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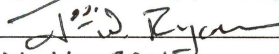
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**THE U.S. ARMY'S BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM: APPLYING KOTTER'S MODEL TO ARMY
MODULARITY**

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Executive Summary

Title: The U.S. Army's Brigade Combat Team: Applying Kotter's Model to Army Modularity

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Thesis: General Schoomaker's strategic vision and the Army's operating environment at the turn of century enabled them to achieve a swift transformation at the end of the Cold War into an organization with more agility and flexibility.

Discussion: As the United States exited the Cold War, the Army faced a strategic environment that would require them to examine how, and with what organization, they would wage warfare in the future. From World War II through the end of the First Gulf War, the U.S. Army has undergone multiple incremental changes to their organization to cope with the changing environment and adversaries, but these changes had all been predicated on keeping a divisional organization. The problem was that the division was becoming too large and unwieldy. Beginning with General Reimer in the early 1990s, the Army began to explore what a modular, brigade-based organization would look like. Across three Chiefs of Staff, the Army developed concepts of these new modular units, but never made the concept a reality. With General Schoomaker's nomination as the Chief of Staff, the Army set on course to shift to the BCT as the basis of its organization. Against a backdrop of Dr. John Kotter's model for organizational change, this study seeks to examine how the United States Army under General Schoomaker achieved its transformation from an organization based on the division to one based on the brigade.

Conclusion: General Schoomaker succeeded in cultivating relationships with those above and below him, decentralized TRADOC's study and analysis efforts to enable broad based action, and sustained momentum built on the Stryker BCTs success in Iraq. His efforts propelled the Army's organizational change forward, and ensured a brigade-based organization would remain the Army's foundation after he departed office.

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THE U.S. ARMY'S BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM: APPLYING KOTTER'S MODEL TO ARMY MODULARITY

With the end of the Cold War and in the final years of the twentieth century, the United States and its Army recognized that the strategic environment and the character and conduct of warfare in the future would necessitate a shift from fighting with large traditional conventional armies to employing smaller information-age unit-level constructs. These new constructs would require increased flexibility, adaptability, and mobility over their predecessors to counter emerging threats. The Army realized that it would have to change its vision and organization to remain relevant in the post-Cold War era. The technological advancements of the information revolution guaranteed any change would be met with difficulty if the Army did not adapt its doctrine and organization to translate the technology into increased effectiveness.¹ Douglas Macgregor in his 1997 book *Breaking the Phalanx* perhaps presciently outlined the Army's way forward into the Information Age paralleling the history of the Roman Legion at Thessaly during the Second Macedonian War. During the battle, the Romans capitalized on their smaller, more agile legion organization and defeated the Macedonian's phalanx, largely seen as invincible at the time.² Macgregor asserts that the Army needed to reevaluate its current organization and perhaps break its own "phalanx," offering a template more akin to the Roman Legion – a small, more mobile and flexible force based on the brigade – which could capitalize on the emerging technologies and their effect across the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war.³

The organizational change phenomenon for the Army is, however, not new. The U.S. Army presents a field rich for study on the challenges and successes of organizational change. From just before the end of World War II through present day, there are multiple instances in which the Army has adapted to a changing political and security environment. General Peter J.

Schoomaker's tenure as the Army's Chief of Staff (August 2003 – April 2007) serves as an excellent case study in the annals of organizational change to assess the Army's transformational shift from a division-based to a brigade-based Army. General Schoomaker's strategic vision and the Army's operating environment at the turn of century enabled it to achieve a swift transformation at the end of the Cold War into an organization with more agility and flexibility.

A Brief History: Army Organizational Change from 1945 – 1991

To fully understand the extent of the Army's evolution under General Schoomaker, it is worthwhile to briefly explore the Army's organizational changes during WWII, the Cold War, and the post-Cold War era. Over these periods, the Army slowly shifted the principle framework on which it based its organizational structure from that of the division in WWII to the modular brigade in the early years of the twenty-first century. The new brigade-based structure would allow the Army to respond to new expeditionary missions for which a large division-based organization was becoming unwieldy and ill-suited.⁴

Mid-way through 1940, the Army numbered an astounding three million soldiers organized into approximately sixty divisions. The hierarchical nature of the Army's command echelons were based on field armies, each containing three to five corps. These corps were composed of roughly the same number of divisions and each division contained between 14,000 to 17,000 soldiers.⁵ These divisions were known as "triangular divisions" as a result of the three regiments contained therein. In WWII the division became the primary echelon of command for combined arms action, and would remain so until the turn of the century.⁶ The triangular division becoming the *de facto* echelon for integrating combined arms was an outgrowth of two ideas: the National Defense Act of 1916 and the ideas of General John J. Pershing circa the mid-1920s. The former directed that the Army would consist of the Regular Army and a combination of Reserve and

National Guard components, with the Regular Army and National Guard to be organized into permanent standing divisions.⁷ At the end of WWI, the War Department commissioned a review of a new 23,000 man division composed of four regiments. General Pershing and his staff recognized the need for a smaller, more mobile force and responded with a proposal for a new, smaller triangular-based force, not dissimilar from the one eventually adopted in WWII.⁸ General Pershing's concept remained in limbo, however, until 1939 when General George C. Marshall directed that the Army reorganize into the three regiment divisions.⁹ General Marshall's triangular divisions were designed for a specific purpose – prosecuting an Allied campaign against Nazi Germany along the Western Front.¹⁰ For nearly a decade after WWII, General Pershing's triangular divisions remained the principal combat organization within the Army until the advent of a battlefield plagued with atomic weaponry.

In the turmoil following WWII, U.S. national policy shifted toward countering a growing potential for nuclear conflict as the Soviet Union acquired atomic weapons. At the time, the Army was wrangling with how to incorporate atomic weapons into its doctrine and organization under Eisenhower's "massive retaliation" policy, while increasing tactical mobility of its units across Europe and Asia. In April 1954, General Matthew B. Ridgway directed the Army to examine an alternative to the triangular division. Ridgway wanted the Army to be "more mobile, flexible, and less vulnerable in the event of an atomic attack," particularly in light of the technological advances occurring at the time.¹¹ The PENTANA study, completed in 1955, provided the answer for the Army, developing a universal division concept that would replace the infantry, airborne, and armored divisions. The principal components within the concept were five, "self-sufficient 'battle groups,'" designed to meet the disparate missions General Ridgway envisioned.¹² The Army termed these new formations the pentomic divisions. Although the

concept was widely criticized by Army leaders, General Maxwell D. Taylor, General Ridgway's successor as the Army Chief of Staff, nevertheless directed the Army to implement the PENTANA concept.¹³ Ultimately, due to a whirlwind of U.S. nuclear policies across presidential administrations and a less than ideal peacekeeping performance in Western Asia, the pentomic division's life was short-lived.¹⁴

In the early 1960's, the U.S.' nuclear policy transitioned from massive retaliation to "flexible response."¹⁵ The Kennedy administration believed it was far better to deter nuclear attack via a range of diplomatic or military means.¹⁶ Moreover, the administration decided that the threat of nuclear war was remote, but there existed an increased possibility of small-scale conflicts.¹⁷ The policy shift meant that the Army needed to be prepared to respond across the spectrum of operations, and increased the significance of military preparedness for both conventional wars and smaller scale contingencies requiring tactical mobility and firepower.¹⁸ In late 1960, the Reorganization of Army Divisions, or ROAD, study was commissioned under then Vice Chief of the Army, General Clyde D. Eddleman. ROAD's emphasis was not directed at an Army-wide reorganization, however. Instead, General Eddleman directed that the study focus on creating a common base among the infantry, armor, and mechanized divisions. Eddleman's desires reflected his involvement in establishing the West German Army as Commander, U.S. Army Europe. The German brigades emphasized creating divisions using a building-block approach for specific missions. Perhaps not surprisingly, the results of ROAD were not dissimilar from the guidance General Eddleman provided and focused on – a common divisional base and interchangeability.¹⁹ Furthermore, the new divisions were to have stout combat support and combat service support elements to enable them to retain sufficient combined arms combat power and sustainability. In 1962, the Army tried to re-organize based on the ROAD study, but

the end result manifested itself in the Army reverting back to a modified triangular division based on the WWII and Korean War constructs, which it employed in Vietnam.²⁰

Toward the end of the Vietnam War, the Army faced another dilemma requiring research to cope with the changing environment. President Nixon eliminated the draft and adopted the all-volunteer force in 1973, which created personnel issues the Army needed to balance against a shrinking budget following Vietnam.²¹ Moreover, the Army was searching for ways it could modernize its forces to preserve combat power, particularly as the Army needed to identify options for balancing against an emerging “heavy” Soviet presence in Central and Western Europe.²² Over the next fifteen years, the Army would implement multiple small-scale reorganization efforts designed to cope with the issues it faced. Of note, and based largely on the ROAD concept, Division 86 enabled the Army to achieve parity with the Soviets through the heavy division which was predicated on combining the Army’s armor and mechanized divisions to achieve personnel efficiencies and increase lethality. Paralleling the Army’s development of the heavy division, Chief of Staff General Edward C. Meyer also directed the Army to explore options to merge its lighter elements; namely the infantry, airborne, and airmobile divisions. The outgrowth was the “light division,” designed to respond to remote areas where the heavy division was ill-suited. Despite these changes the heavy and light divisions were hampered by equipment acquisition and budgetary issues that delayed their entrance until the 1983 Army of Excellence initiative, albeit modified due to limited resources. Toward the end of the 1980s, and with the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact countries, the Army faced severe resource cuts brought about by a skyrocketing national debt. These resource constraints required the Army reevaluate the number of divisions under its force structure, and inactivate at least one.²³ Nevertheless, the

combination of light and heavy units under the Army of Excellence became the blueprint for a powerful, adaptable organization the Army would deploy to Panama, Grenada, and Iraq.²⁴

From WWII through Operation Desert Storm, the Army faced multiple challenges requiring innovative thinkers and leaders to develop strategies to adapt to changing security conditions. With the triangular division, the Army solidified the division as the primary echelon of command to direct combined arms actions, and tailored its forces to become more flexible and mobile as enemies changed their tactics, techniques, and procedures. Despite emerging as the world's sole superpower following the Cold War, the Army still faced a problem. The Army of Excellence the U.S. sent to Iraq in the early 1990s continued to reflect the traditional division-based organization that was large and unwieldy.²⁵ The security environments that lay ahead of the U.S. and the Army would again require its leaders to develop innovative ideas to address emerging strategic threats at the turn of the century.

The Road to Modularity: 1991-2003

After first Gulf War, the Army reoriented its strategy from fighting a major superpower in the European theater toward the emerging technologically-based environment. Moreover, the strategic reality was that the Army would unlikely fight in a major operation alone, and would need to evaluate how to effectively work alongside its sister services under the Goldwater-Nichols act signed in 1986. The Army's Chief of Staff recognized that its previous way of fighting under AirLand Battle would perhaps not provide an adequate response to the strategic environment and an evolving enemy.²⁶ General Gordon R. Sullivan, acknowledging that the Army would need to adapt to Information Age warfare, challenged the service to reevaluate the way it would fight in the future:

We have begun to move into third wave warfare, to evolve a new force for a new century ... The goal is to create new formations that operate at even greater performance levels in

speed, space and time . . . and [we need to break] free of old concepts [and] use command and control technology to leverage the power of the information age.²⁷

General Sullivan's provocation set the Army on course to become more compact, mobile, and capable of quickly responding to a range of conflicts without any loss in combat power. In 1994, the Army's Training and Doctrine Command, TRADOC, developed what would become the Force XXI concept.²⁸ Force XXI describes an Army with the five characteristics of "*doctrinal flexibility, strategic mobility, tailorability and modularity, joint and multinational connectivity, and the versatility to function in War and [Operations Other Than War]*."²⁹ In General Sullivan's concept, these characteristics laid a concrete foundation for which the Army began to explore a modular organization. TRADOC's approach was to create interchangeable elements that the Army could pull from its parent unit to meet real time demands.³⁰ However, the Army still refused to break with its traditional reliance on the division as the primary unit to organize around: "[w]e must organize around the division as the major tactical formation with the capability to tailor it for specific mission purposes."³¹

General Dennis J. Reimer succeeded General Sullivan as the Army's Chief of Staff in 1996. Reimer shared the same core beliefs as his predecessor and set out to develop the Army's strategy to fight warfare thirty years into the future. Rather than scraping Sullivan's concept, Reimer built on Force XXI, adding the Army After Next program to the Army's quest for an organization to meet Information Age demands.³² Through a series of war games, Reimer sought to revolutionize the Army's use of digital technology on the battlefield. By capitalizing on technology, commanders could use information to make decisions ahead of their adversaries.

The Army After Next (AAN) will build upon the advances of Force XXI. It will increase strategic, operational and tactical speed by perhaps an order of magnitude. Closing with the enemy may occur at 300 miles per hour instead of 30, thereby allowing us to decisively defeat an enemy who also enjoys real-time battlespace awareness, effective and fast sensor-to-shooter systems and large inventories of precision-guided munitions. Typical enemies will be able to cripple or annihilate our forces within hours or minutes

unless we can move and attack swiftly enough to stay inside their decision cycle and quickly render them harmless.³³

Synthesizing the results of the war game's simulations, TRADOC developed a brigade sized "strike force" concept to provide the Army a middle-weight force. This strike force would be "more rapidly deployable than its heavy counterparts but also more survivable and lethal than the current light forces."³⁴ Moreover, the Army could assemble these units based on the requisite capabilities to perform specific missions.³⁵

Secretary of the Army Louis Caldera swore in General Eric K. Shinseki as the Army's Chief of Staff on 22 June 1999. His appointment as the top officer in the Army was obvious given his previous experience with Army transformation. Years before, Reimer appointed Shinseki to serve as the Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans, and then later to serve as the principle. Serving as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, he was central to the on-going transformational efforts.³⁶ Shinseki's position meant that he understood the conceptual and technical aspects of both Sullivan and Reimer's Force XXI and Army After Next initiatives, and was qualified lead the Army's future transformation efforts with minimal loss of continuity. Shinseki did, however, identify difficulties with the Army's progress. Just one day after swearing in, he asserted that the Army needed to increase the velocity of its transformation efforts. General Shinseki further declared that the Army's current heavy and light units were not sufficient to meet the service's strategic responsiveness requirements.³⁷

Shinseki expanded the purview of his predecessors' transformation efforts beyond that of just the future combat forces to the institutional and support forces. His strategy manifested itself in three distinct phases – the Legacy Force, the Interim Force, and the Objective Force – with the Objective Force able to deploy a brigade within ninety six hours, a division within 120 hours, and five divisions within thirty days. A key component underpinning the deployment speed was

a standardized unit organizational structure, and Shinseki directed that the Army create a prototype to test the concept – that prototype got its start from General Reimer’s brigade sized strike force concept.³⁸ The Army identified the 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division to be the test division. The new division, called the Stryker Brigade Combat Team for their use of the Stryker vehicle, would test the digital technologies envisioned under Force XXI and serve as the beta division for TRADOC to experiment with what the future Objective Force would look like.³⁹ To be sure, TRADOC wanted a clean break from the Army’s existing structure. TRADOC’s analyses yielded two primary frameworks for the Objective Force organization: a “unit of action” and a “unit of employment,” with the unit of action becoming the *de facto* foundation for what would become the brigade combat team.

Fixed organizations designed to accomplish specific “mission essential” tasks were called units of action (UAs). Nimble headquarters that commanded mixes of UAs appropriate for an assigned mission, but which were themselves unencumbered by permanent organic structure beyond that necessary for command and control, were called units of employment (UEs).⁴⁰

In other words, the units of action were to be purpose-built to synthesize effective warfighting capabilities while the units of employment served as a battlespace integrator. Paralleling TRADOC’s experimentation, then Secretary of the Army Thomas E. White asked the Army War College to propose an echelon structure for what a “flatter” Army would look like. Among other things, the Army War College’s primary recommendation eliminated an entire echelon altogether by combining the current army, division, and corps into two individual echelons and streamlining theater command. The combination of TRADOC’s conceptual unit of action and unit of employment frameworks and the Army War College’s recommendations helped ensure modularity “became a key characteristic spanning all of the elements in the design of the future Army.”⁴¹ Using the units of action as building blocks, the new unit designs would not, however, come to fruition until after General Shinseki retired in 2003.

In the twelve years following the Cold War, the Army took measured steps toward altering its organizational structure to cope with threats in Information Age warfare. For nearly five decades, the Army relied on a division-centric organization to fight the country's wars. Generals Sullivan, Reimer, and Shinseki all recognized a need to adapt and provided the Army with analyses, simulations, and concepts it could carry forward to inform force structure decisions in the next century. The strategic situation at the turn of the century, however, complicated matters for Shinseki toward the end of his tenure as Chief of Staff. On September 11th 2001, the U.S. was blindsided by terrorist attacks which would propel it, and the Army, into a war for which it was not prepared. How the Army would respond during its period of transformation would determine its course throughout the war.

Achieving a Modular Army

August 2003 marked a significant point in time for the U.S. Army. It signaled the point of departure from the five decade old division-based organization. General Peter J. Schoomaker was sworn in as the Army's 35th Chief of Staff, and within thirty days of taking office directed the Army to begin converting to a modular, brigade based organization.⁴² Toward the end of General Schoomaker's tenure, the Army made much progress toward cementing the BCT into Army organization and doctrine. The BCT had been the unit the Army relied on during the fast-paced, chaotic early years of the Global War on Terrorism. Additionally, the BCT made strides toward becoming the Army's agile, flexible, and powerful combat force to meet current conditions. Moreover, General Schoomaker accomplished the organizational shift during his four year tenure as the Chief of Staff, all the while the Army was at war. General Schoomaker's accomplishments notwithstanding, understanding the intimate details is perhaps less important than understanding "how" and "why" he was able to achieve the Army's transformational shift,

particularly against the backdrop of an organization built around the division for five decades. To complete this study, it is imperative that one understand the process of organizational change for which there are a multitude of models.

Arguably, one of the most studied models within the defense community is the model developed by Harvard Business School's Dr. John Kotter. In the 1990s, Kotter developed his organizational change model based on over twenty years of studying how organizations undertake successful change, and conversely, what makes organizations fail while trying to implement change. Kotter predicates his method on progressing through a series of eight stages. The eight steps are: establishing a sense of urgency, creating a guiding coalition, developing a vision and strategy, communicating the vision, empowering broad based action, generating short term wins, consolidating gains and producing more wins, and anchoring new approaches in the culture. When discussing the importance of each stage to the overall process, Kotter writes in his book, *Leading Change*, "[a]lthough one normally operates in multiple phases at once, skipping even a single step or getting too far ahead without a solid base almost always creates problems."⁴³ For General Schoomaker, changing an organization as large and complex as the Army, it was crucially important that he progress through each of Kotter's stages in order to realize his vision of a modular Army. Likewise, Schoomaker could not just be a figure-head. Rather it was critical that Schoomaker "lead change," and not simply "manage change."

The first stage in Kotter's eight-step process required the Army to establish a sense of urgency for why the transformation needed to occur. In fact, the first stage was perhaps the most critical to get the Army's change effort underway.

Establishing a sense of urgency is crucial to gaining needed cooperation. With complacency high, transformations usually go nowhere because few people are even interested in working on the change problem. With urgency low, it's difficult to put together a group with enough power and credibility to guide the effort or to convince key individuals to spend the time necessary to create and communicate a change vision.⁴⁴

The Army's urgency to expedite its transformation developed largely due to the nature of the war it was engaged in after September 11th. For years, the Army had attempted, and failed, to transform during a period of peace. In January 2001, the Department of Defense got a new secretary – Donald H. Rumsfeld – who brought with him a vision that accelerated the Army's transformation. Rumsfeld thought that the Army's heavy forces were ill-suited to combat, and that the on-going revolution in military affairs would reduce the number of personnel required. Moreover, Rumsfeld believed that the Army's destiny lie in a digitized force.⁴⁵ In the White House, President George W. Bush essentially echoed this view, telling Rumsfeld to evaluate and challenge conventional thought inside the Pentagon. In light of that, the Office of the Secretary of Defense's Office of Net Assessment published a report, at Rumsfeld's behest, finding that it believed the Army was overbuilt and could find efficiencies in personnel numbers to support force modernization.⁴⁶ While ONA's report occurred during Shinseki's tenure, a difference of opinion on personnel strengths between the Chief of Staff and DoD leadership ended up seeing Shinseki effectively removed from office. Nevertheless, Rumsfeld's mandate from the Bush administration laid a solid foundation from which General Schoomaker could examine the problem of a more modernized, yet smaller Army.

Schoomaker further established a sense of urgency during his 2003 confirmation hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee. Schoomaker recognized the nature of the war the Army was engaged and that

[It] must adjust [its] priorities. [The Army] may even need to change [its] culture. In a world where the strategic environment is transformed, [the Army] should be prepared to even reexamine [its] fundamental way of thinking.⁴⁷

Schoomaker was, in essence, challenging the preparedness of the Army to fight with its current organization. Backed by Rumsfeld, Schoomaker again in his 2004 address to the House Armed

Services Committee outlined the considerations driving the Army toward modularity. In Schoomaker's mind, the strategic reality of protracted warfare meant that Army needed an organization that could fight every day.⁴⁸ In other words, he echoed Rumsfeld's idea that the Army needed to make measured changes within its organization to support sustained warfare.

Kotter asserts that to establish the sense of urgency, an organization must enlist the support to the key leaders to make change successful.⁴⁹ General Schoomaker successfully established the Army's sense of urgency in the early stages of his tenure as the Chief of Staff. Even before he took office, Secretary Rumsfeld, backed by the president, voiced his support for change. In that regard, the Army under Schoomaker was well on its way to establishing a guiding coalition – the second stage in Kotter's model.

In the second stage, the critical component is establishing a group of individuals capable of leading any change effort – a guiding coalition. The group must be able to block out opponents of change and have expertise in the subject area to make well-informed decisions. Additionally, the group's membership must have people who are credible both within and outside of the organization, and are effective managers and, most importantly, leaders. According to Kotter, managers are there to control the process whereas leaders drive change.⁵⁰

As General Schoomaker took office, he had already garnered the support of Secretary Rumsfeld, and by extension of President Bush. Rumsfeld, at Schoomaker's swearing in, powerfully appealed to a wider audience when he said, "Gen. Pete Schoomaker brings wisdom, experience, drive, and leadership to the job as chief of staff of the Army [and he] is the right man to lead the United States Army as it continues its transformation into a force that will provide 21st century capability to the challenges we will face."⁵¹ Secretary Rumsfeld's statement about the capabilities of General Schoomaker cemented his credibility as a capable individual with a

long career in the Army and signaled the DoD's support for Schoomaker as a key person to the Army's change efforts. Although President Bush and Secretary Rumsfeld were powerful, it remains that the change effort needed buy-in and ownership from those who were subordinate to the Chief of Staff and those outside the Army entirely.

Upon taking office, one of Schoomaker's first orders of business was refocusing the Army's senior leadership toward transformation. In August 2003, Schoomaker convened a meeting with the Army General Staff Council to espouse his vision for the Army's way ahead. At the discussion, Schoomaker noted that although he may not have been Rumsfeld's first choice and was selected over many of his peers, he still had much to learn.⁵² Moreover, he wanted the group to focus less on him and his background and more on the Army's transformation. Schoomaker offered a much more simplistic philosophy and established an "open door" policy with the Army Staff principles, indicating that he valued their opinions and he desired to involve them in the process moving forward. His policy hedged between allowing the transformation process to be more fluid and reserving the ability to revert back to Shinseki's highly structured process. The net effect of Schoomaker's relaxed philosophy was that it generated ready compliance, and not just from those on the Army Staff; it generated ready compliance from those in the OSD and prevented potential disagreements at future Congressional hearings. Likewise, by not simply discarding the work previously done under Shinseki, Schoomaker's subordinates more readily accepted the new direction that the Chief of Staff desired.⁵³

Equally important to Schoomaker's coalition was the Army senior leadership. Immediately following Shinseki's retirement, Thomas E. White vacated the Secretary of the Army position. Both Shinseki and White were well-liked among congressional circles. The latter's absence could have been potentially detrimental to the Army transformation process if

not for the knowledge and capabilities of then Under Secretary of the Army Les Brownlee. Brownlee had studied Army transformation in the post-Vietnam era and was intimately familiar with the intricacies and pitfalls of the process. Moreover, Brownlee had served as a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee under Senator John Warner, giving him the requisite understanding of how to negotiate Capitol Hill's complexities.⁵⁴ Brownlee's intimate understanding of Capitol Hill politics translated into a powerful benefit for Schoomaker's change coalition during the transformation process. His knowledge and expertise ensured that Schoomaker could secure the buy-in for Army interests on Capitol Hill without much fanfare and disagreement.

In assembling his guiding coalition, Schoomaker ensured that he had the required expertise, credibility, and senior leadership support within and outside of the Army. Across the Army, this buy-in would ensure that Schoomaker could solidify his vision for a changing Army and translate it into action. By Kotter's model, Schoomaker succeeded in forming a powerful guiding coalition.

Kotter's change model, in its third stage, requires organizations to develop a strategic vision that promotes and enables change. Moreover, in the fourth stage, his model requires an organization to also effectively communicate the vision to subordinates. These two stages, although treated separately in Kotter's model, are nevertheless inextricably linked. To develop an effective vision for an organization, Kotter notes that change visions serve three important purposes:

First, by clarifying the general direction for change . . . Second, it motivates people to take action in the right direction . . . [and] Third, it helps coordinate the actions of different people . . . in a remarkably efficient way.⁵⁵

Kotter further asserts that the vision must describe the future environment, be realistic, and have attainable goals, be focused and flexible, and easy to communicate.⁵⁶ In essence, the vision needs

to unify the organization toward achieving the desired end state. Motivating people comes through effective communication, and is essential for successful organizational transformation.⁵⁷ So, an organization needs the right vision but it also needs to be able to communicate the vision in a variety of ways to unify its subordinates toward change.

During his August 2003 initial entry meeting with the Army Staff General Council, General Schoomaker reviewed the previous efforts toward transformation with the senior leaders in the Army. Additionally, he laid out initial focus areas which the staff principles were to discuss and analyze, providing feedback for improvement. Particularly important at this time was Schoomaker's recognition that the Army had been at war in the Middle East for nearly two years; his initial goals and priorities reflected this reality. Among other things, Schoomaker wanted the Army to focus on developing resilient soldiers capable of handling the demands of sustained warfare, a networked Army capable of capitalizing on the digital age, creating "capabilities-based unit designs," and improving the Army's ability to be joint and expeditionary.⁵⁸ While Schoomaker did not explicitly mention the BCT, his guidance pointed specifically in that direction. Perhaps most significant however, was Schoomaker's simplification of Shinseki's highly stratified approach to Army transformation. Rather than using Shinseki's three prongs, Schoomaker collapsed the idea into a simple linear arrow depicting the "Current" and "Future Force," thus making the concept of Army transformation much easier to communicate to audiences.⁵⁹

At his July 2004 testimony, Schoomaker further highlighted his vision for the Army's transformation. In remarks to the House Armed Services Committee, he highlighted the necessity for the Army to understand the current conflict, and to build on lessons learned for the future. The way for the Army to accomplish this was primarily through its organization.

A key prerequisite to achieving [the capability to conduct larger, more protracted campaigns] is developing more modular tactical organizations. The Army's force design has incorporated tailoring and task organization for decades, but primarily in the context of a large conventional war . . . [but the current] strategic reality is the immediate need for versatile, cohesive units – and more of them. Increasingly, ownership of capabilities by echelons and even by services matters less than how those capabilities are allocated to missions. Although divisions have long been the nominal measure of the Army's fighting strength, the Army also has a long history of deployment and employment of multifunctional brigade combat teams.⁶⁰

In Schoomaker's vision, the way for the Army to be more adaptable in the face of new threats was through "shifting to . . . brigade combat teams as [the Army's] basic units of action . . . [to] significantly improve the tailorability, scalability, and 'fightability' of the Army's contribution to the overall joint fight."⁶¹ In essence, BCTs would allow the Army to be more flexible across the full spectrum of operations in line with the Army's FM 3-0 in a way that the division could not.

As part of Schoomaker's campaign to communicate the Army's vision, the Chief of Staff developed and disseminated the "2004 Army Transformation Roadmap Summary." The document provides continuity with his remarks to Congress and highlighted the impetus for change. Moreover, the roadmap touched on the Army's objectives throughout transformation, identifying capabilities the Army would develop, and provided a timeline for how and when the Army would adopt the modular organizational structure.⁶² Perhaps most importantly, however, is the attention the roadmap paid to both the active and reserve components. To be successful in protracted and sustained warfare, the Army needed to incorporate the reserve components to a much greater degree than in the past to meet operational requirements. At a broader level, the document served as a platform to communicate the vision across the entire force – ensuring the Army in totality was unified in its purpose for transformation.

From the onset of his tenure as Chief of Staff, General Schoomaker developed and communicated his strategic vision for the Army effectively across all levels. His vision for the Army addressed the strategic reality the Army was facing, provided specific goals and objectives

for the Army, and communicated the vision to a broad audience. According to Kotter, Schoomaker met the conditions for a vision and strategy that was easy to communicate.

For the Army to simply create and communicate a realistic vision and strategy was not enough. The Army needed to empower subordinates to guide the change; Kotter calls this “empowering broad based action.” His change model’s fifth stage insists on decentralizing execution to remove barriers to implementation.⁶³ Recognizing the need for change would not be enough for Schoomaker, he needed to empower his subordinates to make real progress toward organizational change.

Midway through 2004, Schoomaker succeeded in decentralizing execution through Task Force Modularity, which was Schoomaker’s principle organization to analyze the transformation to modularity and develop courses of action for the Army to evaluate and implement. Shortly after Schoomaker decreed that the Army would begin its transition to a brigade-centric force, TRADOC’s commander, General Kevin P. Byrnes, formed Task Force Modularity and appointed Major General Robert Mixon to lead the study team. In establishing Task Force Modularity, TRADOC drew on personnel from within its own organization and more specifically, experts who had worked on General Shinseki’s Objective Force designs a few years earlier.⁶⁴ Personnel continuity meant that there was essentially zero loss in knowledge from the personnel turnover at the Chief of Staff position. Recognizing that the effort would be sweeping, Major General Mixon expanded the task force’s membership to include others on and within the Army Staff. In particular, the task force employed experts from “the Headquarters, Department of the Army; the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology; the National Guard Bureau; the Office, Chief of Army Reserve; the Judge Advocate General; Forces Command; the Army Materiel Command; and the Army War College.”⁶⁵ To further diversify the

mix of personnel and viewpoints, Task Force Modularity was not limited to uniformed personnel.⁶⁶

As part of an effort to keep opponents from hindering progress, Schoomaker directed that all analyses Task Force Modularity produced were “close hold,”⁶⁷ initially aiming to prevent preliminary results from creating dissent and parochial mindsets across the Army’s branches. Despite the close hold directive, Schoomaker recognized the value of generating buy-in from Army components that would be responsible for transitioning to the BCT. The Chief of Staff directed Task Force Modularity to engage in discussions with regional Army commands and Army Service Component Commands. Moreover, Schoomaker further directed that the task force coordinate with the Joint Forces Command and the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force. In doing so, the communication channels between Task Force Modularity and outside elements ensured that any results were representative of joint equities and ensured support for the BCT effort.⁶⁸ Despite the contradictory appearance of the guidance, it was nevertheless required to ensure that organizational change would occur. If Task Force Modularity failed to keep those affected by the BCT reorganization informed, it is possible that the recommendations would have been met with staunch opposition. The task force, given its membership came from a broad base of experts across multiple organizations, enabled General Schoomaker and the Army to eliminate barriers through *a priori* coordination and buy-in that would have otherwise served as barriers to implementing the Army’s vision for change.

Fundamental to any change effort is building and maintaining progress. Kotter devotes two stages to help an organization address the near term and long term problems which could derail progress. Identifying and addressing potential challenges is especially important to the Army when considering the entirety of changing from the division to a brigade-based

organization. In Kotter's sixth stage, he asserts that the near term should be devoted to generating "short term wins" to create "results that are visible and unambiguous." It is vitally important that these acts be unambiguous because it gives naysayers little chance to argue against progress. Kotter highlights six roles for short term wins: justifying costs, building morale, testing the viability of an organization's ideas, undermining cynical spectators, keeping leaders onboard, and, perhaps most important, to building momentum.⁶⁹ The short term wins feed directly into Kotter's seventh stage: "consolidating wins and producing more change." The point Kotter makes in stage seven is that organizations cannot simply declare victory after generating short term wins. They must continually seek to improve themselves to break with tradition and culture.⁷⁰ While Kotter treats stages six and seven distinctly, they are nevertheless linked and organizations often work in both stages simultaneously.

General Schoomaker's tenure as Army Chief of Staff came pre-packaged with a short-term win. His predecessor's three-pronged approach – the Legacy, Interim, and Objective forces – envisioned and planned for a mobile infantry-like BCT – the Stryker. However, during General Shinseki's tenure the Stryker BCT remained a concept on paper that had only been tested in an experimental and training capacity. In the summer of 2003, however, the BCT's role would change and Schoomaker would use the Stryker BCT as the fulcrum on which he would demonstrate visible and unambiguous progress toward Army transformation.

In November 2003, the Army had been at war in Iraq for eight months. President Bush had declared the end of combat operations in Iraq in May, but the country was far from secure and the war far from over. Instead, the U.S. Army became embroiled in a vicious counterinsurgency that served as a test to validate the new unit.⁷¹ As the invasion force deployments drew to an end, the Army announced that the 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division –

the first Stryker BCT – would rotate to Operation Iraqi Freedom to replace the 101st Airborne Division, and signaled the unit’s first test in combat.⁷² From the beginning, the 3/2 Stryker BCT showed promise, demonstrating versatility in its quick and efficient deployment from the U.S. to Kuwait, and into Iraq, using only two naval vessels and commercial aircraft.⁷³ Immediately upon entering country, the Coalition Joint Task Force 7 – the interim command element in Iraq from 2003 to 2004 which preceded Multi-National Force Iraq – directed the 3/2 Stryker BCT to augment the 4th Infantry Division who was responsible for the treacherous Sunni Triangle northwest of Baghdad, known for its relatively high insurgent activity. Moreover, the BCT accomplished this movement in stark contrast to previous units who were hampered by unimproved roads and requirements for large logistical support. Col. Rounds, then commander of the 3/2 Stryker BCT noted of his unit’s agility and flexibility in its efforts:

The 540-mile move [to Samarra] speaks a lot about the capability of the brigade – our operational agility. We were relatively self-sustaining and self-moving, and when we came into PACESETTER, we quickly made the transition to ... one of the most complex mission in Iraq. It was a great first test.⁷⁴

As violence across Iraq continued to grow, the 3/2 Stryker BCT would be tested time and time again as the enemy sought to identify the unit’s weaknesses. On more than one occasion, the units’ flexibility was tested as it would be asked to fulfill missions such as stability operations, Iraqi unit training, and force protection requiring less logistical assistance and at a faster pace than non-Stryker units.⁷⁵ Perhaps most significant during the prototype unit’s deployment was its involvement in a September 2004 mission akin to the 1993 Blackhawk rescue mission in Mogadishu, Somalia. In Tall Afar, insurgents downed a Kiowa Warrior helicopter as it hovered above the city providing oversight to engaged units. Elements of the BCT dispatched to rescue the pilots from the down aircraft, and were met with a barrage of small arms, RPGs, and indirect fires. In the ensuing race to the wreckage, the BCT’s capabilities afforded it marked advantages

in mobility and communications that enabled it to arrive on scene with mass, coordinate support, rescue the pilots, treat the wounded, and overwhelm the enemy insurgents as they attempted to mount an offensive.⁷⁶ Success notwithstanding, the Army's decision in October 2004 to replace the 3/2 Stryker BCT with the 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division – another Stryker unit – demonstrates a great deal of confidence in the newly tested combat unit.⁷⁷

Outside of Iraq, the Army and General Schoomaker were working to consolidate gains and generate more wins in line with Kotter's seventh stage. Despite the Stryker BCTs successes, however, it was not a universal answer to the Army's transformation woes. Schoomaker's Task Force Modularity was designing the heavy and infantry BCT organizations in light of the Army's 2003 announcement that the 3rd Infantry and the 101st Airborne Divisions would be the next to undergo transformation. By 2004 both units were to be fully redesigned as they would deploy the following year. At the same time, Schoomaker decided to "tie unit reorganizations to upcoming rotations," which were to begin with the 3rd Infantry Division.⁷⁸ One of the principle proposals Task Force Modularity developed was based on the Stryker BCT concept, and at the time deployed to northwest Iraq.⁷⁹ While Task Force Modularity eventually decided in favor of an alternative proposal based on a provisional heavy BCT, the Stryker BCTs experiences nevertheless fed into the discussion as evidenced by Schoomaker's recognition that the unit redesigns would be iterative and based on operational experiences.⁸⁰

As the war in Iraq progressed, the Army and Schoomaker became increasingly focused on creating a sufficient rotational base. The immense personnel strain the Iraq and Afghanistan wars placed on the Army was particularly challenging, especially as the Army was transforming. During the initial phase of the Iraq war, the Army deployed units on a division basis, not unlike wars since WWI. The problem was the Army's rotational method was predicated on there being

sufficient units to cycle through.⁸¹ However, from the war's onset, it was clear that the Army's previous force generation method would be insufficient. General Schoomaker recognized this deficiency and directed Task Force Modularity to explore options to size units appropriately to prevent exhausting the Army. Schoomaker predicated his modularity initiative on designing smaller units that were readily expandable and interchangeable. The BCT designs adopted a two maneuver battalion framework with supporting technological and organizational enablers to preserve combat capabilities. Schoomaker accepted this proposal in light of his preference for a three maneuver battalion based unit. Smaller units would increase the Army's unit base to meet the war's demands. Accepting risk on the number of battalions, Schoomaker recognized the narrow window of opportunity to sustain momentum and break from the division-based Army tradition.⁸²

Success in combat is the validation test. The unit's success validated the Army's transformation ideas and justified the cost. Likewise, 3/2 Stryker BCT's ability to adapt to the evolving enemy with relative ease likely silenced critics of smaller, more mobile units, and kept those behind the effort committed to transformation. This short term win fed into the larger process Schoomaker led through Task Force Modularity. Focused on the near term impacts the Global War on Terror placed on the Army, Schoomaker's emphasis on ensuring the Army had a sufficient rotational base forced the organization make long term changes. Taking into account operational experiences, Task Force Modularity developed unit designs that would preserve unit capabilities and enable the Army to be a more nimble force, thus requiring the Army to continue breaking with its previous traditions. For General Schoomaker, the only remaining task was anchoring the new approaches in Army culture.

The last component in Kotter's model is negotiating the gap between the previous culture and the new culture. While Kotter recognizes that being sensitive to an organization's culture is important at all stages, he saves this step until the very end because his years of experience and study conclude that changing an organization's culture is difficult and comes only after demonstrating success.⁸³

Perhaps one of the biggest drivers of Army doctrine is its culture. At all levels, and across all services, service members are taught to consult with the current doctrinal manuals to guide their thinking. Doctrine holds the current set of beliefs and principles developed and modified over years of experience. In other words, it is a guide to the way the services conduct business. After perusing through the doctrinal manuals during, and following, General Schoomaker's time as Chief of Staff, it should not be surprising that his transformation ideas permeate the pages of Army doctrine. To that end, of paramount importance to the Army's transformation effort is Field Manual 1: The Army. Published in June 2005, the Chief of Staff makes it clear in the opening pages that

[FM 1] states what the Army is, what the Army does, how the Army does it, and where the Army is going. It establishes the Army's operational concept and other fundamental principles for employing landpower in support of the National Security, National Defense, and the National Military Strategies.⁸⁴

In other words, FM 1 underpins much of the Army's culture. Published well after Task Force Modularity's initial unit designs, it is clear that the BCT's mobility, agility, and flexibility capabilities form the basis for FM 1's operational concepts. Contrasting the Army's current challenge with those it faced in WWII, FM 1 highlights that "[t]he War on Terrorism requires an Army with diverse capabilities to meet a different kind of adversary," and that the Army continues to shape and rebalance its forces to meet twenty-first century challenges. These challenges, according to FM 1, would put "a premium on operational flexibility and

adaptability—attributes of Army forces with balanced capabilities ... [and] requires Army forces to sustain a consistently high readiness level,” as there would be insufficient time for a division-based army to respond rapidly.⁸⁵ More directly, FM 1 addresses the larger issue of transforming Army culture and organization from one based on the division to the brigade. FM 1 asserts that

[T]o remain relevant and ready, the operational Army is transforming from a division-based to a brigade-based force. This more agile “modular force” is organized and trained to fight as part of the joint force. Modular organizations can be quickly assembled into strategically responsive force packages able to rapidly move wherever needed. They can quickly and seamlessly transition among types of operations better than could their predecessors.⁸⁶

To continue the Army’s brigade-based transformation, soldiers need to embrace the changes afoot. FM 1 addresses this issue poignantly by placing the soldiers and leaders at the core of the cultural shift, asserting that the Army would be “changing policies, training, and behavior to create a culture that embraces the operational and organizational challenges of a turbulent security environment.” These changes would enable leaders to “reorient peoples’ actions and attitudes” toward embracing the Army’s culture shift to espouse innovation and recognize that expeditionary operations will be the crux of future conflicts.⁸⁷

General Schoomaker attacked the culture issue directly through the Army’s fundamental underpinnings – its doctrine. FM 1 enabled the Army to anchor the BCT in its culture, defined the future the Army would face, and directly established the means by which it would meet future challenges. From the perspective of Kotter’s change model, Schoomaker’s strategy, ideas, and efforts had been cemented into the Army’s culture, ensuring the brigade-based Army structure would survive.

Conclusion

Since the end of WWII, the Army has changed its organizational structure numerous times, albeit marginally, to cope with emerging threats. For over five decades, from WWII through the end of the Cold War, the Army built its organization around massive, slow-moving formations able to mass firepower to overwhelm potential adversaries. The Army's division-based organization at the end of the Cold War, despite achieving success during the First Gulf War, proved to be maladroit and unwieldy when confronting the quick, adaptable enemies during the Global War on Terror. The Army recognized its outdated organization and that it needed to transform its organization to capitalize on technological advancements to be more flexible, adaptable, and mobile. However, achieving change in large organizations is difficult. Achieving change on the scale Macgregor suggests, particularly in large, bureaucratic organizations can be a monumental effort. General Schoomaker's vision and efforts enabled the Army to achieve this immense transformation, all during his four-year tenure as the Army's Chief of Staff. Against the backdrop of Kotter's eight-stage model, it should not be surprising that Schoomaker succeeded in shifting the Army toward a brigade-based organization Macgregor suggested nearly a decade previously in *Breaking the Phalanx*. Perhaps more surprising is how quickly he was able to achieve the transformation.

Keen observers of the Army's transformation will be quick to point out that Schoomaker's predecessors laid a stable foundation for the brigade-based organization. While this is true, and it would be in error to diminish their efforts, Schoomaker nevertheless provided a mix of vision, leadership, and tenacity to drive the Army's transformation efforts from 2003 through 2007. General Schoomaker succeeded in cultivating relationships with those above and below him, decentralized TRADOC's study and analysis efforts to enable broad based action,

and sustained momentum built on the Stryker BCTs success in Iraq. The totality of his efforts, and the new environment, propelled the Army's organization change forward, and ensured a brigade-based organization would remain the organization's foundation after he departed office.

Finally, it is worth bearing in mind that a multitude of organizational change models exist today. These tools are designed to provide structured frameworks for organizations to use in undertaking a change effort. The existence of several models should come as no surprise as changing an organization is not a "one size fits all" endeavor. For example, in 1980 a group of partners at the management and consulting firm, McKinsey & Company, authored an article outlining a framework to help organizations examine fundamental aspects critical to success – the 7-S Model. The model emphasizes seven essential elements of an organization – strategy, systems, structure, skills, style, staff, and shared values – and uses these elements to identify gaps that require an organization's attention to facilitate implementing its strategy.⁸⁸ Another common model is Lewin's Change Model. Developed by Kurt Lewin in 1958, he advocates three steps – unfreeze, change, refreeze – for organizational change. Lewin pushes organizations to visualize themselves as an ice cube, first unfreezing their situation to understand what needs to change. He then advises that after an organization identifies what needs to change, make the necessary changes and "refreeze" these changes to cement them into an organizations culture.⁸⁹ While this is a simplified view of Lewin's model, the overall point across all organizational models is the same – to guide an organization's change efforts. The fundamental limitation of these models is that each framework is attempting to represent a very fluid process in a very rigid format. Backward looking assessments have the benefit of having much more information available than during a period of change and, as such, are much easier. Nevertheless, organizations, to include the Army in the future, must recognize this, and remain flexible. Dr.

Kotter's change model used here in the analysis of the Army's transformation to the BCT is only one of many that exist that could be applied.

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- ⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 68-9.
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- ⁷⁸ Brown, *Kevlar Legions*, 303.
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- ⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 25 and 46; Schoomaker approved the provisional heavy BCT only for the 3rd Infantry Division, and not the broader “heavy” force. The Chief of Staff preferred to reserve the capability to make changes based on the unit’s operational experiences than to make the design final. The provisional heavy BCT only had two maneuver battalions versus the desired three. Moreover, at the time the Army was facing budgetary challenges that could make fielding three maneuver battalion BCTs challenging, if not impossible.
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