



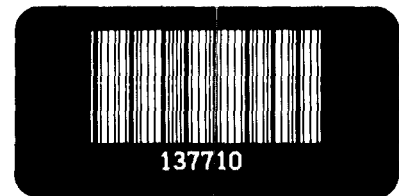
United States General Accounting Office

Report to the Honorable
Terry Sanford

January 1989

ARMY SPECIAL FORCES

Rationale for Relocating the 5th Special Forces Group From Fort Bragg, North Carolina



National Security and
International Affairs Division

B-221984

January 5, 1989

The Honorable Terry Sanford
United States Senate

Dear Senator Sanford:

This report responds to your April 27, 1988, request that we determine the Army's rationale for relocating the 5th Special Forces Group from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to Fort Campbell, Kentucky. As agreed with your office, our review focused on determining the effect of the relocation on the Fayetteville, North Carolina, area in terms of economic impact and troop population. In addition, we reviewed the effect of the relocation on the 5th Group's training and deployment capabilities. The results of our work are summarized below and discussed in more detail in appendixes I through IV. The objectives, scope, and methodology of our review are in appendix V.

Background

The Army's 5th Special Forces Group is an active Army unit of the Special Operations Forces. A Special Forces Group consists of three battalions, a headquarters, and supporting signal, intelligence, and service elements. Its missions include (1) conducting guerrilla warfare, (2) obtaining information that affects the strategic planning of enemy forces, (3) performing operations directed at specific targets, and (4) providing military and nonmilitary assistance to foreign governments. As of August 1988, the Group had 1,131 personnel assigned, as compared to an authorized level of 1,294.

Since the early 1980s, the 5th Group has been assigned to the U.S. Central Command, which is responsible for Southwest Asia and the Persian Gulf region.

The Army, in August 1986, relocated the 5th Group's 1st Battalion and its supporting elements (representing 273 soldiers) from Fort Bragg to Fort Campbell. Between May 1988 and July 1988, the Group's 2nd Battalion, its headquarters, and most of the remaining support elements (representing 762 soldiers) relocated from Fort Bragg to Fort Campbell. The Group's 3rd Battalion remained at Fort Bragg and will be redesignated the 1st Battalion of the 3rd Special Forces Group when the 3rd Group is activated in July 1990.

Rationale for the Relocation

The relocation of the 5th Group was one of a series of moves designed to relieve overcrowded training and working conditions at Fort Bragg. In addition to Fort Bragg, other Army installations involved in the series of potential moves to improve the organizational mission alignment of Army Special Operations Forces included Fort Campbell, Fort Bliss, and Hunter Army Airfield.

The Army organizations principally responsible for the Group's mission and organizational alignment initially recommended that the 5th Group be moved from Fort Bragg to Fort Bliss, Texas, because of its ideal training environment. In 1985, however, the Chief of Staff of the Army decided that training environment should not be the principal factor in determining where to relocate the Group. He requested another analysis that considered such factors as total cost, military construction cost, and the impact of unit relocations and activations on post populations.

In November 1985, the Secretary of the Army approved the Chief of Staff's plan to

- relocate the 5th Group from Fort Bragg to Fort Campbell in the 1986-88 time frame;
- activate a new special forces unit, the 3rd Special Forces Group, at Fort Bragg in the 1990-91 time frame;
- keep a major special operations aviation unit, the 160th Aviation Task Force, at Fort Campbell; and
- activate four additional XVIII Airborne Corps aviation units¹ at Fort Bragg between 1987 and 1989.

For a short period of time, the relocation of the 5th Group will decrease Fort Bragg's population. During this period, Fort Bragg plans several facility modernization projects that should improve its training and working capacity to handle anticipated increases in Fort Bragg's population through 1991. The decision to activate XVIII Airborne Corps aviation units at Fort Bragg was made to better align Special Operations Aviation units with units it supports.

¹Prior to the November 1985 decision, the Chief of Staff had decided to activate seven other XVIII Airborne Corps aviation units at Fort Bragg.

Impact on Training and Deployability

The relocation of the 5th Special Forces Group to Fort Campbell does not materially affect the training readiness or deployability of the Group. However, if the Group had been moved to Fort Bliss, as originally recommended, it would have been stationed in a training environment commensurate with its assigned mission. Thus, leaving the Group at Fort Bragg or moving it anywhere other than Fort Bliss does not enhance its mission-oriented training. As a result, the Group must still travel to Fort Bliss for such training.

The Group Commander told us that for other training needs, the facilities at Fort Campbell are sufficient and the relocation should not degrade the mission capability of the Group.

With regard to deployability, the Group Commander stated that the Group can deploy from the Fort Campbell airfield just as easily as it could from Pope Air Force Base, which is adjacent to Fort Bragg. Also, the relocation will not affect the ability of the Group to deploy within the time frames specified in its operations and contingency plans.

Cost of the Relocation

Relocating the 5th Group was only one of a series of unit activations and stationing actions considered by the Army. As a result, the Army did not look only at the cost of relocating the 5th Group but rather at the total estimated costs of all of the unit relocations and activations. In May 1985, the estimated costs of seven alternatives ranged from \$158.3 million to \$226.1 million.² These estimates, which were revised by October 1985, ranged from \$175.6 million to \$222.1 million for the three alternatives that remained after the Army decided that training location was not a primary factor and that the 160th Aviation Task Force would remain at Fort Campbell.

The alternative selected by the Army Chief of Staff in October 1985 was estimated to cost about \$196 million. This total included about \$16.4 million for moving the 5th Group's personnel and equipment to Fort Campbell and for upgrading and constructing facilities to accommodate the Group at that location. The remaining \$179.6 million related to relocating and activating other units in the overall re-stationing plan.

²The costs are nonrecurring costs for moving personnel and equipment and for major and minor construction to build or upgrade facilities. The costs do not include the military pay of personnel or the procurement of major items of equipment.

Economic Impact on the Fayetteville Area

The selected stationing alternative had the effect of reducing the population at Fort Bragg by about 1,800 personnel between 1986 and 1987.

If all the planned stationing actions are implemented, there should not be a long-term adverse economic impact on the Fayetteville area. In fact, the Army estimates that by 1993, the post population at Fort Bragg will increase by about 800 military personnel over its 1986 level of about 43,200. In addition, the Army estimates that it will spend about \$359 million for military construction at Fort Bragg during the 7-year period ending September 1993.

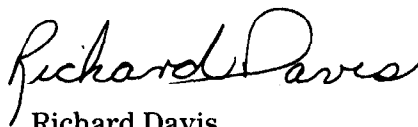
Agency Comments

The Department of Defense agreed with our findings and conclusions.

As agreed with your office, unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of the report until 10 days from its issue date. At that time, we will send copies to interested committees and other Members of Congress; the Secretaries of Defense and the Army; and the Director, Office of Management and Budget. Copies will also be available to other interested parties upon request.

GAO staff members who made major contributions to this report are listed in appendix VII.

Sincerely,



Richard Davis
Senior Associate Director

Contents

Letter		1
Appendix I		8
Rationale for	Overcrowded Conditions at Fort Bragg	8
Relocating the 5th	Improved Mission Alignment	9
Special Forces Group		
Appendix II		13
Impact of the	Special Training Facilities at Fort Bragg	13
Relocation on Unit	Other Training Needs	13
Training and	Impact on Deployability	14
Deployment		
Capability		
Appendix III		15
Cost of Relocating the		
Group to Fort		
Campbell		
Appendix IV		16
Impact on the		
Fayetteville, North		
Carolina, Area		
Appendix V		17
Objectives, Scope, and		
Methodology		
Appendix VI		18
Comments From the		
Department of		
Defense		

Appendix VII		19
Major Contributors to This Report	National Security and International Affairs Division, Washington, D.C.	19
	Atlanta Regional Office	19

Tables	Table I.1: Planned Activation Schedule of XVIII Corps Aviation Units at Fort Bragg	8
	Table I.2: Alternatives Considered in the May 1985 Stationing Plan	11
	Table I.3: Three Alternatives Presented to the Chief of Staff in October 1985	12
	Table III.1: Estimated Military Construction Costs at Fort Campbell	15
	Table IV.1: Projected Military Population and Military Construction Trends at Fort Bragg	16

Rationale for Relocating the 5th Special Forces Group

The Army's rationale for relocating the 5th Special Forces Group from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to Fort Campbell, Kentucky, was to relieve overcrowded training and working conditions at Fort Bragg and improve the organizational and mission alignment of the Special Operations Forces. This relocation was part of a comprehensive re-stationing and unit activation plan that involved not only Special Operations Forces but also Army aviation units.

Overcrowded Conditions at Fort Bragg

Overcrowding at Fort Bragg became an issue beginning in late 1982 when the 1st Special Operations Command—the parent command of the 5th Special Forces Group—began to expand. Between 1982 and 1984, the 1st Special Operations Command headquarters increased by 600 force structure spaces (personnel positions). This expansion resulted in the 5th Group's moving to 1940s-era temporary facilities that were upgraded at an estimated cost of about \$682,000. These facilities were normally used to support Reserve Officer Training Corps students who attended summer training at Fort Bragg.

The overcrowding issue took on added significance in April 1985 when the Chief of Staff of the Army approved a plan to activate seven XVIII Airborne Corps aviation units at Fort Bragg between 1987 and 1991, as shown in table I.1. These seven units represent 1,302 force structure spaces. As of September 1988, four of these units, with 608 spaces, had been activated at Fort Bragg. The other three units are scheduled to be activated in 1990 and 1991. These seven units, referred to as phase I, are in addition to the units in the approved November 1985 Stationing Plan.

Table I.1: Planned Activation Schedule of XVIII Corps Aviation Units at Fort Bragg

Unit	Number of spaces	Scheduled activation
Aviation Brigade Headquarters	76	Prior to August 1987
Headquarters, 2nd/159th Aviation	54	Prior to September 1987
Co. A, 2nd Battalion/ 159th Aviation	180	Prior to November 1987
1st Battalion/159th Aviation	298	September 1987
10th Aviation Group Headquarters	65	1990
1st Battalion/229th Aviation	266	1991
Air Cavalry Squadron	363	1991
Total	1,302	

Improved Mission Alignment

The recommendation on where to locate the 5th Group and the XVIII Airborne Corps aviation units to improve the mission alignment of Special Operations Forces was made by the Chief of Staff of the Army in October 1985 and approved by the Secretary of the Army in November 1985. The key events leading to the decision are discussed below.

In November 1982, various Army organizations recommended that the 5th Group be relocated to Fort Bliss, Texas, because the training environment at that location better suited the Group's Southwest Asia mission. In 1983, the then-Chief of Staff of the Army approved the recommendation "in concept," but no action was taken to move the Group.

In July 1984, Army Forces Command recommended that the Department of the Army announce the Group's move to Fort Bliss. Department of the Army headquarters advised Army Forces Command that the announcement would be delayed because the new Chief of Staff of the Army was not convinced that Fort Bragg would be overcrowded. Also, the Chief of Staff requested an analysis of projected troop strengths at Fort Bragg, Fort Bliss, and Fort Campbell.

Army Forces Command provided the projected troop strength data to the Department of the Army. In response to the data and because of its concern about the military construction funds that Fort Bliss would need in order to accommodate the 5th Group, the Army announced that it was forming a General Officers' Steering Committee to advise it on stationing alternatives.

In October 1984, the 1st Special Operations Command recommended that the 5th Group be relocated to Fort Bliss. It also recommended that the new 3rd Special Forces Group be activated at Hunter Army Airfield and that a major Special Operations aviation unit at Fort Campbell—the 160th Task Force—be relocated to Hunter because of its training and mission relationship with other Special Operations Forces that it supported.

In order to assess the 1st Special Operations Command's recommendation, Army Forces Command analyzed various stationing alternatives for the 5th Group, the 3rd Group, and various Special Operations and XVIII Airborne Corps aviation units. Based on its analysis of alternative locations in terms of cost, training, and operational security for the units, the Command recommended that the 5th Group be relocated to Fort Bliss, the new 3rd Group be activated at Fort Campbell, and the

**Appendix I
Rationale for Relocating the 5th Special
Forces Group**

160th Task Force be relocated from Fort Campbell to Hunter Army Airfield. In November and December 1984, the General Officers' Steering Committee and the Department of the Army agreed to relocate the 5th Group to Fort Bliss.

Army officials who were at the briefing where the recommendation to move the Group to Fort Bliss was presented to the Chief of Staff stated that the Chief of Staff was not convinced that Fort Bliss was the best location for the 5th Group. The Chief of Staff asked the Army Forces Command to analyze other alternatives. Its analysis, known as the May 1985 Stationing Plan, considered seven alternatives, one of which included relocating the 5th Group to Fort Bliss. The alternatives and their associated costs are shown in table I.2.

Just prior to finalizing the stationing plan in May 1985, the Department of the Army decided that, because of airlift availability, it was not necessary to locate the Group at its best training site, Fort Bliss. Then in July 1985, the Army decided that the 160th Aviation Task Force would remain at Fort Campbell.

The effect of these decisions was that all the alternatives except 1B, 4, and 5 were eliminated from consideration. Table I.3 shows the three remaining alternatives presented to the Chief of Staff in October 1985. The updated costs of the alternatives were \$196 million for alternative 1B, \$175 million for alternative 4, and \$222 million for alternative 5.

**Appendix I
Rationale for Relocating the 5th Special
Forces Group**

Table I.2: Alternatives Considered in the May 1985 Stationing Plan

Unit name	1A	1B	1C	2	3	4	5
3rd Special Forces Group	Campbell	Bragg	Campbell	Bragg	Bragg	Bragg	Bragg
5th Special Forces Group	Bliss	Campbell	Campbell	Campbell	Campbell	Campbell	Campbell
XVIII Corps Aviation Brigade							
Aviation Attack Group							
Headquarters, Headquarters Company	Bragg	Bragg	Bragg	Campbell	Campbell	Hunter	Hunter
Attack Battalion	Hunter	Hunter	Hunter	Campbell	Campbell	Hunter	Hunter
Attack Battalion	Campbell	Campbell	Campbell	Campbell	Campbell	Hunter	Hunter
Combat Aviation Battalion							
Headquarters, Headquarters Company	Bragg	Bragg	Bragg	Campbell	Campbell	Hunter	Bragg
Company A	Bragg	Bragg	Bragg	Campbell	Campbell	Hunter	Bragg
Company B	Bragg	Bragg	Bragg	Bragg	Bragg	Bragg	Bragg
Company C	Hunter	Hunter	Hunter	Hunter	Hunter	Benning	Hunter
Special Operations Force Aviation Brigade							
Headquarters, Headquarters Company	Hunter	Hunter	Hunter	Hunter	Hunter	Hunter	Campbell
Special Operations Force Aviation Brigade	Hunter	Hunter	Hunter	Hunter	Hunter	Hunter	Campbell
160th Aviation	Hunter	Hunter ^a	Hunter	Hunter	Benning	Campbell	Campbell
Nonrecurring costs (in millions)^b							
Military pay	\$8.3	\$8.3	\$8.3	\$7.9	\$7.8	\$6.3	\$7.6
Operations and maintenance	13.5	16.3	16.3	16.3	9.8	11.7	16.4
Military construction	168.0	164.6	164.6	167.1	140.6	155.7	202.1
Total	\$189.8	\$189.2	\$191.7	\$158.3	\$182.0	\$171.3	\$226.1

^aThis location was changed to Fort Campbell after the plan was finalized but before it was briefed to the Chief of Staff in October 1985.

^bNonrecurring costs include (1) all needed military construction, (2) permanent change-of-station costs, and (3) certain operations and maintenance costs.

**Appendix I
Rationale for Relocating the 5th Special
Forces Group**

**Table I.3: Three Alternatives Presented
to the Chief of Staff in October 1985**

Unit name	1B	4	5
3rd Special Forces Group	Bragg	Bragg	Bragg
5th Special Forces Group	Campbell	Campbell	Campbell
XVIII Corps Aviation Brigade Aviation Attack Group			
Headquarters, Headquarters Company	Bragg	Hunter	Hunter
Attack battalion	Hunter	Hunter	Hunter
Attack battalion	Campbell	Hunter	Hunter
Combat Aviation Battalion			
Headquarters, Headquarters Company	Bragg	Hunter	Bragg
Company A	Bragg	Hunter	Bragg
Company B	Bragg	Bragg	Bragg
Company C	Hunter	Benning	Hunter
Special Operations Force Aviation Brigade			
Headquarters, Headquarters Company	Hunter	Hunter	Campbell
Special Operations Force Aviation Brigade	Hunter	Hunter	Campbell
160th Aviation	Campbell	Campbell	Campbell

From these three alternatives, the Chief of Staff selected alternative 1B, which provided for

- relocating the 5th Group from Fort Bragg to Fort Campbell in the 1986-88 time frame;
- activating the 3rd Group at Fort Bragg in the 1990-91 time frame;
- keeping the 160th Aviation Task Force at Fort Campbell; and
- activating four of the XVIII Airborne Corps aviation units at Fort Bragg.

The Secretary of the Army approved the decision on November 25, 1985, and the Secretary of Defense was notified concurrently. The Congress was notified about 3 weeks later.

Impact of the Relocation on Unit Training and Deployment Capability

Fort Bragg offers a variety of specialized and advanced training opportunities in language, special warfare, and free-fall parachuting. While some of these training opportunities benefit Special Forces Groups, others do not. In addition, Special Forces Groups must travel to other locations for some training needs.

The Group will now deploy from the Fort Campbell airfield rather than from Pope Air Force Base, which was its deployment base when it was located at Fort Bragg. Each of these locations meets the Group's needs in the time frames required in its operations plans. Overall, the Army believes that relocating the 5th Group to Fort Campbell has not affected its training preparedness or deployment capabilities.

Special Training Facilities at Fort Bragg

The 1st Special Operations Command Language School at Fort Bragg provides two language programs to Special Forces soldiers: (1) basic acquisition language training and (2) remedial-refresher-maintenance-enhancement training. Both language programs are also available at Fort Campbell. Typically, a soldier acquires basic language training before assignment to a Special Forces Group. Once assigned, a soldier requiring increased language proficiency can take refresher courses at Fort Campbell just as well as at Fort Bragg.

The Army Special Warfare Center and School at Fort Bragg does meet a variety of training needs of soldiers in the 5th Group. These needs include training in high-altitude, low-opening free-fall parachuting; survival, escape, resistance, and evasion tactics; operations intelligence; military occupational specialties; and advanced noncommissioned officer's skills. In order to take advantage of these training opportunities, the Group will have to periodically return to Fort Bragg.

Other Training Needs

One of the 5th Group's training needs not met by either Fort Bragg or Fort Campbell is scuba training. This training is only available at the Special Forces Underwater Operations Branch at Key West, Florida. After initial training in Florida, individuals or units train in the lakes near Fort Bragg. Now this training will be conducted in lakes near Fort Campbell.

Another important training need of the Group is desert and mountain training. To prepare it for this type of environment, the Group will have to continue to travel to Fort Bliss and other locations.

**Impact on
Deployability**

The Army's May 1985 stationing plan included an analysis that showed that the airfield adjacent to Fort Campbell satisfies the Group's deployment needs. The airfield used to be an Air Force Strategic Air Command base and is now an alternate landing site for the space shuttle. The 5th Group Commander stated that the airfield meets the unit's needs and that deploying from the Fort Campbell airfield, as opposed to Pope Air Force Base near Fort Bragg, will not affect the Group's ability to meet deployment commitments prescribed in its operations plans. Our analysis confirmed that the Group's deployment commitments would not be affected by the relocation.

The 5th Group Commander told us that relocating the Group to Fort Campbell has not affected its readiness or training preparedness. This is also the position of the Department of the Army.

Cost of Relocating the Group to Fort Campbell

The total cost of relocating the 5th Group from Fort Bragg to Fort Campbell is about \$16.4 million, excluding the military pay of personnel and the procurement of major end items that would be the same regardless of where the Group was located.

The \$16.4 million is in three cost categories. One category is the cost of transporting unit equipment and supplies and upgrading some facilities to accommodate the 5th Group at Fort Campbell. This is estimated to cost about \$583,200 and is paid out of the operations and maintenance account. A second cost category, which is paid from the military pay account, is the permanent change-of-station costs to move the soldiers and their families to Fort Campbell. This cost was estimated at \$2.9 million. The third cost category is military construction to meet the Group's future facility needs at Fort Campbell. These costs, which are funded from both military construction and operations and maintenance accounts, are estimated at \$12.9 million for the 4 fiscal years ending in 1989. The minor military construction projects funded from the operations and maintenance account are estimated at \$924,000. The remaining projects, estimated to cost \$12.0 million, are shown in table III.1.

Table III.1: Estimated Military Construction Costs at Fort Campbell

Dollars in millions		
Project	Fiscal year funded	Estimated cost
Conversion of team facility complex	1987	\$0.9
Special Forces mission support facility	1988	6.2
Hardstand/tactical equipment shop	1989	4.9
Total		\$12.0

Impact on the Fayetteville, North Carolina, Area

The military population at Fort Bragg is expected to increase over the next several years, assuming that all of the Army's currently scheduled force structure actions are taken. However, these plans could change if the Army has to make force structure and manpower reductions.

Although relocating the 5th Group will result in a short-term decrease in the population at Fort Bragg, the decrease will be more than offset by unit activations at Fort Bragg. For example, the seven aviation units that the Army plans to activate between 1987 and 1991 will increase the post population by about 1,300 soldiers. After considering all planned force-structuring adjustments, the Army estimates that by 1993 Fort Bragg will have about 800 more military personnel than it had in 1986.

As a result of unit activations and facility modernization projects at Fort Bragg, the Army estimates that it will spend about \$359 million for military construction at this location between 1986 and 1993. Table IV.1 shows the projected military population and military construction at Fort Bragg over the next several years.

Table IV.1: Projected Military Population and Military Construction Trends at Fort Bragg

Dollars in millions		
Fiscal year	Number of personnel	Military construction
1986	43,200	\$41.2
1987	41,400	19.8
1988	41,400	57.2
1989	42,400	32.8
1990	43,000	39.9
1991	44,400	79.8
1992	44,000	40.2
1993	44,000	48.1
Total		\$359.0

The projected increase in military population and in military construction at Fort Bragg should enhance the economic climate in the Fayetteville area. While there might have been some individual hardships as a result of relocating the 5th Group from Fort Bragg, discussions with the Group Commander and various enlisted personnel disclosed that the Group, as a whole, is satisfied with its new location.

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

Our objective was to determine the Army's rationale for relocating the 5th Special Forces Group from Fort Bragg to Fort Campbell. We were also asked to determine the effect of this relocation on the Group's deployment capability; the cost of the relocation; and the resulting economic impact on the Fayetteville, North Carolina, area.

We reviewed pertinent documents and interviewed appropriate officials at the following organizations in order to obtain an understanding of the reasons for the move and of how Fort Campbell was selected as the Group's permanent stationing location:

- Headquarters, Department of the Army, Washington, D.C.;
- United States Special Operations Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida;
- United States Central Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida;
- U.S. Forces Command, Fort McPherson, Georgia;
- U.S. Army 1st Special Operations Command, Fort Bragg, North Carolina;
- XVIII Corps (Airborne), Fort Bragg, North Carolina;
- 101st Division (Air Assault), Fort Campbell, Kentucky; and
- 5th Special Forces Group, Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

We reviewed Army regulations that prescribe the factors for performing stationing analyses and the 1st Special Operations Command regulation that prescribes the training criteria for Special Forces Groups. We also reviewed modified tables of organization and equipment for Special Forces Groups and the 160th Aviation Task Force to determine the number of soldiers and the amount of equipment each unit was authorized. In addition, we reviewed the Army's force list to identify past, present, and future force-structuring actions so that we could determine the effect of these actions on post populations. At the various locations, we also reviewed official correspondence files and interviewed responsible officials to obtain clarification and/or interpretation of these documents. We did not validate the cost estimates shown in the stationing alternatives, nor did we interview the former Chief of Staff of the Army who made the final stationing decision.

Our review was performed from June through September 1988 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Comments From the Department of Defense



SPECIAL OPERATIONS/
LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-2400

7 NOV 1988

Mr. Richard Davis
Senior Associate Director,
National Security and
International Affairs Division
U.S. General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Davis:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the General Accounting Office (GAO) draft report, "ARMY SPECIAL FORCES: Army's Rationale for Relocating the 5th Special Forces Group from Fort Bragg, North Carolina," dated October 24, 1988 (GAO Code 393301/OSD Case 7814).

The DoD has reviewed the report, concurs with the GAO findings and conclusions, and has no further comments. The Department appreciates the opportunity to comment on this draft report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles S. Whitehouse".

Charles S. Whitehouse
Assistant Secretary of Defense
for Special Operations and
Low Intensity Conflict

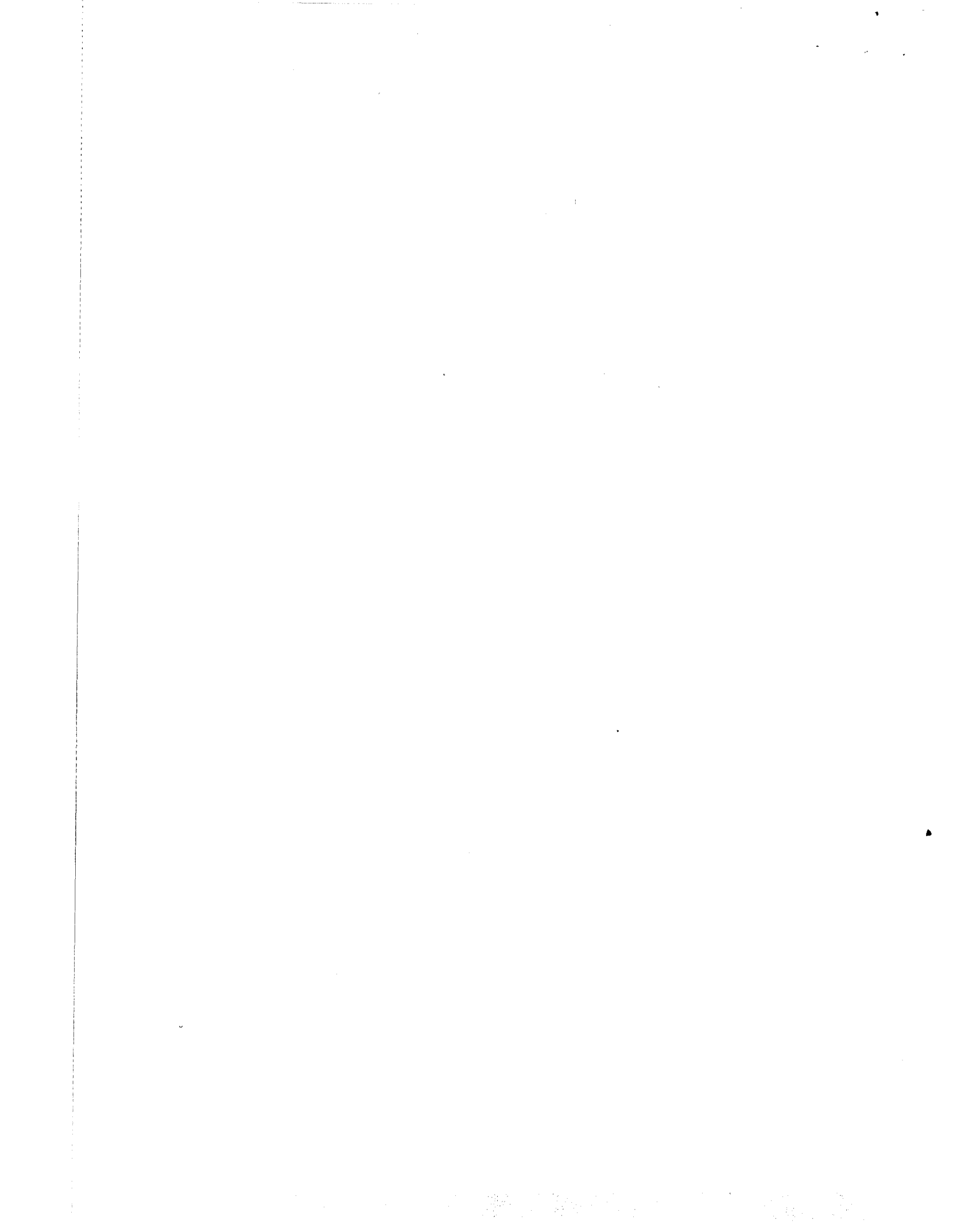
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