



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

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FEDERAL PERSONNEL AND
COMPENSATION DIVISION

B-210323

FEBRUARY 2, 1983

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

Attention: The Inspector General DAIG-AI

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Subject: Army's Ability to Expand Training Base Upon
Mobilization Remains Limited (GAO/FPCD-83-2)

We have performed followup work on the Army's ability to expand the training base in the event of a war or national emergency, requiring a full mobilization. In previous reports, ^{1/} we cited major problems that would hamper the Army's ability to train over one-half million soldiers needed during the first 180 days of mobilization: unqualified trainers and shortages of training personnel, training companies, and equipment. We said in our July 1980 report that, unless solutions were found, the Army could train only about 360,000 (80 percent) of the soldiers it needed.

The Army has taken some action to identify the magnitude of its base expansion problems. However, Reserve training divisions that are being counted on to perform required training are still lacking personnel, and many assigned personnel are not qualified to perform required duties. Also, the Army still needs additional training companies to meet mobilization training requirements. Equipment shortages are so great that training would be impaired even if an adequate number of trainers and companies were available.

The Army estimates that, primarily because of equipment shortages, it has the capacity to accommodate only about 70 percent of the personnel it needs to begin training within the first 30 days following mobilization. This problem becomes more severe as the days following mobilization increase. For example, the Army estimates that it has the capacity to accommodate only about 50 percent of the personnel it needs to begin training within 180 days following mobilization, due to shortages in equipment, trainers, and training units.

^{1/}"Problems in Getting People Into the Active Force After Mobilization" (FPCD-79-40, May 17, 1979). "Action to Improve Parts of the Military Manpower Mobilization System Are Underway" (FPCD-80-58, July 22, 1980).

The Army's Inspector General made recommendations for correcting base expansion problems in a recent confidential report. ^{2/} The Army has tasked its subordinate organizations, such as the Training and Doctrine Command and Forces Command, to review and comment on the Inspector General's recommendations and to develop plans to address those recommendations.

The Army has developed action plans to address each of the Inspector General's recommendations and has set forth specific tasks and milestones to complete the required action. Some corrective actions have been initiated; however, it is too soon to tell whether improvements in the training base will result. In view of this and the fact that over 3 years have elapsed since we first reported training base problems, we believe the Secretary of the Army should closely monitor the implementation of the action plans developed.

OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

Our objective was to determine what progress the Army has made in correcting previously reported problems affecting base expansion capabilities. We obtained updated information from Army Headquarters in Washington, D.C., concerning assigned strength levels of Reserve training divisions compared to authorized strength levels, the number of additional training companies needed to meet mobilization training requirements, and examples of equipment shortages in the Reserve training units.

To determine actions taken or planned to address previously reported problems, we held discussions with mobilization planners at Army Headquarters; at the 80th U.S. Army Reserve Training Division in Richmond, Virginia; at Fort Hood, Texas; and at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Both Fort Hood and Fort Sill will function as Army training centers upon mobilization. We also obtained the planners' views regarding expected training requirements compared with current training capabilities.

We obtained a briefing from and held discussions with the Army Inspector General's inspection team regarding its inspection of the training base. This was done to coordinate our efforts, as well as to gain an understanding of the scope and methodology of the Inspector General's inspection. Our work, conducted between August 1981 and June 1982, was performed in accordance with generally accepted Government audit standards.

^{2/}"Report of Inspection, Army Training Base Expansion During Mobilization," Department of the Army, Office of the Inspector General, Jan. 22, 1982.

BACKGROUND

The Training and Doctrine Command is responsible for planning and coordinating the initial training of personnel both in peacetime and in wartime. In peacetime, nine Army training centers provide training to service personnel. In the event of a full mobilization, the number of training centers will expand to 15. Mobilization plans call for the 12 existing Army Reserve training divisions to either augment the 9 existing training centers or to begin operations at the 6 additional centers to be established. During peacetime, the existing Reserve training divisions are under the control of the Army Forces Command. Upon full mobilization, control of these divisions will be transferred to the Training and Doctrine Command.

Subordinate to the training divisions are training companies, which are primarily responsible for training Army personnel. Upon full mobilization, the Army must have sufficient training companies with enough qualified trainers and equipment to handle the surge that is being planned. This is particularly important in view of the need for additional trained personnel to offset the shortages of pretrained Individual Ready reservists that currently exist.

PERSONNEL SHORTAGES IN TRAINING DIVISIONS

Although Reserve training divisions' assigned strength exceeds the peacetime authorization, there is a significant personnel shortage when compared to wartime requirements. To help improve this condition, the divisions are allowed to recruit above their authorized strength levels. As of August 1982, the Reserve training divisions' assigned strength levels were at 103 percent of their peacetime authorized strength levels--a substantial improvement over the conditions that existed during our prior work. As depicted in both our 1979 and 1980 reports, the Reserve training divisions were at 86 percent of their peacetime authorized strength levels. However, when assigned strength levels are compared to wartime required strength levels, significant shortages exist. For example, the 12 Reserve training divisions, as of August 1982, were staffed at between 51 and 76 percent of their wartime required strength levels. Training divisions' assigned strength levels, according to an early 1982 Army report, were more than 23,000 personnel short of 1981 wartime required strength levels.

The 80th U.S. Army Reserve Training Division was at 118 percent of peacetime authorized strength levels as of October 1981. However, the division was only at 61 percent of its wartime required levels. Military occupational specialties most

affected by these shortages included drill and platform instructors, who are critical for providing combat training to new soldiers.

Mobilization planners at Army Headquarters told us that the Army began taking action in 1981 to improve the overall strength levels in Reserve training divisions by allowing the divisions to recruit above their authorized strength levels. However, the planners said that, due to budget constraints and other priorities, reducing the shortage may take some time.

LACK OF QUALIFIED TRAINERS

Personnel shortages in the Reserve training divisions are compounded by a lack of qualified trainers. In our 1979 report, we stated that 52 to 92 percent of the personnel in five Reserve training divisions possessed the military occupational specialty required of the position. We also reported that only 32 to 68 percent of these personnel were at the proper skill level for the position. For example, the position may have required a skill level 3, while the person occupying that position was at skill level 2. The highest skill level for trainers is skill level 4. As we reported in 1980, Army mobilization planners said that Reserve trainers had undergone a requalification program to insure that they are qualified to perform required duties. In following up, we asked about results of the requalification program; however, Army officials told us that they did not keep results.

The Army's 1982 report analyzed 1981 personnel qualifications data in four Reserve training divisions. The report pointed out that, when compared to 1981 wartime required strength levels, 27 to 55 percent of the personnel assigned to these training divisions during 1981 were qualified to conduct required mobilization training. When compared to peacetime authorized levels, 43 to 91 percent of these training division personnel were qualified.

To help alleviate shortages of qualified trainers, the Army is considering assigning retired personnel to training divisions. The Army has established a policy that allows retirees to be preassigned to training divisions. The retraining or refresher training of these personnel in peacetime is essential to insure their performance during mobilization.

TRAINING COMPANY SHORTAGES ARE SIGNIFICANT

The Army still does not have enough training companies to meet mobilization training requirements. Since 1981, the Army's estimated shortage has been reduced by about 10 percent; however, assumptions used to make the estimates have not been tested.

In 1979, we reported that the Army estimated a shortage of 345 training companies as of October 1978. Our 1980 report said that the Army estimated a shortage of 287 training companies as of October 1979. As we pointed out, the reduced shortage was due to different assumptions used by the Army in its calculations. For example, the October 1979 estimate assumed that (1) training companies would be brought into the training base to begin training earlier than originally planned and (2) each company would train 275 persons during the 8- to 12-week training cycle (as compared with about 220 persons currently).

As of October 1981, Army mobilization planners estimated they were short 310 companies. The planners applied the same assumptions used in 1979 and concluded that the primary reason for the increased shortage was improved data for making their calculations.

The validity of assumptions used by the Army in calculating training company shortages has not been tested. For example, the assumption that training companies, during mobilization, can train 275 inductees a company has not been scientifically determined. As a result, the shortage estimates are not precise. The Army, however, stated that during peak periods in the summer, active duty training companies train between 240 and 250 trainees and, as a result, does not believe 275 is an unrealistic estimate.

The Army's 1982 report also raised a serious concern about the calculated shortage of training companies. The number of training companies needed depends upon the accuracy of the requirements for trained personnel upon mobilization, and the report questioned the validity of the data used to estimate requirements for trained personnel. If the requirement is inaccurate, it would affect the estimated number of training companies needed upon mobilization.

EQUIPMENT SHORTAGES SERIOUSLY
CONSTRAIN TRAINING BASE EXPANSION

In our 1979 report, we said that the Army did not know what equipment was available in the Reserve training divisions. Furthermore, we pointed out that the Training and Doctrine Command said that, due to the existing equipment constraints, the peacetime training base was not capable of expansion beyond its assigned training load. Although considerable progress has been made in identifying available equipment, efforts to develop acceptable training alternatives to deal with existing constraints have been unsuccessful.

As pointed out in our 1980 report, the Army formed a planning group to conduct a "War-Immediate Analysis." This analysis was an attempt to develop alternative training methods as a short-term solution to equipment shortages. However, it has not been formally approved by the Army because the assumptions made depart from current training doctrine. For example, the assumption that training companies, during mobilization, can effectively train its personnel using increased trainee-to-equipment ratios has never been scientifically determined, and its impact on training quality is unknown. Because of such departures from approved training doctrine, the Army's Training and Doctrine Command and training centers have taken issue with the "War-Immediate Analysis."

During our prior work, the planning group identified the specific items of equipment available for training and suggested various alternative actions that could be taken to improve training base capabilities during mobilization. For example, the planning group found that infantry training would be severely hampered by a shortage of M-16 rifles. To offset this weakness, the planning group said the Army could issue M-16s for 3 weeks of training rather than for the entire 7-week training period.

Other shortage items identified included the M-60 tank and M-113 reconnaissance vehicle. The planning group suggested that, to remedy these problems, the Army increase trainee-to-equipment ratios, compress the training period for certain types of training, and substitute wheeled vehicles for reconnaissance vehicles.

In this followup, Army mobilization planners told us that severe equipment shortages still exist and are a serious barrier to expanding the training base. Our work at the 80th U.S. Army Reserve Training Division confirmed this problem. The division keeps only enough equipment to train its cadre. Furthermore, division officials said that upon full mobilization, they do not know what equipment will be made available or in what quantities. As a result, these officials do not know whether they will be able to adequately perform their training mission.

Another example of equipment shortages involves the 84th U.S. Army Reserve Training Division, which, upon full mobilization, will be required to conduct armor training at Fort Hood, Texas. To perform this mission, Army mobilization planners said that the division needs about 480 tanks. During our visit, however, the division had only 12 tanks in its inventory. Furthermore, the tanks in the inventory were M-48s, which are different from the M-60 tanks the Active Force uses for training. Thus, personnel may be trained at Fort Hood on equipment

different from that which they may be required to operate and maintain in a combat environment.

Equipment shortages exist throughout the Army and are not unique to the U.S. Army Reserve training divisions. Furthermore, current equipment distribution priorities call for training unit needs to be filled only after theater and deploying unit demands are met.

The Army's goal is to train 133,000 personnel during the first 30 days after mobilization. However, in a March 1982 testimony before the Subcommittee on Military Personnel and Compensation, House Committee on Armed Services, the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) stated that, because of equipment shortages, the Army would only be able to train 83,000 personnel.

The Assistant Secretary further said that:

"Funding initiatives in the FY 1983 Budget to improve training base capacity call for \$25.7 million for the purchase and stockpiling of equipment as well as other initiatives. * * * These initiatives will help meet the requirements associated with absorbing new trainees but will not solve all of the problems."

Army mobilization planners told us that funds requested for equipment purchases in the Army's fiscal year 1983 budget request will only partially solve the training base expansion problem.

CONCLUSIONS

Over 3 years have elapsed since we first reported on problems preventing the Army from expanding its training base during full mobilization. Although the Army has made some progress, particularly in the area of alternative training methods, and the development of action plans, it still needs to do much more. For example, unless alternative training methods are tested, it is unlikely that they will gain acceptance by either the Training and Doctrine Command or the training centers. Accordingly, the Army needs to closely monitor the implementation of action plans developed for achieving a training base that will be capable of meeting mobilization training requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Secretary of the Army:

- Test the feasibility of the alternative training methods developed by the "War-Immediate Analysis" planning group and adopt those that are satisfactory.
- Establish appropriate priorities and target completion dates and develop other strategies for resolving training base expansion problems.
- Monitor the implementation of plans developed by responsible subordinate organizations to correct training base problems.

AGENCY COMMENTS

We obtained oral comments from the Office of the Secretary of Defense and Army officials, who said that they generally agreed with our findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Regarding our first recommendation to test the feasibility of alternative training methods, the Army said that a Training and Doctrine Command study initiated in December 1982 of all training installation expansion capabilities is the initial step in laying the groundwork for testing alternative training methods. The Army said that it would develop a plan of action to test training methods in fiscal year 1984 and that it expected to determine what kinds of expedient training methods could be taken upon full mobilization.

In response to our remaining two recommendations to correct training base expansion problems, the Army said that it (1) has developed action plans with milestones to address problem areas noted in this report and (2) will monitor the implementation of plans developed by subordinate organizations.

The Army also commented that it had taken several initiatives to reduce trainer shortages. First, a reorganization of Reserve training divisions had reduced the required strength level of training divisions. Second, the Army said that a forthcoming reduction in mobilization training requirements would probably reduce strength requirements. Third, the Army commented that its newly established policy of allowing military retirees to be preassigned to training divisions would reduce the shortage of pretrained personnel upon full mobilization. The Army commented that this policy will also reduce the shortage of training companies.

In a draft of this report, we said that the Army was also considering the use of individuals from late deploying or nondeploying units to reduce trainer and training company shortages. The Army said that this initiative had not been considered at the policy level and, therefore, we have deleted it from the report.


To address the problem of unqualified trainers, the Army said that its Training and Doctrine Command has initiatives underway to improve the quality of trainers, including (1) increased emphasis on the Reserve's noncommissioned officer education program and (2) development of military occupational specialty training courses to be given at divisions' home stations.

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As you know, section 236 of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 requires the head of a federal agency to submit a written statement on actions taken on our recommendations. This written statement must be submitted to the House Committee on Government Operations and the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs not later than 60 days after the date of the report. A written statement must also be submitted to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations with an agency's first request for appropriations made more than 60 days after the date of the report.

We are sending copies of this report to the Secretary of Defense; the Director, Office of Management and Budget; interested congressional committees; and other interested parties.

Sincerely yours,


Clifford I. Gould
Director