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STUDENT ESSAY

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THE REGIMENTAL SYSTEM

A FRAMEWORK FOR BETTER FORCE
STRUCTURE AND STATIONING
DECISIONS

BY

COLONEL MICHAEL S. ROBERTSON, AD

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SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE (When Data Entered)

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM
1 REPORT NUMBER	2 GOVT ACCESSION NO	3 RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
	AD-A168044	
4 TITLE (and Subtitle)		5 TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED
The Regimental System: A Framework for Better Force Structure and Stationing Decisions		STUDENT ESSAY
		6 PERFORMING ORG REPORT NUMBER
7. AUTHOR(s)		8 CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s)
COL Michael S. Robertson		
9 PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS		10 PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS
U.S. Army War College Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013		
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS		12. REPORT DATE
SAME		1 March 1986
		13 NUMBER OF PAGES
		21
14 MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS (if different from Controlling Office)		15 SECURITY CLASS (of this report)
		UNCLASSIFIED
		15a. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE
16 DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report)		
DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A: Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.		
17 DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)		
18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES		
19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)		
20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)		
<p>> Recent mobilization exercises indicate that the U.S. Army still has shortcomings in the area of training readiness, transportation, and command and control systems. The CAPSTONE and Regimental systems have done much to reduce training requirements to the minimum essential tasks, thereby improving our overall training readiness. Under these programs, we are attempting to train in peacetime as we would fight in wartime. A logical expansion of these programs would be to have all of our units, to include our Reserve Components, (continued)</p>		

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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

THE REGIMENTAL SYSTEM

A FRAMEWORK FOR BETTER FORCE STRUCTURE AND
STATIONING DECISIONS

AN INDIVIDUAL ESSAY

by

Colonel Michael S. Robertson, AD

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1 March 1986

ABSTRACT

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TITLE: The Regimental System: A Framework for Better Force Structure and Stationing Decisions

FORMAT: Individual Essay

DATE: 1 March 1986 PAGES: 18 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

Recent mobilization exercises indicate that the US Army still has shortcomings in the area of training readiness, transportation, and command and control systems. The CAPSTONE and Regimental systems have done much to reduce training requirements to the minimum essential tasks, thereby improving our overall training readiness. Under these programs, we are attempting to train in peacetime as we would fight in wartime. A logical expansion of these programs would be to have all of our units, to include our Reserve Components, organized and stationed in peacetime with the organizations they would fight with in wartime. This would minimize post-mobilization transportation, and command and control requirements and generally improve the overall cohesiveness of the Army. A technique that would allow us to do this, would be to copy the United Kingdom "Regimental System", which places their reserve units into their "Regiments" and requires them to report to their "Regimental Depot (MOB Station)", which also must be the installation closest to their home station, upon mobilization. All units, active and reserve, within a given geographical area would be of a type required by the highest tactical element within the same geographical area. Since CAPSTONE identifies post mobilization chains of command, through ongoing restationing actions, to include reorganizations and redesignations, we could expand our fledgling "Regimental" System to RC units, and eventually have peacetime and wartime chains of command and stationing, that matched. HQDA should influence ARNG reorganizations and activations along this line to the extent acceptable to the various state governors, and should dictate USAR reorganizations and activations to achieve the closest possible match over time. These actions would improve our overall mobilization readiness, and resultant deterrent value for very little cost, and should therefore be accomplished as soon as possible.

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THE REGIMENTAL SYSTEM
A FRAMEWORK FOR BETTER FORCE STRUCTURE AND STATIONING DECISIONS

I. INTRODUCTION

The United States of America has participated in nine principal wars. Each of these wars found the country unprepared, and each war was followed by various legislative acts geared toward making our armed forces ready for war. The question amongst our legislators still remains, "are we ready?" As stated by General R. M. Shoemaker during his assignment as Commanding General of the United States Army Forces Command (FORSCOM); "The answer to that, put very simply, is no, we're not as ready as we should be and would like to be".¹ Gen. Shoemaker has also stated that:

"Our country has not done very well in past mobilizations. Indeed, it has been said that the most important lesson learned in the history of mobilization in the United States is that we must do better next time."²

Gen. Otis, when assigned as the CG of Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), advised the TRADOC installation commanders that mobilization "readiness" was a "priority mission". The reason for this obviously, is that a high level of readiness helps us achieve our primary mission, which is to deter war. In fact, Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger recently states:

"The word deterrence has been repeated so often that we frequently fail to consider what it actually means. It means that we seek to protect our vital interests, not by aggression or war, but by

preventing war. We seek to prevent war by persuading potential adversaries that the costs of attacking us will exceed any gain they could hope to achieve."³

Although ready units are a prime ingredient for deterrence, we must also be able to mobilize and deploy such units before deterrence will be effective. This point is so important that the Department of Defense has initiated a series of exercises, which the Army has titled MOBEX, to measure our ability to do so. All of the MOBEX Exercises, which includes MOBEX 78, 80, 83, and 85, have indicated that we are not completely there yet. They have shown in general that we have deficiencies in the areas of unit training readiness, command and control systems, and transportation capabilities. To help overcome our weaknesses in the training readiness area, the Army developed the CAPSTONE and Regimental programs.

Under the CAPSTONE Program:

"FORSCOM in coordination with other Army Major Commands, the Army Staff, and the National Guard Bureau, aligns the force into PRIORITIZED packages identified with major subordinate commands of USAREUR, Army Requirements for ACE, USECOM and other unified commands, and requirements for the CONUS training and sustaining bases; organizes these packaged forces into functioning organizational associations; monitors their wartime planning; supervises their training; directs their mobilization; and as USCINCARRED, executes their deployment."⁴

"The primary purpose of the (CAPSTONE) organizational associations is for them to enter into the planning process of their designated wartime commands."⁵

"The secondary purpose of the organizational associations is to provide a vehicle for more realistic training of the force. As much as practicable within resources, planning associations will also be training associations."⁵

Said another way, CAPSTONE allows the total force to "train in peacetime, on the tasks it would have to perform in wartime." This allows all units to identify with and obtain training guidance from their wartime gaining command. The interesting effect of this program is that unit training requirements are "reduced" to a mission essential task list, which allows units to make better use of their available training time.

The Regimental system is also a method for decreasing training requirements in that it minimizes unit turbulence and thereby reduces the amount of squad, platoon, and company level retraining that will be required. It does this by adopting a unit rotation system in which companies and/or battalions rotate between their regimental homebase and OCONUS assignments rather than constantly moving individuals in and out of different units around the world. Although the primary affect of this program is a tremendous improvement in unit cohesiveness down to the squad and section level, it also improves overall training readiness by reducing retraining requirements. The resultant increased cohesiveness is also a tremendous combat multiplier, a very positive side affect in itself.

Both of these programs help improve our training readiness by reducing the amount of training required, rather than by the normal solution of generating additional requirements or procuring additional training assets. The purpose of this article is to consider how this concept of "reducing or minimizing" can be applied to our mobilization command and control, and transportation problems, and thereby improve our overall mobilization readiness for very little additional cost. The

primary vehicle for these improvements would be expansion of the regimental concept into the reserve components, a solution that could preclude the expenditure of a great amount of funds to provide additional command and control, or transportation assets.

II. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

a. Post-Mobilization Reorganization

The most immediate command and control problem within the Army upon announcement of a full mobilization is converting from its peacetime TDA configuration to its mobilization TDA. This act in effect causes a reorganization of all post staffs. Some entities are completely disestablished while others are greatly expanded. There would probably be a tremendously increased workload immediately upon receipt of a mobilization announcement. At the same time all of the special duty or augmentee troops on our installations must be released from the post staff directorates and returned to their parent TOE units for deployment purpose. The net effect is a much greater workload with fewer people. Plans for hiring of additional civilians, recalling of retirees, and mobilization of reserve units and individuals to support installations staffs do exist. However, these individuals will generally not be available to assist post staffs until the M+7 to M+30 timeframe. Consequently, the personnel required to deploy active units and assist in the transportation and reception of reserve personnel might not be available, or trained in their mobilization job, until well after mobilization has been announced. This will probably have the effect of backing-up or slowing down the entire transportation system.

Mobilization also causes a tremendous disruption to installation upward chains of command. Most non-FORSCOM installations

become OPCON to FORSCOM upon mobilization. At the same time, many of the FORSCOM installations become TRADOC installations after deploying active Army units. This causes a tremendous disruption in normal command and control channels. It also causes installation staffs to deal with unfamiliar personnel and procedures from their new higher headquarters at a critical time. Due to this, the confusion factor and communications load will be high across the spectrum during a future mobilization. This obviously exacerbates our command and control problem.

b. The Transportation Problem

The most immediate transportation problem is one of deploying active army units. The question of which, and when units deploy is based upon which of the many operations plans is to be executed. This is because any given unit can currently be assigned to several different Time Phased Force Deployment Lists (TPFDLs), and consequently could go to several different higher headquarters on differing dates after mobilization. Additionally, since the TPFDL to be used is not known until an emergency occurs, the military traffic management command (MTMC) cannot pre-allocate transportation assets. This problem is also magnified by the fact that MTMC will not know in advance where the various assets such as trucks, trains, planes and ships will be around the world, when the emergency occurs. Consequently, how much and what type of transportation active duty units will receive is unknown. The real problem is that this is occurring prior to the installation staffs receiving any additional trained transportation personnel to determine and coordinate transportation.

At the same time, transportation must be obtained for mobilizing Reserve Components Units. The immensity of this problem varies with the type and location of the units concerned. ARNG units generally are stationed in close proximity to, and have the majority of their heavy equipment stored in a mobilization and training equipment site (MATES) which is located on their Mobilization Station. However, this is definitely not the case with USAR units. An example is the 3396th USAR Reception station. This unit is stationed in Gainesville, Florida. It and its equipment currently must be shipped over fifteen hundred miles to Fort Bliss, Texas immediately upon mobilization, since it is required to in-process other reserve component units and individuals at that location. Wouldn't it be simpler if this unit was stationed in

El Paso? Many other reserve units have a double problem in that they must not only be moved great distances in one direction to a MOB station, but must also be transported the opposite direction to an OCONUS emergency area. Once again, their plans cannot be finalized until the types and amount of transportation is determined.

An area of even greater problem potential is that of convoy command and control for units that must cross the many boundaries that currently exist. As an example once again, the 3396th USAR Reception station must currently convoy or be rail shipped over 1500 miles from Gainesville, Florida to El Paso, Texas. To coordinate this trip the unit must contact its supporting, coordinating, and mobilization station installations. This is just a start since it must also coordinate with the six ARNG state area commands (STARCs), two CONUSAs, five ARCOMs, and three FEMA region headquarters not to mention the Air Force, Navy, and

Marine headquarters whose area it must pass through during the trip. This will be required during a period of tremendous activity which would probably include the saturation and degradation of all of our communications systems. Since all of the headquarters mentioned above have some responsibility in the control and support of convoys, the potential for someone not "getting the word" is tremendous. This same type of problem also exists for many active Army units such as those at Fort Carson and Fort Riley, when they must move to Seaports of Embarkations (SPOEs).

c. Existing Force Structure and Stationing Problems

"The present force structure of the Army Reserve Components was developed to provide the type force required upon mobilization. It is based on the existence of each and every unit required upon mobilization either as an active Army unit or a reserve unit at some location either in CONUS or overseas. In other words, each and every unit including each detachment that would be required for the contingency planned upon mobilization, exists in the present reserve component force structure or is already activated."⁷

"The force structure so constituted results in a myriad of many different types, sizes, and variations in branch of units. This mixture of units when coupled with the complex dimensions of geography results in a highly disarranged combination of units in any given geographical area. In many cases, organic units are fractured and spread across the entire country. In the typical case of an infantry, artillery, or engineer battalion, the subordinate units are usually close enough geographically for command and control and in most cases can train together as battalions on weekend drills if desired. However, many combat support units are so split-up that they cannot be commanded and controlled by their organic headquarters and in some cases do not even train together during annual training, much less during weekend drills."⁸

"Taking any geographical slice off the force structure of the reserve components results in a

multiplicity of diverse training requirements for that slice of units. Some of these training missions are unusually sophisticated with severe limitations and constraints on the availability and capacity to provide meaningful and dynamic training in the prescribed mission of the unit."⁹

"Many combat support units are so sophisticated and their training mission so complex that there is no capability for training directly in mission oriented activity at home station during inactive duty training periods. The units may be located geographically in such a location that it is not possible to train at a military installation or in a civilian facility in mission related activity. Only in isolated cases is it possible for combat service support units to marry with active installations offering mission oriented training."¹⁰

While the preceding four paragraphs are totally applicable to the current RC force structure, they are in fact, verbatim extracts from a United States Army War College student essay prepared by a USAR officer in 1973. So much for the STEADFAST Program. The reason that these comments are pertinent here is that the problems of scattered and fragmented USAR organizations still exist due to current force structure and stationing policies, and these current peacetime training problems will continue to exist at the installation level as transportation, and command control problems after mobilization. This means that due to the high degree of sophistication as well as the diverse mix of units arriving at various MOB stations, installations may be unable to validate, or to provide training assistance to RC CSS units. The problem is further compounded by a lack of appropriate equipment and/or training aids for such RC units at the MOB stations.

d. Inability to Provide Command and Control

"In most instances, the reserve chain of command does not provide command and control of subordinate units by intermediate headquarters that normally provide such function in a field or mission related

type environment. Invariably, non-standard arrangements for command and control of units have been devised whereby the intermediate headquarters is not an organic arrangement for the command and control of units so assigned. This means almost universally, command and control is vested in a unit which does not fully understand or appreciate the mission of the subordinate unit or the problems associated with that type of unit. Therefore, it is difficult to provide adequate command and control and certainly renders the supervision less than effective. With the present system of apportionment of the force structure there is no alternative to this situation.-11

This problem is also extracted from the aforementioned study and still exists today. Although the study was discussing peacetime problems, they will also exist, and be compounded, after mobilization. As an example, let's look again at Fort Bliss, Texas. As of MOBEX 83, fifty-seven Reserve Component units mobilized at Fort Bliss. Prior to a mobilization these units are subordinate to eight ARCOMs, and seven STARCs, seven of the then existing nine ARMRS, and all three of the then existing CONUSAs. Upon mobilization, they were to deploy to Fort Bliss, and eventually from there to thirty-three different gaining organizations, which were located on twenty-five different installations and that would eventually go to thirteen separate MACOMs around the world. This reinforces the fact that our present Reserve Components Stationing is in complete disarray. Additionally, prior to mobilization, USAR units (mostly CSS units) receive administrative and logistical guidance from an ARCOM and training guidance from a CONUSA. After mobilization they receive all guidance to include validation for deployment from their Mobilization Station Commander. In fact, these units might not see their wartime higher Headquarters Commander until introduction into combat. This is a problem in that under CAPSTONE

doctrine, units do not have to perform prescribed amounts of time of training in all functional areas. Organization commanders are given the discretion of determining mission essential tasks and to be the judge as to whether or not their units are sufficiently trained, based upon their wartime mission. It would seem logical then, that the wartime gaining organization commander should validate a unit's readiness for deployment rather than a Mobilization Station Commander on some distant installation. However, the time-distance and transportation factor will prevent this normal command and control function under current force structuring and mobilization stationing policies. Consequently, our current RC force structure and stationing prevents us from following the current CAPSTONE training doctrine, after mobilization.

As indicated earlier, under CAPSTONE and the Regimental system, we are attempting to train in peacetime as we would fight in wartime. A logical expansion of this program would be to have our forces organized and stationed in peacetime with the units that they would have to fight with in wartime. The regimental system provides a framework that will allow us to do just that.

III. DISCUSSION

The CAPSTONE Program provides a wartime chain of command for all Active Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve units. This, in conjunction with a Regimental System restationing program for Reserve Component units, could lead to a peacetime chain of command, and command and control system that would be identical to the wartime chain of command regardless of the OPLAN to be executed. A review of the

regimental system within the United Kingdom shows how this might be done.

Basically, the United Kingdom military structure is very similar to that of the United States. Their equivalent to our Forces Command Headquarters is called United Kingdom Land Forces (UKLF). Next below this organization are various military districts, commanded by Lieutenant Generals, and which have missions similar to our CONUSA's. The next lower echelon consists of regimental depots which are similar to our installations or MOB stations. At the same time, various tenant activities and tactical headquarters such as divisions, brigades and regiments that report directly to UKLF through a parallel tactical chain of command, are stationed on or around the depots. These regimental depots serve as home bases for specific "regiments" which rotate battalions to and from overseas locations, and provide normal logistical and BASOPS support for all tactical organizations and other tenant activities in their geographical area. An aspect that makes this system interesting to us is that the "regiment" consists of a certain number of active battalions, and a certain number of reserve battalions and support units of the Territorial Army and Volunteer Reserves (TAVR) which is their equivalent to our Army Reserve. Additionally, the only reserve units that are stationed within the regimental depot's area of responsibility are those that are required by the depot's active units upon mobilization. Consequently, the reserve units of the TAVR have the same chain of command before and after mobilization. As can be seen, they receive premobilization administrative, personnel, logistical, and training support from the same organization, i.e., their regimental depot, which happens to be the nearest active duty installation or MOB

station. This tremendously improves the TAVR's capability to mobilize. Command and control and transportation requirements to mobilization stations are minimized. A TAVR unit simply reports to its organizational commander on its regimental depot in its immediate hometown area where its equipment is already stored. It would deploy with and support the same organization in most cases. Since the same organization and depot has to provide pre-mobilization and post mobilization administrative support, there is more incentive for said organizations to ensure this support is adequately provided prior to mobilization. In fact, these tactical organization commanders take great interest in their assigned TAVR units since they become the organization's support forces. This relationship is similar to the relationship that exists between our CONUS based active Army divisions and their round-out Army National Guard brigades and battalions, only it is even stronger.

Once again, the point that is specifically interesting to us is that all reserve units within a depot's area of responsibility mobilize at the depot; are affiliated with the depot's regimental system; and are required to support and/or are organic to the depot's active units. If this were the case with our USAR and ARNG units almost all of the problems outlined on preceding pages would be eliminated, or at least, minimized. Simply put in the U.K. System, peacetime chains of command and unit stationing are based upon mobilization requirements.

Since CAPSTONE identifies post mobilization chains of command, through ongoing restationing actions we could expand our Regimental system to RC units, and eventually have peacetime, and wartime command and control systems that matched. It is understood that a perfect match

will probably never occur. However, HQDA can and should influence all ARNG reorganizations and unit activations, and in fact dictate USAR reorganizations and unit activations to achieve the closest possible match over time. The following is a suggested method for achieving this goal.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The first step required would be to place all installations that serve as Mobilization Stations under a chain of command that would not change before, during or after mobilization. This would most logically be the FORSCOM, and CONUSA chain. All other activities on these MOB stations such as FORSCOM TOE units, TRADOC schools or HSC medical centers should be treated as tenant activities. This arrangement would allow us to finally implement a standardized installation TDA, and would prevent a major reorganization upon mobilization as required under the present system. It would also eliminate some unnecessary peacetime work on the installations that aren't subordinate to FORSCOM, but are mobilization stations, and become OPCON to FORSCOM and appropriate CONUSA upon mobilization. These installations are currently required to maintain two sets of MACOM directives, plans, SOPs, etc. They must also try to maintain familiarity with two separate MACOM staffs. At the same time, many FORSCOM troop units are stationed on these other MACOM installations and have the same problem prior to mobilization as the installation staffs do after mobilization. In effect, these installation staffs and FORSCOM units have two sets of bosses.

The next step after giving FORSCOM and the CONUSAs command and control of all installations that serve as Mobilization stations within their geographical area of responsibility, would be to give the CONUSAs

regimental depot, or home basing responsibility for one OCONUS and one CONUS based corps to include all reserve component units that would support either corps. Now, the key to this entire concept is that all units, active and reserve, that are required after mobilization to support the CONUS based corps or other tenant activities assigned within a CONUSA's area of responsibility, would be stationed within the CONUSA's geographical area of responsibility. Additionally, to the maximum extent possible, Reserve Component units would report to the nearest mobilization station and would be of a type required by the active duty of RC units that are also home based on that installation. The third step would then be to assign the mobilization stations within a CONUSA as the specific "regimental depots" or home bases for all of the tactical and support units that would be required to reinforcement the OCONUS deployed corps that is supported by their CONUSA. This would include RC as well as active duty units. Obviously, battalion or company level rotations from within a CONUSAs area of responsibility would be between its CONUS and OCONUS based corps. Additionally, RC deployment training with OCONUS commands should also follow this concept. As can be seen, the above steps provide a straight chain of command for installations that serve as MOB stations which would not change before, during, or after mobilization. The CONUSA's, and MOB station staffs become the base operators. This allows the tactical unit commanders, and tenant activities to get on with their business. This also eliminates the problem of who is the Senior Officer and Commander as various Active and Reserve Components come and go from the installation as well as who the installation belongs to during different mobilization phases. Following the rank structure of FORSCOM, and

CONUSA, the installation commander should be a Major General. On existing TRADOC and FORSCOM installations there are already two staffs. One runs the TRADOC school or FORSCOM TOE unit and the other runs the installation. It would be very simple to designate an existing Deputy Commander or Assistant Commandant, and the installation staff, as the FORSCOM Post Commander and staff.

This arrangement minimizes the turbulence of reorganization during mobilization. The installation reporting chain would not change and the RC units would have the same Coordinating Installation/Supporting Installation (CI/SI), and mobilization station therefore minimizing command and control requirements. Also, transportation and communications requirements would be greatly reduced, since RC units would go to the nearest installation, which would be their normal CI/SI. A key to this is to also station all RC units' heavy equipment at their mobilization stations. Additionally, there would be much less confusion resulting from crossing boundaries while moving from home station to mobilization station and SPOE.

The following are some additional benefits that could be derived from an expansion of the Regimental concept to our "Total Army" force structure. One could be to eliminate all transportation costs for soldiers and their dependents to and from OCONUS locations. All that would be required would be to shift to a thirteen month unaccompanied overseas tour policy in which battalions or even brigades rotated as units to say, Europe, to participate in JRX/JTX activities such as REFORGER, and their sister battalion or brigade, who would move out of barracks and act as the OPFOR during the JTX, would rotate back to the CONUS post which the deploying unit left, on returning exercise

aircraft. This concept would also reduce the requirement and expense of maintaining OCONUS family housing. Assuming that "Regiments" would each have at least three battalions, you would spend about one third of your time OCONUS, which is about the current requirement. This concept would also minimize our dependent evacuation problems upon mobilization which would also alleviate our transportation problems.

V. SUMMARY

It has been stated by some that our current officer and enlisted rating systems are out of whack since raters and senior raters have abrogated their responsibilities by rating everyone high. Additionally, we have been accused of adopting a new golden rule which is "Do unto others as they would do unto you, but do it first and then transfer out". Furthermore:

"A recent Army study confirms the demise of the spirit of service, the hallmark of military tradition. Sixty-eight percent of the survey respondents agreed that today's officer corps is focused on personal gain rather than selflessness. The study also found that the bold original creative officer cannot survive in today's Army; a sad commentary for the future effectiveness of our armed forces."¹²

This type of an attitude, if it does exist, was probably engendered by our current individual rotation or replacement system. Since an individual will remain in, and/or return frequently to his regiment under the "Regimental Concept" much of the individual self-interest hinted at above will die out. This is because such behavior would lead to an individualist's rapid expulsion from the more cohesive group culture that will develop under the new system.

As can be seen, an expansion of the "Regimental Concept" could help to minimize our command and control, and transportation problems

associated with mobilization. This would be done by minimizing the amount of transportation and command and control communications that would be required in the event of mobilization, rather than costly new requirements. These actions would not solve the entire problem, but could have a large positive impact for very little cost. They could also generate savings in other areas prior to mobilization as well as improve the overall group culture within our Army. Consequently, these recommendations should be adopted immediately.

ENDNOTES

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2. Army Reserve Magazine, Vol. 27, Winter 1981, p. 24.
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4. Implementing Plan for Army CAPSTONE Program (U), 1 Aug 1980, HQ FORSCOM, p. 2.
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10. Ibid., p. 4.
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