

GAO

Report to the Chairman, Subcommittee
on Readiness, Committee on Armed
Services, House of Representatives

March 1992

OPERATION DESERT STORM

Army Had Difficulty Providing Adequate Active and Reserve Support Forces



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**National Security and
International Affairs Division**

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The Honorable Earl Hutto
Chairman, Subcommittee on Readiness,
Committee on Armed Services
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This report responds to your request that we review the Army's provision of support forces for Operations Desert Shield and Storm. It discusses how the Army selected support forces for these operations, how it readied these forces to deploy, and how well its force structure accommodated the operations' need for ready support forces. It contains recommendations to the Secretaries of Defense and the Army aimed at improving the Army's ability to support future conflicts and a matter for congressional consideration related to the President's reserve call-up authority.

As agreed with your office, unless you publicly announce the contents of this report earlier, we plan no further distribution of it until 10 days from the date of this letter. At that time, we will send copies to interested parties and make copies available to others upon request.

Please call Richard Davis, Director, Army Issues, at (202) 275-4141 if you have any questions concerning this report. GAO staff members who made major contributions to this report are listed in appendix I.

Sincerely yours,

Frank C. Conahan
Assistant Comptroller General

Executive Summary

Purpose

Support forces were critical to the success of Operations Desert Shield and Storm. The Army played a major role in providing these forces by integrating all elements of its Total Force to support combat operations in a harsh environment, over long distances, and in a place without a permanent U.S. presence. At the request of the Chairman, Subcommittee on Readiness, House Committee on Armed Services, GAO assessed (1) the Army's processes for selecting support forces for the war, (2) its procedures for readying them to deploy, and (3) the adequacy of its force structure in meeting support force needs. GAO's objective was to identify lessons from the war that the Army might apply as it downsizes its forces.

Background

Support forces maintain equipment, transport and distribute supplies, provide services, and sustain combat in many other ways. Because about 68 percent of the Army's combat-support and combat service-support forces are in the Army Reserve and National Guard, the President had to call up the reserves 3 weeks into the crisis. By invoking a limited reserve call-up under 10 U.S.C. 673b, the President could activate and deploy up to 200,000 reserves in units for 90 days, with a 90-day extension if needed.

The buildup continued for 5 months under this limited call-up until January 18, 1991, when the President invoked a broader call-up authority under 10 U.S.C. 673. This allowed the Department of Defense (DOD) to mobilize up to one million reserves, including individuals as well as those in units, for up to 2 years. DOD authorized the Army to call up reserves incrementally from an initial 25,000 in August 1990 to 220,000 in January 1991. In all, the Army called up over 140,000 reservists and deployed over 74,000 to the Gulf.

Results in Brief

Unreliable data on unit readiness, the unanticipated extended period that the limited reserve call-up remained in effect, and the incremental way in which DOD implemented the call-up created an extensive force selection process that might have posed problems had there been less time to prepare for combat. GAO identified factors that created difficulties in filling support force requirements and concluded that an earlier invoking of the broader reserve call-up authority under 10 U.S.C. 673 would have eliminated some problems and might have allowed fuller participation by reserves.

The Army lacked specific plans for correcting personnel and equipment shortages under a limited call-up and had to extensively transfer resources

among units. This degraded the capability of units that might have been needed later. Despite these transfers, it could not totally rectify deficiencies and sent support units at a lower standard of readiness than combat units.

The long lead time for the buildup, modern ports and airstrips, host nation support, and the war's short duration allowed the Army to provide most needed support forces. Despite these favorable conditions, the Army ran out of some types of units and had no contingency plans for creating new ones where shortages were forecast. Ad hoc measures filled some gaps, but remaining deficiencies could have had serious consequences had events unfolded differently.

In revising its force structure, the Army is adding some active support forces to its contingency force and is considering substituting additional active support forces for reserves in this force. Some movement in this direction appears warranted based on the initial support shortages that surfaced in the war. However, because reserves may play a greater role as the Army downsizes, GAO believes that any decision to shift additional capability from the reserves to the active force must be weighed carefully. In GAO's opinion, the Army needs to examine and address the factors that led reserves to be excluded from this war so as to preserve as many roles as possible. Improved mobilization procedures might make it feasible for more reserve support forces to participate in the contingency force.

Principal Findings

Various Factors Impeded Force Selection and Led to the Exclusion of Trained Reserves

The Army had to engage in an extensive force selection process because (1) an operational plan and troop list to fit this scenario was not in place and (2) unreliable unit status reports made it more difficult to quickly identify the readiest units. Many reserve units trained for Southwest Asia were not selected because they (1) were less ready than other units or (2) had not trained with deployed forces. Also, because the call-up was not immediately invoked, the Army substituted active forces for some reserve forces it had intended to deploy. Because DOD incrementally implemented the call-up, the Army excluded some reserve command and control units to stay within personnel ceilings. Creating smaller units out of larger ones and forming new active units to substitute for reserve units led to

time-consuming paperwork, adversely affected unit integrity, and damaged the morale of reservists left behind.

Conducting operations for 5 months under a limited reserve call-up hampered the Army in providing ready support forces. Under the law, it could call up units but not individuals to fill vacancies and could retain support units on active duty for only 90 days with a possible—but not certain—extension of another 90 days. Also, the Army did not send people to finish initial Army training to enable them to later join their units because it interpreted the law to preclude this.

In reviewing the legislative history, GAO found that questions remain about Congress' intent in excluding individuals—including those needing more training—from a limited call-up. It is also unclear whether Congress intended a conflict of this nature to be conducted for so long under this limited call-up authority. GAO believes that consideration of changes to the call-up legislation should be made within the context of a clear understanding of Congress' intent regarding this legislation.

**Many Units Needed
Additional People,
Equipment, and Training**

Although the Army had detailed plans for mobilizing reserves under the broader authority, it had no plans tailored to a limited call-up scenario. This occurred because the Army had assumed that a limited call-up would be quickly followed by a partial or full mobilization. As a result, Army personnel developed ad hoc, nonuniform procedures as they adapted existing plans to the limited call-up situation.

To rectify shortages, the Army transferred people and equipment from units not scheduled to deploy into units that were. These transfers (1) degraded the capability of units that might have been needed later and (2) sometimes resulted in units that had not trained together or on the equipment provided. Deployment dates rather than proficiency dictated the time units had to train. As a result, the training units received varied widely, and some was deferred until units arrived in the Gulf. Because the Army had no standard criteria for validating proficiency, it had no assurance that similar units mobilized at different sites were similarly proficient.

**Force Structure
Weaknesses Surfaced in
Supplying Support Forces**

The Army was able to provide most needed support forces through the reserve call-up, compensating actions, and host nation support. However, initially it could not provide some critically needed forces because much

of its capability was in the reserves and the call-up was not yet in effect. Over the course of the war, it sent virtually all of some types of forces, leaving few, if any, to reinforce operations had the war lasted longer or a second conflict arisen. The Army used nearly all of its heavy and medium truck units, water units, pipeline units, units controlling enemy prisoners of war, graves registration units, and postal units yet had large surpluses of other types of units.

In restructuring its forces, the Army is designing a five-division contingency force able to rapidly deploy to a major regional conflict. To ensure that this force is highly ready and can deploy quickly, the Army is retaining some active support forces it had previously planned to inactivate and considering substituting active forces for some reserve support units. GAO found some justification for these plans, since the types of units being retained were in short supply in the war. Also, some units needed early were primarily in the reserves and were initially unavailable. However, Congress has approved substantially fewer force reductions in the reserves than the administration has proposed and may be reluctant to accept further substitutions of active for reserve forces.

Matter for Congressional Consideration

The Congress may wish to examine the intent behind the use of the President's Selected Reserve call-up legislation (10 U.S.C. 673b) and the limiting provisions it contains and clarify whether this intent remains valid in light of experiences of the Gulf war.

Recommendations

To assist Congress in weighing the merits of proposed changes to reserve call-up legislation, GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense identify problems related to this legislation that the services encountered and alternative actions that could mitigate these problems without legislative changes. GAO recommends that the Secretary of the Army (1) evaluate factors that led to the exclusion of reserves and identify actions to ensure fuller reserve participation in future conflicts, (2) develop mobilization plans appropriate to a limited call-up scenario, and (3) improve plans for filling understrength support units and adding new units so that support capacity can be more readily increased. Other recommendations appear in the body of this report.

Agency Comments

GAO provided DOD a draft of this report for comment, but DOD did not provide official comments. However, GAO discussed the report with DOD officials and incorporated their informal comments where appropriate.

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Abbreviations

CONUSA	Continental U.S. Army
DOD	Department of Defense
FORSCOM	Forces Command
GAO	General Accounting Office
IRR	Individual Ready Reserve

Introduction

Support forces were critical to the success of Operations Desert Shield and Storm. The Army played a key role in providing these forces by integrating all the elements of its Total Force—the active Army, the Army Reserve, the National Guard, host nation personnel, civilian personnel, and contractors—to support combat operations in a harsh environment, over long distances, and in a location where the United States had no permanent presence.

But while these accomplishments were impressive, the Army also experienced problems in providing ready support forces to sustain this conflict. This report assesses the Army's experiences in selecting and mobilizing support forces for the Gulf war and the adequacy of its force structure to accommodate support force requirements. Our objective was to identify lessons from these operations that the Army might apply in its ongoing deliberations over the future composition of its force structure, peacetime resourcing and training strategies, and mobilization procedures as it downsizes and restructures its forces.

Support Forces Played a Key Role in the Gulf War

A primary objective of the Department of Defense's (DOD) Total Force Policy has been to maintain as small an active peacetime force as national security policy, military strategy, and overseas commitments permit and to integrate the capabilities of active and reserve forces in a cost-effective manner. In implementing this policy, the Army has placed a substantial portion of its total force in the Army Reserve and the National Guard and has assigned them demanding wartime missions and critical peacetime operational responsibilities.

In this regard, the Army has increasingly assigned many vital combat-support and combat service-support missions to the reserves.¹ Today, the reserves provide over two-thirds of all the Army's support forces, with about 41 percent of these forces in the Army Reserve and about 27 percent in the National Guard. These reserve support forces and their active counterparts load and unload cargo, transport and distribute supplies, maintain equipment, provide services to their fellow soldiers, manage and coordinate support forces, and otherwise sustain combat operations. Some of these forces are an integral part of divisional forces, while others—especially those providing combat service-support—support the divisions at the corps level and above.²

¹The term "reserves" in this report refers to both the Army Reserve and the National Guard.

²The term "support forces" as used in this report refers to both combat-support and combat service-support forces.

Gulf War Required the Largest Reserve Call-up Since World War II

The Gulf war was a major test of the viability of DOD's Total Force Policy in that it required the greatest call-up and mobilization of the reserves since World War II. The unique circumstances of this conflict, which occurred in a distant region without American bases and in a desert environment, significantly increased the requirements for some types of support forces and made the mobilization of reserve support units critical to the success of this operation. In all, about 140,000 members of the Army Reserve and the National Guard—the vast majority of whom were support forces—were called to active duty. About 74,000 of these forces were deployed to support operations in the Gulf, while others either provided additional capability to deploy U.S. forces or filled positions in the United States and Europe vacated by deployed forces.

Over the course of the buildup and the war, reserve participation grew. The objective of the initial U.S. military operation—"Operation Desert Shield"—which began shortly after Iraq invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990, was to deter Iraq and defend Saudi Arabia. From the outset, it was clear that the buildup could not be sustained without the participation of reserve support units. On August 22, 1990, the President exercised his "limited" call-up authority under 10 U.S.C. 673b to call reserves to active duty. Between August 7 and November 7, 1990, the Army's goal was to establish a minimum-essential force of 4-1/3 divisions, beginning with the first units of the 82nd Airborne Division. On November 8, 1990, the President decided to increase this force to conduct offensive operations to liberate Kuwait, if that became necessary.

On January 17, 1991, after the United Nations' deadline for the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait expired, the air war began, and the operation became known as "Operation Desert Storm." On January 18, 1991, the President signed an executive order mobilizing U.S. forces under a broader call-up authority (10 U.S.C. 673), which permitted the Army to also call up members of the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR). The Army continued to build up its forces until a total of 7-2/3 divisions and their supporting units had been deployed. On February 24, 1991, the ground war began. It lasted about 100 hours and ended in the defeat of the invading Iraqi military forces and the liberation of Kuwait.

Numerous Army entities and officials interacted to identify and mobilize units to fill the support requirements of this operation. The Commander in Chief of Central Command was responsible for all operations in this region, and the Army forces under his control were designated "U.S. Army Central Command." The staff of U.S. Army Central Command identified

requirements for combat-support and combat service-support units and sent its requests to Forces Command (FORSCOM). Department of the Army Headquarters, FORSCOM, entities of the National Guard and the Army Reserve, and the Continental U.S. Armies (CONUSA)³ interacted to select the units best able to meet operational requirements. These entities, plus personnel at over 40 mobilization stations, took collective actions to provide the personnel, equipment, and training required to ready units for deployment. Officials of the U.S. Army, Europe, identified the specific support units that deployed from Europe.

Gulf War Tested the Assumptions Upon Which the Army's Force Structure Was Built

The Gulf war tested a major assumption upon which the Army had built its force structure: namely, that risks could be taken with support forces in peacetime because their capabilities could be expanded in war. The basis of the Army's support force planning was its belief that any war that would tax U.S. support force capability would most likely occur in response to a war in Europe. The Army saw the increased use of reserves, supplemented by host nation personnel and equipment, as a cost-effective means of meeting support requirements. In addition, given resource constraints, some required support units were not provided any people or equipment and existed only on paper, the plan being to resource these units when and if they were needed.

In the early 1980s, when revising its force structure, the Army deliberately reduced its support forces and staffed them, on average, at lower levels than combat units. The Army believed that, since it could not afford to keep all required forces in its inventory or to fully resource them, it would be better to accept risks in support forces than to accept them in combat forces, since the former could more easily be generated or rebuilt if a conflict arose. Since then, concerns have been voiced about whether the revised force structure—which is lean on support forces—is adequate to support combat operations on a large scale.

In accepting risks in its support forces, the Army assumed that once a partial mobilization of U.S. forces was called, it would be able to

- fill vacancies in active and reserve units with personnel from the IRR,
- quickly prepare and deploy reserve support forces at readiness levels high enough to sustain combat operations, and

³Continental U.S. Armies are major subordinate commands of FORSCOM, which direct and control all Army Reserve elements within their geographical areas. They also supervise the training and monitor the readiness of National Guard units within their areas.

- create new support units by providing resources to required units that had not been provided personnel and equipment in peacetime due to affordability constraints.

In addition, the Army assumed that support forces could be augmented through host nation agreements that committed them to provide specified types of support to U.S. combat forces. Through such agreements, the Army would avoid devoting personnel to requirements that could be met through other means.

Restructuring Affords the Army an Opportunity to Reassess Its Support Forces

Ironically, the same day that Iraq invaded Kuwait, President Bush announced a new post-Cold War strategy that would focus less on the Soviet threat in Europe and more on the threat of major regional conflicts. The Army is currently both restructuring its forces and adjusting its strategic roles in support of this new strategy. As the Army restructures, it is also reducing the size of its force. The Army plans to reduce its active and reserve forces by over 400,000 by the end of fiscal year 1995. Army combat divisions would be reduced from the 18 active and 10 reserve divisions that existed in 1990 to 12 active, 6 reserve, and 2 cadre divisions.⁴

The new post-Cold War strategy will be accomplished by a smaller active and reserve force. Therefore, lessons learned from Operations Desert Shield and Storm may assist the Army in its deliberations over what types and how many support units it will retain in its force structure, how much peacetime resourcing it will provide them, and what improvements might be made to its mobilization procedures to ensure that future conflicts can be effectively sustained.

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

At the request of the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Readiness, House Committee on Armed Services, we assessed (1) the Army's processes for selecting support forces for the war, (2) its procedures for readying these forces to deploy, and (3) the adequacy of its force structure in meeting requirements for support forces. GAO's objective was to identify lessons from these operations that the Army might apply as it downsizes and restructures its forces.

⁴Cadre divisions are partially staffed and equipped in peacetime but can be fully staffed, equipped, and trained after total mobilization.

We conducted this review as the Gulf war evolved, and although we conducted no fieldwork in the Gulf region, we obtained information from numerous key officials directly involved in operations there. We also conducted extensive interviews with Department of the Army Headquarters personnel involved in unit selection and mobilization, as well as individuals responsible for overseeing force development issues for each major support branch of the Army. These officials were from the Offices of the Deputy Chiefs of Staff for Operations, Logistics, and Personnel; the National Guard Bureau; and the Office of the Chief, Army Reserve. We also discussed the Army's force reduction plans with these officials.

To evaluate the selection and mobilization process for reserve units, we interviewed and obtained documents from officials at FORSCOM, Fort McPherson, Georgia; and the National Guard Bureau and the Office of the Chief, Army Reserve, in Washington, D.C. To examine mobilization procedures, we visited several mobilization stations, including Fort Campbell, Kentucky; Fort Lee, Virginia; Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri; Fort Meade, Maryland; and Fort Riley, Kansas. At the mobilization sites, we observed the mobilization process, received briefings on mobilization activities, and obtained mobilization information from installation officials.

At Fort Leonard Wood and Fort Meade, we interviewed commanders of support units deploying to the war about their preparations for deployment. At Forts Campbell and Riley, we interviewed officials returning from the war on the strengths and weaknesses of the mobilization process. To identify the actions needed to prepare units for movement to the mobilization sites, we interviewed key officials at the Kansas National Guard in Topeka, Kansas; the Tennessee National Guard and the 125th Army Reserve Command, Nashville, Tennessee; the 89th Army Reserve Command, Wichita, Kansas; and the 2nd Army, Atlanta, Georgia. At these locations, we also obtained documents on their operations, activities, and concerns during mobilization.

To examine the adequacy of the Army's force structure in filling requirements for support forces, we obtained information from members of the Third U.S. Army—the Army headquarters that supported Central Command and that had recently returned from Southwest Asia—and officials of FORSCOM, both located at Fort McPherson, Georgia. To assess the depth of the Army's force structure for specific types of forces, we analyzed computer-generated force structure data from the Third U.S.

Army on the forces deployed to Southwest Asia and compared it to the Army's pre-Desert Shield force structure. We also visited the Army's Quartermaster School at Fort Lee, Virginia, and the Engineer School at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, to obtain their perspectives on the adequacy of the force structure to meet the operations' support force requirements. We visited the Combined Arms Center and the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and the Combined Arms Support Command at Fort Lee, Virginia, to obtain viewpoints on support force requirements and doctrine. Finally, we visited the Army Reserve Personnel Center in St. Louis, Missouri, to obtain information on the mobilization of Individual Ready Reservists. We also obtained information related to support units at the Aviation Systems Command, also in St. Louis.

In addition to the above, we reviewed documents related to the Total Force Policy, the Army Mobilization and Operations Planning System, and the Forces Command Mobilization and Deployment System and pertinent Army regulations, field manuals, mobilization plans, and Army studies related to mobilization, training, support doctrine, and unit status reporting. We also reviewed the legislative history of 10 U.S.C. 673b to determine the intent behind specific aspects of this legislation.

We conducted this review from October 1990 to August 1991 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Various Factors Impeded the Army's Selection of Support Forces for the Gulf War

For the following reasons, the Army had to engage in an extensive force selection process to identify those units best suited to supporting operations in the Gulf:

- An approved operational plan and troop deployment list to respond to a scenario such as Operation Desert Shield/Storm was not in place to serve as a starting point for filling requirements.
- The extended period during which the Army operated under the limited reserve call-up (authorized under 10 U.S.C. 673b) restricted the Army's flexibility in providing needed support forces.
- The incremental way in which DOD implemented the call-up led to inefficient actions and the exclusion of certain trained reservists in order to stay within personnel ceilings.
- Unit status reports obscured the true readiness of individual units and made it more difficult to identify the readiest ones.

A need exists to examine the factors that created difficulties in selecting forces for these operations because future conflicts may not afford the luxury of time to engage in an extensive force selection process. Although DOD plans to propose changes to the limited call-up legislation (10 U.S.C. 673b), a better understanding of Congress' intent with respect to this legislation is needed when changes are considered. Moreover, because effective implementation of the Total Force Policy will become even more important as the Army downsizes, the Army should examine how it might overcome the difficulties that led to the exclusion of trained reserves from important wartime roles.

Lack of Completed Operational Plan and Troop List Led to Extensive Force Selection Process

The Army develops operational plans to address the most likely scenarios in different regions of the world. These plans (1) preselect active and reserve units to carry out the plan (these units are included on a "troop list";) and (2) specify when and where mobilizing units are to report, from what locations they are to deploy, and when they are needed. Army planners recognize that an actual conflict will probably deviate from the expected scenario, and therefore some sort of force selection process will be needed. However, the operational plan and troop list at least provide a starting point for meeting the needs of an actual operation and reduce the amount of attention that must be paid to selecting forces.

For Southwest Asia, the Army's main operational plan envisioned an invasion into Iran that threatened Gulf oil supplies. In the summer of 1990, the U.S. Army's Central Command had begun preparing a plan to focus on

the defense of the Arabian Peninsula against non-Soviet regional threats. The Command used the draft plan in an exercise termed "Internal Look '90" and identified in broad terms the types of units that would be needed to engage in such a conflict with a force of about one corps. However, the Army had not yet approved the plan or designated the troop list to carry it out when Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

This lack of a troop list to use as a starting point for identifying forces for the Gulf war set into motion an extensive force selection process involving many different Army entities. Once Central Command requested specific types of support forces, officials at Army Headquarters; FORSCOM; U.S. Army, Europe; the Office of the Chief, U.S. Army Reserve; the National Guard Bureau; state and regional arms of the reserve components; individual installations, units, and over 40 mobilization sites interacted to identify the specific units to deploy. The time devoted to this force selection process did not pose insurmountable problems, since the offensive did not begin for 5 months and deployments were constrained by available airlift and sealift. However, some officials said that the Army may not have the time to conduct such an extensive force selection process in future conflicts.

Limited Reserve Call-up Restricted the Army's Flexibility in Selecting Forces

While the President's initial decision to call up the reserves in August 1990 under 10 U.S.C. 673b appears to have been consistent with Congress' intent for the use of this legislation, we found that continuing to conduct these operations for 5 months under this limited call-up authority created several difficulties for the Army in filling support requirements. Specific restrictions of this legislative authority and the time needed to invoke it introduced inefficiencies into the force selection process; prevented access to some needed reserves; and, in some cases, led the Army to exclude trained reservists from the operation due to their initial unavailability. An earlier invoking of the broader call-up authority (10 U.S.C. 673) would have provided the Army more flexibility in filling personnel requirements and would have eliminated some of the problems that were encountered. Questions remain about Congress' intent regarding certain key provisions of 10 U.S.C. 673b.

Reserves Called to Active Duty Under Different Authorities

The President exercised two separate legislative authorities to call reservists to active duty during the Gulf war:

- Under 10 U.S.C. 673b, the President may activate not more than 200,000 members of the Selected Reserve⁵ from all services for an initial 90 days. Under this "limited reserve call-up," he may extend this period for an additional 90 days if he deems such an extension necessary.
- Under 10 U.S.C. 673, upon declaring a national emergency, the President may activate up to one million members of the Ready Reserve⁶ for up to 2 years.

The President exercised the more limited authority under 10 U.S.C. 673b on August 22, 1990—3 weeks after Iraq invaded Kuwait. This was the first time a President had exercised this legislative authority since its enactment in 1976. The services operated under this call-up legislation, which included an initial 90-day call-up with a subsequent 90-day extension, until January 18, 1991. At that time, the President invoked 10 U.S.C. 673 and authorized the call-up of up to one million reservists. According to DOD, about 213,000 reservists were ultimately called to active duty to support operations in the Gulf under these two legislative authorities.

Specific Provisions of the Limited Call-up Legislation Hampered Force Selection

In reviewing the Army's force selection process, we found that specific restrictions on the President's authority contained in the limited call-up legislation (10 U.S.C. 673b)—as well as the delay in invoking it—created difficulties for the Army in filling support requirements. Under these provisions, the Army could not call up members of the Individual Ready Reserve or individual members of Selected Reserve units to fill unit vacancies. Moreover, on the basis of its interpretation of the legislation, the Army did not call up members of reserve units who had not completed initial training to be sent for further training because they believed the law precluded this. In addition, the Army excluded some reserve units from the operation because an extension of the legislation's 90-day limit on reservists' service was uncertain.

One restriction of the limited call-up legislation is that it requires that only "units" of the Selected Reserve or individual members of the Selected

⁵The Selected Reserve in the Army includes members of the Army National Guard, the Army Reserve, the Active Guard Reserve, and Individual Mobilization Augmentees.

⁶The Ready Reserve in the Army includes members of the Selected Reserve, the Individual Ready Reserve, and the Inactive National Guard.

Reserve who are not in units be called to active duty.⁷ This restriction prevented the Army from calling up individual members of Army Reserve and National Guard units, as well as about 286,000 members of the IRR to fill unit vacancies.⁸ These vacancies existed because many units (1) had not been authorized to have all of their required wartime personnel in peacetime and (2) contained some personnel deemed unable to deploy because they had not completed initial training, had medical problems, or could not meet other deployment criteria.

The Army filled some of these vacancies with reserve volunteers, retirees, and individuals transferred from units not yet called to deploy. As discussed in chapter 3, these latter transfers rendered the losing units less ready to deploy had they been needed later and created other difficulties. Army officials told us that the Army would have had more flexibility in filling unit vacancies (1) had the legislation permitted access to the Individual Ready Reserve or individuals assigned to units of the Select Reserve or (2) had there been an earlier exercise of 10 U.S.C. 673, which would have permitted access to these categories of reservists. DOD is currently reviewing what changes related to the call-up legislation that it will propose to Congress. One change under consideration is to permit the President to call up members of the IRR under 10 U.S.C. 673b to alleviate some of the problems encountered in filling vacancies.

A second restriction of 10 U.S.C. 673b is that it authorizes the President to call up personnel to serve only in an operational mission. DOD officials interpreted this provision as precluding the services from sending untrained members of activated reserve units—those who had not completed initial basic training or military occupational specialty training—to training that would enable them to deploy later. Accordingly, the Army transferred these individuals to non-deploying units and filled their positions with trained personnel from other units. As noted, these transfers degraded the capabilities of remaining units.

A third restriction of 10 U.S.C. 673b is the initial 90-day limitation it imposes on the duration of a reservist's call-up. According to Army officials, this limitation led the Army to hold back some units in case forces were needed to replace units whose term of service had expired. This was especially true when the Army had relatively few units of a given

⁷Individual members of the Select Reserve not assigned to units are called "Individual Mobilization Augmentees." They fill specified positions in active (but not reserve) units after mobilization. As of September 1990, the Army had about 14,000 individuals in this category.

⁸Once the President exercised the broader legislative authority on January 18, 1991, the Army called to active duty about 20,000 members of the IRR who had served in an active or reserve unit within the preceding 12 months.

type, such as water purification units. Although the legislation specifies that the President may extend this period of active duty for another 90 days, as he did in this operation, Army officials noted that there was no guarantee that this extension would be granted. FORSCOM officials advised us in December 1991 that DOD might propose to Congress that the initial call-up period be extended to 180 days with a possible extension of another 180 days.

In addition to the legislative restrictions, the delay in invoking the limited call-up prevented the Army from using some reserve forces trained specifically for Southwest Asia. Because the call-up was not invoked until August 22, 1990, reserves were not available until several weeks into the conflict. As a result, the Army substituted active duty forces and reserve volunteers and created provisional organizations to perform missions that would normally have been carried out by reserve units. For example, the Army took various actions to compensate for the initial unavailability of reserve movement control teams, which are needed early to help deploy forces.

Intent Behind Specific Provisions Unclear

In view of the difficulties associated with mobilizing forces under 10 U.S.C. 673b, DOD plans to propose changes to this legislation. According to DOD officials, these proposals are being developed and will be forwarded to the Congress for consideration during the spring 1992 legislative session. In view of the problems related to the legislation that we noted during our review, we examined the statute's legislative history to gain a better understanding of the congressional intent behind the provisions that posed difficulties. While this history provided some insights into congressional intent, we found that the intent behind some provisions is not entirely clear.⁹

For example, the legislative history did not clear up all questions concerning why reserves were to be called in units rather than as individuals. Congressional committee reports on the 1976 legislation indicated that reserve units might be more effectively integrated into the Total Force if it was clear that the Army could call them up for limited conflicts as well as for those requiring higher levels of mobilization. In congressional hearings on this legislation, Members of Congress expressed concerns about the importance of maintaining the integrity of reserve units when they are activated. They feared that the integrity of reserve

⁹GAO raised other issues on the legislative intent of 10 U.S.C 673b in a letter to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Management and Personnel (B-242575.1, May 8, 1991).

units could be adversely affected if individual reservists were used as fillers in active duty units. While Congress appears to have been opposed to the use of reservists to fill active units, it is not clear whether Congress would also have opposed using such reservists to fill vacancies in other reserve (as opposed to active) units.

The legislative history also is not clear about whether Congress expressly opposed giving the President the authority to call up members of the IRR under 10 U.S.C. 673b or whether it simply thought that Selected Reservists ought to be called first. The Senate report on the 1976 legislation stated that Congress was aware that the Selected Reserves contained the "readiest" reserves.

However, the report was silent on the question of why the call-up did not extend the President's access to the Ready Reserve, which encompasses the IRR. In 1980, when the President's call-up authority was expanded from 50,000 to 100,000 reservists, an administration spokesman expressed his view that if the legislation were expanded to provide access to individuals, then members of Army Reserve and National Guard units, who were being paid for participating in weekend drills, should be called before members of the IRR, who were not required to train. Although this topic was discussed, the legislative history does not explain why Congress did not expand the statute at that time to permit the call-up of individuals.

The legislative history is also unclear with respect to the provision specifying that reserve units be called to active duty only for "operational missions." It is clear from a committee report on the 1976 legislation that this provision was intended to prevent the President from calling up units for training exercises that had no relationship to an international crisis. However, Congress might not have intended this restriction to preclude the services from calling up members of activated units to be sent for further training so that they could later deploy to such a mission.

The Army would have been able to build up more trained personnel to serve as replacements had the legislation been interpreted in this manner, assuming that it had sufficient capacity to train these individuals. The Army might also have been able to avoid some of the personnel transfers that degraded the capabilities of non-deploying units.

**10 U.S.C. 673b Appears Not
to Have Been Intended for
Extended Conflicts**

A more basic question is at what point Congress intended a transition from 10 U.S.C. 673b to the broader call-up authority of 10 U.S.C. 673 to be made. In reviewing the legislative history, we found that the initial circumstances

of Operation Desert Shield appear to have been consistent with those Congress envisioned when enacting 10 U.S.C. 673b. However, it does not appear that Congress intended an operation of this size to be conducted under this statute for more than a very limited time.

According to the legislative history, 10 U.S.C. 673b was intended to give the President the flexibility to respond to a crisis requiring a measured military response without declaring a national emergency that might be premature, unnecessarily provocative, or have undesirable international or domestic consequences. Congressional committee reports stated that this authority would

- enhance the credibility of the reserves as an integral element of the Total Force;
- enable DOD to assign support missions to the reserves with assurance that they could be called into action in situations short of a national emergency; and
- provide DOD access to needed airlift capabilities, which it had increasingly assigned to the reserves.

These reports envisioned that the President would use this authority in two situations: (1) when a short-term crisis required capabilities that were unique to the reserves or present only in small amounts in the active forces and (2) when international tensions had arisen but had not yet erupted into a major confrontation. The exercise of this authority was intended to deter potential aggressors and encourage U.S. allies. However, if deterrence failed, this limited response would have at least put into place the selected units needed to deploy additional units to the conflict.

The expressed intent on the appropriate uses of this authority appears to match the initial circumstances of Operation Desert Shield. Substantial airlift and tanker capabilities existed in the reserves of the Air Force, and the Army heavily depended on its reserves for many support functions. Also, since it was feared that Iraq might invade Saudi Arabia, a decision was made to deploy a force that would deter such an action. Army officials told us that they believed that exercising this limited authority in the initial days of Operation Desert Shield was reasonable, since the eventual size and length of the deployment were unknown and public support for the operation needed to be gauged.

However, according to the legislative history, it appears that Congress did not intend for a larger scale operation to be conducted under 10 U.S.C.

673b. This intent is reflected both in the congressional reports and hearings on this legislation. For example, the Secretary of Defense testified in 1975 that once a deterrent force was put into place, a decision on whether to call a national emergency would be made very early in the 90-day period of the call-up.

In addition, the Army Chief of Staff testified in March 1991 that all of the planning scenarios the Army used prior to Operation Desert Storm assumed that a partial mobilization under 10 U.S.C. 673 would be called a few days after any exercise of the more limited 10 U.S.C. 673b. Moreover, because the limited call-up legislation was not viewed as a stand-alone authority, the Army built its mobilization plans assuming that 10 U.S.C. 673 would be in effect, thereby permitting it broad access to all categories of reserves and other mobilization assets needed for an escalated conflict.

In the case of the Gulf war, such a decision was not made until mid-January 1991—5 months into the conflict—despite earlier indications that the conflict might escalate. For example, on November 8, 1990, the President announced his intention to increase the number of forces for sustained operations and to provide a force with offensive capability. A second indication that the conflict could escalate occurred on November 29, 1990, when the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution that authorized members to use “all means necessary” to enforce previous resolutions if Iraq did not leave Kuwait by January 15, 1991.

Key questions that remain are whether Congress intended the two legislative call-up authorities to cover distinctly different situations and whether amendments to the legislation might have blurred that distinction. 10 U.S.C. 673b was enacted in 1976 to enable the President to provide a measured military response without declaring a national emergency. However, two amendments to this legislation have expanded the size and duration of an operation that the President may conduct under this statute. In 1980, the statute was amended to increase the maximum number of reservists who could be called up from 50,000 to 100,000. It was amended again in 1986 to permit the call-up of 200,000 reservists and give the President the option of extending the original 90-day call-up to another 90 days. These amendments have made it possible to conduct increasingly large operations for longer periods of time without having to invoke the broader legislative call-up authority. Additional amendments expanding the President's authority under 10 U.S.C. 673b—particularly any that

would extend the duration of reservists' service under the call-up—could further blur the distinction between these two legislative authorities.

In our opinion, a clear understanding of Congress' intent behind specific provisions of the call-up legislation, as well as an understanding of when it envisions a transition being made between the two pieces of call-up legislation, is needed when legislative changes are considered. These clarifications, coupled with information on the nature and extent of problems encountered by all the services—not just the Army—would assist the President in making prudent decisions on the use of these legislative authorities.

In discussing this report with DOD program officials, they noted that, given the types of conflicts that could occur in the future, these same issues related to the call-up legislation could resurface. Accordingly, they agreed that a clear reading of congressional intent and whatever changes flow from that clarification would help to mold the manner in which the Department responds to future conflicts.

Incremental Call-up Restricted the Size of the Support Force and Led to the Exclusion of Certain Reserves

The incremental manner in which the Secretary of Defense implemented the call-up compounded the Army's force selection difficulties, leading it to restrict the size of its support force, break up large reserve units into smaller ones, and exclude the command and control elements of some forces to stay within personnel ceilings.

The Secretary of Defense implemented the reserve call-up in four increments during the Gulf war. As shown in table 2.1, the first three increments occurred under the limited reserve call-up legislation (10 U.S.C. 673b); the final authorization occurred after the President's call for a partial mobilization (authorized under 10 U.S.C. 673).

Table 2.1: Incremental Reserve Call-up for the Gulf War

Date Secretary of Defense authorized call-up	Legislative authority	Cumulative reserve personnel ceiling	
		All services	Army
August 23, 1990	10 U.S.C. 673b	48,800	25,000
November 14, 1990	10 U.S.C. 673b	125,000	80,000
December 1, 1990	10 U.S.C. 673b	188,000	115,000
January 19, 1991	10 U.S.C. 673	360,000	220,000

This incremental approach had positive and negative effects. On the positive side, Army officials noted that at the outset, the nature and duration of the operation ahead were uncertain and that incrementally authorizing the reserve call-up permitted a tailored response to the evolving threat. On the other hand, these officials acknowledged that the restrictive nature of the call-up limited the Army's flexibility in meeting operational requirements. One Army headquarters official involved in evaluating how the Army would meet initial requirements noted that his analysis showed that over 80,000 Army support personnel would initially be required, compared to the 25,000 authorized.

Army officials told us that one means of staying within the personnel ceilings was to create "derivative units"—that is, subunits within larger units—to meet Central Command's needs for special skills. In all, the Army created 94 derivative units, which represented about 9 percent of the units mobilized. Creating derivative units solved two problems. First, it was viewed as satisfying the legislative requirement that members of Selected Reserve units be called to active duty as members of their activated units rather than as individuals. Second, it permitted the Army to call up essential portions of some units, such as linguists within military intelligence teams and elements of hospitals, without calling the entire unit.

Army officials pointed out that, while creating derivative units helped the Army stay within DOD's personnel ceilings, it also (1) adversely affected the deploying unit's integrity and morale, (2) adversely affected the ability of the partial unit left behind to deploy, and (3) created a time-consuming administrative bureaucracy in adjusting the personnel and equipment accounting systems for the derivative units.

A second means that the Army used to stay within the personnel ceilings was to limit the number of command and control units that it sent to the Gulf. For example, FORSCOM information showed that the Army deployed only 15 of 33 senior-level reserve command and control units that the Army had earlier designated to support a one-corps scenario in Southwest Asia. Of the 18 units not sent, 6 were assigned key theater-level command and control roles; these included a theater army area command, a signal command, an air defense brigade, a military police brigade, a transportation command, and a finance command. In addition, another command and control unit—a medical brigade—deployed to the region but did not assume the key theater-level command position for which it had trained.

To compensate for not sending these elements, the Army (1) created new "provisional" units from available forces to handle theater army area command and signal command functions; (2) substituted existing active units for units such as the air defense brigade, the military police brigade, and two corps support groups; and (3) took other actions to perform the functions of the transportation command and the finance command.

Army officials frequently cited the 377th Theater Army Area Command as an example of a reserve command and control unit excluded from the operation. The 377th had trained extensively with the Third U.S. Army and Central Command for operations in Southwest Asia and had helped to prepare operational plans for the area. Army officials noted that, because it had been necessary to immediately establish logistics operations and because the reserve call-up had not yet been approved, the Army sent a provisional group of active personnel to supervise initial logistical operations. In November 1990, as the President authorized the deployment of follow-on forces, the Army considered sending the 377th, but decided not to since it believed that replacing the ad hoc unit would disrupt an operation that was working well. Instead, the Army added forces to the ad hoc structure, which became the "22nd Support Command" on December 19, 1990.

Some officials noted that, despite the initial unavailability of units trained specifically for Southwest Asia, there was sufficient time from November 1990 until the beginning of the war to call up and deploy some of them. For example, the 335th Signal Command had trained for operations in Southwest Asia, had participated in the 1987 Bright Star collective training operation in Egypt, and had been applauded for its proficiency. Army Central Command officials told us that, originally, the Army had believed a theater signal command was not essential and therefore had not sent the 335th. They noted, however, that by October 1990 it had become apparent that such a command was needed and that the Army could have then sent the 335th. Instead, Central Command officials decided to retain the existing ad hoc structure and not deploy the reserve unit.

We recognize that other factors contributed to the exclusion of forces originally intended to support operations in the region. Overall, the Army deployed only about half of the forces that it had earlier designated to support a conflict in Southwest Asia. In some cases, these forces were not sent because readiness was a key criterion for selection, and the readiest forces were generally those aligned with Europe rather than with Southwest Asia. In addition, because some aspects of the operations were

conducted in ways other than what was originally envisioned, some reserve forces tied to Southwest Asia were not required. Also, when the Army elected to send VII Corps from Europe as its second corps, it was logical to send forces that had peacetime training relationships with those combat forces rather than those aligned with Southwest Asia.

We believe that the various factors that led to the exclusion of reserve units—particularly those assigned key command and control roles—are significant for several reasons. First, by failing to deploy these units, the Army did not follow through on its own philosophy of deploying units in wartime that had trained together in peacetime. During peacetime, the Army had selected and trained these units to support the Central Command in a conflict in Southwest Asia. Many of these units had trained with active Army forces aligned with this theater of operation, had participated in preparing plans for a conflict in the region, and had deployed to the region in various collective training exercises. One official pointed out that these units had developed cohesiveness from training together for years.

Second, creating provisional units took time and resources. While the Army had already authorized personnel and equipment for the existing units, it had to validate newly created units before it could authorize them personnel and equipment. The Army may not have sufficient time to create and equip provisional units in the next conflict.

Third, creating provisional active Army commands to take the place of existing, trained units is not a cost-effective means of using the Army's force structure. For example, a senior Army official said that each year the Army spends about \$5 million training and maintaining the 335th Signal Command, which was not deployed, even though it had achieved an acceptable level of readiness. In addition, to create the substitute 6th Signal Command, the Army had to transfer equipment and personnel from other Army units, thereby disrupting their home units and degrading their readiness.

Finally, not affording the reserves the opportunity to perform the demanding roles they have been assigned and for which they have been trained is not only an inefficient use of resources but is damaging to the morale of these forces. Army officials pointed out that a major complaint of reservists was that they had been ready and willing to serve but were not called.

Unit Status Reports Were Not Valid Indicators of Unit Readiness

Although readiness was a primary criterion for unit selection, the Army found that it could not easily identify the readiest units from its readiness information due to weaknesses in how equipment and personnel status had been reported. As a result, Army officials had to engage in extensive consultations at various levels to determine the true status of an individual unit's readiness.

Periodic unit status reports provide information on the personnel, equipment, training, and overall status of Army units. These reports identify shortfalls in training, equipment, and personnel that degrade the unit's readiness status, such as differences between required and on-hand personnel and equipment. While it should be recognized that the unit status report is only one of several means for evaluating unit readiness,¹⁰ FORSCOM officials said that in considering units for selection, they examined these reports first, before considering other information such as the unit's location, its active or reserve status, and its prior training relationships with deployed forces.

Army officials pointed out that from the very beginning, weaknesses in these reports hampered the force selection process. A major weakness of the unit status reports was that the pertinent Army regulation authorizes commanders not to report shortages of certain items of equipment in some cases.¹¹ For example, the National Guard Bureau lists over 300 types of equipment, including a wide range of trucks, night vision equipment, communications gear, and other major items of equipment, that do not have to be reported under certain circumstances. These reporting exemptions were intended to prevent the assignment of low readiness ratings to units whose equipment shortages were due to factors beyond their control. For example, a unit might have been authorized equipment that, due to resource constraints, would not be provided until months or even years later.

A second problem with the accuracy of the unit status reports was that under the unit status reporting regulation, unit commanders could report older items of equipment as filling requirements for newer items if the authorized newer item had not yet been issued. Army officials noted, however, that during the Gulf war, some of the reported substitutions failed to meet the needs of the unit. For example, Army officials said that

¹⁰The Army also uses the results of annual training evaluations, performance in collective training exercises, and other information.

¹¹The Army authorizes commanders not to report certain items of equipment, referred to as "non-reportable line item numbers," in Appendix G of Army Regulation 220-1, Unit Status Reporting.

experiences in the war showed that commercial utility cargo vehicles were not true substitutes for the high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles needed for desert operations.

FORSCOM officials stated that reporting procedures for personnel also posed difficulties in ascertaining a unit's true readiness. For example, they noted that, although the readiness reports of National Guard medical units showed that some personnel requirements had been filled, mobilization officials found that they had often been filled with personnel possessing different specialties than those required.

Army officials said that early in the force selection process, they had found that they could not rely on the unit status report as a valid indicator of readiness because of these problems. As a result, extensive consultations had to take place among various command levels throughout the Army to determine the exact status of units being considered for call-up. A senior FORSCOM official stated that in some cases, a unit's report had indicated that it could be deployed when it actually was not sufficiently ready to carry out its mission. To illustrate, one unit called to active duty had not been required to report shortages of 20 items of mission-critical equipment and 73 other items needed to supplement or substitute for its primary pieces of equipment.

Also impeding the force selection process were the different frequencies with which active and reserve Army units had been reporting their status. At the start of Operation Desert Shield, active units were required to report their status monthly, Army National Guard units quarterly, and Army Reserve units twice a year. Army officials told us that when the crisis began in August 1990, many reserve reports were outdated and did not reflect units' current status. Army Reserve unit status reports reflected status on April 15, 1990; National Guard reports reflected status on July 15, 1990. One official pointed out that much of the annual training that occurs in the reserves takes place in the summer and therefore would not have been reflected in the reports available at the start of the operation.

In past GAO reports, we have pointed out various weaknesses in the Army's readiness information.¹² Recognizing weaknesses in its reporting systems, the Army has been working to improve its reporting procedures. An Army official told us in October 1991 that the Army was revising its regulations related to the unit status report and will phase out its policy of exempting

¹²See *Army Training: Evaluations of Units' Proficiency Are Not Always Reliable* (GAO/NSIAD-91-72, Feb. 15, 1991); and *National Guard: Peacetime Training Did Not Adequately Prepare Combat Brigades for the Gulf War* (GAO/NSIAD-91-263, Sept. 24, 1991).

items of equipment from the reporting requirements by October 15, 1993. These revisions will also (1) change the frequency of unit status reporting by Army Reserve units to match the quarterly reporting now required of National Guard units and (2) revise the list of items of equipment that can be substituted for other equipment to better reflect what items can reasonably be expected to carry out the functions of the missing ones.

Conclusions

Even with the best estimates of future threats, future conflicts will not exactly match the Army's existing operational plans and preselected troop lists. Therefore, some sort of force selection process will likely always be required. The favorable conditions of this operation—particularly the luxury of time to prepare for combat operations—permitted the Army to engage in an extensive interactive force selection process without posing insurmountable problems. However, because there is no guarantee that these favorable conditions will recur, it is important that the difficulties encountered during this force selection process be addressed. The Army's planned action to improve the reliability of its unit status information is one positive step that could facilitate a speedier identification of the readiest units in the future.

Many of the obstacles that the Army encountered in providing support forces for the war were due to the extended period in which it operated under the limited reserve call-up. It should be recognized that this was the first time this legislative authority had been used and that some of the difficulties could not have been forecast. While amending 10 U.S.C. 673b to expand the President's authority in various ways might preclude a recurrence of some of the difficulties that the Army experienced in this war, an earlier invoking of the broader legislative authority to call up reserves could have eliminated many of these problems and could have provided the Army more flexibility in filling personnel requirements. Moreover, any amendments to expand the President's authority under 10 U.S.C. 673b—particularly those that would further extend the size and duration of a conflict that could be conducted under this legislation—could further blur the distinction between the two legislative call-up authorities.

We believe that any proposed changes to this statute should be considered within the context of a clear understanding of Congress' intent behind specific limitations in the law as well as when it envisions a transition being made from a limited call-up to higher levels of mobilization. In our opinion, the legislative history is not entirely clear on these points. Also,

any proposed expansion of the President's authority under this legislation should be based not only on the experiences of the Army, but on the experiences of the other services, which were not examined in this review.

In implementing DOD's Total Force Policy, the Army has assigned reserve units important wartime roles. Effectively using these forces will become even more important as the Army downsizes and perhaps becomes even more dependent on the reserves. Not using these forces to the fullest extent possible represents an inefficient use of force structure resources, wastes operating and training funds, and lowers the morale of reserve units trained but not called to carry out their assigned missions. Accordingly, we believe a fuller examination into the factors that contributed to the exclusion of reserves in this conflict is warranted.

Matter for Congressional Consideration

The Congress may wish to examine the intent behind the use of the President's Selected Reserve call-up legislation (10 U.S.C. 673b) and the limiting provisions it contains and clarify whether this intent remains valid in light of experiences of the Gulf war.

Recommendation to the Secretary of Defense

To assist the Congress in analyzing DOD's proposed legislative changes to the President's Selected Reserve call-up authority (10 U.S.C. 673b), we recommend that the Secretary of Defense supplement his proposed legislative changes with information clearly identifying the following:

- the specific obstacles encountered by each military service in selecting and mobilizing the reserves under 10 U.S.C. 673b and
- the specific actions DOD and the military services can take to mitigate those difficulties that do not require legislative changes.

Because this issue affects both the legislative and executive branches, we recommend that this information be provided to both Congress and the National Security Advisor to the President.

Recommendation to the Secretary of the Army

Because the effectiveness of the Total Force Policy will become even more important in the downsized Army of the future, we recommend that the Secretary of the Army evaluate (1) why some reserve support units intended to respond to a conflict in Southwest Asia—particularly command and control units—were not sent to support the Gulf war and (2) what actions will be taken to ensure fuller participation by the reserves in future conflicts. In making this evaluation, the Secretary should

Chapter 2
Various Factors Impeded the Army's
Selection of Support Forces for the Gulf War

consider the factors we have identified in this chapter that led to these exclusions. These include the limitations posed by the call-up legislation, the incremental manner in which the call-up was implemented, and the readiness status of units left behind.

Problems Encountered in Mobilizing Support Forces

Although the Army had extensive plans and procedures for mobilizing the reserves under a partial or full mobilization, it had no such plans for conducting an operation under an extended limited reserve call-up. As a result, the Army had to engage in ad hoc, nonuniform procedures to ready forces for deployment under the more limited authority.

Many reserve support units needed additional people, equipment, and training before they could deploy. To rectify shortages, the Army had to extensively transfer people and equipment from non-activated Army units into activated ones because the limited call-up legislation did not permit the call-up of individuals to serve as fillers.¹³ These transfers (1) degraded the capability of to units that might have later needed to deploy and (2) resulted in units whose personnel had not trained either together or, in some cases, on the equipment they were provided. While the Army set the highest standard of readiness for combat units to deploy, it set a lower standard for its support units.

Because deployment dates dictated the amount of time units spent in training at their mobilization sites, the types and amounts of training they received varied widely, and some training was deferred until units arrived in the Gulf. Further, the Army had no set standards for validating proficiency and therefore did not have clear assurance that similar units mobilized at different locations had achieved similar levels of proficiency.

Army Lacked Specific Plans for Mobilizing Reserves Under a Selected Reserve Call-up

According to Army officials, the Army developed its mobilization plans assuming a limited reserve call-up would be quickly followed by a partial mobilization. The limited call-up would permit access to reservists needed initially, and then a partial or full mobilization would permit broad access to all reservists needed if the conflict escalated. Because of this assumption, the Army's mobilization and deployment planning guidance—which explains how the reserves are to be mobilized and assimilated into the active force and how they are to be equipped, trained, and deployed—is oriented toward explaining what is necessary for a partial or full mobilization of U.S. forces.¹⁴

Because of this orientation, Army officials said that mobilization plans are based on certain assumptions that do not apply to a limited reserve

¹³An exception is that Individual Mobilization Augmentees, designated to fill specified positions in active (but not reserve) units, can be called.

¹⁴This guidance is contained in the Army Mobilization Planning System and the FORSCOM Mobilization and Deployment Planning System.

call-up. For example, under a partial or full mobilization, mobilization stations are authorized to transfer personnel and equipment between units on their installation to fill shortages, regardless of command affiliation. They are also authorized to fill unit shortages with soldiers activated from the IRR. Because these options to improve the capability of units were not available under the limited call-up, Army Reserve and National Guard entities became responsible for correcting personnel and equipment deficiencies using assets under their control.

Army mobilization officials said that under a partial or full mobilization, installations also have access to a full range of supplementary personnel to assist in mobilizing forces. Because these personnel were not automatically made available under the limited call-up, Army personnel at mobilization stations improvised to handle mobilization tasks. Some stations reassigned personnel from other tasks on the installation; others called up Individual Mobilization Augmentees, as permitted under the limited call-up; and still others used U.S. Army Reserve garrison forces to perform mobilization activities. We noted that the degree of experience of those assigned to mobilization tasks varied widely among mobilization stations. Under a partial or full mobilization, the experience of personnel handling these tasks would have been more uniform.

Although the Army had extensive plans and procedures for mobilizing reserves under higher levels of mobilization, Army officials had to adapt these plans to mobilize forces under the more limited reserve call-up. As a result, Army officials said that mobilization procedures varied from station to station, depending on how those assigned to mobilization tasks had adapted the plans. We were told that much of the mobilization guidance that evolved was ad hoc, transmitted by messages between FORSCOM, the Continental U.S. Armies, Army Reserve and National Guard headquarters organizations, and mobilization stations.

Mobilization officials stressed that they had been able to accomplish the mobilization work load without the specific plans and supplementary assets that would have been available at higher levels of mobilization primarily because the operations were time-phased over a period of months. Recognizing the inefficiencies and nonuniform procedures that resulted from not having mobilization plans to fit a limited call-up, the Army is reviewing and will propose changes to these plans. According to Army officials, the proposed changes will recognize that mobilization procedures must be developed to address a wide range of scenarios—from a domestic emergency requiring limited mobilization action to an extended

global conflict requiring a full mobilization. Proposed changes will also take into account the reality that the future downsized Army may have fewer assets with which to handle the mobilization process. Army officials advised us that the Army expects to publish revisions to its mobilization plans by the end of May 1992.

**Transfers of
Personnel and
Equipment Were
Required to Improve
the Capability of
Support Forces**

The Army extensively transferred equipment and personnel from non-activated units into activated ones to improve their capabilities before they deployed. These transfers only partially corrected deficiencies and created difficulties for both the activated units and units that had not yet been called up.

**Extensive Personnel and
Equipment Transfers
Degraded the Readiness of
Remaining Units**

Army officials noted that personnel and equipment transfers between units may be necessary to meet wartime requirements under all potential scenarios, since resource constraints preclude the Army from financing all requirements in peacetime. We found that, despite this recognition, the Army had no set plans for how it would correct such shortages under a limited call-up. Therefore, the Army had to rectify deficiencies on an ad hoc basis, thereby degrading the capability of some remaining support units.

The Army's mobilization plans were built around the concept of improving the capabilities of unit personnel and equipment after mobilization, using assets acquired by the mobilization stations, FORSCOM, or Continental U.S. Army Commands. However, under the limited call-up, it became the responsibility of State National Guard organizations and Army Reserve commands to improve unit capabilities at home stations through lateral transfers of equipment and personnel between units. These transfers were to take place before the units moved to their mobilization sites. FORSCOM guidance prescribed that in filling personnel and equipment shortfalls, Army personnel were not to make such transfers if the actions would degrade the losing unit to a non-deployable state of readiness. When the responsible National Guard or Army Reserve entities could not meet a valid need, higher levels of command were to resolve the problem. Army officials said that the actions necessary to improve the capability of mobilized units required extensive coordination among Guard and Reserve headquarters and their assigned units.

Officials at FORSCOM, Army mobilization stations, Army Reserve commands, and State National Guard headquarters expressed concerns that these transfers were rendering units on the losing end less and less capable of deploying later if they were needed. Some officials questioned whether these units could have effectively served as reinforcements for the war or as forces to fill requirements for a second conflict had one arisen.

The Chief of Staff at FORSCOM said that a major weakness in this mobilization was the lack of access to individual personnel, who could have been used to quickly fill vacancies without reducing the capability of remaining forces. We were told that qualified Individual Ready Reservists could have been used to meet the needs of some water, transportation, and maintenance units. Instead, schools had to be quickly organized to train additional personnel to perform these functions.

The Army's Central Command acknowledged that supporting commands had exerted a tremendous effort prior to deployment to provide the people and equipment needed to increase the readiness of deploying units. For example, the 89th Army Reserve Command deployed almost 2,000 personnel assigned to 19 units—about a third of its total forces. In reviewing the status of its forces, it found that about 400 personnel could not deploy. Of these, 252 did not have the required training to deploy. The Command transferred these personnel into non-deploying units and then transferred about 200 people into the deploying units to fill these vacancies. It also transferred into deploying units substantial amounts of equipment, such as 5-ton trucks, which were needed to rectify shortages and improve their state of modernization. In all, the Command transferred 900 items of 66 types into deploying units. It also shipped 300 sets of chemical equipment to a single reserve unit. The Command's Chief of Staff, in commenting on these transfers, said that if mobilization had continued, it would have been difficult to transfer additional assets and keep the units left behind mission capable.

The 125th Army Reserve Command deployed over 4,000 personnel assigned to 28 units—over half of its total personnel. It transferred almost 500 people into deploying units to make up for those soldiers declared non-deployable, primarily because of a lack of training or for medical reasons. The non-deployable personnel were transferred to other units, Command headquarters, or reserve schools. The Command also transferred 3,700 total items of 170 equipment types into units before they reported to mobilization stations. Some of these items, including 5-ton

trucks, secure communications devices, and chemical detection devices, were critical to their missions. Many of the Command's units had to transfer their entire supply of chemical gear to units that were to be deployed.

National Guard officials in one state noted that they had to work hard to get the only unit they sent to the Gulf—a general support heavy equipment maintenance company—ready for mobilization. In all, they transferred 23 soldiers—primarily those capable of repairing tracked vehicles—into this unit of about 200 soldiers. In addition, 24 different types of equipment had to be added to the 141 types that the unit had on hand. After all the personnel and equipment had been transferred, the unit was still short 20 items of equipment critical to its mission and 73 items either supplementing or substituting for its primary equipment. The unit's personnel also required extensive training at a regional maintenance training site to enhance their proficiency in servicing items that they had not trained on; the unit did not deploy until about 9 weeks after mobilization.

The Tennessee National Guard had 18 units called up for mobilization, 15 of which deployed to the Gulf. Tennessee Guard officials also extensively transferred personnel and equipment into its early-deploying units to increase their readiness. But while it tried to fill every need to 100 percent, this became more difficult as the operations progressed. In all, Tennessee Guard officials transferred 1,841 items of equipment and 473 personnel into deploying units, thereby creating equipment and personnel shortages in units that did not deploy. We were told that units not deploying were short key assets and that equipment shortages in some units were especially acute following the transfers to the last deploying units.

Personnel and Equipment Transfers Complicated Pre-deployment Training

We also found that personnel and equipment transfers had complicated training at the mobilization stations. While the transferred personnel had been trained in needed occupational specialties, the fact that they had not previously trained with these units created collective and unit training difficulties. Likewise, equipment transfers created training problems for units whose personnel had not previously trained on the items provided. For example, a Fort Benjamin Harrison lessons learned report noted that about half of the personnel in a postal unit of almost 200 people had been transferred into the unit during mobilization. The report further noted that this unit had been force-fed equipment on which it had not previously trained. While the infusions of personnel and equipment were necessary to

make the unit deployable, they aggravated the unit's collective training problems since they had not previously worked together.

The Center for Army Lessons Learned also reported that transferring large numbers of personnel to deploying units had compounded the difficulty of preparing and training units to deploy. It reported that the large number of personnel assigned as fillers to units immediately prior to their deployment had created difficulties because their levels of expertise varied and some were not skill-qualified. One unit received 29 new personnel and experienced a 60-percent turnover in officers, including the company commander. The lessons learned report further noted that, although the new equipment provided to units just prior to their deployment had improved their capabilities, it had caused problems in training, since units receiving new equipment had little or no time to train on it.

Lower Readiness Standard Set for Support Units

The extensive personnel and equipment transfers that were required to ready support units to deploy were necessary because the Army could not afford to provide units with all of their required personnel and equipment in peacetime. Prior to the war, support units had been authorized on average to have about 90 percent of their required personnel in peacetime, compared to 97 percent for combat units. In addition, most reserve units also contained some soldiers who had not completed basic training and/or training qualifying them for their specialties and could not be deployed. Other members were found to be non-deployable for medical or other reasons.

In addition to personnel shortfalls, some reserve support units that deployed to the Gulf war had not enjoyed a high priority for resources and therefore were not equipped with some critical pieces of equipment and some other authorized items of equipment. Because such shortages could have impeded success in the war, the Army took extensive actions to correct these shortages prior to the units' deployment. However, these actions did not completely rectify deficiencies, and many support units deployed at less than the Army's rating of C-1 (combat ready with no deficiencies)—the deployment standard that the Army had set for its combat units. The Army's deployment standard for support forces was C-3—that is, combat ready with major deficiencies. Of the 375 Army Reserve units that deployed to the Gulf, 94 deployed at the C-1 standard, 146 at C-2 (combat ready with minor deficiencies), and 135 at C-3.

U.S. Army Central Command officials told us that, although the Army had set the minimum deployment standard for support units at C-3, their requirements had been based on units' being fully mission capable. Various Army officials said that support units deployed at the C-3 standard could not fully support combat units deployed at higher levels of readiness. For example, if a transportation requirement for a C-1 company with 60 trucks is filled with a C-3 unit with only 48 trucks, this represents a 20-percent shortfall in transportation capability. Officials also said that units deployed at C-3 are not capable of operating 24 hours a day, as may be required by combat operations.

**Various Factors
Created
Pre-deployment
Training Difficulties at
Mobilization Stations**

We found that the Army was hampered in providing effective pre-deployment training to activated units because it could not rely on the units' training assessments as valid indicators of their training needs. We also found that the Army lacked assurance that support forces trained at different mobilization stations had been similarly prepared for their missions because (1) deployment dates rather than proficiency determined the amount and quality of the training that could be provided and (2) the Army lacked standard criteria for validating unit proficiency.

While the extent of needed training varied among units, reserve support forces generally required some additional training due to shortcomings in their peacetime training. This was particularly true of training related to soldier and survival skills.

**Unreliable Training Needs
Assessments Complicated
Decisions on What
Training to Provide**

Training guidance provided by Central Command emphasized that mobilization stations were to ensure that units were given training in tasks essential to their wartime missions and geographic areas of deployment. Units' post-mobilization training plans, which are prepared periodically based on unit status reports and Army Forces Command 1-R reports, reflect the additional training that units will require upon mobilization. The 1-R reports assess the level of proficiency demonstrated during a unit's 2-week annual training period. In theory, these post-mobilization training plans should provide a complete assessment of the training that units will require when mobilized.

Army officials at mobilization stations that we visited made little use of these plans because they were skeptical of the accuracy of the units' reported proficiency and training needs. At Forts Riley and Campbell, mobilization officials said that they had not considered the units' plans to

be reliable because they contained outdated information. Because unit mobilization training plans and readiness data were unreliable or unusable, mobilization training was individually crafted by senior mobilization and readiness officials based on recent unit training experiences and interviews with unit commanders. These mobilization officials told us that developing these customized training plans took additional time and effort.

Training Tailored to Time Available Rather Than to Specific Proficiency Levels

The amount and type of training units received were determined primarily by the unit's scheduled deployment date and the date its equipment had to be shipped to the port. Deployment dates were established to coincide with airlift or sealift availability, with the result that a unit's equipment often had to be sent to the Gulf before the unit had completed its training at the mobilization site. As a result, mobilization stations had to structure training plans around equipment availability. For example, if the unit's equipment needed to be shipped early, initial unit training was focused on technical training that required interaction with the equipment. After the equipment had been shipped, the focus changed to collective and survival training. The need to ship equipment prior to the unit's deployment also affected the quality of training that the unit received. For example, mobilization officials at Fort Riley told us that training for several units, including a heavy equipment maintenance company, a hospital, and a military police unit had been adversely affected because their equipment was shipped several weeks before the units deployed.

One transportation company, which mobilized at Fort Lee, received some training on collective tasks but could not complete its training because its equipment had to be deployed. The unit was assessed by the readiness group at Fort Lee as having met an acceptable level of proficiency before it deployed, but it was given a list of collective training tasks to complete upon arrival in the Gulf.

When a unit was unable to complete its training prior to deployment, the unit commander was provided guidance on what skills the unit needed to improve and was instructed to continue training once the unit arrived in the Gulf. Unit commanders we interviewed after their return from the Gulf said that a great deal of additional training had been conducted in-country. They said that, because combat operations had not begun for 5 months, forces had been able to conduct the training directed by Central Command, engage in soldier activities, and improve technical skills. They noted that future conflicts might not afford this luxury of time to prepare.

Army Lacked Uniform Criteria for Validating Units for Deployment

The lack of standard criteria for validating units as ready to deploy led to nonuniform standards that did not provide clear assurance to wartime commanders that similar units mobilized at different mobilization sites had attained similar levels of proficiency. Mobilization procedures require that prior to deployment, all units be evaluated and validated in the areas of personnel, logistics, and training. The purpose of this validation is to verify that each unit is capable of performing its assigned wartime mission and meets all deployment criteria.

While the Army had set a minimum standard for deployment, we found that individual mobilization stations had subjectively assessed unit proficiency and had varying degrees of formal documentation to substantiate their analyses of units' readiness to deploy. For example, a senior mobilization official at Fort Riley said that installation officials had not prepared formal assessment documents validating all units' status prior to deployment—especially later-deploying units—but instead had prepared informal notes that simply highlighted major issues. In earlier cases, they had used a detailed checklist that more completely evaluated a unit's status. In contrast, officials at Fort Lee prepared formal assessments of each unit's readiness for deployment for the installation commander's review. These assessments noted the sufficiency of each unit's personnel, equipment, and training; documented specific training tasks the unit had completed; and recommended additional training for the unit to conduct once it arrived in the Gulf.

Training at Mobilization Sites Focused on Survival Skills

Mobilization officials told us that reserve support units spend most of their training time during the year obtaining and enhancing proficiency in individual and technical skills and that unit cohesiveness, consolidated unit training, and soldier and survival skills receive less attention.¹⁶ Because FORSCOM training guidance emphasized that mobilized units were to be fully trained on go-to-war tasks; survival skills; and nuclear, chemical, and biological survival, mobilization stations placed a high priority on correcting deficiencies in these areas.

A lessons learned report from the 125th Army Reserve Command reported that nuclear, biological, and chemical training had not been sufficiently emphasized prior to mobilization; map reading skills were deficient; individual and crew weapons had not been adequately maintained; and survivability skills were deficient. One ordnance company, for example,

¹⁶For example, see *Chemical Warfare: Soldiers Inadequately Equipped and Trained to Conduct Chemical Operations* (GAO/NSIAD-91-197, May 29, 1991).

arrived at its mobilization station and was immediately downgraded to a non-deployable status due to its limited training in skills deemed necessary for Southwest Asia. Although this unit had proficiently operated an ammunition supply point during its summer training, Army officials noted that operating an ammunition supply point in wartime requires more emphasis on individual and collective survival skills, such as setting up a defense and operating machine guns. By designating the unit as non-deployable, mobilization officials ensured that the unit's training would be intensely focused on correcting deficiencies in these areas. Officials at mobilization stations we visited said that, because of widespread deficiencies in survival training, they had had to place a great deal of emphasis on these types of skills rather than on skills related to specific military occupational specialties.

Army "Bold Shift" Initiative Aimed at Improving Reserve Readiness

The Army has begun an initiative termed "Bold Shift," which is aimed at improving the readiness of reserve forces. Under this initiative, the Army is conducting an Operational Readiness Exercise Test Program on selected units as part of a pilot effort in fiscal year 1992.

The objective of this test will be to validate the operational readiness of National Guard roundout and roundup brigades and early-deploying combat service-support units supporting the contingency force to deploy and perform their assigned wartime missions. The test will (1) establish the validation standards and criteria to be used across the Total Army beginning in fiscal year 1993 and (2) identify resourcing shortfalls and readiness enhancement needs that require intervention at higher levels of the Army. The test will focus on critical personnel, logistics, and training tasks and, according to Army officials, is intended to ensure that training in soldier and survival skills represents a prominent portion of units' annual training plans.

Conclusions

The Gulf war demonstrated that a President could conduct a large-scale operation under a limited reserve call-up, yet all prior mobilization planning has assumed that large mobilizations would be undertaken within the context of a partial, full, or total mobilization of U.S. forces. During a limited call-up, certain established procedures in the mobilization plans do not apply, and certain assets for handling mobilization tasks and filling personnel vacancies are not available. Accordingly, mobilization plans for rectifying personnel shortages under a limited call-up should not depend on the access to individuals that is permitted only under higher levels of

mobilization. Also, under this limited call-up, the Army had no common set of procedures and criteria for validating units' proficiency. Wartime commanders, therefore, did not have clear assurance that similar units that had prepared for deployment at different mobilization sites were similarly prepared to conduct their missions.

While some of the difficulties the Army encountered in mobilizing its reserve support forces were caused by the lack of definitive plans and procedures, we identified several other sources of the difficulties. First, the conscious under-resourcing of support units in peacetime was an underlying reason that extensive fixes were required to ready support units for deployment. The fact that the Army set a lower readiness standard may reflect a realization that it would find overcoming these peacetime deficiencies difficult. In our opinion, a clear picture of the ramifications of deploying support units that required extensive fixes to deploy at readiness levels lower than their combat counterparts has not yet emerged. Moreover, the consequences of degrading the readiness of some units to correct deficiencies in others might have been more serious had the Army needed to later deploy a substantial number of these degraded forces for sustainment, rotations, or other conflicts.

The favorable conditions of this conflict—foremost of which was the time available to prepare for offensive operations—permitted the luxury of individually crafted training plans and enhanced survival skill training. Although training time in-country provided added assurance of unit readiness, future conflicts may not permit such efforts. The types of pre-deployment training required to correct deficiencies in this conflict—particularly in the areas of soldier and survival skills—should offer some insights into how these strategies may need to be modified. The war also pointed out the need to improve the uniformity of unit training assessments so that pre-deployment training can readily be directed at the units' greatest needs. We believe that the Army's actions to modify the Army Mobilization Planning System to address mobilization under conditions of less than full mobilization and to improve reserve readiness through the Bold Shift initiative are positive steps toward addressing some of these problems.

Recommendations to the Secretary of the Army

To improve the Army's ability to efficiently and effectively mobilize reserve forces for future conflicts, we recommend that the Secretary of the Army take the following actions within the context of its current efforts to modify its mobilization plans and implement the Bold Shift initiative:

- **Ensure that the Army's revisions to its mobilization procedures provide (1) specific guidance on how the mobilization of the reserves under a limited reserve call-up (10 U.S.C. 673b) should be carried out, (2) a plan for filling personnel vacancies during mobilization that does not hinge on the broad access to individuals available only under a partial or full mobilization of forces, and (3) uniform procedures and criteria for validating units' proficiency as a condition of their deployment.**
- **Identify any problems that the Army might have encountered in deploying reserve support units at a lower readiness standard than the combat units they were supporting and evaluate whether this practice should be continued.**
- **Take actions to improve the Army's reserve unit training assessments to provide better indicators of training needs upon mobilization.**

Gulf War Taxed the Army's Force Structure in Providing Needed Support Forces

While the Army was able to provide most of the support forces it needed for the Gulf war, it had difficulty providing support forces of some types, particularly in the early phases. Over the course of the conflict, it deployed virtually all of some types of forces, leaving few, if any of them to reinforce offensive operations had a prolonged engagement occurred or a second conflict arisen.

In some instances, Central Command needed more Army support units than were available. Since the Army had no specific contingency plans to create new support units, ad hoc measures were required to provide additional support capability. These measures were only partially successful in correcting deficiencies that could have had serious consequences had events unfolded differently or had the circumstances been less favorable. Lessons learned from these operations can be applied to Army restructuring and downsizing to reduce the possibility that these deficiencies will recur.

Shortages Surfaced as the Army Attempted to Provide Support Forces

For Operation Desert Shield, the Army had difficulty providing needed support forces because of (1) the initial unavailability of reserve units and (2) decisions not to deploy all available forces and to deploy combat forces first, thereby delaying the deployment of support forces. During the course of the conflict, the Army exhausted its inventory of certain types of support units, yet it used other types sparingly. The unique features of this war created unusual demands for certain types of support forces, which may or may not recur in future operations.

Reserve Support Units Initially Unavailable

Certain support units were unavailable in the early days of Operation Desert Shield because these forces were primarily in the reserves, and the President had not yet authorized their call-up. For example, limited numbers of postal units are available in the active Army; units that detain enemy prisoners of war exist only in the reserves; and in August 1990, when Operation Desert Shield began, the Army had only one graves registration unit and one water purification team on active duty. Some of the support units concentrated in the reserves were critical to early operations. These included movement control teams, which were needed to coordinate transportation assets; terminal transfer units, which were needed to operate port facilities; and water supply companies, which were needed to supply water to the troops. As noted, Iraq invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990, but the reserve call-up was not authorized until August 22, 1990.

**Uncertainties Led to
Decisions Not to Deploy
Some Support Units**

In addition to this initial unavailability of reserve support units, several uncertainties led the Army to restrict the deployment of certain support forces to the theater. As noted in chapter 2, the Army kept some forces in reserve in case force rotation was needed, since it had no guarantee that the initial 90-day call-up would be extended. In addition, the Army did not consider certain forces to be available, since they were critical to other Army operations and needed to remain in place in case a second conflict arose.

Initial shortages also resulted from Central Command's early decision to deploy combat units first and to defer the deployment of support forces. This decision was made because Central Command officials wanted to ensure that the greatest amount of combat power possible arrived during the crucial early days of the crisis, since Iraq's intentions were unclear. While this decision might have been prudent, FORSCOM listed as a lesson learned from the operation that a more balanced flow of combat and support forces early in the operation would have been desirable.

To partially offset these early shortfalls in support forces, the Army obtained supplementary assistance from the Saudi Arabian government and private contractors, but many difficulties nevertheless ensued. For example, in the beginning of the operation, the Army was heavily dependent on Saudi Arabia to provide meals, transportation, water, and hospital beds for initially deploying combat troops. The Army was also unable to provide some types of support that required skills without civilian equivalents, such as ammunition handling. As a result, a great deal of ammunition was left piled up at a port in Saudi Arabia, with no means to distribute it to combat units that would have needed it had combat operations begun earlier. Moreover, the stockpile created a significant safety hazard. One Army Central Command official stated that if an enemy action or accident had ignited this ammunition, the entire port would have been destroyed.

**Selected Types of Units
Exhausted in Meeting
Longer Term Requirements**

In the longer term, the Army's capacity to supply needed forces was more fully tested. While the Army was able to meet most of Central Command's requests for support forces through its own forces or supplementary support from contractors and the host government, the Army exhausted its inventory of certain types of units. For example, to meet Desert Shield and Storm requirements, the Army deployed

- all available water supply companies and other support units that had been converted to perform this function,
- all graves registration units,
- all available pipeline and terminal operations companies,
- all heavy truck units and virtually all available medium truck units,
- virtually every unit that handles enemy prisoners of war, and
- virtually all available postal units.

In a limited number of cases, Central Command's requirements were not fully met. For example, although the Army deployed all the graves registration units in the Army, these units could have handled only the number of casualties caused by peacetime accidents or a low-intensity conflict and would not have had sufficient capability to handle the number of casualties that might occur in a medium- or high-intensity conflict. Of the five companies deployed, three were authorized only about one-third of the number of personnel in a full-sized company. The Army did not provide these units with additional personnel.

The Army deployed almost all of its military police units that handle enemy prisoners of war, converted 22 combat support military police companies to prisoner guard companies, and converted a personnel unit to a prisoner processing unit. Despite the deployment of all these forces, it was only because the Army transferred control of its prisoners to the Saudi Arabian government after initial processing that it was able to meet the requirements of this operation. The Army was able to transfer its prisoners to Saudi Arabian control with assurance that this government would treat them in accordance with the Geneva Convention. However, one Army Central Command official noted that the Army might not always be able to relinquish this task to the host nation.

While the Army exhausted certain types of support units, it used other types of units sparingly in the operation. For example, Central Command required only 10 of the Army's 53 heavy equipment maintenance companies, 4 of its 140 legal teams, and 1 of its 73 mobile public affairs detachments in this operation. Moreover, while the Army nearly exhausted its supply of some support units, it deployed only about one-fifth of its combat forces.

**Adverse Impacts of
Shortages Mitigated by
Favorable Conditions**

The adverse impacts of support force shortages during the Gulf war were mitigated by several favorable conditions.

- The enemy chose not to fight at the outset, thereby permitting the United States and its allies 5 months to prepare for offensive operations.
- The host nation had a developed private sector that was able to supplement U.S. support forces.
- Modern port facilities, air bases, and military facilities were available.
- The offensive was of a short duration and did not fully stress the support forces or require the Army to reinforce already deployed troops.
- No second conflict requiring a concurrent U.S. military response arose.

According to DOD's own assessment, an operation that affords less time to prepare, that takes place in a location providing a less developed infrastructure in terms of ports and airstrips, or that involves a host nation less able to support U.S. forces could render the Army less able to meet support requirements.

Various Factors Account for the Shallowness in Some Support Capabilities

We identified several factors that might have contributed to the difficulties the Army faced in meeting the support needs of the Gulf war.

- The desert environment and the extraordinary distances over which supplies and services had to be provided created exceptional demands for certain types of support forces.
- Unusual requirements arose that may not recur, such as the enormous volume of "Any Service Member" mail, which created an unprecedented work load for postal units.
- The orientation of the Army's force structure toward a major conflict in Europe led it to rely heavily on Germany to supply certain support units, such as transportation units, rather than to carry them in its inventory.
- Past Army decisions to emphasize deterrence led it to reduce its number of support forces in order to retain the maximum number of combat forces.
- Because the Army cannot afford to provide resources to all needed units, it has consciously left many support units unresourced in peacetime in the belief that it can reconstitute these forces upon mobilization if needed.

Army Plans to Rectify Anticipated Shortages Were Inadequate

Since the Army is unable to afford all required support units, shortages may occur in any operation and in any theater. Specific concerns about logistical support shortages in the Southwest Asian theater emerged in the early 1980s with the establishment of a rapid deployment force to respond to crises in this region. At that time, shortfalls were forecast in water supply and water purification units, ammunition supply, truck companies,

supply and service companies, and terminal services units—some of the same units that were in short supply during the Gulf war.

Although the Army anticipated shortages, we found that it did not have adequate contingency plans for correcting support force shortages when they occurred in the Gulf war. For example, although the United States had been unsuccessful in obtaining prearranged host nation support agreements with the nations of this region to augment anticipated support shortfalls, the Army did not develop a plan to fill this void. Moreover, it did not have adequate contingency plans for providing personnel and equipment to unresourced units in the force structure or for creating new units in functions that represented critical support shortfalls, such as graves registration units.

Earlier Efforts to Gain Host Nation Support Agreements Unsuccessful

One mechanism to alleviate anticipated support shortfalls is an agreement made with an ally to supply certain types of services to supplement U.S. support capabilities. The Army planned to rely on host nations to supply the equivalent of over 100,000 support personnel to offset anticipated shortfalls rather than to keep these additional support units in its force structure. For example, Germany was scheduled to supply the equivalent of 96 medium truck cargo companies to support a conflict in Europe. However, because of local customs, the United States had been unable to obtain similar prearranged agreements with governments in the Southwest Asian region.

Despite initial negotiation difficulties, Central Command eventually obtained post-deployment agreements from the Saudi Arabian government to augment U.S. support capabilities. DOD has noted that these agreements were essential to meeting the support requirements of these operations. For example, to compensate for transportation shortfalls, Saudi Arabia provided 800 general use trucks and 5,000 tankers and trucks to distribute 20.4 million barrels of Saudi Arabian fuel. Saudi Arabia also provided large quantities of potable water, food, fuel, and hospital beds and permitted American forces to use Saudi Arabian port facilities.

In its assessment of the Gulf war, DOD noted that its early efforts to support troops would have been enhanced if extensive host nation programs had been in place prior to the conflict. Although DOD has noted that such support will become more critical as forward-deployed forces decrease worldwide, there are also drawbacks to such dependence. First, some areas of the world do not have the civilian and military

infrastructure that would enable them to provide such support. Second, once an actual conflict arises, U.S. commanders may not be able to rely on host nation support units with the same assurance as they do on U.S. forces. Civilians, afraid of possible enemy action, may be unwilling to perform vital support functions. For example, in the Gulf war, there was a very high absentee rate for indigenous civilian truck drivers the first day of the air war. These drivers returned to work only when it was apparent that U.S. forces were not experiencing any serious Iraqi opposition and were winning the war.

No Plans for Expanding Support Under a Limited Call-up

Because the Army has not been able to afford all the needed personnel and equipment for all required support units due to funding constraints and end strength limitations, it recognizes that certain support shortfalls will probably arise in a large conflict. Yet we found that the Army's plans for expanding its support forces' capacity hinged on some level of national mobilization beyond a limited reserve call-up. In some cases, the Army was able to compensate for shortfalls because it had time to formulate ad hoc solutions. In other cases, the Army could not totally meet Central Command's needs.

Because the Army could not afford to provide any equipment or personnel to required support units needing about 87,500 individuals, these units exist only "on paper."¹⁶ While the Army has no specific plans to provide the personnel and equipment for such support units, it assumes that it will fill them with either reservists or draftees and equipment available after wartime mobilization. The shortcoming of this plan is that in the absence of a partial, full, or total mobilization, the Army will not have access to individuals from the Ready Reserve and will have to fill vacancies with either reserve volunteers or with individuals from active duty units. Neither is there any assurance that the equipment needed by these units can be provided if U.S. industry is not expanded as part of a general mobilization. In the Gulf war, the President did not sign the executive order authorizing the call-up under 10 U.S.C. 673 and allowing a partial mobilization until January 18, 1991—a full 5 months into the operation—and it was only then that Individual Ready Reservists were available to resource these "paper" units.

In addition to the lack of planning, we found that the Army in some cases had not taken immediate actions to rectify anticipated shortages. For example, additional graves registration units—two companies and

¹⁶Units that exist only on paper are known as "component 4" units.

numerous platoons, teams, and detachments—are among those required Army units that exist only “on paper” due to affordability constraints. Although the Army recognized as early as September 1990 that it did not have a sufficient number of graves registration units to meet the requirements of this operation, the Army did not act to create additional units. Even after officials of the XVIIIth Airborne Corps requested in September 1990 that more graves registration units be created to fill a critical support shortfall, the Army did not resource these units. Officials of the Quartermaster School—the organization that analyzes the requirements for these units, formulates their doctrine, and provides training—told us in December 1990 that they had been aware of the expected shortages and that they had been compelled to completely reorganize all available graves registration units because these forces were insufficient to perform this function according to previous Army doctrine.

Army Central Command officials stated that the proper treatment and identification of soldiers killed in action were crucial because of the adverse consequences of a failure to perform these functions adequately. The timeliness of these identifications was made more critical because of the instantaneous news coverage of occurrences such as the SCUD attack on an Army barracks in Dhahran that resulted in casualties. That attack resulted in a large number of casualties in a single support unit—a fact that the media quickly reported. Army Central Command officials responsible for ensuring adequate graves registration capability in the theater believed that if there had been more casualties, the significant shortfall in graves registration capability would have had serious consequences.

Similarly, the Army anticipated a shortfall in water units in October 1990. However, Quartermaster School officials advised us in December 1990 that they did not believe that a shortage of water units was a problem because the Saudi Arabian government had supplied a tremendous amount of water. In addition, the Army eventually converted six other support units to water supply companies to offset this shortage. As noted in DOD's interim lessons learned report, the shortage of water supply companies could be a greater problem in the future if the Army is unable to gain a similar level of host nation support.

Restructuring Affords Opportunity to Adjust Force Structure and Improve Contingency Planning

Changing geopolitical conditions and continuing budgetary pressures will require the Army to adjust its force structure to the point that it (1) has sufficient capability, particularly in rapid deployment situations; (2) entails a prudent and calculated acceptance of risks; and (3) is affordable. The Army was able to support the Gulf war; however, future conflicts may not provide the same favorable conditions that enabled the Army to overcome the difficulties it encountered during this operation. This juncture provides an opportunity for the Army to reassess the adequacy of its support force structure and to make appropriate adjustments as it downsizes and restructures its forces. The lessons of the Gulf war point to the need for certain changes in the role of the reserves and improved contingency plans for expanding support capacity that may be needed in war but is not affordable in peacetime.

Army Plans for Highly Ready Contingency Forces May Require a High Proportion of Active Forces

One new focus of Army strategy involves a five-division contingency force that will be quickly deployable to a major regional conflict such as the Gulf war. To ensure that this force can rapidly deploy, the Army is (1) increasing the priority of support units required by the contingency force to receive personnel and equipment and (2) increasing the number of active component support units available to support the early-deploying elements of this force.

In designating the support units for the contingency force, the Army identified units comprised of 18,155 positions that had been reserve missions. The Army believes that these positions need to be active to meet early deployment criteria. These units included certain types of reserve support forces that were initially in short supply in Operation Desert Shield—water supply units, military police units, ammunition companies, and others. Of these 18,155 positions, the Army will (1) transfer 12,031 positions in active duty support units in Europe to the United States and (2) assign active duty units comprised of 1,679 positions already stationed in the United States to the contingency force. The Army had originally planned to inactivate these units. It is considering shifting the remaining 4,445 positions needed for the contingency force from the reserves to the active force.

The primary reason the Army believes that more active duty support capability is needed for the earliest deploying elements of the contingency force is that time was needed to authorize a reserve call-up and mobilize needed units for the Gulf war. As shown in table 4.1, a high proportion of

the types of units being withdrawn from Europe to support the contingency force was in the reserve components in October 1990.

Table 4.1: Types of Units the Army Is Withdrawing From Europe but Retaining in the United States to Support Its Contingency Force

Type of unit	Percent in reserve components ^a
Engineer battalions (mechanized)	100
Engineer combat support equipment companies	90
Maintenance battalion headquarters detachments	88
Medium truck companies (petroleum, oil lubricants)	88
Personnel services companies	86
Heavy truck companies	85
Ammunition battalions	83
Military police combat support companies	80
Non-divisional maintenance companies	79
Ammunition companies (direct support)	78
Financial support units	64

^aPercentage of these types of units in the reserves of all those in the continental United States from which a contingency force would be drawn.

Our analysis of the units being withdrawn from Europe but retained in the force structure for the contingency force showed that only a limited number of these types of units were available on active duty in the continental United States to meet the requirements of Central Command in the early days of Desert Shield. For example, six of the units being withdrawn are combat support military police companies, and 80 percent of the units available to support the contingency force are in the reserves. While the Army maintains some active units of this type in the United States, according to Army officials, these units are needed to provide law enforcement support to military bases in the United States and to support operations in Central America. Due to the multiple taskings of these units, the Army found it difficult to meet initial requirements for this function in Operation Desert Shield. The Army also expects to retain units providing ammunition services—a function that was critically short in the early days of the operation.

The Army is studying the feasibility of shifting the remaining 4,445 support positions now in the reserves to the active component because some of these units, such as water supply companies, are only available in the reserves yet are among the highest priority units for inclusion in an initially deploying contingency force. As shown in table 4.2, a high

percentage of some types of units is in the reserve components. We found that some of these units were required immediately to support Operation Desert Shield, yet were either not available or not available in sufficient numbers to meet initial requirements. These included water supply companies and theater army command headquarters.

Table 4.2: Types of Units Primarily in the Reserve Components That the Army Is Considering Moving to the Active Component

Type of unit	Percent in reserve components ^a
Prisoner of war processing units	100
Water supply companies	100
Theater army command headquarters	100
Light equipment maintenance companies	91
Medical groups	89
Ammunition company (general support)	89
Heavy equipment maintenance companies	86
Supply and support battalion headquarters	85
Mobile army surgical hospitals	83
Graves registration companies	80
Contract supervision teams	64

^aPercentage of these types of units in the reserves of all units in the continental United States from which a contingency force would be drawn.

On the basis of its experiences during the war, the Army is justified in attempting to ensure that its contingency force can be readily supported by forces able to rapidly deploy. However, Congress has approved substantially fewer reserve personnel reductions than the administration has proposed, partly because reserve forces generally cost less than active duty forces and should be used to the maximum extent possible. Accordingly, we believe that the Army may need to identify actions that would enable reserves to participate more fully in this force.

For example, one key Army mobilization official noted that during the Gulf war the Army found it difficult to ready most reserve units in less than about 3 weeks due to all the steps necessary for them to transition from civilian to military life. However, he also noted that the Army needed to give more examination to ways that could speed their mobilization, such as ensuring that reservists had their wills prepared in advance, were in good physical condition, and had up-to-date dental and medical care. With a concerted effort to correct some of these problems, which slowed their mobilization, he believed that it might be more feasible to place additional

reserve units in earlier deploying positions on the troop list. He also noted that consideration might be given to establishing a select category of reserves that would be given special priority for resources as a means of speeding the mobilization of the earliest deploying units. Such actions might preclude the need to move additional missions into the active component.

During our discussions of future force structure changes with program officials, they noted that some organizational missions are programmed to move between components. However, they did not provide sufficient information to enable us to identify the specific mission shifts that are being planned among the components. We continue to believe that the Army will need to carefully weigh decisions that would shift missions from the reserves to the active component in view of congressional interests and budgetary constraints.

**Army Intends to Revise Its
Force Structure to Address
Certain Shortages**

The force equivalent of eight divisions was deployed at the peak of the Gulf war. To meet the needs of Central Command, every available unit of certain types was deployed to meet the requirements of this operation, leaving none to support reinforcements or to deploy to another conflict. Despite this experience, at the time of our review, the Army's force reduction plans called for eliminating some types of reserve support units that represented shortages in the Gulf war. Among the proposed inactivations were graves registration companies, water companies and detachments, heavy and medium truck units, and prisoner of war processing units. These inactivations would have exacerbated the shortages that surfaced in the war.

In discussing our draft report with Army program officials, we were advised that, on the basis of its experiences during the war, the Army had identified through its requirements determination process a need for additional support forces, including water supply and distribution and graves registration units. Additional units are being activated to increase Total Force capabilities and to improve the Army's contingency forces. Requirements for medium and heavy truck units are also being modified to improve transportation capabilities.

The Army did not provide information to show where force structure cuts would be made to offset these increases in support capabilities. In this regard, it should be noted that (1) Army plans call for retaining more than twice the number of combat divisions than were deployed in the Gulf war,

(2) the Army deployed only about 22 percent of its combat forces to the Gulf while deploying about 32 percent of its support forces, and (3) a large portion of some capabilities—both combat and support—was never used. As an example of this latter point, the Army plans to eliminate only 2 of its 53 heavy equipment maintenance units, even though it used them only sparingly in the war.

Because future conflicts may or may not require the types of forces needed in these operations, it would not be wise for the Army to tailor its future force structure to match the precise circumstances of the Gulf war. While decisions regarding restructuring will not be easy, the Army will need to keep in mind the shortages that occurred in this operation and carefully examine its remaining force structure to identify where prudent cuts can be made.

Conclusions

Just as Operations Desert Shield and Storm generated extraordinary and, in some cases, unanticipated support requirements, so may the next conflict. Future operations may occur in areas where there are no preexisting agreements for host nation support or in areas where host nations either do not have the ability or the willingness to provide this support. The smaller Army of the future will be less able than it has been in the past to afford all of the required support forces it needs. Therefore, the Army will need sound contingency plans for creating additional units when they are needed.

On the basis of experiences in the Gulf war, we believe that the Army may be justified in retaining active duty support units originally intended to be inactivated from Europe and shifting some missions from the reserve to the active component to meet the early support requirements of its contingency force. However, congressional interests in preserving reserve roles and continuing budgetary pressures dictate that the Army carefully weigh decisions that would shift additional missions from the generally lower-cost reserves to its active force. Exploring ways to modify mobilization procedures to speed the mobilization of reserves when they are needed might increase the feasibility of retaining more reserves in the contingency force.

Recommendations to the Secretary of the Army

As part of the Army's current review of its mobilization procedures, we recommend that the Secretary of the Army develop contingency plans for

Chapter 4
Gulf War Taxed the Army's Force Structure
in Providing Needed Support Forces

creating additional support units during mobilization to ensure that the Army can readily increase its support force capability when needed.

The effectiveness of the Total Force will become even more important in the downsized Army of the future. Accordingly, we recommend that the Secretary of the Army consider actions to speed the mobilization of reserve support forces to enable them to participate more fully in the contingency force.

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