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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

TITLE:

**THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD:
AN OPERATIONAL FORCE, AT THE READY**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: The Army National Guard: An Operational Force, At the Ready
Author: Major Hector Sotolongo, Army National Guard
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Thesis: As America's war efforts have increased, the nation has progressively relied on the Army National Guard (ARNG) to perform as a strategic reserve, then as an operational reserve, and although not officially recognized as such, it has met the demands expected of an operational force. Given the high operational tempo expected of the ARNG and its historic performance capability, the Department of Defense should formally designate the ARNG as an operational force in order to meet the defense requirements of the nation.

Discussion: The ARNG has endured significant challenges in its pursuit for advancement as an essential member of the total Army force. From the post-Vietnam era to the most recent efforts of the Global War on Terrorism, the ARNG has played an important role in support of the mission of the United States Army (Component 1). During the forty-five year period since the implementation of the Total Force Policy, the ARNG has seen major transformations from being a strategic reserve of the nation to becoming an operational reserve, and even at times performing the role of an operational force within the United States Army. However, the ARNG's road to modernization and relevance, proportional to its employment, has been difficult to navigate. Throughout this evolution, the organization has struggled to achieve and maintain the advantages, resourcing, and influence associated with having the status of an operational force. In 2004, Congress appointed the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves (CNGR), with the purpose of assessing the functions, responsibilities, and capabilities of Army National Guard (Component 2) and Army Reserve (Component 3). By 2008, the Commission delivered its report to Congress and to the Secretary of Defense. The report offers six conclusions and ninety-five recommendations necessary to formally designate the ARNG as an operational force.

Conclusions: For the last seventeen years, the Armed Forces of the United States have been occupied with the asymmetrical threats associated with the Global War on Terrorism. However, the future of the United States in warfare is more likely to involve a near peer and/or peer competitors. With the prospect of a conventional fight, the Army will need the full support of ready and rapidly deployable ARNG. Therefore, the Department of Defense should consider the recommendations of the CNGR and support the continued enhancement of the total Army force by resourcing the Army National Guard's formal transformation into an operational force.

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Preface

As a member of the Army National Guard, I selected this topic as it offered a great opportunity to broaden my understanding of the history and evolution of my organization. As a starting point, I sought two research objectives: first, to study the history of Army National Guard, particularly the key historical events and consequent reforms that impacted the organization; and second, to research and address how the Army National Guard, as an essential component of the total Army force, may be employed to help confront potential emerging threats to our nation.

I would like to thank Andrea for providing balance and her support during this process, as we eagerly await Alexander's arrival. I would like to offer a special thanks to my mentor, Dr. Lon Strauss for his guidance throughout this project. His dedication and willingness to read through several drafts and provide detailed and timely feedback, were indispensable to my ability to successfully complete this project. I am also very grateful to Colonel Matthew P. Neumeyer, USA, for taking the time to review my work and provide extensive direction, particularly in the subject matter of Army readiness. I would also like to express my gratitude to my military faculty advisor, Lieutenant Colonel Michael J. Byrne, USMC for his leadership, encouragement, and for his counsel as I prepared for the oral defense. Lastly, but certainly not least, I would like to thank Ms. Stase L. Wells and the LCSC team for their outstanding support while providing timely, detailed, and constructive feedback on my MMS drafts and several other written assignments throughout the academic year.

Introduction

The Army National Guard (ARNG) traces its roots to 1636, when the General Courts of the Massachusetts Bay Colony assembled the first militia regiments. While the original purpose for the creation of the militia units was to provide for the defense of the Colonies against Native Americans and other European colonists, the nation has relied on its citizen-soldier organizations for much more. From the American Revolutionary War through the American Civil War, to the present day's Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), and every conflict in between, the ARNG has faithfully answered the nation's call to arms. Throughout this history, the ARNG has fought alongside the Army and, after the Defense Act of 1916, the Army Reserves. Of note, the Guard played a major role in supporting the active Army during the First World War, the Second World War, and the Korean War. However, prior to 1973 (as the war in Vietnam approached its end), the Army had not structured its three components for interdependence. In other words, the Army and its reserves were not optimized to meet the nation's strategic requirements of the time. There are several examples that illustrate this shortfall throughout American history, but the Vietnam War highlighted it more, as President Johnson decided not to activate the National Guard. This underutilization abroad was a setback for the ARNG as an organization and left a military resource on the sideline when it may have positively contributed to American efforts in Vietnam. Hence, in 1973, the Department of Defense established the Total Force Policy, a plan that would generate greater compatibility and interoperability among the three Army components and ensure the Army would have the support of its reserves in future major combat operations.

Since the implementation of the Total Force Policy over the last forty-five years, the ARNG has seen major transformations from performing as a strategic reserve of the nation to becoming an operational reserve, and although not officially, relied upon to perform the role of operational force as an integral member of the Army. During the period between the Korean War and the Gulf

War, the Army considered the ARNG a strategic reserve, that is “a force to be called all at once for ‘total war’ against a peer adversary.”¹ In a monograph completed while attending the United States Army War College, Colonel Verne C. McMoarn provides an excellent description of the strategic reserve as a “military organization composed of citizens of a country who combine a military role with a civilian career and their main role was to be available to fight when a nation mobilized for total war or to defend against invasion; not considered part of a permanent standing body of armed forces; only deploy in support of the nation in case of total war.”²

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, the early demands of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) thrust the ARNG towards becoming an operational reserve. In 2009, the National Guard defined the term “operational reserve” as a force providing “operational capabilities organized and resourced in a recurrent predictable cycle to support Army requirements, in peace and war; an Operational Reserve Force is fully manned, equipped and trained to provide ready units across the full spectrum of operations.”³ As an operational reserve, the ARNG consistently met the operational requirements of the Army and the expectations of the nation. However, as the demands of GWOT increased, the Army expected the ARNG to perform missions at the speed and capability of an operational force. In accordance with the Department of Defense Instruction 1235.12, the ARNG may be ordered to “active duty as an operational force to support the national defense strategy across the full spectrum of military operations, including sustained operational missions, emergent contingency operations, and service during national emergencies or in time of war.”⁴ As the United States war efforts increased, the nation has

¹ Jacob Alex Klerman, *Rethinking the Reserves*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2008, 3.

² Colonel Verne C. McMoarn, “The National Guard: An Operational Force for the 21st Century,” United States Army War College, 2013, 15.

³ Major General Raymond Carpenter, “Definition of Operational Reserve Force,” National Guard Information Paper, Washington, DC, 2009, 1.

⁴ Department of Defense Instruction 1235.12, “Accessing the Reserve Component”, Washington, DC, 2012, 1.

progressively relied on the ARNG to perform as a strategic reserve, then as an operational reserve, and although not officially recognized as such, it has met the demands expected of an operational force. As Lieutenant General Timothy J. Kadavy, the former Director of the Army National Guard, stated in a 2016 address to the United States Senate Appropriations Committee: “Since September 11, 2001, Army National Guard Soldiers have conducted more than 544,000 individual mobilizations in support of federal missions, with more than 320,000 individual Soldier mobilizations to Iraq and Afghanistan during that period...many senior leaders within the Department of Defense, the Administration and Congress have stated publicly that the Army would not have been able to accomplish its combat missions without the use of the Army National Guard and I fully agree.”⁵ Given the high operational tempo expected of the ARNG and its historic performance capability, the Department of Defense (DOD) should formally designate and resource the ARNG to an operational force in order to meet the defense requirements of the nation.

The Vietnam War: The Catalyst for a Total Army Force

During the Vietnam War, rather than calling on and fully employing the ARNG and the other reserve components (RC), President Johnson decided to augment the active component (AC) with draftees as a way to support the war efforts. Prior to America’s shift to an All-Volunteer Force and continuously after Congress passed the Burke-Wadsworth Act in 1940, the United States relied heavily upon the draft to fill its military ranks. What was unusual about the Vietnam War was the underutilization of the ARNG and the RC. With a few rare exceptions, the ARNG was virtually denied the opportunity to serve in Vietnam. As a result, the organization attracted a dispassionate crowd of enlistees looking for a way to avoid the draft and the war. The ARNG continued its best efforts to prepare and deploy to combat, but the administration persisted in its

⁵ Statement of Lieutenant General Timothy J. Kadavy before the United States Senate Appropriations Committee on The National Guard and Reserve Posture on March 16, 2016, 114th Cong., 2016, 6.

resolve not to send reservists to Vietnam. One of President Johnson's motivation for excluding the ARNG was to conceal the severity of the war; thereby, maintaining political support from the nation. President Johnson thought that a full-scale mobilization, which would include reservists, would "get Congress and the rest of the country all het up and asking too many questions."⁶ Ultimately this decision was the President's prerogative, and, therefore, the ARNG did not have much participation in Vietnam. By the mid-stages of the war, the ARNG had only been able to deploy 2,729 troops. After a few ARNG unit rotations between 1968 and 1969, just over 9000 guardsmen served in combat, with the last few deploying members returning on December 12, 1969. This underutilization, coupled with the surge of enlistees seeking to avoid combat service, had a demoralizing effect on the organization.⁷

As the war in Vietnam neared its conclusion, the negative effects of the conflict were evident. Civilian support for the military had diminished, the Army was ailing after losing the war and the lives of so many troops, and the ARNG was in shambles, filled with inadequate troops that had enlisted as a way to dodge conscription. In order to resolve these setbacks, President Nixon's administration and the Department of Defense instituted a few important initiatives. Shortly after winning the election in 1969, President Nixon appointed a commission charged with finding a practical way for ending the draft while maintaining the nation's defense requirements. The commission determined that the most reasonable solution was to gradually decrease the number of conscript service members over a period of four years, culminating with total abolition of the draft by 1973.

⁶ Rachel Maddow, *Drift: The Unmooring of American Military Power*, New York, Crown Publishers, 2012, 14.

⁷ Michael D. Doubler, *Civilian in Peace, Soldier in War: The Army National Guard, 1636-2000*, Lawrence, KS, University Press of Kansas, 2003, 260-267.

Although the plan to end the draft and establish the AVF was rolled out gradually, from 1970 to 1973, the transition represented a considerable setback to the ARNG. For example, President Nixon administration's announcement to end conscription prompted a sudden and sizable reduction of the force as enlistment contracts expired and draft motivated enlistments decreased. By the end of 1972, "enlisted losses exceeded gains by over 17,000 in the Army National Guard,"⁸ bringing down the size of the force from 402,175 to just under 388,000 personnel. This manpower crisis worsened in 1977 as a bulk of Vietnam-era enlistment contracts ended and triggered a mass exodus of over 104,000 troops. By 1979, the strength of the ARNG hit rock bottom at 346,974 soldiers. The rapid reductions of personnel meant that, by the end of fiscal year 1979, the ARNG was unable to maintain its required strength of 417,535.⁹ However, there were obvious benefits to the post-Vietnam policies. Soldiers that were eager to serve remained in the ARNG, which helped improve the morale and quality of the organization. Another silver lining was that unlike the Active Component, the ARNG mostly avoided the "severe crisis of confidence and loss of public approval"¹⁰ resulting from the very unpopular war. These aspects were helpful for aiding the ARNG. Although the ARNG had suffered a significant reduction of force, with higher quality troops the organization stood poised for the next phase: implementation of the Total Force Policy.

Shortly after full execution of the AVF in 1973, the Army also presented a policy to make post-Vietnam course corrections. The Chief of Staff of the Army, General Creighton Abrams instituted the Total Force Policy (also known as the Abrams Doctrine), interconnecting the three

⁸ Robert K. Griffith Jr., *The U.S. Army's Transition to the All-Volunteer Force, 1968-1974*, Washington, DC, United States Army Center of Military History, 1997, 271.

⁹ Department of the Army Historical Summary, Fiscal Year 1979, United States Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC, 1979, 116.

¹⁰ Michael D. Doubler, *Civilian in Peace, Soldier in War: The Army National Guard, 1636-2000*, Lawrence, KS, University Press of Kansas, 2003, 258.

Army components (AC, ARNG, and USAR). The principal objective of the Abrams Doctrine was to meet the demands for defending the nation while cushioning the impending large force reductions resulting from President Nixon's administration policy to end conscription. In General Abrams' judgment, the Army needed to expand from thirteen to "sixteen active combat divisions to meet its worldwide strategic requirements without resorting to nuclear weapons."¹¹ By reorganizing and integrating the Army and its two reserve components, General Abrams would be able to reach his desired sixteen divisions and meet the Army's strategic requirement. While this was the chief objective of the Abrams Doctrine, numerous sources highlight that General Abrams had a secondary motivation for interconnecting the three Army services. Third party accounts make the claim that General Abrams sought to limit presidential powers by fully integrating the Army reserve components and making it almost impossible for future administrations to deploy the Army without its reserve components, at least in support of major combat operations.¹²

Although there is no recorded evidence that General Abrams intended to impose a check on presidential war-making decisions, other testimony suggests that it was at least an ulterior effect of the Abrams' plan. General Abrams had been the commanding general of United States forces in Vietnam from 1968 until the end of the war. As such, he recognized that the previous administration's unwillingness to use the reserve components in Vietnam may have been detrimental to the war efforts. According to General John Vessey, who had worked closely with the Army Chief of Staff, General Abrams saw "the Armed Forces are an expression of the nation. To take them out of the national context you are likely to screw them up. That was his lesson from Vietnam. He wasn't going to leave them in that position ever again. And part and parcel of that

¹¹ Conrad Crane and Gian Gentile, "Understanding The Abrams Doctrine: Myth Versus Reality," *War on the Rocks*, December 9, 2015, 4.

¹² *Ibid.*, 6.

was that you couldn't go to war without calling up the reserves.”¹³ General Vessey's recollections indicate that General Abrams understood that as a citizen-soldier organization, the ARNG had closer ties to the community and its inclusion in combat readiness efforts would likely increase buy-in from the public in times of conflict. If the Army did have to go to war in the future, it would be more likely to do so with the support of the nation if the ARNG went with it.

The Abrams Doctrine proposed three principles for developing the Army while providing additional resources to Army Guard units. However, while these principles were meant to improve both organizations, there were also drawbacks. The first of these principles known as “Mirror Imaging,” called for the alignment of combat units in both the Army and the ARNG with the same force structure. The rationale of this concept was that by equipping the ARNG with a heavy force structure, such as armored brigades and divisions, the organization would be a more equal and compatible partner to the active Army. Although this concept made the two organizations more compatible, it also created problems for the ARNG as the organization lacked the resources to effectively maintain, mobilize and deploy said heavy units. The second principle, known as “First-to-Fight Funding,” provided units scheduled to deploy with maximum funding needed to man, train, and equip themselves. The problem with this premise was that Army reserve units not slated for combat deployment were under-resourced and therefore would fall deficient in training, equipping, and overall readiness. Lastly, the third principle was “Cascading Modernization,” where reserve units would receive surplus equipment from the active Army as it modernized itself with new equipment. Similar to the other two principles, this concept represented readiness disadvantage to the ARNG. The older and outdated equipment resulted in higher maintenance

¹³ David M. Kennedy, *The Modern American Military*, New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 2013, 58.

costs and decreased capability for the ARNG.¹⁴ While these principles may have attempted to enhance force structure and increase resources for the ARNG, they actually constituted a setback to the organization.

Another significant pillar of the Abrams Doctrine was the creation of the ARNG Roundout Program, under which Army Guard brigades would become subordinate to active Army divisions for training, mobilizations, and deployments. It was a simple but potentially effective concept: for training and combat deployments, one ARNG brigade (approximately 4000 soldiers) would join two other AC brigades in order to “round out” an AC division to its full configuration.¹⁵ The primary purpose of the Roundout Program was to increase the number of Army divisions from thirteen to sixteen, without increasing the AC’s end-strength. Nevertheless, the program had several other benefits, especially for the ARNG. First, it helped fulfill General Abrams’ vision to integrate the ARNG and the AC, and further public support for potential combat operations. Second, the program increased ARNG readiness through training and equipping. Third, it increased morale among Guardsmen, as it gave them the opportunity to train with their active duty counterparts under more realistic conditions. While the Roundout program constituted a training and equipping advantage to the ARNG, its implementation during an actual combat deployment proved to be a challenge. According to a post-Gulf War Government Accountability Office (GAO) report published in 1992 on Operation Desert Storm, “(1) peacetime training did not adequately prepare the roundout brigades for their wartime roles, (2) the Army's readiness information greatly underestimated the amount of post-mobilization training that would be needed to ready the brigades to deploy, and (3) adverse impacts resulted from the incompatibility of the National

¹⁴ James Jay Carafano, “Total Force Policy and the Abrams Doctrine: Unfulfilled Promise, Uncertain Future,” Foreign Policy Institute, Philadelphia, February 2005, 3.

¹⁵ Michael D. Doubler, *Civilian in Peace, Soldier in War: The Army National Guard, 1636-2000*, Lawrence, Kansas, University Press of Kansas, 2003, 280.

Guard's peacetime systems with those of the active Army.”¹⁶ In other words, there was preexisting evidence to show that the Roundout program would encounter readiness setbacks when implemented in wartime. Aspects related to the shortcomings of the Roundout program will be analyzed in a later section of this report.

Another important total force initiative was the Army’s 1979 CAPSTONE program. CAPSTONE offered ARNG units realistic combat training by aligning them with appropriate active Army units. Under this concept, ARNG units would mobilize to their training station and subordinated themselves to the same Army headquarters with whom they would perform their wartime mission. The benefits of this program were threefold: the ARNG units received enhanced tactical and operational training in order to achieve proficiency in their wartime mission; ARNG commanders and staffs, at all levels, had the opportunity to develop their training and planning skills along with their AC counterparts; and it focused on a commanders-specific and tangible mission: a defensive, mechanized war in Europe. Furthermore, in 1980, the Army announced that it was refocusing the CAPSTONE program to sustain rapid deployments to Southwest Asia. Accordingly, Guard units began training for a possible conflict in that region. Although this was an unexpected shift, it was a fortunate decision in hindsight, considering that most of the nation’s proceeding conflicts, from the Gulf War to the current efforts while waging the GWOT, would take place in the Middle East.

However difficult, the period during and post the Vietnam War was an important phase for the development of the ARNG. The fact that President Johnson’s administration did not deploy the Guard to Vietnam in any significant numbers represented a hard-learned lesson for the Army and the Army Guard. The failure to mobilize the ARNG served mostly to create a sanctuary for

¹⁶ Government Accountability Office, “Operation Desert Storm: Army Guard Combat Brigade War Lessons Reflect Long-Standing Problems,” (Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, 1992), 1.

draft-aged individuals to avoid conscription and by extension swell the ranks of the ARNG with soldiers barely fit to serve. With the introduction of the AVF and the elimination of the draft, the ARNG struggled and even failed to maintain personnel strength. However, as a silver lining, the mass exodus also relieved the ARNG from most of the unmotivated draft-dodgers, significantly improving the morale of the organization. Lastly, General Abrams' initiatives were essential for the inclusion of the ARNG as part of the total Army force. The Abrams Doctrine set the Guard on a new path, requiring the organization to work toward new goals in partnership with the Army to prepare for future conflicts. However, further progress would be forthcoming for the ARNG during President Reagan's administration.

President Reagan's Era of Military Buildup

During the 1980s, or the period ranging from President Reagan's election and culminating with the Gulf War, the ARNG also underwent significant transformations. This period included major new initiatives, increases of allocations for defense spending, and significant growth to the organization, to include increased resources, manpower, and heightened fitness standards. President Reagan more than doubled defense spending from \$143.9B in 1980 to \$294.7B in 1985.¹⁷ While DOD focused most of this capital on reconstituting the AC, the ARNG greatly benefited as well. With the additional resources, the ARNG instituted two new personnel programs. In 1981, the ARNG established the Key Personnel Upgrade Program (KPUP) in order to provide better training opportunities by assigning Guard leaders to key positions within active Army units. Over a period of seven years, this program placed over 7500 citizen-soldiers on active duty to help them sharpen their leadership, technical, and tactical skills. The KPUP was of

¹⁷ Ibid., 286.

significant value to fostering a more professional organization, as these experienced leaders would return to their Guard units better prepared to train and develop their drilling soldiers.

The Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) program, also established in 1981, brought experienced ARNG leaders to full-time service to manage the daily activities of Guard units as well as to oversee the procurement and management of resources at the federal level, which were tasks originally delegated to regular Army administrators. At the state level (Title 32), AGR personnel would accomplish the day-to-day coordination and the completion of administrative tasks, logistical requirements, and training plans prior to the conduct of Inactive Duty Training (IDT; one weekend per month) and Annual Training (AT; two weeks per year) assemblies. At the federal level (Title 10), the AGR leadership served to enhance connectivity between the states and the federal entities (the Congress, Department of Defense, and Army Headquarters). Title 10 AGR officials were responsible for petitioning and obtaining additional resources and structure for the Army Guard. Both the KPUP and AGR programs were instrumental to increased readiness and towards solidifying ARNG's status as a strategic reserve, or an organization ready and available to fight when the nation mobilized for total war or to defend against invasion.

The spending increases also led to increased recruitment incentives and more flexible enlistment options that translated to higher quality soldiers for the ARNG. The strength of the ARNG grew from a low of 346,974 troops in 1979 to a high of 456,960 in 1989.¹⁸ In addition to the increase in manning, the Reagan era investments also advanced the quality of training, equipping, and modernization of the ARNG. With the continued developments of the CAPSTONE and KPUP programs, as well as increased training rotations at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) and National Training Center (NTC), the ARNG was becoming a more reliable and ready

¹⁸ Ibid., 289-291.

force to support the Army's wartime mission, as part of a total Army team. Thus, the ARNG was training its personnel to better integrate and collaborate with the Active Component. By 1990, the ARNG had reached adequate levels of personnel strength and force structure, and the institution was ready to perform its mission both domestic and abroad. By this time, the organization was over "456,000 strong and contained forty-six percent of the combat, thirty-two percent of the combat support (CS), and twenty-six percent of the combat service support (CSS) forces in the total Army."¹⁹ This made the ARNG an important member of the total Army force; the organization was structured as a combat force while maintaining its organic units for CS and CSS. In other words, the ARNG had achieved a balanced and compressive force structure which made it a more reliable partner to support the Army in future combat operations.

In a recent *Army Magazine* article (October 2017), Lieutenant General Kadavy provided some context to the developments of the Reagan-era buildup as follows: "a one-Army standard was adopted and with it the requirement for a physically fit, professional force. Standards were incorporated for physical fitness, height, weight, and haircuts. Regional training institutes were established with Army Training and Doctrine Command programs of instruction to ensure soldiers met the requirements of their Military Occupational Specialties (MOS)."²⁰ These significant improvements would be tested during the Persian Gulf War, with a few setbacks, but also with a respectable measure of success. More importantly, as Lieutenant General Kadavy points out, these developments of the Reagan years helped solidify the Army National Guard's status as a strategic reserve of the nation.

¹⁹ Les' Melnyk, "Mobilizing for the Storm: The Army National Guard in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm," National Guard Bureau Office of Public Affairs, 2001, 2.

²⁰ Gina Cavallaro, "Army National Guard 4.0 Effort Means 'Evolutionary Leap' for Citizen-Soldiers", *Army Magazine*, October 2017, 42.

The Gulf War

The Persian Gulf War (2 August 1990 to 28 February 1991) was an overall success for the Army and the ARNG, as it mostly validated the concept of the total Army force. On August 8, 1990, upon President George H. W. Bush's decision to deploy troops to the Middle East, the ARNG initiated "stop loss" directives, canceled several training exercises, and alerted the first set of ARNG units for deployment. The state Adjutants General and their staffs provided valuable support to the federal mission by "assisting units with rapid mobilizations and quick movements to federal mobilization stations".²¹ The mobilization process revealed only a few problems, mostly medical and dental issues. Medical issues held back only six percent of the mobilized Guardsmen from deploying. The ARNG also encountered two supply issues prior to deployment: first, a lack of machine gun ammunition to qualify gunners and second, a lack of desert pattern camouflage uniforms. The ARNG was able to work around these minor issues and successfully deployed ninety-four percent of mobilized service members. On November 23, President Bush signed an executive order (No. 12733) authorizing ARNG combat units to assist the Army in ground combat operations to repel Iraqi forces out of Kuwait.

Mobilization in support of Operation Desert Shield (Defense of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait) was a significant exercise and test for the ARNG. The organization mobilized 398 units across the organization, most of them combat support and combat service support. While the deployment and service of ARNG combat support and combat service support units was a success, the same cannot be said about the employment of ARNG combat units. The ARNG mobilized five combat roundout brigades: three maneuver and two field artillery. All five brigades made it to their respective mobilization stations, but the Army only validated and greenlit the two field artillery

²¹ Michael D. Doubler, *Civilian in Peace, Soldier in War: The Army National Guard, 1636-2000*, Lawrence, Kansas, University Press of Kansas, 2003, 330.

brigades for combat deployment. According to the active duty evaluators responsible for validation, the three Guard maneuver brigades did not meet Army standards, and, therefore, were not ready for combat. As a result, the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) decided to allocate and deploy active Army maneuver brigades in their place. This generated much criticism from the National Guard leadership as they perceived the SECDEF's decision as unfair; initial reports indicated that the Army evaluators arbitrarily increased the validation requirements seemingly to hinder the ARNG brigades from succeeding, while the active brigades used to replace the Guard roundout units did not have to go through the validation process to deploy.²² However, it is important to note that active Army units possessed a much higher proficiency level at validation compared to their Army Guard counterparts.

In order to determine the root causes for the setback with the three roundout brigades, both the Army Inspector General and the National Guard Bureau (NGB) conducted independent inquiries and issued their respective reports. Expectedly, the two organizations had "vastly different interpretations of the events surrounding the failure to deploy, including the readiness of the units and the validity of the standards."²³ In April 1992, the House Armed Services Committee held a Congressional Hearing during which both the Army Inspector General, Lieutenant General Ronald H. Griffith, and the President of the National Guard Association, Major General (Retired) Robert F. Ensslin provided their testimonies on the subject of the roundout brigades' failure to deploy. Lieutenant General Griffith testified that after a detailed investigation his office found that the AC applied the validation process fairly and proceeded to list several of the deficiencies found while evaluating the roundout brigades. Among those deficiencies, the Inspector General

²² Charles E. Heller, "Twenty-First Century Force: A Federal Army and a Militia", Strategic Studies Institute, United States Army War College, 1993, 42.

²³ Martin Binkin, *Who Will Fight the Next War: The Changing Face of the American Military*, Washington, DC, The Brookings Institution, 1993, 127.

(IG) cited shortfalls with training readiness, specifically related to non-commissioned officers not having completed the required skill level schooling, and insufficient training readiness from individual to platoon-level tasks. The IG also emphasized that at only thirty-nine days of training prior to mobilization, the Guard brigades were not sufficiently prepared for validation. On the other hand, during his testimony, Major General (Retired) Ensslin pointed out that active duty brigades selected to replace the roundout units did not receive the same level of scrutiny for validation. He also attested that all Guardsmen received more than the standard thirty-nine days of training prior to mobilization; enlisted members trained for an average of fifty days, and the officers trained an average of eighty days. These figures did not count the number of unpaid days Guardsmen devoted to training in order to prepare for validation.²⁴

This particular congressional hearing gathered testimony from representatives of both Army and Army Guard representatives, but ultimately the Army provided the more convincing arguments for sending active duty brigades in place of the ARNG roundout brigades. In the end, the absolute tie-break came from the General Accounting Office as it issued its report on the matter summarizing that:

(1) The Army has not adequately prepared its National Guard roundout brigades to deploy quickly; (2) many soldiers were not completely trained to do their jobs and many noncommissioned officers were not adequately trained in leadership skills; (3) the Army's peacetime medical screening program for the National Guard failed to identify dental and other medical ailments that would have adversely affected the ability of many Guard members to deploy early, and only upon mobilization did the Army find that over 4,000 of the Guard members had physical conditions that caused them to be undeployable; (4) in peacetime, the National Guard uses administrative systems that are not compatible with active Army systems to manage personnel and supply operations which, upon mobilization, downgraded the brigades' ability to mobilize efficiently and to train effectively; (5) peacetime training lacked challenging, realistic training missions, failed to integrate combat arms, combat-support, and combat service-support elements, was sometimes cancelled because of inadequate support by host installations, and was often

²⁴ House Committee on Armed Services, *Report to the Committee on Regional Threats and Defense Options for the 1990s*, 102th Cong., 1992, Committee Print 1, 425-433.

conducted with shortages of authorized equipment; and (6) since the post-mobilization training plans developed by each of the three brigades during peacetime were based on unreliable proficiency and combat readiness ratings, Army trainers had to develop ad hoc post-mobilization training plans that called for far more training days than envisioned by brigade commanders and required the support of almost 9,000 active Army trainers and other personnel.²⁵

Ultimately, as the DOD declined to use the maneuver roundout brigades, it offered four reasons to justify the decision: first, the Army believed that only the AC was capable of rapid deployment and immediate combat; second, General Norman Schwarzkopf, the Commander of Central Command (CENTCOM), had ordered the deployment of two full-strength heavy divisions, so with little time to spare the Army decided to replace the ARNG brigades with active duty counterparts; third, CENTCOM's request for heavy forces came on August 6 (sixteen days before the president authorized an ARNG call up); and lastly, the Army pointed out that Section 673b Mobilization Statute restricted ARNG deployments to 180 days, and six months was not sufficient time for proper employment of the roundout brigades. The Chief of the National Guard Bureau (CNGB) began working immediately to reverse this decision with the help of supporting members of Congress. By the time the President issued Executive Order No. 12733 authorizing the employment of ARNG combat units, the Guard maneuver brigades had already been replaced by active Army units; only the two ARNG field artillery brigades were able to see combat service.²⁶

Once President Bush ordered the cease-fire on February 1991, CENTCOM proceeded to execute its plan to return the troops home rapidly. However, the return home was also problematic for the ARNG units. General Schwarzkopf, implemented a policy of "first-in-first-out." As the title of the policy suggested, it entailed that active Army troops, having been the first to arrive in

²⁵ Government Accountability Office, *National Guard: Peacetime Training Did Not Adequately Prepare Combat Brigades for Gulf War*, (Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, 1991), 3, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/160/151085.pdf>.

²⁶ Michael D. Doubler, *Civilian in Peace, Soldier in War: The Army National Guard, 1636-2000*, Lawrence, Kansas, University Press of Kansas, 2003, 310-14.

theater, would also be first to demobilize and return home. While the policy seemed reasonable – especially since in principle, the concept of the total force was to ensure equality across the components – in practice, it represented a burden to ARNG troops. The first-in-first-out policy did not consider that, unlike active component troops, reservists depended on their civilian employment and some were disproportionately financially affected by an extended deployment period.²⁷ By April 1991, two months after the cease-fire, only one-third of reserve troops had returned home; approximately 80,000 troops were still active in support of the post-war efforts, and their families were voicing their impatience. As a result of the mounting political pressure, Congress passed a resolution demanding the return of reservist units no later than July 4. The Department of Defense saw similar political pressure, as depicted in a letter from Senator John McCain to Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney, where he stated: “it is unacceptable that any reserve component unit should remain deployed longer than active component units.”²⁸ In spite of CENTCOM’s best attempts to expedite the return of reserve troops, it could not quite meet the July 4 deadline. By August 25, over ninety-five percent of reservists had returned home, with the last few making it back by November 19, 1991. This was a clear indication that the ARNG had embraced its role as a strategic reserve; although the organization was available to deploy and fight when the nation called, it did not seek to remain in Iraq longer than required, or as part of a standing body of the armed forces.

Soon after the conclusion of the Gulf War, understanding the shortcomings related to the Army Guard units, the United States Congress resolved to improve the organization. In 1992, the Congress sought to correct these shortcomings by passing the Army National Guard Combat

²⁷ Stephen M. Duncan, *Citizen Warriors: America's National Guard and Reserve Forces and the Politics of National Security*, Novato, CA, Presidio Press, 1997, 121.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 42.

Readiness Reform Act, also known as “Title XI” for its section placement in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1993. Title XI offered nineteen directives to help increase ARNG readiness as well as compatibility with its active Army counterparts. Some of the key Title XI provisions included: directing the Army to perform inspections in order to ensure that Army Guard units were meeting deployment requirements; increasing resources to early deploying ARNG units; called for improving the training guidance for ARNG combat units; called for increasing ARNG leadership expertise by focusing recruiting efforts on prior-service personnel, and Reserve Officer Training Course (ROTC) and Service Academy graduates; directed a more compatible systems across the three Army components for tracking and managing personnel, supply, maintenance, and finance; and required a more demanding medical and dental readiness assessment process for ARNG units.²⁹

Overall, the Gulf War was a mutually positive experience for both the active Army and the Guard. As General Colin Powell, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, stated during a Senate Armed Forces Committee hearing, “the success of the Guard and reserve participation in Desert Shield cannot be overemphasized. Their participation has been a significant factor in affording us flexibility and balance and reinforces the policies and decision made over the last ten years to strengthen the Total Force concept.”³⁰ On June of 1991, the ARNG and the National Guard Bureau (NGB) completed an After Action Review (AAR) and provided the following key findings: the AAR highlighted the Total Force Policy and several other programs such as CAPSTONE, KPUP, and AGR as effective and as providing a significant contribution to the success of the campaign. The ARNG had been preparing for over fifteen years, thanks to the support of the

²⁹ Andrew Feickert and Lawrence Kapp, “Army Active Component (AC)/Reserve Component (RC) Force Mix: Considerations and Options for Congress,” Congress Research Service, December 5, 2014, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R43808.pdf>, (accessed April 23, 2019), 6.

³⁰ Stephen M. Duncan, *Citizen Warriors: America's National Guard and Reserve Forces and the Politics of National Security*, Novato, CA, Presidio Press, 1997, 78.

Total Force Policy, Abrams Doctrine, and President Reagan era's military buildup. The readiness of the ARNG helped ensure a swift victory and very few casualties. Throughout this effort, the Guard deployed over 62,000 troops and 398 units. The ARNG successfully deployed battalion-sized units to include, but not limited to, Field Artillery, Military Police, Medical, Maintenance, Quartermaster, Motor Transport, and Engineers.³¹

While the deployment of Guard units in support to the Gulf War was arguably a success, the failure to integrate the maneuver roundout brigades was still a hurdle that both the Army and the Guard had recognized and overcome; both institutions had yet much work to do to improve the ARNG's pre-mobilization readiness. The overall successful inclusion of the Army Guard in the Gulf War, though, yielded various positive outcomes: first, it demonstrated that General Abrams' Total Force Policy reforms and the investments made during the Reagan buildup helped develop a more capable ARNG, which also contributed to a swift military victory; second, with the exception of the setback related to the maneuver roundout units, it confirmed that ARNG units were able to rapidly deploy and conduct combat missions along with the active Army; and third, it demonstrated that the state Adjutants General and their headquarters were instrumental to the mobilization process as they helped to expedite Guard units' movement and arrival to federal mobilization stations; and lastly, the ARNG call-up "helped to generate wide-spread, sustained public support for the war...and cement the bond between the American people and the armed forces in wartime."³² The latter two points further validate the benefits of employing Guard units in support of federal missions. While the ARNG had successfully affirmed its role as a strategic reserve by answering the nation's call to arms, the institution had also demonstrated a capability

³¹ Major General Donald Burdick, "Army National Guard After Action Report," 28 June 1991, 24.

³² Michael D. Doubler, *Civilian in Peace, Soldier in War: The Army National Guard, 1636-2000*, Lawrence, Kansas, University Press of Kansas, 2003, 330.

to become an operational reserve, as it had been “manned, equipped, and trained to provide ready units across the spectrum of operations.”³³ The Guard would further embrace its operational capabilities during its participation in the Global War on Terrorism.

The Global War on Terrorism

Ten years had passed since the conclusion of the Gulf War, when tragedy struck the United States with the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Both the Army and the Guard had taken to heart the lessons of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm; this time the DOD relied heavily on the ARNG’s operational capabilities to provide support and relief to the active Army. Over the next seventeen years, the ARNG deployed over 560,000 troops and employed every possible combat formation and echelon up to division in support of Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, New Dawn, and many others associated with the Global War on Terror.³⁴ However, these efforts did not come without challenges for the Guard. As a strategic reserve, the ARNG’s manning and equipping requirements were only at 80 percent and at 60 percent respectively. While manning and equipping at lower levels was normal and accepted during times of peace, this made it very difficult for the ARNG to generate combat-ready units (required at 100 percent manning and equipment). In order to meet manning requirements for deployment, soldiers from other states’ Army Guard units and the Inactive Ready Reserve (IRR) program supplemented the ranks of ARNG units. In terms of equipment, the active Army had to cross-level (loan from other units not slated for combat deployment) the required forty percent of equipment in order to make ARNG units whole and deployable.³⁵

³³ Major General Raymond Carpenter, “Definition of Operational Reserve Force,” National Guard Information Paper, Washington, DC, 2009, 1.

³⁴ Lieutenant General H. Steven Blum, “The National Guard: Transforming to an Operational Force,” Joint Forces Quarterly, Issue 43, 4th quarter 2006, 3.

³⁵ Michael Lynch, “A Turbulent Transition: The Army National Guard and Army Reserve’s Movement to an Operational Force.”, *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, Issue 36, Summer 2008, 78.

The events of September 11 generated a patriotic reaction across the nation that bound the public together in support of an immediate response to the terrorist attacks. The President had the backing of the country to use the full extent of military measures in order to ensure that another terrorist attack would not take place on American soil. On September 14, the DOD launched Operation Noble Eagle (ONE), activating thousands of National Guardsmen and other reservists in order to provide security within the nation's borders. ONE focused on likely terrorist targets such as airports, power plants, bridges, and government buildings. In addition, some state governors activated their National Guards on Title 32 (state-funded) status for the protection of critical infrastructure. By October 7, active Army units began deploying to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), and within weeks ARNG units began preparations for their own impending mobilization and overseas deployments. ARNG leaders and soldiers alike sought to get in the action; they wanted to join the AC in the fight against al-Qaeda. As early as January 7, 2002, ARNG units started deploying in support of OEF. Although ARNG support was limited at first, its participation gradually increased over time. By 2003, the Army had no definitive time table for drawing down troops from Afghanistan and required some relief from sustained operations. Therefore, the Army sought to rely more heavily on the ARNG to prosecute the war. By the end of 2002, the ARNG had mobilized over 10,000 guardsmen from thirty-nine states had mobilized to Afghanistan.

The DOD was already very busy with operations in Afghanistan, when President George W. Bush declared war on Iraq in 2003, due to the perceived threat of Saddam Hussein's possession of weapons of mass destruction. With combat operations now in two fronts, Iraq and Afghanistan, the Army would inevitably require increased support of its reserve components. Thus, unlike its gradual increase of participation in Afghanistan, the DOD heavily relied on the ARNG for its support in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) from the start. In March of 2003, the ARNG joined the

AC on the initial assault into Iraq. Throughout the campaign, the ARNG provided ready forces proportional in numbers and capabilities as those of the AC. Within the first year of OIF, the number of ARNG troops in Iraq surged to almost 20,000 with capabilities ranging the full spectrum of combat operations. Some of the Guard units deployed included brigade-size elements, attack aviation battalions, combat engineers, and military police.³⁶ The ARNG, along with the Army reserve, also brought to bear capabilities that were mostly absent in the AC, to include “civil affairs, water purification, mail handling, psychological operations, and enemy prisoner of war processing units.”³⁷ At this time, the ARNG was performing as an operational reserve, or a force providing “operational capabilities organized and resourced in a recurrent predictable cycle to support Army requirements... providing ready units across the full spectrum of operations.”³⁸ Meeting the Army’s high operational requirements, however, came at the expense of readiness to non-deploying ARNG units.

According to a 2004 GAO report on the employment of the National Guard, between 2003 and 2004, the ARNG was required to transfer³⁹ over 71,000 guardsmen in order to fill personnel shortages in units scheduled to mobilize in support of OEF and OIF. Similarly, the organization had to transfer over 22,000 pieces of equipment from other units in order to enhance the readiness of deploying units. This negatively affected the readiness of Army Guard units across all fifty-four states and territories, as they were all required to transfer personnel and equipment in support of the war. By the end of 2004, all states and territories were thirty-three percent deficient critical equipment. As an example, the GAO inquiry found that “In New Jersey...some units had less than

³⁶ Lieutenant General H. Steven Blum, “2005 National Guard Bureau Posture Statement”, 5.

³⁷ John D. Ellis, *Operational Reservations: Consideration for a Total Army Force.*, Strategic Studies Institute, United States Army War College, 2014, 5.

³⁸ Major General Raymond Carpenter, “Definition of Operational Reserve Force,” National Guard Information Paper, Washington, DC, 2009, 1.

³⁹ Refers to personnel transfers from other Army National Guard units from the within the state or from other states (IST; Inter-State Transfer).

sixty-five percent of their wartime equipment requirements and reported critical shortages of spare parts, utility trucks, night vision goggles, and pistols.”⁴⁰ The GAO report concluded that as a result of the high operational tempo, readiness was eroding across the Army Guard and that a “comprehensive reassessment” of the organization’s structure and resourcing may be required.⁴¹ In order to improve readiness for the ARNG, in 2005, the Congress approved increases to Army Guard budgets by \$196 million for operations and maintenance, and by \$123 million for training facilities (acquisition, construction, and maintenance).⁴²

As the GWOT continued to ramp up, the ARNG demonstrated to be a reliable and capable organization that was able to deploy and execute a variety of missions rapidly. By 2005, fifty-one percent of Army Guardsmen had been alerted for mobilization. While just over half of the organization was either in the mobilization process or had already deployed, certain types of Guard units were in much higher demand. For example, according to the aforementioned GAO report, ninety-two percent of ARNG military police units had deployed at least once with eighteen percent having deployed more than once. In all, during the early years of the GWOT, the Army Guard would no longer be considered a strategic reserve; the institution was performing the role of an operational reserve. In his monograph, *Operational Reservations: Considerations for a Total Army Force*, Colonel John D. Ellis asserts that “by 2005, Army planners began acknowledging that the RC would be used as an operational, rather than just a strategic, force.”⁴³ While the ARNG proved its capability to perform as an operational reserve, the demands of the GWOT continued to increase, and so did the Army’s operational tempo and deployment lengths. As a result, the

⁴⁰ United States Government Accountability Office, *Observations on Recent National Guard Use in Overseas and Homeland Missions and Future Challenges*, Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, 2004, 13-14.

⁴¹ Ibid. 22.

⁴² Data collected from the National Defense Authorization Act publications for Fiscal Years 2004 and 2005.

⁴³ John D. Ellis, *Operational Reservations: Consideration for a Total Army Force.*, Strategic Studies Institute, United States Army War College, 2014, 5.

Army looked at designing a readiness model that would help manage unit readiness and combat deployment rotations while integrating all three of its components.

As it became clear that GWOT would develop into a protracted armed conflict, and that it would require enduring reserve component support, in 2006, the Army established the Army Force Generation Model (ARFORGEN) “designed to optimize readiness to meet specific timelines for deployment.”⁴⁴ The purpose of the ARFORGEN was threefold: to meet combatant commanders’ theater personnel requirements, to provide units with predictable mobilization cycles, and to align resources with deployment cycles. As per Army Regulation 525-29, which covers the ARFORGEN model, Army (active and reserve) deployment-to-dwell rotations are managed in three phases: the reset phase, the train/ready phase, and the available phase. During the reset phase, units are manned, equipped, and personnel receive their regulatory and individual training; during the train/ready phase, while personnel fills and equipment fielding continues, units conduct collective training and mission rehearsals; during the available phase, units are ready to deploy, or are already deployed to meet combatant commanders’ and service requirements. In terms of cycle timelines, active Army units are managed in thirty-six month cycles (nine months in the available phase and twenty-seven months in the reset and train/ready phases), while reserve units are managed in a seventy-two month cycle (twelve months in the available phase and sixty in the reset and train/ready phases).⁴⁵

As an additional benefit, the ARFORGEN model introduced important adjustments to unit training timelines. Prior to the establishment of the ARFORGEN, Army Guard units would complete a significant amount of their deployment (mission-specific) training tasks post-

⁴⁴ General Robert B. Abrams, “Quick, Decisive Warfighting Takes Ready, Trained Forces”, *Army Magazine*, October, 2015, 65.

⁴⁵ United States Army Regulation 525-29, “Military Operations, Army Force Generation,” Headquarters, Department of the Army, Washington, D.C., March 2011, 2-5.

mobilization, or at the mobilization station, which was arguably a misuse of the deploying units' time. The ARFORGEN model sought to correct this issue, as it provided guidance for realigning training requirements and tasks normally performed during the post-mobilization process, to the pre-mobilization stages. In other words, the model directed ARNG units to complete a majority of its training tasks during their reset and train/ready phases (peacetime training), in order to minimize the number of requirements during the available phase and ensure timely deployments into theater.

It should be noted, however, that the ARFORGEN is primarily a tool for Army leadership to conduct planning and to provide a degree of predictability to units, soldiers, and their families. Given the high operational tempo, not all ARNG units have been able to adhere to the five-year dwell cycle. The demands the GWOT for ARNG ready forces, particularly in critical specialties, out-paced the five-year cycle as prescribed by the ARFORGEN. As a result, some high-demand/low-density ARNG units, such as aviation, civil affairs, and engineer units, have mobilized and deployed more frequently than every five years. In his research project for the United States Army War College, Colonel Kelly C. MacNealy, provides a detailed review of the ARFORGEN deployment-to-dwell rotations of two ARNG Brigade Combat Teams (BCT): the 30th BCT, from the North Carolina Army National Guard (NCARNG) and the 155th BCT, from the Mississippi Army National Guard (MSARNG). In this report, Colonel MacNealy notes that some of these ARNG units required to deploy within less than five years. As an example, Colonel MacNealy cites the 288th Sapper Company of the MSARNG, which “mobilized in early 2007 with all 104 Soldiers deploying on a volunteer basis; seventy-eight of these Soldiers had less than sixteen months dwell time from a previous mobilization.”⁴⁶ This serves as evidence that the Army

⁴⁶ Colonel Kelly C. MacNealy, “Manning Army National Guard Units For Deployment,” United States Army War College, 2009, 3.

Guard was able to provide capabilities beyond those of an operational reserve; the ARNG was able to perform as an operational force, or able to undertake sustained operational missions and emergent contingency operations.

In 2010, the Department of Defense issued DOD Instruction (DODI) 1235.12 in order to “establish policy, assign responsibilities, and prescribe procedures for ordering units and individual members of the reserve component to active duty as an operational force to support the national defense strategy across the full spectrum of military operations, including sustained operational missions, emergent contingency operations, and service during national emergencies or in time of war.”⁴⁷ Similar to the definition of an operational reserve, DODI 1235.12 covers the use of the ARNG in the full spectrum of operations. However, the DODI adds the elements of “sustained operational missions, emergent contingency operations, and service during national emergencies or in time of war,”⁴⁸ all of which are activities that the ARNG is capable of performing and routinely executes. Furthermore, the DODI states that reserve units will be resourced “in the form of manpower, training, equipment, and compensation to fulfill roles and missions as both a strategic and operational force that is a fully integrated part of the national defense strategy.”⁴⁹ Ultimately, as this guidance outlines, when required, the Army Guard will be resourced and employed as an operational force.

By 2014, the Army was conducting fewer operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and setting its sights on to other more conventional threats the likes of China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. Consequently, the Army decided that the ARFORGEN model was not flexible enough to manage the potential threats and initiated design towards a new model. In 2017, the Army unveiled the

⁴⁷ Department of Defense Instruction 1235.12, “Accessing the Reserve Component”, Washington, DC, 2012, 1.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 4.

Sustainable Readiness Model (SRM) as a better-suited readiness process in order to deal with a multi-front near-peer/peer threat. The objective of the SRM is to achieve sixty-six percent combat readiness for active units, across the total Army force by 2023. In contrast to the ARFORGEN model, the SRM's cycles are not tied to operational deployments. In other words, while the ARFORGEN sought to progressively ready units to meet scheduled deployment cycles, the SRM focuses on maintaining a high level of readiness to respond to global contingencies or unanticipated operations. However, the ARNG does maintain the five-year cycle. Under this new model, there are three stages (modules) of readiness: first, the "Mission Module," comprised of units that are allocated or assigned to a mission and have met all the requirements for deployment and stand to conduct combat operations as required; second, the "Ready Module", consisting of units that are still building proficiency but already meet readiness requirements to deploy and perform combat operations; and third, the "Prepare Module" encompasses those units that are building readiness and are not deployable.⁵⁰

While both the ARFORGEN and the SRM call for the same five-year cycle approach to ARNG deployments, the latter represents a significant advantage to the organization. Currently, the ARNG high-priority units are manned at a higher level (approximately 80 percent) than before GWOT, as well as equipped at approximately 90 percent, making it much easier and faster for them to mobilize and deploy at the required full strength. However, it should be noted that only high-priority units are manned and equipped at higher levels. In order to correct this, the Congress may consider granting additional resources to the ARNG, which would enable standard Army Guard units to also reach higher levels of readiness. Additionally, the Army requires that ARNG personnel meet the same levels of training and education as their active-duty counterparts. Overall

⁵⁰ Andrew Feickert, "The Army's Sustainable Readiness Model", Congress Research Service, March 31, 2017, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/IN10679.pdf> (accessed December 15, 2018), 1.

the SRM is very advantageous to the Army Guard, as it aims to reach a thirty-three percent deployable readiness to respond to global contingencies by 2023. This is a much-needed condition for the ARNG while supporting the active Army in the face of a potential near-peer or peer confrontation. As the organization's Command Sergeant Major states in the 2020 ARNG Vision Statement: "The Army's Sustainable Readiness Model offers guidance on making sure that soldiers and units are prepared to respond at the state and national levels. In the rapidly changing environment, readiness is critical."⁵¹ The Army's reliance on Army Guard units for support in full-spectrum operations, able to conduct sustained operational missions, and emergent contingency operations, ranging from asymmetric threats to peer adversaries, further proves it essential to formally designate and resource the ARNG as an operational force.

Conclusion

Today, the United States Army defines the total force as an "ongoing effort by the service to transition its reserve component forces, both the Army Reserve and the National Guard, into an operational force."⁵² As noted earlier, in 2004, Congress appointed the CNGR to conduct a thorough study in order to assess the current and potential future state of the National Guard and Reserves Components (all services). By 2008, the commission completed and furnished its report to Congress and the SECDEF. In this report, the Commission concluded: "that there is no reasonable alternative to the nation's continued increased reliance on reserve components as part of its operational force for missions at home and abroad."⁵³ The commission came to understand that the ARNG and other reserve services were no longer performing as a strategic reserve or an operational reserve even. The operational tempo of the ARNG had proven to be fast-paced and

⁵¹ Lieutenant General Timothy J. Kadavy, 2020 Vision: Army National Guard Strategic Guidance, 2017, 3.

⁵² Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, "Total Army Force Policy" 26 July 2010 https://www.army.mil/article/42866/army_total_force_policy (accessed November 20, 2018), 1.

⁵³ Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, "Transforming the National Guard and Reserves into a 21st Century Operational Force", Washington, DC, January 31, 2008, Foreword.

well within the category of an operational force. However, while the ARNG was performing at the pace of an operational force, it is not technically one, and, therefore, not resourced or maintained as an operational force. In its report, the commission made several recommendations for the appropriate manning, training, and equipping of the ARNG, in order to ensure readiness on par with the organization's operational tempo and to prepare for future potential threats.

In terms of manning, the CNGR recommends that addressing “three major personnel readiness challenges: ensuring that service members are skill-qualified for their military specialty, deploying cohesive units, and satisfying combatant commanders’ requirements for personnel with ‘high-demand/low-density’ capabilities.”⁵⁴ The commission also provided recommendations for the management of Army Guard and Reserve (AGR) billets; the commission advises replacing AGR personnel (generally hired from within the ARNG’s part-time workforce) with seasoned active duty personnel, in order to permeate the AC experiences into the organization. For training, the commission holds that ARNG units must conduct more than the prescribed thirty-nine days per year in order to meet their readiness requirements. Here the commission concedes that the Army should provide supplementary funding to the ARNG in order to cover additional training days. The CNGR also recommends replacing the weekend drills with a twenty-four-day activation. In terms of equipping, the commission states that “as the reserve components transition to an operational force, our strategy to equip them must also change. Modernization, equipment replacement due to the war, as well as homeland defense missions are the catalyst for a new approach in equipping the Reserve components, in particular, the ground forces of the Army.”⁵⁵ Bottom line, the commission provided the Congress and SECDEF with a detailed blueprint to formally designate the ARNG as an operational force. In order to accomplish this, the CNGR

⁵⁴ Ibid., 185.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 215.

acknowledges that the Army would have to devote significant resources to the ARNG. However, if implemented, it would arguably be an effective way to fully institute the total Army force.

The evolution of the ARNG as part of the total Army force was a result of the lessons learned from the Vietnam War. Army leadership recognized that underutilization of ARNG was seriously detrimental to the war efforts. From this realization, the Army made some adjustments in order to avoid committing the same error in future armed conflicts. Plans such as the Total Force Policy and the Abrams Doctrine aimed at integrating the three Army elements – Active Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve – to ensure better quality of training, manning, and equipping across the three components, and ultimately wield a more capable total Army force during combat operations. The Army tested the concept of the total force during the Gulf War, with a respectable degree of success. ARNG units mobilized and deployed and helped secure a swift victory for the United States. The Army helped identify and correct the ARNG’s setbacks of the Gulf War, more specifically those associated with the failure to deploy the ARNG maneuver roundout brigades, by the time the nation’s military was again called to arms. Following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the ARNG’s response was swift and unequivocal; the organization led the way in Operation Noble Eagle and followed the Army into combat operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Since then, and with the United States’ enduring involvement in the conflict, the AC has relied increasingly on the ARNG. From the start of the GWOT, the nation has mobilized and deployed over 560,000 Army Guard troops to support this effort.⁵⁶

It has been seventeen very demanding years for the United States’ Armed Forces as they fight in the Middle East and in other parts of the world. However, the struggle is not over; other

⁵⁶ Gina Cavallaro, “Army National Guard 4.0 Effort Means ‘Evolutionary Leap’ for Citizen-Soldiers”, *Army Magazine*, October 2017, 42.

asymmetrical but powerful adversaries such as North Korea, Iran, and extremist terrorist groups continue to develop as global threats. These threats, coupled with the rise of near-peer and/or peer competitors, such as China and Russia, confirm the nation's requirement to refocus its efforts and training towards a more conventional and multi-front fight. In order to prepare for these developing threats, the Army changed the ARFORGEN model in favor of the SRM, as a way to ensure sixty-six percent readiness across the total Army force. In addition, to help increase readiness, the CNGR conducted a thorough study of the roles and capabilities for the reserve component. In this report, the CNGR recommends that DOD supports a transition of the ARNG to an operational force. The ARNG is fully capable of fulfilling the role of an operational force, as long as the nation requires it. If the answer is yes, the United States Congress would have to approve additional resources to enable training, manning, and equipping closer to that of the regular Army. Formally designating the ARNG as an operational force would help ensure that the Army, as a total force, is at the ready to respond to the emerging new threats.

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