



First Army: Training for Today's Requirements and Tomorrow's Contingencies

While we cannot predict the future of our increasingly uncertain and complex strategic environment, we can be certain that our nation will continue to call on America's Army. Going forward, we will be an Army in transition. An Army that will apply the lessons learned in recent combat as we transition to evolving threats and strategies. An Army that will remain the best manned, best equipped, best trained and best led force as we transition to a leaner, more agile force that remains adaptive, innovative, versatile and ready as part of Joint Force 2020.

General Raymond T. Odierno,
Chief of Staff, U.S. Army

Marching Orders—America's Force of Decisive Action, January 2012

Introduction

Numerous factors are combining today to create a rapidly changing environment for the Army. Even as war continues, the withdrawal of U.S. ground forces from Iraq and the impending reduction of forces in Afghanistan over the next several years promise to fundamentally alter the strategic landscape that has dominated Army force generation for a decade—that of supplying trained, ready units to meet combatant commanders' requirements for the warfight.

But even as the immediate pressure is slowly reduced, enduring concerns remain. The international security situation continues to be complex, and it is perhaps even more difficult than before to predict the nature of the next global contingency. Looming force reductions and budget constraints are challenging the Army to remain in balance. The latest strategy and policy guidance makes clear that U.S. forces will accept additional risk and will no longer be sized to conduct multiyear stability operations similar to those conducted in Iraq and Afghanistan.

To hedge against increased uncertainty, the Army has come to rely upon its reserve component (RC) forces (the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve) as an operational reserve to preserve hard-earned expertise gained over a decade of war and to be able to expand capabilities rapidly if demand suddenly rises. The need to ensure strategic depth throughout the force while simultaneously fulfilling the requirements of combatant commanders led the Army to devote a three-star command whose core competency is sustaining the operational readiness of the reserve component in conjunction with the Army National Guard and Army Reserve. First Army through U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) serves as the Army's multicomponent executing agent for RC training support and mobilization operations.



Background

Since 9/11, sustained land combat has transformed the reserve component from a strategic reserve to an operational reserve as an integral part of the total Army. (In fact, Army RC forces represent more than 51 percent of the total Army and have deployed repeatedly alongside the active component.) As RC forces rapidly adapted to heavy demand and engaged in major stability operations as an operational reserve, their strategic value evolved as well. The most significant challenge for today's operational reserve is to sustain readiness to provide combatant commanders with adaptive units that are capable across the full range of military operations. Like all Army forces today, these units must be capable of integrating all operations with their joint, interagency and multinational partners. Key to meeting this challenge is First Army's dual focus on supporting the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) process and ensuring that its trainers have current, relevant experience.

The ARFORGEN process helps commanders predict the availability of ready units, understand the status of their preparedness and ensure that units have access to the right resources at the right time. During the Reset phase, the RC unit reintegrates Soldiers and families,

completes individual education and development, accomplishes institutional training and focuses on manning and equipping. During the Train/Ready phase, the unit restores combat task proficiency through intensive collective training and demonstrates its readiness for contingency deployment. When a unit enters the Available phase, it is assigned as a Deployed Expeditionary Force (DEF) and sent to fulfill an existing wartime need or as a Contingency Expeditionary Force (CEF) that must be ready to execute any mission on demand.

First Army's role in helping ensure the readiness of the total Army is to advise and assist in training all Army National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers in the continental United States during premobilization periods to meet combatant commanders' requirements worldwide. This function is accomplished by a skilled group of almost 2,500 First Army trainer/mentors (T/Ms) assigned to First Army's two subordinate divisions (Division West, at Fort Hood, Texas, and Division East, at Fort Meade, Maryland), 16 training support brigades and 103 training support battalions located throughout the United States. First Army comprises active duty, active duty Guard and Reserve and Army Reserve Troop Program Unit personnel who ensure that reserve component forces are fully compatible with active component forces. They provide training support in doctrine as well as current and emerging tactics, techniques and procedures. Much of First Army's priority of effort since 9/11 has been to conduct mobilization and demobilization operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn, training more than 750,000 personnel in support of these and other named contingency operations.

Supporting Total Army Readiness

The highest training priority is to maximize the readiness of RC DEF units—those units in the ARFORGEN process that have been assigned to prepare for a specific deployable mission—to meet combatant commanders' requirements in the current fight. First Army and the appropriate Army National Guard or Army Reserve chain of command begin collaborating on the day a RC DEF unit is alerted for possible mobilization. This preparation results in:

- mission analysis and the refinement of the unit's Mission Essential Task List;
- development of a deployment Single Integrated Training Plan;
- identification of manning or equipment concerns;
- monitoring of unit training and overall readiness; and
- finalizing post-mobilization training plans and resources.

First Army has trained thousands of reserve component formations to perform complex contingency missions ranging from base defense to all military operations for brigade combat teams. On several occasions, it has played a role in developing new training requirements for emerging missions such as military transition teams, provisional reconstruction teams and agribusiness development teams.

RC CEF units—those units that must remain ready to react to any global contingency—receive somewhat different readiness support. The majority of First Army CEF training support focuses on the major collective training exercises conducted during Train/Ready Year 3 of the ARFORGEN cycle because these opportunities are ideal for assessing overall unit readiness prior to entering the Available force pool. However, regular in-process reviews early in the Train/Ready phase yield the development of the same preparatory plans as for DEF units. Further support is available to the RC unit commander upon request and in accordance with established FORSCOM priorities.

The number of RC CEF units is expected to increase in coming years. First Army anticipates providing skilled T/M personnel in support of approximately 59 major collective training events per year beginning in Fiscal Year 2013. These will range from direct action, brigade-level exercises and combat training center rotations to command post exercises. As combat operations wind down in Afghanistan, RC DEF requirements are expected to decrease. This shift in requirements has reduced some of the need for mobilization training center capacity. First Army has begun to consolidate some operations to provide economy of scale for training support resources while maintaining the capacity to meet future mobilization surge requirements.

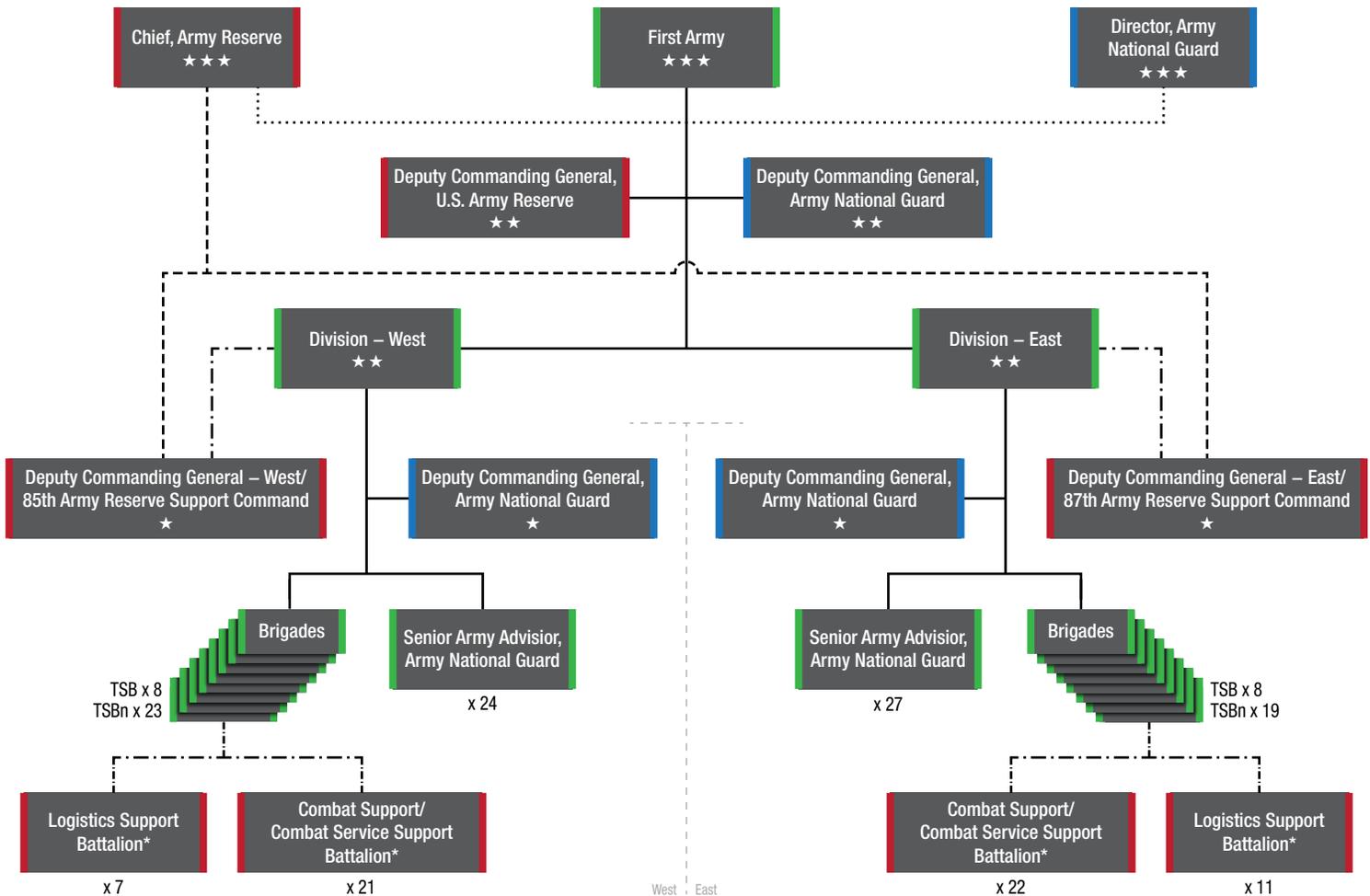
Growing Trainers While Supporting the Current Fight

The Army's dedication to institutionalizing the operational readiness of its reserve component is already paying dividends in the current fight. The strategy of U.S. forces in Afghanistan is twofold—to secure and hold territory to create the conditions for stable self-governance and, simultaneously, to stand up and train Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), who will ultimately assume the security mission. Recent security gains have enabled a transition from a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy to an increased focus on supporting the ANSF. The Army's new security force assistance teams (SFATs) are a key mechanism by which American forces are improving Afghanistan's capability and helping it assume greater responsibility for security. The capabilities of Army National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers are proving invaluable in standing up these new teams.

SFATs consist of highly trained officers and noncommissioned officers who mentor and assist Afghan army and police units as they conduct security operations. They vary in size and composition to support requirements of regional commanders. The teams have the means to defend themselves, but their primary role is to help Afghan units achieve sufficient levels of proficiency so that they can lead and conduct security operations independently.

There are two main sources of Soldiers who comprise the SFATs. Army leaders selected Soldiers (from the active and reserve components) assigned to First Army to be SFAT members because their experience as trainer/mentors for American personnel provides unique capabilities to help train Afghan personnel.

First Army's Multicomponent Structure



* First Army Division Headquarters and Army Reserve Support Command have shared administrative control responsibilities for U.S. Army Reserve Training Support Battalions and Logistics Support Battalions. First Army Divisions West and East have operational control of two U.S. Army Reserve Support Commands and 61 additional U.S. Army Reserve battalions for training support.

Source: First Army

Other SFATs comprise Soldiers from active component brigade combat teams. The teams will deploy in large numbers throughout the spring and summer months of 2012; eventually, 150 SFATs will operate in the southern and eastern sectors of Afghanistan and throughout the U.S. area of operations, where they will facilitate the transition of security to the government and military of Afghanistan.

Members of the SFATs will return to their parent units in the continental United States in early 2013. Their new mission will be to apply the lessons they learned in the field to training curricula for other RC units and to prepare those Soldiers selected to fill future SFATs with their recent experience. This is an example of how the Army ensures that its trainers remain highly qualified to prepare RC units to support the current fight. More broadly, such institutionalization of the lessons of war helps fulfill the Army's goal of preserving sufficient capability despite its looming reduction in endstrength.

Integrating 21st Century Training Across the Army

The new Army Training Concept aims to make training as challenging as possible to ensure maximum Soldier and unit readiness even as future training resources become more limited. First Army's role in the Training Concept is to assist RC unit commanders with conducting rigorous, relevant, mission-focused training throughout the ARFORGEN cycle.

The Army has invested significant resources to build world-class training areas—such as combat training centers (CTCs), mission command training facilities and mobilization training centers—where Soldiers prepare for contingency operations. More than 90 collective training venues (many operated by the reserve component) are available for Army/joint integrated training. First Army adds unique training capability to support the readiness of the total Army through its five mobilization training centers located at Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort Hood, Texas; Joint Base



McGuire–Dix–Lakehurst, New Jersey; Camp Shelby, Mississippi; and Camp Atterbury, Indiana.

The foundation of the Army's readiness philosophy is the knowledgeable, experienced and qualified trainer/mentor. The Army employs a number of innovative initiatives and techniques to ensure that the T/Ms who support today's operational reserve are proficient and that the training they provide is relevant:

- First Army maintains a T/M training academy at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, where trainers gain practical knowledge and skills before assisting RC units;
- Most T/Ms are combat veterans who infuse their recent deployment insights into training plans and processes;
- T/Ms routinely liaise with Army CTCs to maintain fidelity on recent lessons learned and current tactics, techniques and procedures;
- T/Ms study evolving, real-time scenarios and threats in current theaters of operation;
- T/Ms visit deployed Army units in the field before beginning the training of a RC unit so that they can fine-tune training plans as necessary; and
- First Army liaison officers located in theater provide instant feedback on current operations, informing further revision of training operations.

Army personnel customize a wide range of training support resources to meet unique needs of unit commanders. Among the numerous resources that T/Ms provide are unit training management assistance, vehicle crew evaluators, experienced exercise developers, subject matter experts, role players (joint, interagency, intergovernmental, multinational and civilian), mobile training teams and deployable training support capability.

Critically, the trainers are subject-matter experts in the integration of cost-effective live, virtual, constructive and gaming (LVC/G) technologies into the training environment. They are beginning to work through the challenges of establishing and maintaining LVC/G infrastructure, validating capability and certifying training accomplishment. The next step in leveraging these systems is to integrate them into the Army's evolving Direct Action Training Environment and training strategies.

For example, with LVC/G technology, integrated training environments link an Army National Guard combat aviation brigade exercising at Fort Rucker, Alabama; an Army Reserve combat support enabler exercising at Fort Hunter Liggett Regional Training Center, California; elements of an Army National Guard brigade combat team undergoing their culminating training event prior to mobilization at Camp Blanding, Florida; and elements of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) exercising at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. With the technology, these disparate units can, for training purposes, see the same operating picture in each unit's operating centers.

Other emerging Army technologies enhance total readiness by focusing on leader and exercise development. The U.S. Army Reserve Command's 75th Training Division and Training and Doctrine Command's Training Brain Operations Center (TBOC) integrate data from current world events into hybrid threat-based scenarios and leadership exercises that unit commanders can use to achieve training objectives. TBOC products can replicate an area of operations, help commanders with operational environment analysis, provide attack-the-network training vignettes that simulate complex mission requirements and much more. The result of efforts to integrate training will be flexible training environments, scalable scenario designs, more comprehensive incorporation of remote players and a reduction in home station or training center costs.

The Way Ahead

The Army is entering a period defined by shrinking resources even as strategic uncertainty grows. Demands on the reserve component as an operational force are going to continue to increase as the Army adjusts responsibility for various mission sets among the components. First Army is a product of the total Army's redoubled efforts to balance simultaneously the strategically imperative tasks of supporting the current fight, preserving the lessons of war and maintaining expandable capability as the Army accepts increased risk. Efforts such as these guarantee the Army's strategic depth as it executes its Title 10 requirements and continues to meet combatant commanders' needs worldwide.

It is vital that manning, equipping and training the operational reserve be carried out in balance and in sufficient levels to meet continuous need. The work of the Army's expert trainers is indicative of the high state of readiness that the Army can maintain when such balance is preserved; skillful, experienced personnel can leverage cutting-edge technologies and invest training time to provide adaptable capabilities to meet urgent needs (as the SFATs demonstrate). However, looming budget cuts threaten to disrupt this balance and slash modernization and readiness accounts disproportionately. Applying the lessons learned about total force readiness from the past decade will be crucial to successfully confronting the uncertainty of the next decade.