century – had suddenly been reduced throughout the service’s force structure. Possible reasons might include greater effort and coordination by the Air Force in providing ground support to the Army, new “aerial artillery” assets with the rise of the Army’s own aviation community, and the greater precision in delivery means available to air-delivered ordnance to date relative to artillery munitions (particularly important as the U.S. military seeks to reduce collateral damage). However, the artillery community’s future is far from bleak: to compensate for the loss of artillery brigade command slots, artillery colonels are being offered the opportunity to command BCTs; the service is funding research and development on high-precision artillery munitions; and new artillery systems are under development. Finally, a key war-fighting element of the Army’s new Future Objective Force program is the delivery of long-range fires, clearly the role of the artillery community.

The revised picture of the intra-service politics of the Army then is as follows: a weak central leadership combined with an oligarchy of combat communities (armor-mechanized infantry, artillery, aviation, and foot-mobile infantry) that dominate the remainder of the service. Within this oligarchy, the combined armor-mechanized community is the strongest player, while the artillery branch suffered some losses during the early part of the twenty-first century. The aviation community has a lot power, but will remain a secondary player. The foot-mobile infantry, at least for the moment, occupies the weakest position within the oligarchy and has been in that position since the end of the Vietnam War.

This section concludes with several additional observations. First, changing or expanding the membership of a ruling community oligarchy can be difficult and time-consuming. As illustrated by the foot-mobile infantry, once a community achieves membership in the oligarchy, it tends to retain that membership even through many losses in the intra-service wars; once in the oligarchy, a community rarely leaves. It also can be very difficult, however, to break into the oligarchy. Success in wartime is one way that a new community can enter into the ruling oligarchy;

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7 Even vestiges of the cavalry remained in oligarchy long after the horse had been removed from the service in the form of the armored branch’s armored cavalry units. Since 1950, the role of armored cavalry regiment has been to perform the traditional horse cavalry “security and reconnaissance missions”; see Hoffmann, Through Mobility We Conquer, 456.
two prime examples of this success in the U.S. Army are the armored community in World War II and the aviation community during the Vietnam War. But in peacetime, as Stephen Peter Rosen has pointed out, changing the structure of a service’s internal politics – i.e., changing the distribution of power among a service’s communities – is primarily an internal service affair. It involves, at heart, the development and maintenance of promotion paths within a service, which in turn determines who writes doctrine, who defines appropriate missions, and who determines distribution of resources within the service. And, it is the senior leadership within the service that determines these promotion paths. In the absence of strong, independent central leadership, these decisions are made by the heads of the ruling communities, making it very difficult to bring about change.

Of the three patterns of intra-service politics described in Chapter One, monarchical community control may be the most detrimental as it leads to the narrowest focus of the three patterns. Alternatively, a strong central leadership independent of community biases may be the best pattern, though it too has some drawbacks. A service ruled by two or more communities lies somewhere in between. Given this, among future research questions might be the following: In the case of monarchical community control, how can the grip of the dominant community be broken; allowing, at a minimum, for the rise of several co-equal communities within the service? In the case of strong central leadership, what, if any, the additional drawbacks or dangers exist beyond those already described? And, how can a strong independent central leadership be established within a service while maintaining the benefits of competing communities and without threatening civilian control? Finally, what means, if any, are available to outsiders to influence internal service politics?

**OBSERVATIONS ON U.S. ARMY POLITICS**

Politics within the U.S. Army is complex, multi-layered, and multi-faceted; so too is the politics among the Army and the other services. The case studies found in the previous chapters focused primarily on the division design process and the “heavy vs. light” split within the Army, but there are a variety of other ways to examine politics, competition, and communities within the Army. For example, there is the jockeying for funds, programs, promotions, and prestige amongst the communities that make up the service’s oligarchy. A similar competition goes on between the Army’s combat arms and the various non-combat, or supporting, arms, with the latter nearly always limited to a subordinate role. The Army’s active-duty component and the National Guard likewise compete for funding, equipment and manpower; a competition which often spills over into the congressional arena. And, the Army competes for funds, manpower, and missions with the Air Force and Navy. Finally, the U.S. military’s largest ground army

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competes for funds, programs, prestige and missions with the military’s other ground forces – the United States Marine Corps and the special operations community. This latter community includes special operations elements from the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps as well as units ostensibly tied to the Army, such as Special Forces Operational Detachment-D (Delta Force) and the Green Beret.

To conclude this work, we will summarize and bring up to date the Army’s preparations for various types of warfare, and its inability to achieve a balanced set of capabilities in the post-Vietnam War era. Specifically, we will contrast the service’s development of conventional high-intensity combat capabilities on the one hand and its development (or lack thereof) of similar capabilities for waging counterinsurgency warfare on the other. In short, we will examine how the Army came to possess such a powerful capability for conventional war that it could swiftly and easily defeat the conventional military of a mid-size regional power during the opening phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and yet find itself so ill-prepared to wage the counterinsurgency war that followed. In so doing, we hope to illustrate further some of the community politics that swirls in and around the Army.

The Army’s Special Operations Community

Before proceeding, we need to describe the role of one Army community that has been neglected in this study so far, but is central to any discussion of counterinsurgency: the Army’s special operations community. While organizationally part of the Army, these special operations forces (SOF) are seen by those in the service as outside and apart from the regular Army. Several factors set the Special Forces apart from their regular Army counterparts.

Like similar units in the other services, Army SOF organizations have a history that is distinct from and of more recent origin compared to their parent organization. The Special Forces (Green Beret) trace their lineage back only to World War II and the clandestine Office of Strategic Services. They were officially formed in 1952 to act as a covert guerrilla organization operating behind Soviet lines in the event of war, only later acquiring a counterinsurgency role. Delta Force (and possibly other classified units) was formed only after the Iranian seizure of the U.S. embassy in 1979, and have had a distinctive counter-terrorist focus.\(^9\)

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SOF units also fight in a unique fashion. While the regular Army is designed to fight conventional wars, these units are specifically designed to engage in unconventional warfare. Employed in small teams, oftentimes in secret, these units operate either “behind the scenes” in times of peace or “behind enemy lines” in times of war. In contrast with the regular military, special operations forces tend to reward unconventional thinking, be less-hierarchically organized, and often appear to their regular Army brethren as less disciplined. They often operate independent of other forces, which also can contribute to a perception among the regular Army that they constitute rogue elements within the military.

SOF troops, though drawn from their parent service, are chosen after a very rigorous screening process, and consider themselves members of highly elite organizations within the Army. And once chosen to join a SOF organization, members rarely return to the regular Army. With one notable exception, SOF officers never rise to their service’s top ranks. Army Chief of Staff Peter Schoomaker is the exception, having spent the bulk of his career in special operations community; aside from a stint as Assistant Division Commander of the 1st Cavalry Division late in his career, his highest command of a regular Army unit was as Cavalry Troop commander (the equivalent of a company commander). However, his August 2003 appointment as Chief of Staff – out of retirement no less – by then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was seen by many in the Army as a collective slap in the face to the service, especially following Rumsfeld’s ill-treatment of the previous Chief of Staff, General Eric Shinseki.

Overall, members of the Army’s SOF community tend to have more in common with their special operations brethren drawn from the other services, who also generally find themselves to be unique and separate communities within their parent organizations, than they do with the regular Army. Indeed, with exception of the Army’s Rangers, the special operations units from across all the four services can be seen as a community distinct from any other organization or service within the U.S. military. This distinct special operations community was made official with the creation of the Special Operations Command in the mid-1980s, which put all of these units under one command.

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10 The only other Army officer with a SOF background to serve at the Joint Chiefs of Staff level was General Hugh Shelton, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs from 1997 to 2001. But, while General Shelton did serve a tour of duty in Vietnam as a member of the 5th Special Forces Group and headed the U.S. Special Operations Command, the vast bulk of his career was served in regular Army: returning to Vietnam as an officer in the 173rd Airborne Brigade, and with subsequent assignments in the 9th Infantry Division, the 82nd Airborne Division (including as division commander), and the 101st Assault Division, before becoming commander of the XVIII Airborne Corps.

By contrast, the U.S. Army Rangers, while also an elite organization and (like Army SOF) part of the United States Army Special Operations Command, are embraced by the regular Army. The Rangers have a long history and one closely associated with their parent service. They trace their lineage back to colonial America, with Ranger-like units having fought in both King Phillips War and the French and Indian War. Two Ranger units (the Corps of Rangers and Marion’s Partisans) famously fought in the American Revolution, elements of the United States Rangers fought in the War of 1812, and Ranger battalions fought in all the major theaters of World War II. The Ranger School and the headquarters of the 75th Ranger Regiment are both located at Fort Benning, GA, home of the Army’s Infantry School and regarded Army-wide as the heart and home of the infantry. Many infantry officers undergo Ranger training and proudly wear their Ranger badge, even if they do not actually serve in a Ranger unit (Ranger training was a early requirement for officers serving in LID units). Commissioned and non-commissioned officers frequently rotate from Ranger units to infantry units and back again, and often rise high in the service’s leadership. Finally, unlike the other special operations units, the Rangers rarely participate in operations independent of regular Army units; their motto “Rangers lead the way!” indicate that they (unlike the SOF) see themselves as the lead element of the larger Army organization.

Even within the small SOF community, however, a divide exists between those forces engaged in more combat-oriented direct action missions (so-called “kinetic” missions) and those involved in advisory or support roles. The Army’s Delta Force, certain Air Force special operations units, Navy SEAL teams, and many elements of the Marine Corps special operations forces are part of the “kinetic” community; the Army Green Beret, with their traditional focus on counterinsurgency, training and advisory roles, are members of the “non-kinetic” SOF sub-community.

Conventional Warfare vs. Counterinsurgency Warfare

We now turn to a brief summary of the contrasting fortunes of high-intensity conventional warfare and lower-intensity counterinsurgency warfare in the post-Vietnam U.S. Army. Their respective fortunes have been dependent, in part, on several fundamental characteristics of the two forms of warfare, which provide conventional forms of warfare an

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12 The Ranger commander during the French and Indian War, Major Robert Rogers wrote the nineteen “standing orders” still in use by the Rangers.

13 Another, distinctly twenty-first century, indication of the close association of the Rangers with the regular Army: unlike the U.S. Army Special Forces website, the 75th Ranger Regiment website can be accessed via the U.S. Army Infantry Homepage, available at https://www.benning.army.mil/infantry/ (accessed March 2007).
advantage over counterinsurgency operations in the U.S. military. First, counterinsurgency warfare tends to be a low-technology type of warfare. While technology can enhance the soldier’s capability for fighting this type of war, it can rarely substitute for manpower. Moreover, the technologies that are relevant to counterinsurgency—e.g., intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance technologies, telecommunications, body armor—do not tend to be expensive “big-ticket” items. As a result, counterinsurgency warfare, in contrast to conventional armored warfare, does not have a powerful industrial base in the United States willing to lobby for its requisite capabilities in the corridors of government. Second, Congress and the American people tend to be more averse towards U.S. involvement in counterinsurgency-type wars than conventional ones, and thus prove less willing to support the development of counterinsurgency capabilities. But a closer look at the intra-service politics reveals additional reasons why counterinsurgency and other forms of low-intensity conflict have remained niche missions within the U.S. Army, despite changing strategic contexts which might favor the wider adoption of such missions by the service.

**Vietnam and After**

Counterinsurgency warfare first became a subject of intense interest within the U.S. national security establishment in the early 1960s, driven by the Kennedy Administration’s concern with defeating communist wars of national liberation. It became identified at that time with the Army’s Special Forces, but was not widely embraced by the regular Army. The Special Force’s role, however, would prove to be limited to training and advising third countries in counterinsurgency; they never would be large enough to engage in a sustained counterinsurgency campaign of their own. Throughout the first five years of the war in Vietnam, the Army largely rejected applying counterinsurgency tactics, relying instead on large-scale, conventional search-and-destroy missions. The Marines, relying on their tradition of fighting small wars, did attempt to employ some counterinsurgency tactics, but these efforts were discouraged and disparaged by the regular Army and the military headquarters in Vietnam for much of the war. It was only in the war’s later years (following the departure of General Westmoreland) that the regular Army

14 Among the reasons observers cite for the greater U.S. public’s aversion are the politically “messier” nature of counterinsurgency warfare, the fact that such wars require a longer-term commitment coupled with more limited war aims, and the fact that such wars are rarely fought for vital U.S. national interests. For one of the most recent discussions of American dislike for counterinsurgency warfare, see Jeffrey Record, *The American Wary of War: Cultural Barriers to Successful Counterinsurgency*, Policy Analysis No. 577 (Washington, DC: The CATO Institute, 1 September 2006).
began to employ some counterinsurgency tactics, specifically “clear and hold” operations, with any degree of success.\footnote{See Lewis Sorley, \textit{A Better War: The Unexamined Victories and Final Tragedy of America’s Last Years in Vietnam} (San Diego, CA: Harcourt, Inc. 1999).}

As we have seen, however, once the U.S. completed its withdrawal of ground forces from Vietnam, the regular Army and its newly dominant oligarchy abandoned further involvement in counterinsurgency operations. Counterinsurgency tactics rely heavily on dismounted soldiers, and usually large numbers of such troops; providing local security and gathering intelligence, two vital aspects of counterinsurgency, are best provided by dismounted patrols. Armored and mechanized forces have little role to play in this type of fight. In short, the counterinsurgency fight is primarily a light infantry battle, and consequently one that has run counter to the Army’s ruling oligarchy in the post-Vietnam War era.

Instead, from the end of the Vietnam War to the end of the Cold War, the Army focused its attention and the bulk of its efforts towards developing the capabilities for fighting large-scale conventional armored warfare. And, for most of this period that focus was on bringing these forces to fight on the plains of Central Europe. National policy did eventually force the Army to expand its sights to include the Persian Gulf region, but here too the fighting was conceived as one involving massed armored forces. The other constant during this period was the limitation on Army manpower and funding. Nearly all of the Army’s internal and external politics revolved around the issue of providing sufficient armored forces capable of engaging in high-intensity combat in Central Europe given constrained personnel and financial resources. The Total Army policy, for example, was conceived in large measure as a means for generating combat power from the manpower-constrained active-duty component while retaining the necessary combat support functions in the wider Army.\footnote{As point out in Chapter Three, the policy was also designed to prevent the repetition of the Vietnam-era absence of large-scale reserve mobilization during a major military deployment.} This policy, however, led to complaints by members of the affected support communities that they lacked sufficient representation in the active-duty component, and essentially were being sacrificed by the dominant communities of the service’s oligarchy (all members of the combat arms). Relations between the Army National Guard and the active-duty Army too centered for much of period around the question of what role the Guard would play in a high-intensity European conflict, and how capable and prepared it should be for such a fight. Likewise, much of the Army’s relations with the Marines during this period centered around the latter’s pursuit of a greater armored warfare capability in order to better perform its missions, first in support of the Army on the flanks of Europe and later in competition with the Army in the Persian Gulf region. As a result,
for example, once its Big Five programs moved from development to acquisition, the Army regularly found itself fighting off attempts – some successful and some not – by the Army National Guard and the Marine Corps to garner more of these weapon systems for themselves. While the Marines’ efforts to acquire more Big Five equipment were occasionally welcomed (if they brought their own funds to the table), the National Guard’s efforts and funds always came at the expense of the Army’s active-duty component. Many of these battles between the active-duty Army, Army National Guard, and Marines ended up being fought and decided in Congress – often at the expense of the Army’s active-duty component.

For most of this period, counterinsurgency warfare was given low priority in the Army, when it was not ignored altogether. Until the formation of the Light Infantry Divisions, Army planners seemed determined to eliminate from the service’s force structure the very units best able to carry out the counterinsurgency role: i.e., non-mechanized infantry. While a few Army officers persisted in studying the subject, most received only a few hours of cursory instruction in counterinsurgency within the service’s school system. Even the Army’s Total Force policy reduced the service’s ability to perform this mission: the transfer of many non-combat, support functions to the Army Reserves included many functions vital to counterinsurgency operations, such as civil affairs and psychological operations. But, the political leadership was unlikely to activate the reserves for counterinsurgency-type conflicts.

Indeed, the capability for counterinsurgency warfare nearly disappeared from the active-duty regular Army until increased communist activities in Latin America, beginning in the late 1970s, led to a renewed interest in insurgency and counterinsurgency warfare at the top reaches of the national security establishment. The Reagan Administration’s more aggressive stance in confronting Communism worldwide in the early 1980’s led to further interest in combating local communist insurgencies as well as fomenting insurgencies against established communist governments. This, in turn, led a small number of Army officers and outside defense analysts to examine the concepts associated with Low Intensity Conflict (LIC), including counterinsurgency operations. But the Army had a difficult time designing forces (like the Light Infantry Divisions) to meet LIC missions given the absence of a detailed description of these missions and their requirements in Army documents. And, while this renewed interest led the Army to issue a new counterinsurgency field manual (along with several other LIC-related publications), this document was largely a rehash of the service’s Vietnam-era 1960’s manual.

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17 Among the civilian defense analysts addressing Low Intensity Conflict at this time were Edward Luttwak and Robert Kupperman.
For the most of the post-Vietnam era, the Army relegated the counterinsurgency mission to the Special Forces, which – due to their small size – remained limited to training and advisory roles. Indeed, the Army greatly reduced the Special Forces in the immediate aftermath of the Vietnam War. It required substantial pressure from outside the service – both by the Reagan Administration and members of Congress – for the Army to expand its Special Forces community and create the U.S. Army Special Operations Command in the mid-1980s. It was at this time as well that the Army was forced to place its beloved Rangers within this command organization.

In summary, by the end of the end of the Cold War, the active-duty Army and its dominant oligarchy had achieved considerable success in terms of equipment, unit design and doctrine for fighting large-scale conventional warfare. Meanwhile, counterinsurgency operations were limited to the SOF community and a small niche of light infantry officers within the regular Army.

Post-Cold War

The first Gulf War, Operation Desert Storm, would prove to be the high-water mark for the Army’s intra-service oligarchy and its preferred form of warfare. After nearly twenty years of preparation for such a conflict (though against a much less capable opponent than what it was originally designed to fight), the U.S. Army executed a near-perfect conventional massed armored operation against the Iraqi army. And, it was able to achieve this victory while relegating the Marines to a largely subsidiary supporting role and preventing the Army National Guard’s combat divisions from leaving the states; truly a total victory for the Army’s intra-service community oligarchy. Afterwards, however, the Army finally would have to confront the issues arising from the end of Cold War and the removal of the service’s core mission – large-scale armored warfare on the plains of Central Europe.

As a result, following Operation Desert Storm, the Army was faced with an immediate issue – how to reduce its force structure in the face of rapidly declining budgets.\(^\text{18}\) In accomplishing this task, the active-duty Army fought with the National Guard and Army Reserve to achieve large reductions in the Reserve Component force structure, while maintaining maximum combat capability in the active-duty force. Yet, cuts were also needed in the active-duty forces; the Army’s intra-service oligarchy succeeded in achieving these reductions while simultaneously maximizing retention of its armored and mechanized forces.

\(^{18}\) Indeed reductions in force structure had become even before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, and for a time in the fall of 1990, the Army found itself in the awkward position of trying to cut its forces while building up forces in the Persian Gulf.
However, from the end of the first Gulf War to the start of the second (Operation Iraqi Freedom), the Army and its oligarchy confronted a second, longer term issue: ensuring that the service’s dominant communities retained their dominance and relevance in the post-Cold War era. Specifically, once the Army could no longer count on pre-positioning its heavy forces near the expected main battlefield (i.e., Central Europe), it now had to determine how to turn its heavy armored forces into a lighter expeditionary force to ensure that it could reach the service’s new battlefields in a timely fashion.

In the post-Cold War inter-service battles, the Marine Corps struck first as defense budgets began their decline in the late 1980s, with its leadership proclaiming that they were the military’s true “light infantry” force in contrast to the Army’s Potemkin-like LIDs. Moreover, they argued that their shipboard deployments worldwide already prepared them to quickly respond to any contingency outside of Europe. By the early 1990s, the Marines had combined with the Navy to produce the “Assault from the Sea” doctrine and an accompanying host of new acquisition programs. In essence, with the end of the Cold War, the Marines fell back on their two traditional combat missions: amphibious warfare (with their raiding-like “Assault from the Sea” concept) and small wars (every Marine’s a rifleman capable of performing LIC missions).

The Army leadership responded that the Marines had no combat role to play inland, especially over extended periods of time, and therefore should not intrude on Army missions. Meanwhile, they focused on transforming the service’s heavy divisions into an expeditionary force with a series of experimental and development programs. These efforts included Force XXI, a set of digitization experiments conducted at Fort Hood Texas with the 4th Infantry (Mechanized) Division, and the “Army After Next” project. All these programs were directed at developing a lighter, more strategically mobile force with essentially the same combat power as the armor and mechanized divisions of Division 86 – consistent with the continued dominance of the armor, mechanized infantry, field artillery and aviation communities. Ironically, with their focus on networking computers, telecommunications, and reconnaissance assets to enhance the survivability of the force and substitute tactical speed and maneuverability for heavy armoring, all of these programs represented a return to the old High Technology Light Division concept. As of the first decade of the twenty-first century, the only tangible result of these efforts had been the deployment of the medium-weight Stryker Brigade Combat Teams. These brigades were built around the Stryker vehicle – basically a heavily digitized version of the Marine Corps wheeled LAV, surrounded by add-on metal apron to protect against rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs).

The latest incarnation of the Army trend towards lightening its heavy forces is the Future Combat Systems (FCS) program and the Future Objective Force. FCS includes aviation assets,
tank-like vehicles, infantry combat vehicles, and a number of artillery systems organized into a new type of Brigade Combat Team. In theory, the greater strategic mobility of this force will be achieved by replacing heavy armor with tactical mobility and networking these vehicles together with long-range fire delivery systems and a wide array of sensors in order to achieve information dominance on the battlefield – largely negating the need for close-in engagements. But again, the battlefield envisioned is the same as before the end of the Cold War – a mid-to-high intensity conventional conflict against a large armored ground force – only the location and enemy have changed. As befits the service’s premier armored weapons program for the future, it has been described as “represent[ing] by far the biggest single investment that the Army is planning to make for the next twenty years.”19 For example, it consumed well over half of the Army’s Research, Development, Test and Evaluation account in fiscal year 2006, nearly one-third of that budget in fiscal year 2007, and a similar percentage of the research budget in fiscal year 2008 and fiscal year 2009.20 Though the program underwent some restructuring in Army’s fiscal year 2007 and fiscal year 2008 budgets, a brigade’s worth of equipment was scheduled to be purchased annually starting in fiscal year 2015 and continuing for fifteen years thereafter, at an average cost of approximately $5 billion per brigade.21 If Army procurement budgets remained flat after 2011, the General Accountability Office (GAO) estimated that FCS procurement would consume sixty to seventy percent of the service’s procurement budget for at least eight years beginning in 2014.22

However, despite annual criticism from Congress, GAO, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and others, and despite the Army’s deep budgetary woes due continuing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, funding for the FCS program rarely, if ever, suffered a set-back in funding. In part, the program maintains its support due to the strong industrial base backing it. Up through


21 In 2006, CBO estimated a cost per brigade of $6.7 billion when the Army planned on purchased 1.5 brigades per year. The Army’s move the following year to reduce the procurement to 1 brigade per year, while stretching the procurement out five additional years, was expected to reduce unit cost somewhat. See Gilmore, Army’s Future Combat Systems Program, 5; and Daniel G. Dupont, “Army Proposes Major Weapons Cuts,” InsideDefense.com Newstand, 7 December 2006, available at http://www.military.com/features/0,15240,120100,00.html (accessed March 2007).

22 And some portion of that remaining budget would need to go for spin-outs from FCS, the procurement of FCS complementary programs; see Paul L. Francis, Defense Acquisitions: Improved Business Case Key for Future Combat System’s Success, Testimony Before the Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, GAO-06-564T (Washington, DC: United States General Accounting Office, 4 April 2006), 15.
2007, the FCS program was led by the team of Boeing and Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) as lead system integrators, who in turn have awarded subcontracts for major components of FCS throughout the leading names of the defense industry: General Dynamics, United Defense, Raytheon, Northrop-Grumman, BAE Systems, Textron, Honeywell, Computer Sciences Corporation, and Lockheed Martin.\(^{23}\)

Most elements of the Army, meanwhile, showed little interest in counterinsurgency and other LIC-type warfare following the end of Cold War, even as the service found itself deploying to more and more such missions throughout the 1990s. With operations ranging from Somalia to Haiti to Bosnia and Kosovo, the Clinton Administration made frequent use of the Army in small-scale and humanitarian operations: stability operations, peacekeeping and peace enforcement. Forced to confront these operations, the Army, again led by a small cadre of interested officers, eventually came up with a new term for such operations – Operations Other Than War (OOTW) – which included attacks and raids, noncombatant evacuation operations, combating terrorism, support to other nations’ counterinsurgency efforts, peace operations, and disaster relief and humanitarian assistance. Nonetheless, the service struggled throughout the 1990s to develop and write a coherent doctrine on OOTW into its operations manuals. The Army doctrine writers also recognized that stability operations, known as Phase IV operations, would be the responsibility of the military following the completion of regular conventional combat operations, and a basic description of such operations did make it into the services 2001 Operations manual. But beyond this concept development, little more was accomplished.

For most officers, such deployments were a distraction from the Army’s main task of preparing for high-intensity armored warfare. Moreover, the service had long taken the view that any unit prepared for the most intense combat could easily perform these “lesser” missions. Finally, it should have been obvious to any politically aware officer at the close of the Clinton Administration era that such missions would persist only until a new political party took over the White House – these types of operations were widely decried by Republican Party politicians. Indeed, George W. Bush specifically campaigned for the presidency in 2000 against using the military in these derisively-termed “nation-building” efforts. Hoping to be rid of such missions, the Army looked forward to the new Bush Administration.\(^{24}\)

Up until several years into Operation Iraqi Freedom, counterinsurgency remained a niche mission within the Army, relegated to the Army’s SOF community and to a small group of officers.


\(^{24}\) Boyer, “Downfall.”
within the regular Army. Even though counterinsurgency (or Foreign Internal Defense) was included in the OOTW concept, the emphasis was on supporting other countries’ militaries as they battled insurgents, not on U.S. forces conducting counterinsurgency operations on their own; essentially, the OOTW counterinsurgency mission fell into the Army Special Forces’ training and advisory role. Most of the Army’s light infantry officers were consumed with carrying out the Clinton-era humanitarian/nation-building missions, considered nuisance roles by many Army officers.

And, in contrast to more conventional warfare capabilities, R&D and procurement programs for the principle tool of counterinsurgency warfare — the dismounted soldier — faired poorly in the post-Cold War period. While several programs designed to enhance the capabilities of the individual combatant were begun in the 1990s (including the Single Integrated Protective Ensemble (SIPE), the 21st Century Land Warrior (21CLW) and finally simply Land Warrior), each had a low priority in terms of the Army’s overall R&D efforts, each was severely under-funded, and some (specifically Land Warrior) were seriously mismanaged. A similar trend can be seen in the individual soldier program designed to work alongside the vehicle-focused FCS program: the Future Force Warrior. Begun several years after FCS, Future Force Warrior sputtered fitfully along, until its absorption into the Land Warrior program. As a result of these problems, by the end of the twentieth century and into the beginning of the twenty-first century, the dismounted infantryman carried essentially the same equipment as did his counterpart in Vietnam forty years before (with the notable recent exceptions of improved body armor and intra-squad radios).

Even within the small SOF community, the Green Beret were losing influencing, further reducing the priority of counterinsurgency warfare. As terrorism became an issue of concern within the national security establishment through the 1990s, the Special Forces began to lose funding and prestige to the direct action, or “kinetic,” units within the special operations community. This trend accelerated after 11 September 2001, as Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld assigned the Special Operations Command (SOCOM) to be the principal command with responsibility for combating terrorism globally.25

The state of counterinsurgency in the Army shortly after the turn of the century may best be illustrated by looking at the Counterinsurgency (COIN) Academy set up by the Army in Iraq. Established in late 2005, nearly two and half years after the occupation of Iraq began, the goal of the school was to provide some training in counterinsurgency operations to officers because, as the

25 The under-utilization of the Special Forces training capabilities became an issue during the two years of Operation Iraqi Freedom, as the U.S. (relying mostly on private contractors) failed to train a new Iraqi Army; see James Fallows, “Why Iraq Has No Army,” The Atlantic Monthly, December 2005, 67-68.
course summary put it, of “the need for U.S. forces to shift from a conventional warfare mindset.” 26 Such a course had to be given after officers and their units were already deployed in-theater to Iraq due to the absence of such instruction at home. Moreover, most of the instructors were retired military because as one contractor explained it: “The old [counterinsurgency] doctrine died out, along with the lessons of East Africa, Vietnam and Bolivia and now they need people with this kind of memory who are retired and know from experience.” 27

**Operation Iraqi Freedom**

Operation Iraqi Freedom exposed both the strengths and the weaknesses of the U.S. Army. The Army proved once again, as it had during Operation Desert Storm, that it had no rival when it comes to conducting high-intensity conventional combat; it swiftly overthrew the Saddam’s regime while suffering relatively few casualties. The Army’s intra-service community oligarchy had done its job well in preparing and equipping the Army for this type of warfare. Ironically, it may have done its job too well – driving competitors away from engaging the U.S. in conventional warfare, where it excels, and towards unconventional or asymmetric warfare where, as suggested by the operations in Iraq up through the end of 2006, the U.S. Army is woefully lacking. The Army was completely unprepared for the looting and instability which followed Saddam’s fall, and, up to the end of 2006, had been unable to contain, let alone halt, the subsequent insurgency and terrorism.

Under the external pressures of war, the Army has made adjustments. First, forced to fight extended wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan without sufficient force structure the Army moved to a brigade-focused modular design, which increased the number of brigades in the active-duty and reserve force, and allowed for the independent deployment of these brigades. 28 On paper at least, these brigades had more capability than their predecessors and returned tasks to active-duty forces considered vital to counterinsurgency operations, including intelligence, civil affairs, military policy and psychological operations. Despite this and similar moves to improve the Army’s ability to deploy forces, however, the service has been strained to near the breaking point by the dual deployments. 29 To make up for the shortfalls, the Army has had to rely far too much on National

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28 This move towards emphasizing brigades over divisions was actually an acceleration of the move towards brigade-focused operations under FCS. Ultimately, the Army plans on having forty-eight Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) in the Active Component and twenty-eight BCTs in the reserves.

29 According to the service’s new deployment plan, active brigades are to spend two years at home for each year they are deployed overseas. However, because of the demands of Iraq and Afghan these brigades typically spend
Guard units, activating many of these units for deployments of up to eighteen months. This led to complaints from the Guard leadership and many Guard members that it was being over-stretched, while its units were being sent into theater ill-equipped for the dangers of combat.

The Army also finally began to emphasize counterinsurgency operations, two-and-half to three years after the occupation of Iraq got underway. For example, beginning in 2006 counterinsurgency and stability operations training at the Joint Combat Training Centers (CTCs) became part of the standard pre-deployment training for all units heading to Iraq.\(^{30}\) By the fall of 2006, nearly half the curriculum at the Army War College was focused on insurgency and counterinsurgency. And in late 2006, the Army and Marine Corps released their first revised counterinsurgency field manual in over twenty years, an effort completed in a little more than a year and authored principally by officers with recent experience in Iraq.\(^{31}\) Many of these changes can be traced to the efforts of General David Petraeus, in his role as commander of the Combined Arms Center, and to the (yet again) small cadre of officers with counterinsurgency expertise that he assembled around him.\(^{32}\) According to one of the counterinsurgency manual’s authors, the Army’s new emphasis on COIN “is a struggle for the soul of the Army. A lot of work needs to be done to change the mind-set of the force….We are trying to shift the culture of the force and balance it better.”\(^{33}\)

The Future of Army Politics

Finally, what are the implications of these trends for the future of the Army’s internal politics? Will the present internal political structure – a weak central authority and a multi-tiered oligarchy consisting of the “heavy community” (armor and mechanized infantry) on top, only one year at home for each year they are deployed. Michael R. Gordon, “Breakpoint?: Iraq and America’s Military Forces,” \textit{Survival} 48, no. 4 (Winter 2006-07): 77.

\(^{30}\) The CTC’s include the National Training Center (NTC) and the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC).

\(^{31}\) In an unusual twist, however, a large number of journalists, outside defense experts, and academics were asked to comment on the draft manual; Sarah Sewall, “Modernizing U.S. Counterinsurgency Practice: Rethinking Risk and Developing a National Strategy,” \textit{Military Review} 86, no. 5 (September/October 2006): 103.


followed by artillery and aviation communities, and a weakened foot-mobile infantry community – change over the next decade or so? First, it appears highly unlikely that the Army will again develop a strong central leadership (last seen in World War II). This is especially true now, given the increasing power of the Joint Staff and the Combatant Commands at the expense of the individual services in the overall DoD policymaking process. So, while the service likely will remain dominated by a ruling oligarchy, will the components of that oligarchy change?

Again, it is highly unlikely that any of the current members of the oligarchy will be pushed aside. First, the Army will argue the need for maintaining a strong armored warfare capability in order, at a minimum, to deter other countries from attempting to acquire an actual or perceived advantage in this arena of warfare. And, the three top communities currently in the oligarchy are and will remain key elements of the Army’s strategy for fighting such wars. In addition, these three communities do play a role, though a lesser one, in unconventional or COIN-like operations in support of non-mechanized infantry (either providing firepower support or transportation). A strong base of support outside of the Army also will continue for these three communities, given their strong industrial bases and consequent support in Congress. In other words, whether the Army chooses to continue focusing largely on preparing for high-intensity armored warfare or decides to pursue a “full-spectrum” force, the current top three communities will continue their membership in the ruling oligarchy. The next question then is whether the relative power between the oligarchy members will change and whether new members might join the ruling collective?

As we have seen, new communities have joined existing oligarchies (or formed new ones) in the past: e.g., the rise of the armored community in many armies following World War II; the rise of the submarine and naval air communities in the U.S. Navy following World War II; and the advent of the helicopter community in the U.S. Army following the Vietnam War. These examples, however, have often been in response to the successful combination of new technologies and new tactics in wartime. If change is to come in the U.S. Army it likely will result instead from a changed strategic environment; one in which countries are far less likely to confront the United States with the threat of a standard conventional war, but instead conduct unconventional or asymmetric operations against it. Should this form of warfare rise to the level of importance within the Army as to be co-equal with high-intensity conventional warfare, then those communities which are best able to perform this type of warfare should end up joining the service’s ruling oligarchy or, if already members, increase their status and power within that oligarchy.

The U.S. Air Force in the 1960s offers such an example of how a change in the strategic environment can lead to a change in national strategy which, in turn, can lead to a change in a
service’s internal politics: the shift from nuclear “Massive Retaliation” national strategy to a more conventional “Flexible Response,” brought about by several changes in the international strategic environment (e.g., rise of communist-inspired national liberation movements, increases (real or perceived) in Soviet nuclear forces, etc.) heralded the shift in Air Force leadership from the nuclear strategic bomber community to the conventional tactical fighter community. But it was more than just the change in strategic environment that led to the rise of the tactical fighter community; as important was the fact that other services responded to this change with their own air programs – specifically Marine/Navy fixed wing aviation and Army rotary-wing aircraft. It was this competition that helped push the Air Force to a greater emphasis on interdiction and ground attack missions and aircraft, thus promoting the rise of its conventional fighter community. Will the Army witness a similar, though less dramatic, transformation in its ruling oligarchy?34

As of this writing, it is unclear whether the new strategic environment will be able to serve as a springboard for communities either to propel themselves into the Army’s oligarchy or change their status within that oligarchy. While it seems likely that counterinsurgency and other OOTW-like operations will continue to present a threat to U.S. strategic interests, it is unclear whether these missions likewise will assume a greater long-term role in the Army, or even whether the new emphasis on counterinsurgency operations will outlast the war in Iraq. As noted earlier in this chapter, a number of obstacles inhibit the Army from adopting counterinsurgency and similar types of operations as one of its core mission areas; these obstacles will remain relevant in the future. One such obstacle is the nation’s and its army’s traditional aversion to unconventional warfare like counterinsurgency, an aversion that our experiences during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) are likely to enhance. Adding to the likelihood of an absence of external support for such missions is the essentially low-technology nature of this type of warfare, which prohibits the development of an associated large-scale industrial base. Although information systems and related technologies may increasingly play a role in unconventional warfare (as well as in how foot-mobile soldiers fight), they likely will remain a very small part of their respective industries; hence, they are unlikely to be strong sources of support for these military applications. And, at present neither the short nor long term signs bode well for an unconventional warfare mission in the U.S. Army.

In the short term, a great deal depends on the outcome of the war in Iraq (which many believe is already lost), and the Army’s perceived role in that outcome. Again, General Petraeus

34 To a degree, the situation confronting the oligarchy-dominated Army is easier than that of a single-community-rulled service like the Air Force. Rather than requiring the complete overthrow the existing power structure, the addition of new members to an oligarchical structure like the Army simply requires making room at the table for another community and redistributing “goods” appropriately.
and his small clique of counterinsurgency officers will have much to say about that outcome, as the
general took over as commander in Iraq in February 2006 and brought many of those officers with
him as advisors. 35 If the war continues to be long and bloody and ultimately is seen as a failure,
then the Army is likely to abandon the mission once again, or at minimum reduce its role to one of
training and advising in the future.

In the longer term, the signals are decidedly mixed as well. Among the trends indicating the
Army may not embrace unconventional warfare is the service’s continuing emphasis on the FCS
program, suggesting that the Army may continue to plan for the least likely type of future warfare.
FCS, if it performs as the service advertises (which is questionable), may be very good against
traditional armies on an open battlefield. It may be very poorly suited, however, to warfare against
other types of opponents in other environments, largely because it is so heavily dependent upon
near-perfect situational awareness. Against small, easily hidden forces such situational awareness
may not be possible, nor will it likely be possible to achieve in closed terrain such as jungles and
urban areas. The likely vulnerability of these vehicles to even the simplest of weapons systems in
urban areas, where combat can take place unexpectedly at very short ranges, makes FCS vehicles
ill-suited to counterinsurgency and other OOTW missions. 36 At the same time, the Army has
recently announced the cancellation of its premier individual combatant program (Land Warrior),
which had the potential to improve the capability of dismounted infantry for unconventional and
other missions. 37

On the plus side of the ledger, the Army’s new modular force program has added additional
light infantry to the force structure. 38 And, a new doctrine for counterinsurgency warfare is in place

36 Such weapons could include the ubiquitous RPGs or Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) that have become
infamous and deadly in Iraq. Many FCS vehicles are designed to employ situational awareness, tactical mobility
and, as a last resort, active protection systems (APS) to counter the vulnerability of their thin skins. However, many
APS systems have minimum range within which they are ineffective – a range which can easily be gotten inside of
during combat on urban terrain.
37 See U.S. Army, Office of the Secretary of the Army (Financial Management and Comptroller), Descriptive
Summaries For Program Elements of the Research, Development, Test and Evaluation, Army FY 2008/2009 Budget
Estimate, Volume I: Budget Activities 1, 2, 3 (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, February 2007), p. ii; and
“Land Warrior Termination to Save Army $300 Million Over Six Years,” Inside the Army, 12 February 2007;
(accessed March 2007). While the Future Force Warrior program continues, its status within the service’s broader
R&D efforts can best be seen in the Army’s latest FCS White Paper, presents the soldier as simply one of twenty
systems of the FCS BCT – on a par with unmanned aerial vehicles and small unmanned ground vehicles; see U.S. Army,
Tank and Automotive Command (TACOM), Program Manager FCS, Future Combat (Brigade Combat Team (FCS
BCT)): 18+1+1 Systems Overview (Warren, MI: U.S. Army TACOM, 11 April 2006).
38 For example, the last six of the Army’s planned forty-eight active duty Brigade Combat Teams (BCT’s) are
projected by the Army to be added in FY08/FY09; see Association of the United States Army, Army Seeks $130.1
and being tested in combat in Iraq. Finally, the strategic situation that the Army will face after Operation Iraqi Freedom will be fundamentally different from the one it faced following the Vietnam War. In the immediate aftermath of the war in Iraq, the Army is likely to reemphasize its more traditional, conventional combat roles, simply to reestablish a balance in the capabilities of a combat force preoccupied at the moment with counterinsurgency warfare. But, the Army no longer has a high-intensity conventional mission on NATO’s Central Front to which it can turn all of its attention once it gets out of Iraq. The question is: Will the Army again turn its back on unconventional warfare or will it decide to develop a full-spectrum force, one capable of both mid- to high-intensity conventional combat and lower-intensity unconventional or OOTW-like operations? And, if it chooses to include OOTW-like operations as one of its core mission areas, which Army communities, if any, would benefit from such a move?

At present, two existing Army communities could potentially benefit most from the service’s adoption of unconventional military operations as a core mission area: the Special Forces and the foot-mobile infantry communities. Of these two, the Army’s Special Forces community is very unlikely to win a place within the service’s ruling oligarchy – this community has always been on the periphery of the Army, barely tolerated by most of the service’s officer corps, and there is little indication that this attitude will change. Far more likely, the Army’s Special Forces community could join with its fellow outcasts from the other services’ special operations communities to form a separate and virtual fifth service. Indeed, the various special operations communities are far along this path following the creation of a Joint Special Operations combatant command (SOCOM) combining these forces; the continuation of the “Global War on Terror” and SOCOM’s central role in that “war” likely will accelerate this trend.

In the long run then, only the foot-mobile infantry community is likely to benefit within the Army from an increasing service focus on unconventional warfare. But, given all of the obstacles to its acceptance, what could pressure the Army into making this form of warfare one of its core mission areas?

Again, the example of the U.S. Air Force in the 1960s is instructive, as the answer may lay in the typical bureaucratic response to external competition for an organization’s roles and missions. If the strategic environment is changing in the way suggested above (i.e., an environment in which unconventional or asymmetric warfare is much more prevalent than in the past, and possibly even

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*Billion Budget and $83.4 Billion for War on Terrorism Next Year and an Additional $45 Billion to Cover War Costs this Year* (Arlington, VA: Association of the United States Army, 6 February 2007).

predominant), then several organizations other than the Army could easily lay claim to the unconventional warfare role. For example, the special operations community and its new special operations “service” could argue for that role. The Marine Corps, with its rifleman-centric ethos and small-war tradition, likewise could argue that it has the capability for performing unconventional or OOTW-like missions. Indeed, the Corps argued in the late-1980s that it was the military’s true light infantry force and far more capable than the Army to perform OOTW-like missions.

Faced with outside competition for one of its missions, even a previously low-priority one, the Army could respond in a defensive manner typical of bureaucracies (including the 1960’s-era U.S. Air Force) in similar situations: i.e., in order to protect its role in unconventional missions, the service’s could place greater priority and resources towards such missions. Such a response would be enhanced (perhaps enough to overcome the previously mentioned hurdles to the Army’s acceptance of OOTW-like operations as a core mission area) if such warfare became perceived by many to be “the only in game in town,” lest the Army be seen as increasingly irrelevant to the nation’s security needs. In responding to these competitors and pressures, by devoting greater resources to these missions, the Army’s foot-mobile infantry community – the service’s community best able to fight such wars – would correspondingly rise in the service’s internal political structure.

In short, if the Army of the near-future does confront a new strategic environment, one where unconventional operations similar to present-day Iraq and Afghanistan are typical, and if it faces competition from the Special Operations community and the Marine Corps for these missions, then the Army is likely to respond a manner such that the foot-mobile infantry community regains its position within the Army’s dominant oligarchy. Short of such a shake-up in the service’s ruling oligarchy, however, the Army can be expected to return to its pre-OIF trends: programs like FCS, involving the three dominant communities (armor/mechanized infantry, artillery, and aviation) and their preferred mission area (high-intensity conventional armored conflict), will to continue to be the service’s top priority, while other programs receive little or no attention and resources. In such a case, the Army will continue to improve its already overwhelming capability to fight the least likeliest wars of the future, while finding itself surprised and unprepared for the wars the nation is most likely to call upon it to fight.
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