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Report to the Chairman, Subcommittee on Military Personnel and Compensation, Committee on Armed Services

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ARMY TRAINING

Management Initiatives Needed to Enhance Reservists' Training

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National Security and
International Affairs Division

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The Honorable Beverly B. Byron
Chairman, Subcommittee on Military
Personnel and Compensation
Committee on Armed Services
House of Representatives

Dear Madam Chairman:

This report responds to your request that we examine the proficiency of Army reservists and addresses the extent to which reservists are trained in critical job and battlefield tasks and the factors that affect this training.

We are sending copies of this report to the Chairmen of the Senate Committee on Armed Services and the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations; the Director, Office of Management and Budget; and the Secretaries of Defense and the Army. Copies will also be made available to other interested parties upon request.

This report was prepared under the direction of Richard Davis, Director, Army Issues. Other major contributors are listed in appendix III.

Sincerely yours,

Frank C. Conahan
Assistant Comptroller General

Some commanders told GAO that individual skill deficiencies within their units, especially in battlefield survival, were significant and that they were concerned about their soldiers' and units' survivability in combat. The Army does not know the true measure and extent of reservists' proficiency because not all reserve component soldiers have been tested for individual proficiency in accordance with Army policy.

The Army has recognized the training deficiencies that exist in its reserve components and has developed a strategy for improving training.

Principal Findings

Some Schools Do Not Provide Instruction on the Equipment Reservists Use

Advanced training conducted by some Army schools provided little instruction on equipment that reservists were expected to operate in their units. Instead, instruction was provided on equipment that reserve soldiers might never use. For example, an air cavalry troop GAO visited while it was engaged in its annual training was using scout helicopters that were so different from the one on which the troop's helicopter mechanics were trained that officials said that the mechanics were not qualified to work on the helicopters. Because advanced training had not prepared the mechanics to work independently on the aircraft, these soldiers, while receiving on-the-job training, were used as "tool carriers" rather than helicopter mechanics during the troop's training exercise.

Units Did Not Adequately Train Reservists to Perform Critical Job Tasks

The quality of training provided by reservists' units was often limited by shortages of essential equipment—such as radios, inert explosives, night vision devices, and chemical decontamination equipment. Eight of the 17 units GAO visited could not conduct essential training for lack of such equipment. In addition, individual and collective training sometimes omitted skills needed to perform the reserve units' mission-essential tasks, largely because commanders lacked the necessary guidance or experience to design effective training programs.

Units Did Not Emphasize Battlefield Survival

Soldiers must be able to survive on the battlefield if units are to accomplish assigned missions. GAO found, however, that reservists had not always been trained in survival skills or under realistic conditions as

The Army Plans Some Changes in Reservists' Training

Deficiencies in reservists' training could have significant effects on the Army's ability to carry out its defense as planned. The Army, recognizing these deficiencies, has developed a strategy to improve reservists' training. Additionally, the Army is preparing an action plan for correcting many training deficiencies in the reserve component environment. Many of the actions have already been initiated. A principal tenet of the strategy is to allow reserve component units to train on fewer tasks than a like active component unit.

Recommendations

GAO recommends that the Secretary of the Army take the following actions:

- Ensure that reservists are trained (1) on the equipment they will be expected to operate in their units, (2) in all job tasks critical to their units' missions, and (3) in survival skills under realistic conditions.
- Improve the management of available training time.
- Ensure that the strategy for training reservists is fully implemented. In addition, provide details to the Congress on how this strategy will affect the total force policy.

These recommendations and others are discussed in detail in the body of the report.

Agency Comments

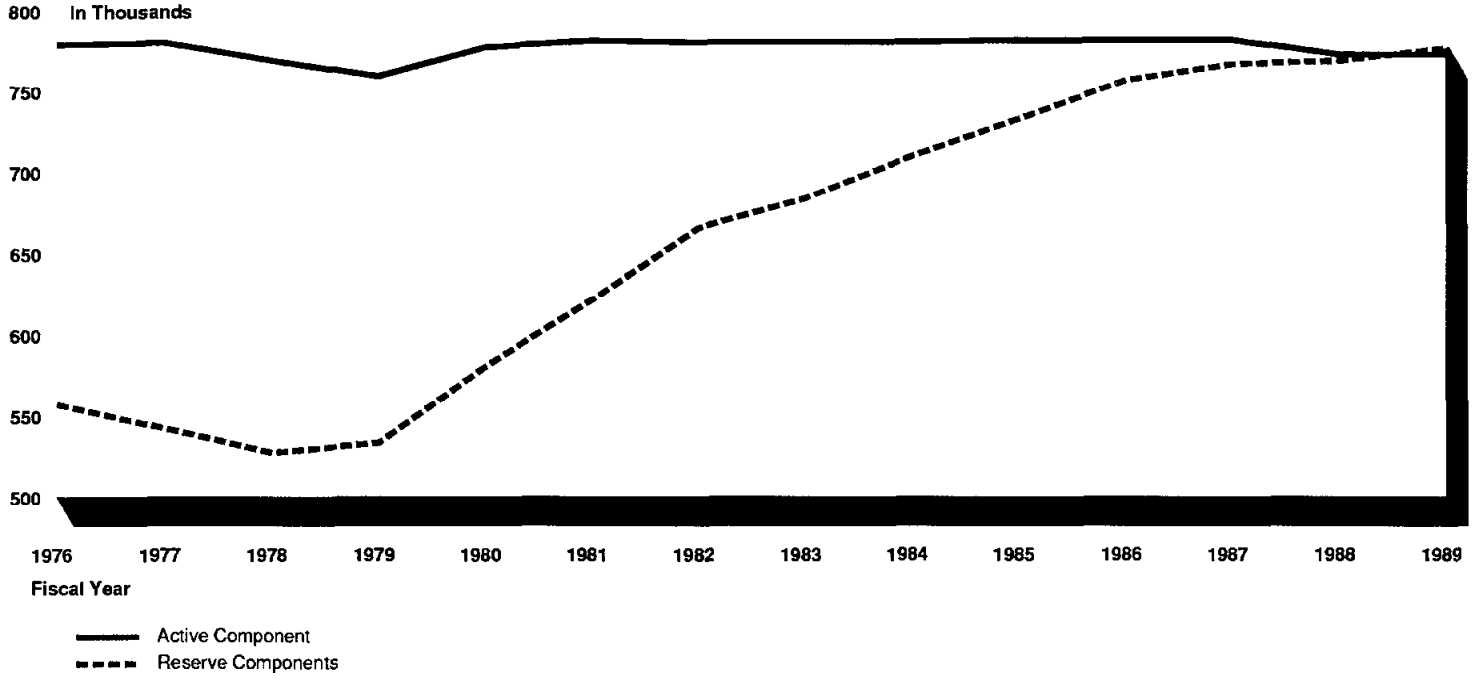
The Department of Defense generally agreed with GAO's findings and recommendations (see app. II). It recognizes that shortcomings in reserve component training exist and is committed to improving such training. Additionally, the Army was aware of many training problems discussed in GAO's report and has already initiated some corrective actions. While the Department of Defense agreed that the 17 units GAO visited were generally representative of the kinds of units that make up the Army's reserve components, it noted that they did not represent a statistically valid sample and cautioned that broad conclusions should not be drawn from observations of these particular units. GAO did not select a statistical sample to project its unit findings. However, the observations and conclusions discussed in its report are not based solely on GAO's unit visits; they are also based on the results of recent Army studies of reserve training.

Appendixes

Tables

Figure

Figure 1.1: End Strength of the Army's Active and Reserve Components



The reserve components provide more than half of the Army's total forces and are authorized about 13 percent of the total Army budget. The reserve components' budget has increased significantly since fiscal year 1980, as shown in table 1.1. In fiscal year 1989, the reserve components' estimated budget was $8.7 billion, which is $242 million more than budgeted in fiscal year 1988.

Table 1.1: Growth of the Reserve Components' Budget Between Fiscal Years 1980 and 1989

Current dollars in millions

Budget category	Fiscal year 1980	Fiscal year 1989	Increase from fiscal year 1980 to 1989 (percent)
Military Personnel	$1,534	$5,541	261
Operations and Maintenance	1,232	2,850	131
Military Construction	54	315	483
Total	**$2,820**	**$8,706**	

Note: Amounts do not include procurement costs.

Army units or shortly thereafter. The impact of this policy on deployment requirements for reserve component units was described by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs in testimony before the Congress in March 1988:[1]

"Under the Total Force Policy, we are increasingly basing the national security interests of our nation on our ability to rapidly mobilize, deploy, and employ combat ready Reserve component units and members anywhere in the world. Today, many of our military contingency plans simply cannot be executed effectively without committing National Guard and Reserve Forces in the same time frame as our Active Forces."

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

Our objectives were to determine (1) the extent to which individual reserve component soldiers were trained in both critical job tasks and battlefield survival skills and (2) factors that affect the reserve units' ability to provide adequate training.

To gain an understanding of reserve component training policies and procedures, we interviewed officials at the following headquarters offices: Department of the Army, Washington, D.C.; U.S. Army Forces Command, Fort McPherson, Georgia; U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), Fort Monroe, Virginia; First Army, Fort Meade, Maryland; Second Army, Fort Gillem, Georgia; Sixth Army, Presidio of San Francisco, California; 81st Army Reserve Command, East Point, Georgia; 96th Army Reserve Command, Fort Douglas, Utah; 97th Army Reserve Command, Fort Meade, Maryland; and the Offices of the Adjutants General in Utah, Maryland, and Georgia. We also gathered information from the Readiness Groups in each of the Continental Armies we visited and the offices of the Inspectors General in the Continental Armies' headquarters and the Department of the Army.

We analyzed overall Army training information developed by the Army Training Board, the Army Inspector General, and Army Readiness Groups. To better understand the underlying causes of training problems identified from these sources, we also visited the following 17 reserve component units (9 National Guard and 8 Army Reserve) to develop case studies. We also used the information gathered during our

[1]Testimony of the Honorable Stephen M. Duncan, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, before the House Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Military Personnel and Compensation, March 10, 1988.

Table 1.4: Number and Type of Units Visited

	Army Reserve Command			National Guard			
	81st	96th	97th	Utah	Georgia	Maryland	Total
Chemical	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
Medical	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Field Artillery	1	1	0	1	0	0	3
Engineering	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
Armor	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Transportation	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Infantry	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Military Intelligence	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Maintenance	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Aviation	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	**4**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**17**

Deployment dates of the 17 units ranged between 7 and 66 days after mobilization, with 10 of the units scheduled to deploy between 26 and 39 days after mobilization. We did not review the combat readiness posture of the units.

We visited each unit for 1 week of its 2 weeks of annual training. At each unit, we observed training and daily operations, reviewed management information records, and interviewed officials regarding how soldiers are trained and major factors that affect their capability to provide training. The Department of Defense, in commenting on this report, said that many of the training deficiencies in the units we visited were attributable to unit leadership, yet the report places substantial weight on these leaders' opinions. We do not agree that the report relies heavily on opinion. Most of our findings are based on firsthand observations and analysis of the Army's own studies. We sought leaders' opinions primarily in areas where there was a lack of objective data, such as in the case of soldiers' battlefield survival skills.

We conducted our review from January to September 1988 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

An MOS is normally awarded to a soldier upon completion of AIT. However, about 25 percent of those who enlist in reserve components are former active-duty personnel whose MOSs are different from those that are needed in their reserve units. Unless the soldier attends another AIT program or a reserve forces school, the unit must assume responsibility for retraining the soldier in a new MOS. Most soldiers do not attend further school training because of civilian job commitments and because many AIT programs exceed 2 months and some take longer than 9 months to complete.

According to TRADOC officials, for nearly one-third of the Army's more than 360 occupational specialties, AIT provides training in less than 80 percent of the critical job tasks soldiers need to learn to be fully qualified. Further, we found that a large number of reservists work in occupations in which they have been taught less than 60 percent of critical job tasks during AIT. As shown in table 2.1, these occupations include specialties responsible for repairing some of the Army's newest equipment such as the Bradley Fighting Vehicle and the Abrams tank.

Table 2.1: Occupations for Which Soldiers Are Trained in Less Than 60 Percent of Critical Tasks During AIT

MOS	Percent of tasks taught	Number of reserve component soldiers assigned
Chemical operations specialist	57	7,202
Tactical telecommunications system operator	56	5,007
Multichannel communications center operator	55	4,721
M-1 Abrams tank system mechanic	54	184
Bradley system mechanic	50	3,217
M60/A3 tank system mechanic	48	2,841
Single channel radio operator	44	7,859
Light wheel vehicle mechanic	29	26,993
Cannon crewmember	28	24,932
Unit-level communications maintainer	28	5,009

Some AIT programs provided little instruction on equipment that reserve component soldiers were expected to operate in their units. For example, one of the units we visited was an air cavalry troop that had OH-6A scout helicopters. Five of the troop's nine scout helicopter mechanics had received their MOSs upon completion of AIT. The AIT program these soldiers attended, however, trained them on the OH-58 scout helicopter, which is used by both active and reserve units. According to Army officials, the OH-58 helicopter is considerably different from the OH-6A. For

Table 2.2: Minimum Essential Equipment Available for Training at Each Continental Army

Continental Army	Percentage of equipment available
1st Army	54
2nd Army	71
4th Army	61
5th Army	61
6th Army	63

Eight of the 17 units we visited lacked mission essential equipment, and their training was significantly hindered by these shortages. For example:

- Two chemical companies could not provide initial or sustainment training in decontamination procedures to its chemical operations specialists because the companies did not have the required equipment. During annual training the units had to rely on borrowed equipment that, according to unit officials, did not adequately prepare soldiers to perform essential decontamination mission tasks.
- One field hospital lacked the equipment required to operate and to train its personnel. As a result, the unit could not train on collective mission tasks in a field environment.
- According to officials at one air cavalry unit, it had not been issued authorized communication security equipment, nuclear-biological-chemical protective clothing, and night vision goggles. As a result, it could not adequately train for missions in a nuclear-biological-chemical environment or in darkness.

Several units also lacked training devices and simulators. For example, officials in both of the artillery batteries we visited told us that soldiers had not seen the basic combat load—the Copperhead round—and did not have access to a Copperhead training device except for approximately 4 hours a year. Battery personnel also expressed concern about having access to the nuclear training device only once a year for approximately 4 hours. They believed that soldiers in their units had not received adequate training in the firing procedures of nuclear artillery rounds. Additionally, officials at both artillery batteries, one armor company, two engineering companies, and a transportation company told us that they lacked inert claymore mines and therefore could not provide effective training in the common soldier tasks of placing and recovering these mines.

Company Officials' Opinions on Soldiers' Proficiency

We sought company officials' opinions on the number of soldiers in their units' most common and three least common MOSs who could perform most job tasks to Army standards. As shown in table 2.3, most officials believed that only half or fewer were proficient in critical MOS tasks.

Table 2.3: Unit Officials' Opinions on Soldiers' Proficiency

Soldiers who were proficient	Perceptions of soldiers' proficiency by			
	Commanders	First sergeants	Trainers	Total
Most common MOSs				
All	0	0	0	0
Most	7	4	3	14
About half	4	5	4	13
Few	3	2	1	6
None	0	1	0	1
Least common MOSs				
All	1	1	0	2
Most	5	1	4	10
About half	4	3	5	12
Few	4	2	3	9

Conclusions

Army training did not adequately prepare many reservists to perform some critical job tasks. In part, this was because many Guard and Reserve units lacked essential equipment to train soldiers in critical job tasks not taught in AIT or to provide refresher training. Also, AIT trained soldiers on the most modern Army equipment, although the units lacked modern equipment. In addition, training that was provided by some units was not properly focused because the units had not prepared METLs or assigned training priorities to individual soldier tasks required to support wartime missions.

The Army should undertake initiatives to improve AIT and unit training programs for reservists. These initiatives should be directed towards ensuring that reservists are given an opportunity to train on the equipment they will be expected to operate and maintain in their units and to assist commanders in focusing reservists' training on mission-essential tasks.

DOD said that our example involving the OH-6A helicopter was a unique exception because this helicopter is being phased out of the Army's inventory and is being used in only some reserve component units. Further, it said that the OH-58 helicopter is at many reserve component aviation units and that much of what the mechanics learned in school is applicable to current assignments. The OH-6A is used in 35 National Guard units, and while it may be phasing out, this does not diminish the need for appropriate training for the mechanics in units that currently use this helicopter.

of available training time was used for common task training. Commanders at five units told us that some soldiers in their units had received no common task training in the past year because of other priorities.

Units Did Not Train Under Realistic Conditions

By not routinely including common soldier tasks in training exercises, the training conducted by 11 of 17 units we visited did not simulate a combat environment. Further, six units had not integrated mission training with other units they would fight with on the battlefield.

According to the Army's training philosophy, peacetime training should conform to battlefield requirements. Commanders are to ensure that soldiers in units are trained to cope with the complex, stressful, and lethal situations they will likely encounter in a war. Soldiers are to train to common standards that match the requirements of the battlefield. Units are to train to perform the tasks and meet the standards necessary to accomplish their operational missions.

Some of the training events we observed emphasized the completion of assigned missions at the expense of incorporating realism. For example:

- Unit officials at one transportation company told us that the company had been tasked in one training event with moving as much of 2.25 million gallons of petroleum as possible. Unit officials told us that the company had moved 1.3 million gallons and set transportation records in the process. However, during the movement of the petroleum, soldiers had not been required to conduct the mission as might be expected in actual combat, that is, using Mission-Oriented Protective Posture (MOPP) gear and minimizing the use of lights at night or in reaction to simulated enemy forces.
- The unit and higher command levels of an engineer company emphasized the completion of real property maintenance and repair projects for the Georgia National Guard at Fort Stewart instead of training to accomplish projects in a combat environment. Moreover, even in instances in which soldiers were working on tactical projects, realism was not incorporated. For instance, perimeter defenses were not established, and plans were not made to protect equipment operators in the event of an aggressor's attack. The commanders emphasized project completion and failed to reinforce the tactical implications of such work.
- Two field artillery batteries participated in an exercise called FIREX 88 at Dugway Proving Grounds during their annual training. During the exercise these units fired more than a thousand artillery rounds as part

Guard		All reserve soldiers tested					
SL-3 (E-6)		SL-2 (E-5)			SL-3 (E-6)		
Number tested	Number failed	Total tested	Total failed	Percent failed	Total tested	Total failed	Percent failed
15,739	759	39,086	2,259	6	23,089	1,067	5
15,739	1,329	39,086	3,758	10	23,089	1,899	8
15,739	1,361	39,086	3,836	10	23,089	1,847	8
15,739	1,626	39,086	4,457	11	23,089	2,376	10
15,739	1,117	39,086	3,354	9	23,089	1,525	7
15,739	1,244	39,086	3,904	10	23,089	1,813	8
15,739	1,826	39,086	5,029	13	23,089	2,550	11
15,739	1,677	39,086	4,411	11	23,089	2,174	9
15,739	1,645	39,086	4,746	12	23,089	2,296	10
15,739	1,529	39,086	4,246	11	23,089	2,080	9
15,739	1,717	39,086	4,980	13	23,089	2,431	11
15,739	1,831	39,086	5,821	15	23,089	2,615	11
15,739	1,401	39,086	4,949	13	23,089	2,027	9
15,739	2,342	39,086	6,241	16	23,089	3,087	13
15,739	2,508	39,086	6,311	16	23,089	3,233	14
15,739	3,813	39,086	9,440	24	23,089	4,829	21
15,739	3,627	39,086	9,363	24	23,089	5,018	22

Conclusions

Providing realistic training conducted to high standards is a fundamental principle of Army training. If this principle is to be achieved, however, Army leaders must give considerably more attention and emphasis to (1) training reservists in battlefield survival skills and (2) conducting exercises in an environment that will train reservists to cope with the complex, stressful, and lethal situations they will encounter on the battlefield.

To help ensure that reservists are adequately prepared to carry out the increasingly crucial role they have been assigned, a new direction for reservists' training is needed. This new direction should stress that soldiers' survival skills are as important as skills required to perform job-specific tasks. Expertise in performing job tasks is of little value if soldiers cannot survive on the battlefield.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Secretary of the Army take the following actions:

- Emphasize the responsibility of leaders throughout the Army in establishing a training environment for reservists that stresses training in battlefield survival.
- Direct unit commanders to follow Army guidance and train NCOs (1) in all common soldier tasks and (2) under realistic battlefield conditions so that NCOs can in turn train the other soldiers.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

DOD agreed with our findings and recommendations. It stated that the Army is publishing regulations that will direct unit commanders to emphasize that soldiers successfully complete the CTT and to integrate individual and collective training under battlefield conditions.

DOD agreed that more training in battlefield survival skills is needed but felt that our presentation of information on common soldier task training could be misleading. We agree that the information as we originally presented it could be misinterpreted since it inferred that the Army directs units to train on tasks selected for testing each year, and we removed this information from the report. DOD also objected to our presentation of NCO failure rates on common task testing, stating that it may not be cost-effective in terms of time, funding, and lost training opportunities to attempt to achieve perfection in a peacetime training environment. We agree but believe that the fact that many NCOs failed

Improved Management Practices Could Reduce the Impact of Training Detractors and Improve Evaluation Testing

A combination of factors makes planning, managing, and evaluating training much different for National Guard and Army Reserve units than for active Army units. For example, the wide geographic dispersion of reserve units makes effective communication and coordination among units more difficult. Also, reserve units have considerably less time available than active Army units to train their soldiers, yet they are required to fulfill many of the same administrative requirements. Commanders can reduce the impact of these training detractors by better managing the time that is available during weekend and annual training periods.

The Army tests reservists' proficiency in both job tasks and battlefield survival skills. However, the tests have not been implemented as required for all personnel, and the results are inaccurate. Consequently, the Army does not have accurate information on reservists' proficiency. Also, Army evaluations of collective training are of limited value. Increased management attention to proficiency evaluations could help to ensure that training weaknesses are identified and corrective actions initiated.

The Army has developed a strategy to improve reservists' training. Additionally, the Army is preparing an action plan for correcting many training deficiencies in the reserve components. Many of the actions have already been initiated. A principal tenet of the strategy is to allow reserve component units to train on fewer tasks than a like active component unit.

Units Are Geographically Dispersed

The reserve force is widely dispersed. Approximately 7,000 units are based in over 4,000 separate facilities. The average distance from a unit to its headquarters is 106 miles. Comparable units in the active force are within walking distance of their headquarters. On the average, a reserve battalion is dispersed over a 150-mile radius, and some extend to over 300 miles. Active component counterparts are typically clustered within a mile or less of each other. At the higher levels of command, few reserve component headquarters have all of their subordinate units in the same state; many headquarters have units in several states, and some cover as many as 12 states. Comparable active units reside on a single installation or on several installations within a few hours' drive.

Reserve units also must frequently travel long distances to reach training support locations and, in doing so, use up valuable training time. On the average, units travel more than 9 miles to a motor pool and

to assemble with its higher headquarters to perform both individual and collective training.

Annual training affords units the best opportunity to provide prolonged mission training. Units can concentrate on improving weaknesses, particularly as they relate to critical wartime tasks. Further, units are required to spend at least 9 days of their annual training period in a tactical field environment to approximate wartime conditions. In many cases, however, we found that valuable training opportunities had been lost because annual training time was not managed effectively.

During the firepower demonstration conducted at Dugway Proving Grounds, one unit was ordered to fire twice the number of artillery rounds considered necessary by the unit commander and firing section chief. According to the battery commander, higher headquarters had told the unit that expending this amount of ammunition was to be its highest priority and that any other training was to be subordinate. The commander said that, consequently, the unit had not provided equal focus on other critical mission tasks where it had identified weaknesses. The utility of the firing mission was further limited because, according to the battery commander, the unit had not been given feedback on whether the approximately 700 rounds fired hit their targets.

Another unit was ordered to prepare its weapons and be ready to fire on command. The unit had to give up other training opportunities because it had to be on standby. Because the firing order did not come for 3 days, valuable training time was lost.

One chemical company did not use its annual training period effectively because it had not ensured that required training equipment would be available. The unit had not been issued any of its mission-essential chemical decontamination equipment and therefore planned to hold its annual training at a reserve chemical school where it believed it could obtain the equipment. The unit had planned its activities around key wartime tasks associated with the equipment but upon arriving at the school learned that the equipment would not be available for several days. As a result, the unit had to postpone the training.

Other examples of the inefficient use of available training time follow:

- A combat engineer company used more highly skilled personnel to complete jobs to "professional" standards in lieu of using less experienced soldiers and affording them a training opportunity.

company to prepare an estimated 10 monthly, 8 quarterly, and 4 semi-annual reports just for basic personnel management, the commander stated:

"These reports do not take one or two people to complete. They require verification of numbers, names, and other pertinent data. It may involve the clerk and the commander. It may involve the clerk, commander, operations officer, training officer, effected [sic] soldiers, platoon sergeants and platoon leaders. These reports are only for the personnel side of the house. There are reports for logistics, maintenance, food service. All these people are doing reports and the troops are waiting to be trained."

Information we received from Army Reserve and National Guard units indicated that 34 percent of the Army Reserve's time is spent on administrative requirements, and 17 percent of the National Guard's time is spent for such purposes. Part of the reason that the National Guard's burden is less may be attributed to programs started by the Maryland and Utah National Guards, which consolidate administrative requirements such as x-rays, immunizations, and updating personnel records into fewer weekends each year. Maryland and Utah Guard officials told us that their programs have increased the time available for training.

Unit officials also told us that in some cases administrative requirements prescribed by higher headquarters had caused significant alterations to planned training activities and that the burden of administrative requirements had made it difficult for them to ensure that training was accomplished.

The Army has initiated a complete review of administrative requirements imposed on reserve units and has adopted a goal of reducing these requirements to no more than 20 percent of available training time.

Reservists' Proficiency Is Not Known

Although the Army has the means to evaluate the overall proficiency of its soldiers in job tasks (with the Skill Qualification Test (SQT)) and survival skills (with the CTT), not all reservists have taken the tests as prescribed by Army policy. Also, NCOs generally do not keep up-to-date job books to show soldiers' strengths and weaknesses. Further, some test results are not accurate

Army officials, commanders are satisfied with these changes, and the Army plans to implement the revised tests in fiscal year 1990.

Job Books Not Maintained

Another reason for the lack of information on reservists' proficiency is that NCOs frequently do not keep job books current, as required by the Army's training management system. Job books list all the critical job tasks of an MOS and provide space for supervisors to sign and record the date that soldiers attain proficiency. Accordingly, the books provide a means to assess soldiers' strengths and weaknesses and plan individual training.

We reviewed over 200 job books at 12 units and found that only a portion of the tasks had been evaluated. Also, some units were using outdated job books, and others had no job books for as many as 50 soldiers.

Some Reservists Do Not Take the CTT

All reservists are required to take the CTT once every 2 years, while active duty soldiers must take it yearly. In fiscal years 1986 and 1987, a total of 37 percent of all Army Reserve and 50 percent of all National Guard soldiers were tested for common task proficiency. At the units we visited, reservists who were not tested had not taken the CTT because (1) they had been absent from drill on the day the test was given, (2) equipment required to administer the test had not been available, or (3) units had not properly scheduled the test.

CTT results for fiscal year 1987 showed that reservists who took the test had successfully completed most tasks. However, on the average, the percentage of tasks failed by reservists was twice as high as the percentage failed by their active duty counterparts, as shown in table 4.1.

rather than every 18 months as are active Army units. Because factors such as personnel turnover, equipment changes, and new requirements are so prominent in the reserve components, one evaluation in a 3-year period is of limited utility. For example, seven (41 percent) of the units we visited had undergone a major mission or equipment change in the last 3 years.

Units are also evaluated during their annual training periods by an external evaluator. In addition, they may be evaluated during the training year by officials within their peacetime chains of command. Despite the number of evaluations that are conducted, the Army's draft action plan for improving reserve training recognizes that currently the results of these evaluations are not linked in order to resolve inconsistencies or provide an evaluation profile over time. To correct this problem, the Army is currently working to develop more standardized and effective approaches to evaluating unit training effectiveness.

The collective proficiency of Army units is to a large extent the result of a commander's emphasis on training. The Reserve Component Training Strategy Task Force found that evaluations of commanders and other unit officials' efficiency, however, concentrated on administrative matters rather than on the effectiveness of training. The Task Force noted that "command performance profiles used by the reserve components are often based on measurable administrative performance rather than effective planning and conduct of unit and individual training."

Army Initiatives to Improve Training

The Army has conducted numerous studies and has initiated actions to improve the training of its reserve soldiers over the past several years. The Army has recently developed a reserve component training strategy and is developing a corresponding action plan to improve training.

A fundamental principle of the strategy is to allow reserve component soldiers and units to train in fewer mission-essential tasks in peacetime than their active component counterparts. Tasks on which reserve component training is conducted, however, will use the same standards. This principle represents a significant change in the way units and soldiers are trained and raises questions regarding its effect on the total force policy, which implies that reserve forces will complement active forces with equal capability.

Included in the action plan to implement the strategy are the following:

The Army has taken a major first step in improving reservists' training by developing a training strategy. The strategy recognizes certain fundamental needs such as the need to improve training management and to focus training on selected mission-critical tasks. We believe that these are steps in the right direction. The provision in the strategy allowing reserve component units to train for fewer mission-essential tasks than like active Army units raises questions about the impact of the strategy on total force policy. Although the change in training strategy may reduce commanders' flexibility in how they can use reserve units, we believe that the change recognizes that not all reservists can develop in 40 days a year a proficiency equal to that of the active Army. The change in training strategy should allow reserve units to better focus scarce training time.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Secretary of the Army take the following actions:

- Direct unit commanders to plan training activities to maximize the limited training time available.
- Encourage states and Army Reserve units that have not already done so to adopt initiatives aimed at consolidating administrative requirements.
- Direct commanders at all levels to ensure that soldiers take the SQT once TRADOC has implemented the revised tests.
- Direct unit commanders to keep job books current.
- Direct commanders at all levels to ensure that soldiers take the CTT, as required by Army regulation. In addition, direct TRADOC to develop guidance on evaluating soldiers to preclude the administrative problems that currently bias CTT results.

We also recommend that the Secretary ensure that the strategy for training reservists is fully implemented. In addition, the Secretary should provide details to the Congress on how the new strategy will affect the total force policy, which implies that Army reserve component units will complement active forces with equal capability.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

DOD agreed with five of our recommendations, stating that current regulations are being revised to provide consistent training guidance to reserve component commanders. Also, the Army (1) has proposed initiatives to assist commanders in making better use of training time and to attack the problem of administrative burden, (2) has directed all units to

Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs last year, the Army Training Support Center analyzed its data base by social security numbers for a 2-year period. According to an Army Training Support Center official, the result of this one-time analysis showed that duplicative entries indeed existed.

In commenting on the purpose of job books, DOD stated that they are training tools designed for use by first-line supervisors and are not intended to provide the Army with an assessment of soldier proficiency. We agree that job books are intended for use by first-line supervisors and have changed the report's wording to clarify this point.

The Department of Defense also expressed concern over the report's focus on individual tests as indicators of reserve component units' proficiency. It stated that it does not rely on individual soldier test results as indicators of unit capability. It was not our intent to focus on individual tests, and we do not believe that the report focuses on them. For example, the report discusses (1) the ARTEP, which is the Army's most comprehensive collective training evaluation, and (2) the absence of linkage among the various collective evaluations performed by the Army. The report concludes that collective unit evaluations used by the Army are of limited value.

Finally, DOD stated that our report incorrectly presented ARTEP evaluations, implying that ARTEP evaluations cover a period of time, when in actuality, they only provide a snapshot in time of the unit's capability. We agree that the ARTEP is intended to provide a snapshot assessment, and we do not believe that our report implies otherwise. However, because of the turbulence in reserve component units, the ARTEP results are of little value very long after the evaluation is conducted.

Comments From the Department of Defense

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

RESERVE AFFAIRS

April 18, 1989

Mr. Frank Conahan
Assistant Comptroller General
National Security and International
Affairs Division
U.S. General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Conahan:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the General Accounting Office (GAO) draft report entitled "Army Training: Management Initiatives Needed to Enhance Reservists' Training," dated February 14, 1989, (GAO Code 393296) OSD Case 7904. The DoD believes that the report addresses a number of important Reserve training issues.

The DoD agrees with most of the findings and recommendations contained in the report. A number of the findings are based upon the Army's own training assessments. The DoD notes, however, that while the 17 units visited by the GAO were generally representative of the kinds of units which make up the Army's Reserve Component (RC) forces, they did not represent a statistically valid sample of all Reserve Component units. It is important, therefore, that unreasonably broad conclusions not be drawn from the GAO observation of these particular units. The DoD further notes that, while the report is critical of the training in the units observed, much of which is directly attributable to the leadership of the units involved, the writers of the report place substantial weight on the opinions of that same leadership.

The DoD welcomes recommendations that may improve RC training. The DoD recognizes the deficiencies in the training of the Army's RC force and it is committed to an improvement in that training. Many of the issues identified in the report are already being addressed by the Army and many of the recommendations in the report are consistent with Army initiatives to improve RC training which are already underway. As a result of the work of the Army's Reserve Component Training Strategy Task Force, the Army has developed a strategy for RC training and an action plan (the "Reserve Component Training Development Action Plan"). The Army has committed resources to many of the initiatives in the Reserve Component Action Plan and progress has been made on a number of those actions.

GAO DRAFT REPORT - DATED FEBRUARY 14, 1989
(GAO CODE 393296) OSD CASE 7904

"ARMY TRAINING: MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES NEEDED TO ENHANCE RESERVISTS' TRAINING"

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMENTS

* * * * *

FINDINGS

FINDING A: Reserves Are Essential. The GAO reported that, because the cost of maintaining a regular Army capable of meeting potential threats is prohibitive culturally and economically, the Army has developed defense strategies that place increasing reliance on the Reserve Components, and as a result the role of the Army Reserve and the Army National Guard has never been more critical. The GAO observed that, because the Reserves now comprise more than half of the Army forces and many units are designated for deployment in less than 30 days after mobilization, it is critical Army leaders ensure that Reserve soldiers and units are highly trained. In this regard, the GAO noted that the Reserve Component budget has increased from $2.8 billion in FY 1980 to $8.7 billion in FY 1989. The GAO reported that the Reserves make up a significant share of the total Army force structure, comprising more than fifty percent of the combat arms and combat support and combat service-support, and more than seventy percent of the total deploying forces. The GAO further reported that the Reserve Components make up more than one-half of many functions that are essential to the Army war-fighting capability. (pp. 1-2, pp. 10-15/GAO Draft Report)

Now on pp. 1, 10-13.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. Recognizing the importance of its Reserve Components, the Army has developed a comprehensive strategy for Reserve component training, as well as a Reserve Component Training Development Action Plan, which addresses the challenges of the Reserve component training environment, while focusing resources on the achievement of wartime mission capability.

FINDING B: Schools Do Not Provide Instruction On The Equipment Reservists Use. The GAO found that some Advanced Individual Training schools provided little training on equipment that Reservists were expected to

Enclosure

Now on pp. 3, 16-20-23.

equipped with the sophisticated M-1 tank, lacked modern radios and, therefore, had to equip the tanks with 1950-vintage radios. The GAO noted that, because the radios were unreliable and lacked adequate power, the tanks had to operate closer together than called for by Army doctrine. (p. 3, p. 17, pp. 19-23, p. 25/GAO Draft Report)

DoD RESPONSE: Partially concur. The DoD agrees that Army schools do not train each soldier primarily on the equipment possessed by his/her unit. The DoD disagrees, however, with the inference that the Army training strategy is ineffective or responsible for low skill proficiency levels.

Within each Military Occupational Specialty and among like units, there are variations in the type equipment found in both Active Component and Reserve Component units. With some unique exceptions, Army service schools conduct Advanced Individual Training on all equipment systems which are generally found in the total force. In many schools, the majority of the training may be conducted on an equipment item which, for reasons of cost and training effectiveness, provides the best training while instruction in like items found in the total force may be less detailed. The example of field artillery training cited by the GAO is typical of this training approach. The M102 howitzer is used as the primary training piece at the field artillery school because it is an effective training howitzer and its ammunition is both readily available and relatively inexpensive. Although training on other howitzers found throughout the total force is minimal, much of what is learned on the M102 howitzer is also applicable to the other weapons systems.

The example cited by the GAO of the air cavalry troop whose mechanics were trained on different helicopters is one of the unique exceptions. The OH-6A helicopter is being phased out of the Army inventory and is now found only in some Reserve Component units. The report does not reflect that many Reserve Component aviation units are equipped with the OH-58 helicopter or that much of what the mechanics learned in school is equally applicable in their current duty assignments.

See comment 1.

On several occasions, the Army has examined the feasibility of implementing training options proposed by the GAO. Unfortunately, the options have been found to be resource prohibitive. For example, training soldiers only on the equipment found in their units would require the Army to establish six separate programs to train field artillerymen. The proposed regional training site option would have the Army establish numerous regional

Now on pp. 2-4, 16-18, 21-22.

required for full qualification. The GAO also identified a number of occupations where reservists had been taught only 60 percent of the critical job tasks during Advanced Individual Training. The GAO observed that most company officials in the 17 units it visited consider only half or fewer of the soldiers in their units to be proficient in critical Military Occupational Specialty tasks. (pp. 17-19, pp. 24-25/GAO Draft Report)

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The Army Training and Doctrine Command schools do not train soldiers in all skill level tasks. The Army trains soldiers in the most critical tasks within a Military Occupational Specialty and provides the gaining unit commander with a report that details the tasks on which each soldier has been trained. To assist gaining commanders, the Army provides commanders with a Trainers Guide and the Soldiers Manual for each Military Occupational Specialty. By this means, commanders are aware of which tasks they must train and sustain. The determination of the tasks that will be taught in Army schools is based on many factors, such as the cost of retraining soldiers in school, the size of student accounts, and what can reasonably be trained in units. The training of all tasks within an Military Occupational Specialty at the formal school would be prohibitive in terms of time, funding and instructional personnel.

The Reserve Component Training Development Action Plan contains an initiative to examine increasing critical task training in Initial Entry Training. The Army Training and Doctrine Command will examine alternative strategies for increasing training on skill level 1 tasks by the fourth quarter, FY 1989. The Reserve Component Training Development Action Plan also includes initiatives designed to improve the Military Occupational Specialty qualification in Reserve Component units.

FINDING D: Commanders Give Low Priority To Mission-Essential Tasks. The GAO reported that the Army training program specifies that both individual and collective training be based on the unit Mission-Essential Tasks Lists. The GAO found, however, that in several instances, units either had not prepared their lists or had prepared them improperly, leading to the unit individual training not focusing on the collective needs of the unit. The GAO reported that both the Army Inspector General and the Army Reserve Component Training Strategy Task Force identified weaknesses in the development of Reserve Mission Essential Tasks Lists, which adversely affected collective training. The GAO noted the Task Force concluded that Reserve commanders did not properly develop the lists, either because they lacked experience or because guidance from headquarters

task training. The GAO also found that soldiers in five units had received no common task training in the past year because of other priorities. The GAO reported that unit officials visited considered that only half or fewer of their soldiers were proficient in common soldier tasks. The GAO also noted that unit officials considered individual skill deficiencies to be significant and raised concern about the survivability of the unit in combat. The GAO observed that, in addition, one reason soldiers did not perform survival skills according to standards is that many of the noncommissioned officers primarily responsible for the training, themselves lack the necessary skills. The GAO found that many failed some of the common soldier tasks tested in 1987 by the Common Task Test, a hands-on evaluation of proficiency in selected soldier tasks. The GAO noted, for example, that 21 percent of the noncommissioned officers (grade E-6) could not recognize friendly and enemy armored vehicles. The GAO concluded that, unless deficiencies in common soldier tasks are corrected, the training is of limited value because it reinforces the wrong way to accomplish the tasks. The GAO also concluded that a new direction in Reservist training is needed, which stresses that soldier survival skills are as important as skills required to perform job-specific tasks. The GAO noted that job task expertise is of little value if soldiers cannot survive. Finally, the GAO concluded that many units may not have adequate time available after mobilization to correct individual skill deficiencies prior to deployment. (p. 5, pp. 27-35/GAO Draft Report)

Now on pp. 2-4, 24-25.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The DoD recognizes that more training in battlefield survival skills is needed. However, the presentation of information on the Common Task Test may be somewhat misleading.

The uninformed reader may infer from Table 3.1 of the GAO report that units are directed to train on the 17 tasks selected for testing each year. The Army does not direct units to train on these tasks for testing. The determination to train on those specific tasks must be made by the unit commander, based on his/her assessment of the unit's training posture. Training on battlefield survival skills is frequently constrained by environmental restrictions and soldier safety considerations.

See comment 2.

According to Table 3.2 of the report, the demonstrated proficiency of Reserve Component noncommisioned officers ranged from 76-95 percent successful completion of tasks. Given time and training constraints, the data in the table is positive, but is verbally presented as a significant failure. It may not be cost effective in terms of time, funding, and lost training opportunities

See comment 3.

nuclear-biological-chemical protective gear--does not fully consider the implications of the safety of both the soldiers involved and nonmilitary personnel who might have been affected. Similarly, during FIREX '88, cited frequently in the report, the average temperature was over 100 degrees Fahrenheit. To avoid needless heat injuries in such circumstances, Army policy requires extensive acclimation before soldiers are to wear full mission-oriented protective posture gear. In addition, the use of the protective gear while driving is carefully controlled due to the loss of peripheral vision and hearing capability. Finally, the Army is precluded in the continental United States, as well as in Europe, from driving in blackout conditions on civilian roads and main supply routes.

Environmental limitations within training areas also preclude total wartime simulation. For example, FIREX '88 was conducted on property controlled by the Bureau of Land Management. The Bureau prohibits extensive digging due to environmental concerns.

A final concern is the determination of what constitutes effective training. The training objectives of FIREX '88 were to exercise a Reserve Corps Artillery, its corps combat support and combat service support systems, and coordinate joint fire support with Army and Air Force elements. These objectives were met. The Army considers the missions levied during the exercise were completely realistic. Furthermore, few units ever have the opportunity to conduct fire missions of that scope and magnitude.

FINDING G: Units Are Geographically Dispersed. The GAO reported that the wide geographic dispersion of Reserve units makes effective communication and coordination among units more difficult. The GAO observed that approximately 7,000 units are based in over 4,000 separate facilities, with the average distance of a unit from headquarters being 106 miles. The GAO also observed that the average reserve battalion is dispersed over a 150-mile radius and some extend over 300 miles. The GAO found that, at higher command levels, few Reserve Component headquarters have all of their subordinate units in the same state--many units are in several states and some cover as many as 12 states. The GAO noted that, in contrast, comparable active units reside in a single or several installations within a few hours drive. The GAO also found that Reserve units frequently travel long distances to reach training support locations, using up valuable training time. The GAO reported that, on average, units travel: (1) 9 miles to motor pools, (2) 128 miles to mobilization and training equipment sites, (3) 40 miles to a local training areas, (4) 154 miles to

- a unit gave up three days of valuable training, while on standby, after an order to prepare weapons and be ready to fire on command;

- a chemical company had to postpone training at a Reserve chemical school, upon learning that mission-essential chemical decontamination equipment would not be available for several days;

- an armor unit could not train one fourth of its tank crews for three days due to inadequate planning for spare parts; and

- one unit allowed soldiers a day off for personal business, such as visiting the post exchange.

The GAO reported that similar findings were reported by the Army Inspector General and the Reserve Component Training Strategy Task Force. The GAO concluded that commanders can reduce the impact of these training problems by better managing the training time that is available. (pp. 39-41/GAO Draft Report)

Now on pp. 2,4, 34-36.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. Recognizing the limited training time available, the Army requires commanders to use their time well. Reserve Component units are directed to concentrate their limited time on the most critical wartime training requirements using the battle focus process.

Additionally, the report implies that more individual training should have been observed during unit visits. Certainly unit leadership should ensure as much concurrent training as possible, but annual training is designated as primarily a collective training period focusing on equipment.

The Reserve Component Training Development Action Plan includes a wide variety of initiatives designed to provide more and better opportunities for Reserve Component wartime specific training and to teach Reserve Component leaders how to better maximize these opportunities.

FINDING I: Administrative Requirements Impede Training. The GAO found that the administrative demands placed on Reserve Components significantly reduce the time available for training, particularly during weekend drills. The GAO reported that the Reserve Component Training Strategy Task Force concluded the following:

- Reserve unit commanders are so overloaded with administrative requirements that readiness is significantly affected;

Reservists are required to take it every two years. The GAO reported that, in FY 1987 and FY 1988, the Army Training and Doctrine Command reported that about 60 percent of reservists required to take the exam took it. The GAO found, however, that the Army does not have accurate information on the number of Reservists in each MOS who should be tested in a given year. The GAO concluded that because some reservists took the test in both years, the Training and Doctrine Command data overstates the percentage of test participants. The GAO noted that, of the 156,000 Reservists who took the Skill Qualification Test during FY 1987, about 65 percent passed, compared with 92 percent of the 450,000 active duty soldiers taking the exam. The GAO found that the Army Reserve Command units it studied did not stress the Skill Qualification Test and offered it only once every two years. The GAO further found that only about 35 percent of the soldiers required to take the Skill Qualification Test in either 1986 or 1987 had actually taken it. The GAO reported that National Guard officials indicated unit commanders lacked incentive to conduct the tests and considered them of little value because:

- results are not linked to promotions as they are for active duty soldiers; and

- soldiers generally do poorly on the tests.

The GAO also noted officials in many units maintained that the Skill Qualification Test is oriented toward equipment that is in the active Army and is therefore of less value to Reserve component soldiers. The GAO reported that the Army has pilot tested Skill Qualification Tests, tailored to the mission and equipment of Reserve component units, and plans to implement the revised tests in FY 1990.

The GAO also found that another reason the Army lacks information on Reservist proficiency is that units frequently do not keep job books current, as required by the Army training management system. The GAO reviewed over 200 job books at 12 units and found that (1) only a portion of the tasks had been evaluated, (2) some books were outdated, (3) and some units had no books for as many as 50 soldiers. The GAO also reported that, in FY 1986 and FY 1987, only 37 percent of all Army Reservists and 50 percent of the National Guard soldiers took the Common Task Test, because of absence, nonavailability of equipment, and or units not properly scheduling the test. The GAO found that, for FY 1987, most of the Reservists who took the test had successfully completed most tasks, but the failure rate among Reservists was twice as high as the rate among their active duty counterparts. The GAO also noted that Reservist proficiency may have been

units ability to mobilize, deploy, and execute wartime missions.

FINDING K: Collective Unit Training Evaluations Are Of Limited Value. The GAO found that Army evaluations on collective training of Reserve components are of limited utility and not consolidated to provide performance trends. The GAO reported that the Army Training and Evaluation Program evaluations are done once every 3 years in the Reserves, compared with every 18 months in the active Army due to limited time available to train the reserves. The GAO noted that factors (like the high personnel and equipment turnover in the Reserves) limit the utility of the evaluations. The GAO found that the collective proficiency of Army units is to a large extent the result of the commander's emphasis on training. The GAO also noted, however, that units (1) are evaluated during their annual training period by an external evaluator, and (2) may be evaluated during the training year by officials within their peacetime chain of command. The GAO concluded that despite the number of evaluations being conducted, the Army recognizes that the results of these evaluations should be linked to resolve inconsistencies and provide an evaluation profile over time. The GAO noted that the Army is currently working to develop more standardized and effective approaches to evaluating unit training effectiveness. (pp. 48-49/GAO Draft Report)

Now on pp. 40-41.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The DoD concurs that unit training evaluations are not consolidated to provide performance trends, but is concerned that the GAO report places an incorrect perspective on Army Training and Evaluation Program evaluations. The report implies that the evaluation results would cover a period of time. In reality, Army Training and Evaluation Program evaluations, like other training evaluations, even for the Active Components, are only intended to provide a snapshot of unit training capability at a point in time. The Army Training and Evaluation Program, when consolidated with other standardized evaluation formats, has significant utility.

FINDING L: Army Initiatives To Improve Training. The GAO found that, over the last few years, the Army has conducted numerous studies and initiated actions to improve the training of Reserve soldiers. The GAO reported that the Army has recently developed a Reserve Component Training Strategy and is developing a corresponding action plan to improve training. The GAO noted that a fundamental principle of the strategy is that Reserve Components will train in fewer mission-essential tasks in peacetime than their active duty counterparts, while using the same standards. The GAO

* * * * *

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of the Army take the following actions to enable unit commanders to train Reserve soldiers in all soldier manual tasks that support the units' mission:

- make arrangements, where feasible, with active units or with other Reserve units to share available equipment with units that lack mission-essential equipment for training;
- identify and evaluate the feasibility of options to establish Advanced Individual Training programs that provide instruction on equipment used by the unit to which Reserve soldiers are assigned; and
- ensure that unit commanders are adequately trained to fully understand the Mission Essential Tasks List development process. (p. 25/GAO Draft Report)

Now on pp. 5, 22.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The Army supports actions which enable unit commanders to train soldiers in tasks required to execute the unit mission.

- Reserve Component units already borrow equipment from a variety of sources where proximity and availability allow. Unfortunately, this does not provide a broad solution to equipment shortages. The availability of equipment is often limited due to a lack of low density items or by active training or operational missions. The expansion of the mission essential equipment for training program is also limited by funding availability.
- The Army will continue to identify and evaluate feasible options for improving Advanced Individual Training programs for Reserve Component soldiers. The Army Training and Doctrine Command will recommend alternative strategies to increase skill level 1 tasks on appropriate equipment by the fourth quarter, FY 1989.
- The Army will continue to provide guidance and assistance to subordinate commanders in developing unit Mission Essential Tasks Lists.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of the Army emphasize the responsibility of leaders throughout the Army in establishing a training

The Forces Command/National Guard Regulation 350-2, to be published in the 3rd quarter, FY 1989, provides detailed implementing instructions for Reserve Component commanders to integrate individual and collective training, noncommissioned officer training, individual skills training, and training under battlefield conditions.

Now pp. 5, 43.

RECOMMENDATION 4: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of the Army direct unit commanders to plan training activities to maximize the limited training time available. (p. 51/GAO Draft Report)

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The FM 25-100, Training the Force, dated November 1988, requires Reserve Component commanders to concentrate limited training time on the most critical wartime training requirements. Department of the Army, Forces Command and National Guard Bureau regulations are being revised to provide consistent training guidance to Reserve Component commanders. Eight Reserve Component Training Development Action Plan initiatives were developed to assist Reserve Component commanders and units in making better use of limited training time.

Now on pp. 5, 43.

RECOMMENDATION 5: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of the Army encourage states and Army Reserve units, that have not already done so, to adopt initiatives aimed at consolidating administrative requirements. (p. 51/GAO Draft Report)

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The Chief of Staff of the Army established a task force to reduce Reserve Component training detractors in August 1988. The task force is conducting a total review of Reserve Component administrative requirements and will recommend requirements to be deleted, or consolidated, by the 3rd quarter, FY 1989. On the March 11, 1989, Chief of Staff of the Army released a "Vuono Sends" message, which eliminated some Headquarters, Department of the Army requirements, consoldated inspections, and emphasized the need to reward trainers. The task force will meet on April 26, 1989, to recommend additional actions in this area. Further guidance to the field will be provided in the 4th quarter, FY 1989.

Now on pp. 5, 43.

RECOMMENDATION 6: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of the Army direct commanders at all levels to ensure soldiers take the Skill Qualification Test, once the Army Training and Doctrine Command has implemented the revised tests. (p. 51/GAO Draft Report)

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The new guidance will be published in the revised Army Regulation 350-37, Individual Training Evaluation Program, by July 1, 1989.

The following are GAO's comments on the Department of Defense's letter dated April 18, 1989.

GAO Comments

1. These suggestions were removed from the report because the Department of Defense said that the Army had examined their feasibility previously and found them to be resource prohibitive.

2. This table was removed because it could have been misinterpreted.

3. We have revised the report to clarify the extent of failed tasks.

4. We have revised the report to clarify our discussion of skill qualification testing.

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Now on p. 43.

RECOMMENDATION 7: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of the Army direct unit commanders to keep job books current. (p. 51/GAO Draft Report)

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. Annotation of job books by first line supervisors is a key element of the Individual Training Evaluation Program. On April 4, 1989, the Army Training and Doctrine Command stated that job books are still a requirement and directed all units to keep them current.

Now on p. 43.

RECOMMENDATION 8: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of the Army direct (1) commanders at all levels to ensure soldiers take the Common Task Test, as required by Army regulation, and (2) the Army Training and Doctrine Command to develop guidance on evaluating soldiers to preclude the administrative problems that presently bias Common Task Test results (pp. 51-52/GAO Draft Report)

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The Army will continue to require soldiers to take the Common Task Test. The Army Training and Doctrine Command is clarifying guidance on the evaluation of soldiers during common task testing. The new guidance will be published in the revised AR 350-37, Individual Training Evaluation Program, by July 1, 1989.

Now on pp. 5, 43.

RECOMMENDATION 9: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of the Army should (1) ensure that the strategy for training Reservists is fully implemented and (2) provide details to the Congress on how the new strategy will affect the total force policy, which implies that Army Reserve component units will complement Active forces with equal capability. (p. 52/GAO Draft Report)

DoD RESPONSE: Partially concur. The Reserve Component Training Strategy was developed to enhance the Total Force Policy, not to change it. Army policy requires Reserve Component units to achieve the training readiness to be able to mobilize, conduct postmobilization training, deploy, and execute specified wartime missions. The Reserve Component Training Strategy and the Reserve Component Training Development Action Plan are specifically designed to reinforce the Total Force Policy and the training readiness of Reserve Component units.

The DoD is concerned with the interpretation connected to the phrase "with equal capability." The DoD suggests that the recommmendation be revised to read: "The Secretary of the Army should (1) ensure that the strategy for training reservists is fully implemented and (2) provide details to the Congress on how the new strategy will affect the total force policy, which implies that Army Reserve component units will complement Active forces with mission capable units."

Now on pp. 5, 31.

environment for Reservists that stresses training in battlefield survival. (p. 36/GAO Draft Report)

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The FM 25-100, Training the Force, dated November 1988, requires Active and Reserve units to train as they will fight, whenever feasible. The FM 25-100 states, "The goal of combat level training is to achieve combat level standards. Every effort must be made to attain this difficult goal. Within the confines of safety and common sense, leaders must be willing to accept less than perfect results initially by integrating smoke, noise, simulate a Nuclear-Biological-Chemical environment, battlefield debris, loss of key leaders, cold weather, and other realistic conditions into training. Leaders must demand this type realism in training and seize every opportunity to move soldiers out of the classroom into the field, to fire weapons, maneuver as a combined arms team, incorporate protective measures against enemy actions, and include joint and combined operations when possible."

The U.S. Forces Command and the National Guard Bureau are publishing a coordinated regulation in the 3rd quarter, FY 1989, which directs all Reserve Component units to train with a battle focus. The Forces Command/National Guard Regulation 350-2, para 6-2, is focused on survival skill training. Reserve Component commanders are directed to include specific survival skills/common task training during field training exercises as well as other training. The regulation emphasizes that soldiers successfully complete the biennial Common Task Test.

RECOMMENDATION 3: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of the Army direct unit commanders to follow Army guidance and train noncommissioned officers (1) in all common soldier tasks and (2) under realistic battlefield conditions so that noncommissioned officers can in turn train the other soldiers. (p. 36/GAO Draft Report)

Now on pp. 5, 31.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The FM 25-100, Training the Force, dated Nov 88, directs unit commanders to train NCOs in common soldier tasks under realistic battlefield conditions whenever feasible. Noncommissioned officer training responsibilities are specified on page 4-4. The FM 25-100 states, "The first line supervisor and his senior noncommissioned officers emphasize performance-oriented practice to ensure soldiers achieve soldiers manual standards. The first line supervisor conducts cross-training to spread critical wartime skills within his unit. The CSM's, 1SGT's, and other senior noncommissioned officers at every echelon coach junior noncommissioned officers to master a wide-range of individual tasks."

Now on pp. 5, 41-42.

concluded that such a change would raise questions about the current force policy, which implies that Reserve forces will complement active duty forces with equal capability. The GAO concluded, however, that due to cost and potential turbulence in the reserve units, it may be 10 or more years before all action plan items are implemented. (pp.49-51/GAO Draft Report)

DoD RESPONSE: Partially concur. The DoD agrees with the fundamental principle of the Reserve Component Training Strategy outlined above, except for the GAO conclusion that "such a change would raise questions about the current force policy, which implies that Reserve forces will complement active duty forces with equal capability." The Reserve Component Training Strategy was designed to enhance training of the Army Reserve Components, not change it. In addition, the total force policy does not imply equal capability. It would be more appropriate to state that Army Reserve Component units will complement active forces with mission capable units.

Now on pp. 3-4, 37-40.

See comment 4.

overstated due to test irregularities (like multiple attempts to improve scores, and credit for simply attending a class covering the task). (pp. 43-47/GAO Draft Report)

DoD RESPONSE: Partially concur. The DoD agrees that not all Reserve component soldiers have taken the Skill Qualification Test, as prescribed, but is concerned that some misperceptions will result from aspects of the report. For example, the report infers that the Skill Qualification Test must be offered annually; actually, the Skill Qualification Test may be used annually if the commander so desires but there is no requirement to do so. Additionally, since Skill Qualification Test results are tabulated by social security numbers, biennial results do not include duplicative entries. The Skill Qualification Test is a valid measure of individual proficiency. The administration of the Skill Qualification Test began in FY 1977 for the Active Components, and in FY 1978 for the Reserve Components, as a method for evaluating individual training proficiency. Approximately 70 percent of the Active Component population is tested annually, compared with approximately 60 percent of the Reserve Component population, which is tested biennially. That portion of each component that is not tested is generally not eligible due to recent changes in personnel specialty caused by factors like new assignments, unit mission changes or personnel turbulence. The Army has recognized that, in some areas, the test and its administration could be better adapted to the Reserve Component environment. The Army Training Support Center is currently well into the process of effecting the necessary alterations.

The Army has directed all units to keep job books current. It should be noted, however, that the job books are training tools designed for the use of the first line supervisor and are not designed to provide the Army an evaluation of soldier proficiency.

A primary DoD concern is the report focus on individual tests as an indicator of Reserve Component unit capability. The DoD does not rely on individual tests as an indicator of Reserve Component unit capability. The Army evaluates Reserve Component unit proficiency using U.S. Forces Command annual training evaluations, triennial external Army Training and Evaluation Programs, the training ratings of the Status of Resources and Training System, feedback from the warfighting Commanders-in-Chief and Army component commanders concerning the proficiency of the Reserve Component units in their wartime capability. There is much that the Army does know about the capability of its Reserve Component

- each commander, on the average, is faced with at least 115 administrative requirements annually, with many of them duplicative or of questionable necessity; and

- the average unit spends about one half of its 39 days on administrative requirements.

The GAO observed that, in July 1988, the Army Inspector General concluded the administrative requirements imposed on Reserve units (1) were totally disruptive, (2) frustrating to the leaders, (3) caused soldier discontent, and (4) forced changes to training plans, thereby detracting from training. The GAO reported that, according to officials at one unit it visited, it is estimated that up to 70 percent (with an average of 25 percent) of all available training time is used to satisfy administrative requirements. The GAO noted that one unit commander, commenting on having to prepare an estimated ten monthly, eight quarterly, and four semiannual reports just on basic personnel management, indicated that many unit personnel are involved in doing the reports, while the troops wait to be trained. The GAO also reported that 34 percent of the Army Reserve time and 17 percent of the National Guard time is spent on administrative requirements. The GAO noted the smaller Guard burden may be due to programs that were initiated to consolidate administrative requirements. The GAO also reported that, in some cases, administrative requirements prescribed by higher headquarters offices caused significant alterations to planned training activities. The GAO also noted that the Army has initiated a complete review of administrative requirements imposed on reserve units, with a goal of reducing these requirements to no more than 20 percent of available training time. (pp. 41-43/GAO Draft Report)

Now on pp. 4, 36-37.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The Reserve Component Training Development Action Plan includes a major initiative specifically designed to attack the problem of administrative burden. This initiative is already well under way and some significant training detractors have already been eliminated. Further reductions and efficiencies will be recommended throughout the remainder of the year.

FINDING J: Reservist Proficiency Is Not Known. The GAO reported that, while the Army has the means to evaluate the overall proficiency of its soldiers in (1) job tasks, using the Skill Qualification Test, and (2) survival skills, using the Common Task Test, not all Reservists have taken the tests as prescribed by Army policy. The GAO noted that, although active duty soldiers are required to take the Skill Qualification Test annually,

Now on pp. 4, 33-34.

major training areas, (5) 65 miles to rifle ranges, and (6) 149 miles to use training aids or simulators. The GAO also noted that only 20 percent of the Reserve Components have usable local small caliber ranges. The GAO concluded that the geographic dispersion diminishes the frequency with which units can use training facilities and increases the difficulty in providing support, evaluation, and other services to subordinate units. (pp. 38-39/GAO Draft Report)

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. Geographic dispersion is second only to time as the most significant constraint affecting Reserve Component unit training. The Reserve Component Training Development Action Plan contains a variety of initiatives designed specifically to reduce this constraint. The following actions are being implemented:

- establishing Regional Training Sites for Medical and Maintenance specialty training;
- designating facilities on active component installations for Reserve Component priority use;
- focusing construction on local training area development; and
- increasing the use of distributed training programs.

FINDING H: Scarce Training Time Not Used Effectively. The GAO reported that Reserve units have considerably less time available than active Army units for training, yet must meet many of the same requirements. The GAO noted that Reserve units are generally authorized only 38 days a year and the National Guard 39 days, to accomplish training, compared with an average of 240 days a year for active units. The GAO reported that Reserve training time consists of two 8-hour days (one weekend a month) of inactive duty training and 14 or 15 continuous days of annual training (usually during the summer) to perform both individual and collective training. The GAO noted that units are required to spend at least 9 days of annual training in a tactical field environment to approximate wartime conditions. The GAO found, however, that valuable training opportunities were often lost because annual training time was not managed effectively. The GAO cited a number of examples of ineffective use of training time including:

- during a firepower demonstration at Dugway Proving Grounds, a unit was ordered to fire twice the number of artillery rounds considered necessary, and, as a result did not provide equal focus on other critical mission tasks where weaknesses had been identified;

to attempt to achieve perfection in all tasks in a peacetime training environment. Army doctrine and guidance does encourage training on battlefield survival skills concurrent with other training events.

FINDING F: Units Did Not Train Under Realistic Conditions. The GAO found that the training conducted by 13 of 17 units it visited did not simulate a combat environment. The GAO also found that 6 of 17 visited units conducted independent annual training, instead of training with other units they would fight with on the battlefield--even though the opportunity for integrated training existed. The GAO further found that some training events emphasized the completion of assigned missions at the expense of incorporating realism. The GAO reported that, although officials at one transportation company set records in one training event for the movement of petroleum, the soldiers in that company were not required to conduct the mission as might be expected in actual combat. The GAO also reported that the unit and higher command levels of one engineer company emphasized the completion of real property maintenance and repair projects for the Georgia National Guard at Fort Stewart, instead of training to accomplish projects in a combat environment. The GAO also found that, in instances where soldiers were working on tactical projects, realism was not incorporated and the commanders emphasized project completion and failed to reinforce the tactical implications of the work. The GAO noted one exercise, FIREX '88, where two field artillery batteries fired more than one thousand artillery rounds, but (1) did not simulate a nuclear-biological-chemical environment, (2) did not require units to establish defensive perimeters for the guns, and (3) did not emplace the guns, as would be required in combat. The GAO concluded that, in that particular instance, the training was a firepower demonstration rather than a firepower exercise. In summary, the GAO concluded the Army must give considerably more attention and emphasis to conducting exercises in an environment that will train reservists to cope with the complex, stressful, and lethal situations of the battlefield. (p. 27, pp. 29-31, p. 34/GAO Draft Report)

Now on pp. 3-4, 25-26.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. Army doctrine and guidance directs units to train under realistic conditions whenever possible. There are, however, numerous considerations that constrain or prohibit totally realistic training.

Safety considerations frequently limit unit ability to train under wartime conditions. The cited example of a transportation company--which did not deliver petroleum at night, while driving in blackout conditions, wearing

Now on pp. 2-3, 20-21.

was vague. The GAO found that the commanders of three of the units it visited considered their Mission Essential Tasks Lists, which had been provided by higher headquarters, to be inaccurate or unrealistic. The GAO concluded that training in some units was not properly focused because units did not prepare the lists. (pp. 23-24/GAO Draft Report)

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. A unit Mission Essential Tasks List defines those collective tasks which are absolutely essential to wartime mission readiness. It is developed from the unit mission, guidance from higher headquarters, and the Army Training and Evaluation Program. Through its own assessments, the Army has determined that junior leaders require more training and guidance in developing Mission Essential Tasks Lists and managing available training time. Several initiatives included in the Reserve Component Training Development Action Plan address this problem.

FINDING E: Units Did Not Emphasize Battlefield Survival Skills. The GAO reported that, to the extent possible, Army training criteria require common tasks (critical to battlefield survival) be incorporated into all training activities, so soldiers are trained as they are expected to fight. The GAO found, however, that units seldom incorporate common task training into the various field exercises and other training events conducted. The GAO also found cases where the common task training that was conducted was not performed to Army standards. The GAO studied the construction of defensive fighting positions by four units and found the following:

- none were prepared, as prescribed by the common task soldiers manual;
- some did not incorporate either adequate overhead cover or grenade sumps;
- positions constructed precluded soldiers from shooting weapons properly; and
- in one instance, the location of two fighting positions could have resulted in soldiers shooting at one another.

The GAO also reported that the Soldiers Manual of Common Tasks contains 86 tasks and each year the Army specifies 17 of those tasks on which units are to test soldiers. The GAO found that the 17 units it visited generally placed little emphasis on including common task training in field exercises and other training events it observed. The GAO reported that, according to unit officials, about 12 percent of available training time was used for common

training sites for the initial entry training of Reserve Component soldiers. Although the Army has created regional sites for sustainment and transition training of Reserve Component soldiers in low density skills, such as maintenance and medical, these sites are significantly different than what would be required to train new soldiers in high density Military Occupational Specialties.

The DoD recognizes that there is a lack of equipment in many of the units the GAO visited. The equipment posture in some of the units is a result of the units being in the process of activation or reorganization.

The Reserve Component Training Development Action Plan includes an initiative to reexamine the possibility of increasing the critical task training of Reserve Component soldiers on unit-specific equipment in Initial Entry Training. The Army Training and Doctrine Command will complete an examination of alternative Initial Entry Training strategies by the fourth quarter of FY 1989.

FINDING C: Advanced Training Does Not Cover All Critical Job Tasks. The GAO reported that Reservists receive basic and advanced individual training in structured courses in Army Training and Doctrine Command schools. The GAO noted that, because the Army strives to minimize the cost and length of formal training, all critical job tasks are not taught during Advanced Individual Training. The GAO reported that, inasmuch as these programs cover only a portion of a soldier's critical job tasks, first-line supervisors (usually noncommissioned officers at the Army Reserve and Guard unit level) have responsibility for the rest of the job specialty skills, refresher, and battlefield survival training. The GAO noted that most Reservists train on weekends, along with an intensive 2-week training session each year. The GAO concluded that the effectiveness of Reservist training was hampered by commanders not focusing sufficiently on training soldiers in tasks that supported the unit mission.

The GAO also reported that, each year, about 25 percent of those enlisting in the Reserves are former active-duty personnel having a Military Occupation Specialty different from that needed in their Reserve unit. The GAO noted that, in such cases, the unit normally must assume responsibility for retraining in the proper specialty because civilian job commitments preclude enrollment in many Advanced Individual Training programs (which usually take more than 2 months to complete and may take more than nine months). The GAO also reported that, for nearly one third of the 360 Army occupational specialties, Advanced Individual Training provides training in less than 80 percent of the critical tasks

See comment 1.

operate in their units. The GAO reported that Advanced Individual Training schools trained on the most modern Army equipment, which was not yet present in many reserve units. The GAO noted that, as a result, the Reserve units had to assume the responsibility to provide initial training in tasks not covered in Advanced Individual Training, as well as refresher training. The GAO cited an example of helicopter mechanics in an air cavalry troop trained and "Military Occupational Speciality qualified" on the OH-58 scout helicopter, used by the active Army, but not qualified on the OH-6A helicopter used by the unit. The GAO noted that, during annual training, these mechanics served as "tool carriers," and the troop had to conduct on-the-job training to provide the necessary maintenance skills. The GAO cited another example where Advanced Individual Training provided a five week training class that focused on the M102 howitzer, used in both active and reserve units, but the Reserve artillery battery being trained used the M198 155-mm towed howitzer. The GAO concluded that several options exist to remedy this situation, including (1) establishing Advanced Individual Training programs that focus entirely on the equipment possessed by the reserve units, and (2) training Reservists at regional sites using reserve-owned equipment.

The GAO also reported that, according to the Army Research Institute, in order to become and remain proficient in critical job tasks, soldiers must have initial school training followed by individual training at the unit level. The GAO found, however, that a number of Reserve units did not have the equipment needed to train its soldiers. The GAO also found that, even though (in 1983) the Army established a Minimum Essential Equipment for Training program, in late FY 1987, the minimum essential equipment available in the five Continental Armies ranged from 54 to 71 percent. The GAO noted that eight of the 17 units it studied lacked mission essential equipment, and training was significantly hindered by the shortages. The GAO reported, for example, that officials at one air cavalry unit had not been issued authorized communications security equipment, nuclear-biological-chemical protective clothing, or night vision goggles and, as a result, could not adequately train for missions in a nuclear-biological-chemical environment or in darkness. The GAO also found that several units also lacked training devices and simulators. The GAO discussed a number of examples, including (1) soldiers in artillery batteries, who had not seen the basic combat load, the copperhead round, and (2) a number of companies lacked inert claymore mines and, therefore, could not provide training in the effective placement and recovery of the mines. The GAO also reported that one armor company,

Detailed comments on the GAO report are provided in the enclosure. The DoD appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft report.

Stephen M. Duncan

Enclosure
a/s

Prior Audits and Studies

Reserve component training has been the subject of prior GAO audits and Army studies.

In 1988 the Reserve Forces Policy Board reported that next to personnel shortages, the individual military skill of reservists was the most critical factor limiting unit readiness. GAO reported that the individual military skills problem reflects the inherent constraints of the reserve training environment—particularly limited time and the need to retrain prior service personnel.[1]

A July 1988 Army Inspector General report[2] on training management made the following observations:

- Training management is not standardized. The uncertainties existing in doctrine, concepts, and terms make training management difficult to teach in schools and sustain in the force. The lack of an institutionalized doctrine leaves training management to the personalities of commanders.
- Inconsistencies that exist in training guidance and policy must be interpreted at each level of command.
- The active Army's insensitivity to reduced training time in the reserve components complicates an already difficult training challenge for reserve component commanders as they deal with administrative requirements competing for limited training time.
- Training is only marginally effective because there are too few training days and training does not focus on battle-essential tasks.

The significance of the training management problem is also noted in the Department of Defense Annual Statement of Assurance for fiscal year 1987. The Defense Department identified training management in the Army National Guard as a "material weakness." Other reserve component training studies include the following:

1. Reserve Training: An Alternative to the Active Army Education Program for National Guard Technicians (GAO/NSIAD-88-164, June 1988).

2. Army Military Occupational Specialty Qualification Task Force Recommendations to Resolve MOS Qualification Problems, May 1987.

[1] Reserve Components: Opportunities to Improve National Guard and Reserve Policies and Programs (GAO/NSIAD-89-27, Nov. 17, 1988).

[2] Department of the Army, Inspector General Agency Report, Assessment of Forces Training Management, July 1988.

keep job books current, (3) will continue to require soldiers to take the common task test, and (4) plans to clarify guidance on the evaluation of soldiers during CTT testing.

DOD agreed that the Congress should be provided details on the reserve component training strategy and specifically how it affects the total force policy. However, DOD said that the total force policy does not imply equal capabilities among reserve component and active forces. DOD said that it would be more appropriate to state that the total force policy implies that Army reserve component units will complement active forces with mission-capable units. DOD might have misinterpreted our statement about equal capability. We did not intend to imply that reserve units do in fact possess a capability equal to that of active Army units and agree with DOD that a more realistic expectation of the reserves is for them to provide mission-capable rather than equally capable units.

Nevertheless, the inferences contained in DOD literature regarding total force policy as well as implications associated with the role assigned to the Army's reserve components imply equal capability. For example, the Army Reserve's fiscal year 1989 posture statement states that the very basis of the total force policy rests on the belief that the reserve components can and will serve as effectively as their active component counterparts when they are called upon. Also, according to the Reserve Forces Policy Board, reserve components are to be equal partners to their active force counterparts in peacetime as well as wartime and must be as ready as their active force counterparts. Because some essential capabilities lie primarily within reserve component units and many of these units have deployment dates that rival those of the active Army, the relationship between the active and reserve component forces goes beyond complementing each other.

DOD generally agreed with our findings but raised several concerns. It stated that the report implies that the SQT must be given annually. DOD said that, since SQT results are tabulated biennially by social security numbers, results do not contain duplicative entries. We agree that the draft report wrongly implied that SQTs must be offered annually, and the report's wording has been changed. However, we disagree with DOD's comment that SQT results do not contain duplicative entries. The Army Training Support Center, which is responsible for the administration, scoring, and reporting of SQTs, does not biennially tabulate reserve component soldiers' SQT results by social security numbers, nor does it have any intention to do so in the future. In preparation for a briefing to the

- Training detractors, such as changes in unit organization and requirements imposed by higher headquarters, should be reduced.
- Leader development training should receive increased emphasis, and redundancies in Reserve and National Guard schools should be eliminated.
- Training should be focused on selected critical mission tasks at the company and battalion organization levels.
- Training management should be improved.

An Army official said that, due to cost and potential turbulence to units, it may be 10 or more years before all actions are implemented.

Conclusions

Training reservists is difficult. The Reserves are a part-time force that is hampered by factors such as (1) the wide geographic dispersion of headquarters and subordinate units, (2) the long distances separating units from available training facilities, and (3) limited training time. These conditions make it imperative that the Army take full advantage of the time that is available to train reservists. We believe that NCOs and commanders at all levels can do a better job of planning training activities so as to maximize training opportunities.

The Army must also seek ways to not only reduce the administrative requirements imposed on units but also to minimize their disruption to training. The Army's review of reserve components' administrative requirements is underway and is an essential first step. Initiatives undertaken by the National Guard in Maryland and in Utah to consolidate administrative requirements into fewer weekends look promising.

Management initiatives are also needed to improve evaluations of reservists' proficiency. Limited participation in the SQT and the CTT and the failure of NCOs to keep job books current limit the information available to commanders on reservists' strengths and weaknesses. Such information would be useful in developing both individual and collective training plans that place increased emphasis on tasks where weaknesses exist. TRADOC's implementation of SQTs tailored to reservists' equipment and missions should enhance the utility of this test. Elimination of testing irregularities of the CTT would enhance its utility. Also, the utility of the various collective evaluations should be enhanced by the Army's initiative to link them.

Table 4.1: Common Soldier Task Test Results for Fiscal Year 1987

Figures in percent

Task tested	Tasks failed		
	Active Army	Army Reserve	National Guard
Recognize friendly/threat armored vehicles	11	23	32
Identify terrain features on map	9	15	17
Determine grid coordinates	8	15	12
Determine magnetic azimuth using compass	4	11	13
Install, fire, recover claymore mines	9	17	20
Camouflage self/equipment to avoid detection	4	13	13
Issue challenge/recognize password	3	8	8
Use protective mask properly	6	10	12
Maintain protective mask	4	10	18
Decontaminate skin/equipment	5	14	28
Put on and wear MOPP gear	3	11	14
Recognize/react to chemical/biological hazard	4	8	14
Apply field pressure dressing	9	14	27
Provide first aid to nerve agent casualty	4	10	11
Prevent shock	4	13	16
Recognize/provide first aid for heat injuries	5	13	15
Provide first aid for frostbite	5	14	16

Reservists' proficiency in common tasks may not be as high as indicated by test results because there were a number of testing irregularities. Officials at two units told us that they had given soldiers multiple attempts to improve their scores, while another unit credited soldiers with task proficiency for simply attending a class covering the task.

Collective Unit Training Evaluations Are of Limited Value

Collective training evaluations conducted by the Army of its reserve components are of limited utility and are not consolidated to provide performance trends. The Army has recognized the need for improvements, and it plans corrective action.

An ARTEP—the Army's most comprehensive collective training evaluation—is performed by higher headquarters' evaluators for both active and reserve units. During these evaluations, units are required to demonstrate whether they can accomplish selected mission tasks according to Army standards. However, in recognition of the limited time available to train, reserve units are evaluated once every 3 years

Some Reservists Do Not Take the SQT

The SQT evaluates a soldier's proficiency in a sample of critical job tasks drawn from the Soldiers' Manual for his or her MOS. Each active duty soldier is required to take the SQT annually, while reservists are required to take the test once every 2 years. The 2-year interval for reservists was established in recognition of the limited time available to reserve units for training and skill development. The Army reported that about 60 percent of the reserve component soldiers required to take the SQT in fiscal years 1987 and 1988 took the test. Based on our examination of TRADOC data and discussion with TRADOC officials, we concluded, however, that the Army does not have accurate information on the number of reserve component soldiers in each MOS who should be tested in a given year. Because some reservists took the test in both years, TRADOC's data overstates the percentage of test participants.

Of the 156,000 reservists who took the SQT during fiscal year 1987, about 65 percent passed. About 92 percent of the 450,000 active duty soldiers passed the test during the same time period.

During a prior GAO review, unit officials told us that their commands had not emphasized participation in the SQT. Our work at one Army Reserve Command confirmed this lack of emphasis. Officials told us that the command had not stressed the SQT in the past. Our review of the SQT results for the command indicated that about 35 percent of the soldiers required to take the test in either 1986 or 1987 had taken the test.

National Guard officials at state and unit levels told us that commanders lacked an incentive to conduct the tests and considered them of little value because

- results are not linked to promotions as they are for active duty soldiers and
- soldiers generally do poorly on the tests.

Officials in many units we visited said that the SQT is oriented toward equipment that is in the active Army and is therefore of less value to reserve component soldiers. For example, the commanders of the air cavalry squadron and one artillery unit we visited told us that the SQTs for their most common MOSs were not useful because the tests contained questions relating to equipment that their units did not have.

The Army has pilot tested SQTs that are tailored to the equipment reserve component units possess and to their missions. According to

- An armor unit could not train one-fourth of its tank crews for 3 days because, according to the commander, higher headquarters had not adequately planned for spare parts.
- One unit allowed soldiers to take a day off for personal business, such as visiting the post exchange.

Administrative Requirements Impede Training

The administrative demands placed on reserve component units significantly reduce the time available for training, particularly during weekend drills.

Reserve component units are required to fulfill many of the same administrative requirements that active component units must fulfill. According to the Reserve Component Training Strategy Task Force, reserve unit commanders are so overloaded with administrative requirements that training readiness is significantly affected. The Task Force reported that on the average, a reserve component company commander is faced with at least 115 administrative requirements annually, many of which are duplicative or of questionable necessity. Task Force and Army Forces Command officials stated that the average unit spends about one-half of its 39 days on administrative requirements.

The Army's Inspector General reported in July 1988 that the administrative requirements imposed on reserve units, coupled with required response dates, had forced changes to training plans and thereby detracted from training. Specifically, the report stated:

"The short and discontinuous nature of the training year significantly reduces the reaction time of leaders and planners to complete unprogrammed administrative requirements within suspenses sensible for the AC [active component], but totally disruptive for the RC [reserve component]. This disruption causes leader frustration and soldier discontent as planned training is changed and soldiers wait in line or sit in briefings. These necessary administrative actions are driven by suspenses that force changes to training plans and magnify the effect that non-training requirements have to detract from battle focused training."

Officials at the units we visited estimated that up to 70 percent, and an average of about 25 percent, of all available training time is used to satisfy administrative requirements.

The impact of these requirements on training was summarized by the commander at one unit we visited. In addressing the requirement for the

128 miles to reach mobilization and training equipment sites or equipment concentration sites to obtain major equipment items needed for training. In order to reach a collective training site, units travel an average of 40 miles to a local training area and 154 miles to a major training area. To go to a rifle range, reserve component units travel an average of 65 miles (only 20 percent have usable local small caliber ranges); if they wish to obtain training aids or simulators, they travel an average of 149 miles.

This geographic dispersion results in

- difficult communication and coordination among units;
- diminished frequency with which units can use training facilities; and
- increased difficulty in providing support, evaluation, and other services to subordinate units.

The Army has developed a number of initiatives to reduce the impact of geographic dispersion, including (1) establishing regional training sites for medical and maintenance specialty training, (2) designating facilities on active Army installations for priority use by reserve component units, and (3) focusing construction on local training area development.

Scarce Annual Training Time Was Not Used Effectively

Reserve components have only a fraction of the time their active duty counterparts have to accomplish the multitude of training required of all Army units. Therefore, it is imperative that the limited time available be used effectively. We observed, however, that available training time was often not effectively used during annual training. Similar findings were reported by the Army Inspector General and the Reserve Component Training Strategy Task Force.

Active units have an average of 240 training days a year. Reserve units are generally authorized only 38 days a year, and National Guard units 39 days a year to accomplish training. In other words, reserve units have less than one-sixth of the time available to active units to meet equal training standards and requirements.

Opportunities to conduct continuous training in the reserve components are also limited. Training time in reserve units is divided into inactive duty training and annual training. Inactive duty training usually consists of two 8-hour days during one weekend each month. Annual training consists of 14 continuous days for Reserve units and 15 days for National Guard units, usually during the summer when the unit is able

some of the survival tasks is significant because of their training responsibilities.

DOD agreed that units were not training under realistic conditions, stating that Army doctrine and guidance direct units to train realistically whenever possible. It stated, however, that there are considerations that constrain or prohibit realistic training, such as safety considerations. We agree; however, at the units we visited, we observed opportunities where more realism could have been incorporated into the training without sacrificing safety. In commenting on our example involving a transportation company that was not required to minimize the use of lights at night, DOD said that the Army is precluded from driving in blackout conditions on civilian roads and main supply routes. A portion of the company's training, however, took place on government-owned land where the restriction did not apply.

DOD also expressed concern about our conclusions concerning what constitutes effective training and cited our example of FIREX 88. DOD believes that the training objectives were met during FIREX 88 and that participating units were provided realistic training. Nevertheless, we found instances in which the training was not realistic. DOD stated that conditions existing during FIREX 88 precluded total wartime simulation. For example, it said that the average temperature exceeded 100 degrees Fahrenheit and, because of concerns about heat injuries, it concluded that it was not feasible to simulate a nuclear-biological-chemical environment. Nevertheless, the Army's training doctrine recognizes that the Army must be prepared to fight anywhere in the world under prevailing conditions without extensive acclimatization.

DOD also said that environmental limitations within the training areas, such as a prohibition against extensive digging, also precluded total wartime simulation. However, neither this restriction nor any other environmental limitation precluded FIREX 88 from requiring units to emplace their guns as would be required in combat or to establish defensive perimeters for their guns.

Unit Officials' Views of Soldiers' Proficiency in Common Tasks

We sought views of soldiers' proficiency from officials of units we visited. In the opinion of most officials, only about half or fewer of all their soldiers were proficient in common soldier tasks, as shown in table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Unit Officials' Views of Soldiers' Proficiency in Common Tasks

Soldiers who were proficient	Perceptions of soldiers' proficiency by			
	Commanders	Trainers	First sergeants	Total
All of them	0	0	0	0
Most of them	5	6	1	12
About half of them	6	4	6	16
A few of them	2	1	1	4
None of them	1	1	0	2

Officials at 12 of the units we visited told us that individual skill deficiencies, especially in battlefield survival tasks, were significant and that they were concerned about their soldiers' and units' survivability in combat.

Many units may not have adequate time available to correct individual skill deficiencies prior to deployment. Table 3.3 compares for one wartime scenario the number of days available to units of one Readiness Group[1] prior to deployment with the number of days unit commanders estimate are needed to prepare their units.

Table 3.3: Comparison of Training Days Available With Training Days Needed After Mobilization

Number of days available at mobilization station	Total number of units	Number of units needing more training days than are available	Percentage of units with inadequate training time available
0-7	38	31	82
8-14	15	6	40
15-21	8	4	50
22-28	5	1	20
29-35	7	0	0
36+	19	0	0
Total	**92**	**42**	**46**

[1] A Readiness Group, which is a subordinate element of a Continental Army, provides advice and assistance to reserve units on training matters.

Table 3.1: Army Reserve and National Guard NCOs Who Failed Common Soldier Tasks Tested in Fiscal Year 1987

	Army Reserve				National	
	SL-2 (E-5)		SL-3 (E-6)		SL-2 (E-5)	
	Number tested	Number failed	Number tested	Number failed	Number tested	Number failed
Use challenge and password	10,676	499	7,350	308	28,410	1,760
Provide first aid to nerve agent casualty	10,676	898	7,350	570	28,410	2,860
Wear protective mask properly	10,676	787	7,350	486	28,410	3,049
Camouflage self and equipment	10,676	1,184	7,350	750	28,410	3,273
Maintain protective mask	10,676	755	7,350	408	28,410	2,599
Determine magnetic azimuth, using compass	10,676	940	7,350	569	28,410	2,964
Prevent shock	10,676	1,224	7,350	724	28,410	3,805
Recognize/react to chemical/ biological hazard	10,676	775	7,350	497	28,410	3,636
Provide first aid for heat injury	10,676	1,048	7,350	651	28,410	3,698
Put on and wear MOPP gear	10,676	884	7,350	551	28,410	3,362
Provide first aid for frostbite	10,676	1,156	7,350	714	28,410	3,824
Identify terrain features on a map	10,676	1,333	7,350	784	28,410	4,488
Determine grid coordinates	10,676	1,083	7,350	626	28,410	3,866
Decontaminate skin and equipment	10,676	1,250	7,350	745	28,410	4,991
Install, fire, and recover claymore mines	10,676	1,224	7,350	725	28,410	5,087
Recognize friendly and enemy armored vehicles	10,676	1,655	7,350	1,016	28,410	7,785
Apply field/pressure dressing	10,676	2,144	7,350	1,391	28,410	7,219

Note: SL = skill level.

of a corps-level exercise. But the exercise did not simulate a nuclear-biological-chemical environment, did not require units to establish defensive perimeters for the guns, and did not require units to emplace the guns as would be required in combat.

Under wartime conditions, units would fight as a team with other combat and support units. According to the Army, "Combined arms proficiency develops only when teams are habitually associated in training exercises . . . and routine employment of the full spectrum of combat, combat support, and combat service support functions must be regularly practiced." However, 6 of the 17 units we visited did not conduct training with other units even though the opportunity existed. Instead, they conducted independent annual training. In all cases, the units conducting independent training were combat-support and combat service-support units.

Many Trainers Lack Survival Skills

One reason soldiers did not perform survival skills according to Army standards is that many NCOs, who are primarily responsible for providing this training, lack the skills. The Common Task Test (CTT) is a hands-on evaluation of soldier proficiency in selected common soldier tasks. Many NCOs failed some of the common soldier tasks tested in 1987. For example, 11 percent of the NCOs (grade E-6) could not identify terrain features on a map, and 21 percent could not recognize friendly and enemy armored vehicles, as shown in table 3.1.

Need to Improve Training in Battlefield Survival Skills

The Army has not fully applied its principles of training to its reserve component soldiers. These principles, as prescribed in Army Field Manual 25-1, are embodied in the statement that "successful armies train as they intend to fight and fight as they are trained." Guard and Reserve units we visited, however, seldom incorporated battlefield survival skills into their training exercises. As a result, the training conducted generally did not simulate a combat environment. In instances where survival skill training was conducted, it often was not performed to Army standards. One reason for this is that many NCOs, who are primarily responsible for providing survival skills training, lack the necessary skills. Officials at most units we visited said that deficiencies in battlefield survival skills were significant and that they were concerned about their soldiers' and units' survivability in combat.

Units Did Not Emphasize Battlefield Survival Skills

Soldiers must be able to survive on the battlefield if units are to accomplish assigned missions. Tasks that the Army considers critical to battlefield survival are contained in a Soldiers' Manual of Common Tasks. These tasks are applicable to all soldiers regardless of their MOSs. Army training criteria stipulate that, to the extent possible, common tasks are to be incorporated into all training activities so that soldiers are trained as they are expected to fight.

The units we visited seldom incorporated common task training into the various field exercises and other training events conducted. Moreover, in other cases the common task training that was conducted was not performed to Army standards. For example, none of the four units that constructed defensive fighting positions prepared them as prescribed by the common task soldier's manual. Some positions did not incorporate either adequate overhead cover or grenade sumps (holes designed to protect soldiers from exploding grenades). Also, positions were poorly constructed, precluding soldiers from shooting weapons properly from them. In one instance, the location of two fighting positions could have resulted in soldiers' shooting at one another. Unless deficiencies in common soldier tasks are corrected, the training is of limited value because it reinforces the wrong way to accomplish a task.

The Soldiers' Manual of Common Tasks contains 86 tasks. Each year the Army specifies 17 tasks on which units are to test soldiers. The 17 units that we visited had generally placed little emphasis on incorporating common task training during field exercises and other training events that we observed. Unit officials told us that generally about 12 percent

Recommendations

We recommend that the Secretary of the Army take the following actions to enable unit commanders to train soldiers in all soldier manual tasks that support the units' missions:

- Make arrangements, when feasible, with active units or other reserve units to share available equipment with units that lack mission-essential equipment for training.
- Identify and evaluate the feasibility of options to establish AIT programs that provide instruction on equipment used by the unit to which reserve soldiers are assigned.
- Ensure that unit commanders are adequately trained to fully understand the METL development process.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

The Department of Defense (DOD) generally agreed with our findings and recommendations and said that the Army supports actions to enable unit commanders to train soldiers in required tasks.

DOD said that reserve component units already borrow equipment from a variety of sources but that this process does not provide a broad solution to equipment shortages. It stated that the availability of equipment is often limited by a lack of low density (few in number) items or by competing users. DOD said that the Army has developed initiatives to examine alternative strategies for increasing training in entry-level tasks during AIT and will continue to provide guidance and assistance to subordinate commanders in developing unit METLs.

DOD agreed that Army schools do not train reserve component soldiers primarily on the equipment they use in their units. However, it said that this condition does not imply that the Army's training strategy is ineffective or responsible for low skill proficiency levels. According to DOD, much of what a soldier learns on the equipment used in advanced training is applicable to his or her current assignment. While we do not disagree, the Army's practice of training reserve component soldiers on equipment different from the equipment these soldiers use in their units nevertheless is a major reason for reserve component soldiers' not possessing the needed skill proficiency upon arrival at their units. DOD said that the Army has an initiative to examine the possibility of increasing the critical task training of reserve component soldiers on unit-specific equipment in initial entry training. We believe that this initiative, if adopted, would help to improve reservists' proficiency.

At one of the armor companies, unreliable radios hindered training. While this company had M-1 tanks—the most sophisticated tank in the Army's inventory—the company lacked modern radios and equipped the tanks with 1950-vintage radios. These radios were unreliable and lacked adequate power, causing numerous communication problems among the tanks. Company officials told us that, because of this condition, in conjunction with limited maneuvering room, the tanks had to operate closer to one another than called for by Army doctrine.

Commanders Gave Low Priority to Mission-Essential Tasks

The Army's training program specifies that both individual and collective training be based on a unit's mission-essential tasks. We found, however, that in several instances units either had not prepared mission-essential task lists (METL) or had not prepared them properly. As a result, at these units, individual training did not focus on the collective needs of the unit.

There is no single Army organization that develops METLs. Instead, reserve unit commanders are required to develop METLs from comprehensive lists of tasks contained in the Army Training and Evaluation Programs (ARTEP). ARTEPs are prepared by TRADOC schools for each type of unit, for example, infantry, artillery, and armor units. ARTEPs are the foundation for all collective training; they detail all the tasks that units must be able to perform. The METL, on the other hand, represents only those ARTEP tasks considered critical to a unit's assigned wartime mission. Individual soldier tasks are to be assigned training priorities by unit officials based on the METL. This approach recognizes that individual training must support the collective needs of the unit.

Both the Army Inspector General and the Army's Reserve Component Training Strategy Task Force[2] identified weaknesses in the development of reserve METLs that adversely affect collective training. The Task Force found that reserve commanders had not properly developed METLs either because they lacked experience or because guidance from higher headquarters was vague. Several units we visited had not identified mission-essential tasks. For example, two units were using the ARTEP as a METL rather than identifying only the mission-essential tasks related to the units' wartime missions. Commanders of three additional units believed that their METLs, which had been provided by higher headquarters, were either inaccurate or unrealistic.

[2]The Task Force was formed in October 1987. It conducted a year-long study to develop a comprehensive reserve training strategy.

example, the OH-58 has hydraulic systems, whereas the OH-6A does not. According to troop officials, the five mechanics, even though "MOS qualified," were not qualified to work on the OH-6A. Because advanced training had not prepared the mechanics to work independently on the aircraft, these soldiers, while receiving on-the-job training, were used as "tool carriers" rather than helicopter mechanics during annual training. The troop must now conduct on-the-job training to provide these soldiers with needed maintenance skills.

We also visited a field artillery battery that had M198 155-mm towed howitzers. Soldiers in this unit had attended an AIT program that lasts 5 weeks, and the training, according to artillery school officials, focuses on the M102 howitzer. Minimal instruction is provided on the M198, which is found in both active and reserve units. A school official told us that only 5 to 8 hours of instruction are given on the M198 during the entire AIT program.

Army officials told us that in many schools the majority of training may be conducted on one type of equipment which, for reasons of cost and training effectiveness, provides the best training. According to the officials, much of what a soldier learns on the equipment used in advanced training (for example, the M102 howitzer) is equally applicable to his current duty assignment.

Some Units Did Not Have Equipment to Train Soldiers

According to the Army Research Institute, soldiers must have both initial school training and subsequent individual training at the unit to become and remain proficient in critical job tasks. We found, however, that a number of units we visited did not have the equipment needed to train their soldiers.

The Army established the Minimum Essential Equipment for Training program in 1983 to alleviate equipment shortages that impaired training in reserve component units. As of late fiscal year 1987, however, the percentage of minimum essential equipment available in the five Continental Armies[1] ranged from 54 to 71 percent, as shown in table 2.2.

[1]The Continental Armies command Army Reserve units and support and train these units in their geographical regions.

Reservists Not Adequately Trained to Perform Critical Job Tasks

Since most Advanced Individual Training (AIT) programs are intended to cover only a portion of soldiers' critical job tasks, Army Reserve and Guard units, like active component units, have a responsibility to provide initial training in tasks not covered in AIT as well as refresher training. In some instances, AIT provided little instruction on equipment reservists were to use. In addition, we found that a number of units lacked the equipment needed to provide this training to its soldiers. Lastly, the effectiveness of reservists' job training was hampered because some commanders did not give priority to instruction in tasks that supported the units' missions. Most unit officials we visited believed that only half or fewer of the soldiers in their units were proficient in critical job tasks.

Advanced Training Does Not Cover All Critical Job Tasks or Equipment Reservists Use

Most AIT programs are not designed to cover all critical job tasks reservists need to learn to become fully proficient. Also, some advanced training programs do not cover the equipment reservists are expected to use in their units.

The Army has implemented the same training program for all units--both active and reserve components. Generally, this program consists of structured courses at training centers and schools and refresher or on-the-job training at individual units. The responsibility for training individual soldiers is shared by TRADOC and the individual units to which soldiers are assigned. TRADOC conducts initial training at its training schools and centers. This training consists of two elements. The first—called basic training—provides training in basic weapons, discipline, and survival skills. The second—called AIT—provides training in the basics of the job, or military occupational specialty (MOS), soldiers will perform at their first units. Tasks taught during AIT are described in soldier manuals and trainer guides, which TRADOC has developed for each MOS. These publications identify all critical tasks soldiers must be able to perform to be fully proficient.

Because the Army strives to minimize the cost and length of formal training programs, soldiers are not trained in all critical job tasks during AIT. Rather, they are trained in a portion of the tasks that are critical to job performance. Initial training in tasks not covered in AIT is conducted at the unit level by first-line supervisors, normally noncommissioned officers (NCO). They directly supervise the soldiers; lead the crews, squads, or teams; and are responsible for providing refresher training in the critical job tasks and survival skills taught during AIT.

unit visits as a basis for assessing the corrective actions being considered by the Army. In commenting on a draft of this report, the Department of Defense said that the 17 units we visited, while generally representative of the kinds of units that make up the Army's reserve components, did not represent a statistically valid sample. It cautioned that broad conclusions should not be drawn from observations made at these units. We did not select a statistical sample to project our unit findings. However, the observations discussed in this report are not based solely on unit visits; they are also based on the results of recent Army studies of reserve training.

Units Visited

401 Chemical Company
339 Chemical Company
144 Medical Hospital
2/222 Field Artillery, B Battery
321 Engineering Battalion, C Company
6/83 Field Artillery, B Battery
1148 Transportation Company
878 Engineering Battalion, D Company
1/108 Armor Battalion, D Company
7/9 Field Artillery, Service Battery
73rd Field Hospital
1/158 Armor Squadron, B Troop
2/175 Infantry Battalion, B Company
2/115 Infantry Battalion, B Company
629 Military Intelligence Battalion, A Company
292 Transportation Company
818 Maintenance Company

We judgmentally selected the 17 units to achieve three major objectives. First, we sought to obtain broad geographical representation. The units we selected represent three state Adjutant General Commands (Utah, Georgia, and Maryland); three Army Reserve Commands (81st, 96th, and 97th); and three Continental Armies (First, Second, and Sixth). Second, we wanted to review units of the type that provide a large portion of the Army's total capability. In this regard, we chose the types of units that contribute at least 50 percent of the Army's total force structure. Last, we wanted a mix of both early and later deploying units. Table 1.4 shows the number and type of units we visited.

Reserve Component Units Provide a Significant Part of Essential Capabilities

The Army's reserve components make up a large share of the total force structure, as shown in table 1.2.

Table 1.2: Total Army Force Structure Represented by Reserves

Force structure component	Examples of the types of units represented	Reserve component units' contribution in fiscal year 1988 (percentage of total force units
Combat arms	Infantry, armor, artillery, combat engineers	51
Combat support and combat service-support	Military police, signal, chemical, transportation, supply, maintenance, medical	63
Total deploying forces		**70**

Reserve components provide more than one-half of many functions that are essential to the Army's war-fighting capabilities. For example, more than three-fourths of all smoke generator companies are in the reserves, as illustrated in table 1.3.

Table 1.3: Examples of Essential Capabilities Provided by the Reserves

Type of unit	Percentage of capability provided by reserves
Smoke generator companies	78
Army hospitals	75
Maintenance companies	75
Infantry battalions	74
Terminal service/transfer companies	65
Combat engineer battalions	64
Field artillery battalions	60
Chemical decontamination units	58

Many Reserve Component Units Have Early Deployment Missions

Under the Total Force Policy, many reserve units have been assigned early deployment missions, scheduled to deploy less than 30 days after mobilization. Some active combat divisions are organized with fewer active brigades than the number called for by the Army's divisional structure and are "rounded out," or filled, by reserve brigades. These round-out units are expected to deploy at the same time as the active

Chapter 1

Introduction

The role of the Army Reserve and the Army National Guard has never been more critical to an effective national defense than it is today. Because the cost of maintaining a regular Army capable of meeting potential threats has long been recognized as prohibitive from an economic standpoint, the Army's leadership has developed defense strategies that place increasingly greater reliance on the reserve components. Since the Army's reserve components make up more than half of the defense force, it is critical that Army leaders ensure that reserve soldiers and units are highly trained. Effective training, which is the keystone of readiness, is the focus of this report.

The Importance of Reserve Components to National Defense

The importance of the Army's National Guard and the Army Reserve to U.S. national defense today and in the future is depicted in the Army Reserve's fiscal year 1989 posture statement:

"Today, the Army Reserve has clearly established itself as an essential element of the Total Army. The Total Army policy and, indeed, the Total Force policy, the very bedrock assumptions of our entire defense posture, are rooted in the belief that the reserve components of the uniformed services can and will serve as effectively as their active component counterparts when they are called upon. Long gone are the days when the reserve components could be viewed as supplements to the standing, regular armed forces of their country."

The growing role of the National Guard and the Army Reserve evolved from a concept called "total force," which arose in 1973 when the Congress capped the active Army strength at 781,000 soldiers. The total force concept involves using all troops available in preparing for a conflict. Since the late 1970s, the size of the Army's reserve has grown dramatically (see fig. 1.1).

Abbreviations

AIT	Advanced Individual Training
ARTEP	Army Training and Evaluation Program
CTT	Common Task Test
DOD	Department of Defense
GAO	General Accounting Office
METL	mission-essential task list
MOPP	Mission-Oriented Protective Posture
MOS	military occupational specialty
NCO	noncommissioned officer
SQT	Skill Qualification Test
TRADOC	U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command

Contents

required by Army policy and regulation. For example, one transportation company GAO observed was tasked in a training event with moving as much of 2.25 million gallons of petroleum as possible. In moving the petroleum, soldiers were not required to conduct the mission as might be required in combat, e.g., minimizing the use of lights at night or in reaction to simulated enemy forces. Although the unit set transportation records, the soldiers were not being trained to cope with the complex, stressful, and lethal situations they will likely encounter on tomorrow's battlefield. GAO also frequently observed that the survival training that was provided to reservists was substandard.

Scarce Training Time Was Not Used Effectively

A combination of factors makes planning and managing training for reservists difficult. The wide geographic distribution of reserve units makes effective communication and coordination among reserve units more difficult than among active units. Also, reserve units have considerably less time than active Army units to train their soldiers, yet they are required to fulfill most of the same administrative requirements. GAO found, however, that scarce training time was often not used effectively. For example, during its annual training, one artillery unit GAO visited was ordered to fire twice the number of rounds considered necessary by the unit commander. Because higher headquarters had told the unit that expending this amount of ammunition was to be its highest priority, the unit did not provide equal focus on other critical mission tasks where it had identified weaknesses.

Proficiency Tests Have Not Been Accomplished in Accordance With Army Policy

In fiscal years 1987 and 1988, only about 60 percent of the reserve component soldiers required to take the Skill Qualification Test actually did so, and the percentage of reservists who passed was about 25 percent lower than the percentage of active-duty soldiers who passed—perhaps because the tests often evaluate proficiency on equipment not used by a reservist's unit. Reservists' participation in the battlefield survival skills test was also limited, and testing irregularities might have inflated their success rate. Consequently, information on reservists' proficiency is essentially limited to commanders' perceptions.

Executive Summary

Purpose

An essential element of the nation's defense policy is the Army's ability to mobilize and deploy combat-ready reserve units. These reserves (the National Guard and the Army Reserve) make up more than half of the Army's forces, and many reserve units are designated for deployment in less than 30 days after mobilization. The Army's defense plans depend upon reserve units' serving as effectively as their active counterparts. Consequently, the training of reservists is vital to national readiness. This report, requested by the Subcommittee on Military Personnel and Compensation, House Committee on Armed Services, focuses on two training topics: the extent to which reservists are trained in critical tasks and battlefield survival and the factors affecting this training.

Background

Active and reserve component soldiers are trained at Army schools and at their units. The schools provide soldiers with basic training (in weapons, discipline, and survival) and advanced individual training in some of the skills they will need in their job specialties. The soldiers' units then assume the responsibility for teaching the rest of the job specialty skills and for refresher training in skills taught during advanced training. Units must also train soldiers in battlefield survival. Tasks that the Army considers critical to battlefield survival are applicable to all soldiers regardless of their job specialties.

Most reservists train on weekends. Additionally, each year intensive training is provided in a 2-week session.

Results in Brief

Training reservists is difficult. Reserve components have only a fraction of the time their active duty counterparts have to accomplish the multitude of training and administrative tasks required of all Army units. GAO found that reservists' training was hampered further for the following reasons:

- Some Army schools provided little instruction on equipment that soldiers were expected to operate in their units.
- Some units lacked the equipment to teach critical tasks.
- Some units did not focus sufficiently on training soldiers in tasks that support the units' missions.
- Units GAO visited seldom incorporated survival skills in training exercises.
- Scarce training time often was not used effectively.