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THE ARMY OF EXCELLENCE: HOW READY?

BY

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engineer, anti-tank, artillery fire support, transportation, and maintenance capabilities are the result. Economies and efficiencies discovered in applying the AOE force design model also allow the creation of two more divisions called Light Infantry Divisions (LID). These LIDs have even less conventional capability than the redesigned heavy divisions, and no real NBC elements at all. The AOE is dependent on high-technology equipment to achieve its expected capability with reduced manning; delays in, or fund shortages for, acquisition of this equipment have a negative effect on readiness. But the AOE is dangerously less combat effective even with the equipment. It is the design itself which has moved too far and resulted in loss of capability.

USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

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THE ARMY OF EXCELLENCE: HOW READY?

An Individual Essay

by

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ABSTRACT

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The Army of Excellence (AOE) is a specific force design applied to Army units for the purpose of reducing redundant functions, robust manning, and excessive resiliency. The AOE was determined to be necessary to eliminate the "hollowness" that had plagued the Army as a result of an organization which had grown large in structure, but did not have the people to fill it. The hollowness was a result of a growing structure colliding with a fixed end strength. The concept of AOE as applied to the Army results in reduced combat capability in the maneuver divisions, whether heavy or light. Reduced air defense, engineer, anti-tank, artillery fire support, transportation, and maintenance capabilities are the result. Economies and efficiencies discovered in applying the AOE force design model also allow the creation of two more divisions called Light Infantry Divisions (LID). These LIDs have even less conventional capability than the redesigned heavy divisions, and no real NBC elements at all. The AOE is dependent on high-technology equipment to achieve its expected capability with reduced manning; delays in, or fund shortages for, acquisition of this equipment have a negative effect on readiness. But the AOE is dangerously less combat effective even with the equipment. It is the design itself which has moved too far and resulted in loss of capability.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Four possibilities exist to justify the downsizing of units based on function: (1) Elevate the function to be performed to a higher level, for example, from division to corps. (2) Eliminate the function altogether. (3) Streamline the function and make it easier to perform by reducing requirements and/or using technology to make the function easier to perform. A last technique, and one which has become popular, is (4) transfer the function to the reserve components. Of these, only one truly reduces actual force structure in my opinion: the elimination of the function. That choice, however, can lead to other problems, namely, the assuming away of the need for force structure. For example, if you assume that your enemy poses no air threat to your forces, you may eliminate the requirement for air defense.

The purpose of this essay is to examine some of the results of the implementation of the Army of Excellence (AOE), most specifically as they impact on unit combat effectiveness. To do this I will look at the AOE itself, some of the underlying assumptions and conclusions that allowed AOE to move ahead, and the resulting shortcomings as to wartime capability. In this essay I will show that the design to eliminate "hollowness" in the Division 86 structure by trimming down spaces is having a negative effect on readiness. The choice to eliminate function by assuming away threat, elevation of function, streamlining, and the reserve component option provided most of the solutions

to force structure shortcomings. I will try to keep the thrust of this essay to the principle that trimming the "fat" from army units and reassigning it to "combat muscle" is a noble ideal, and may have been done with great success in the past, but trimming today is taking muscle. This current trimming carries a high cost in future combat readiness.

The predecessor of the current trimming, done under the direction of the Chief of Staff, General Abrams, in the summer of 1974, allowed the creation of the 5th, 7th, and 24th Divisions without increasing the end strength of the army.¹ There was probably an over abundance of fat in the previous organization, and the three "new" divisions created are a monument to innovative thinking. Today, two more new divisions, called Light Infantry Divisions because of their austere combat capability but superior strategic mobility, are taking shape in Alaska and at Fort Drum, New York. Again, divisions are being created without adding to end strength. Creating new divisions, and light ones at that, may be taking a good idea one step too far.

THE ARMY OF EXCELLENCE (AOE)

Just the sound of the term makes one feel good. A cursory examination of its import shows us that it is a concept of force design that supports a tactical doctrine. The doctrine is called AirLand Battle, and, with the new structure, it incorporates new equipment. Some of the new equipment includes a shift toward automation down to the battalion and separate company level. Some of the automation is directed toward moving

administrative data, for example, Personnel Reports, by The Tactical Army Combat Service Support Computer System (TACCS)². Other computer systems are used in training simulators. For example, Unit Conduct of Fire Trainer (UCOFT) is for training tank gunners like a flight simulator is for pilots. Aircraft technical inspectors can practice troubleshooting in the classroom on microprocessor controlled displays of various helicopter systems.³

HISTORY/BACKGROUND

The major shift in Army doctrine in 1982 was signalled by the publication of a new FM 100-5 (Operations). This documented a changeover from the active defense, with a focus on the battalion/brigade task force, to a concept of AirLand Battle. AirLand Battle places an emphasis on corps level operations, which had received relatively less emphasis earlier. The corps had had only a limited capability to influence the battle, as most combat power was in the divisions, and the corps commander's job was to support the battle, not fight it. In fact, however, the division's capabilities to support the battle was equal to that of the corps. Under the AirLand Battle concept, the corps commander fights the battle; it is where the air and the land forces come together.⁴

While these doctrinal changes were underway, the modernized organizations of Division 86 were being fielded. These included units modernized in both equipment and organization. The modernization did not come about as a result of new doctrine;

rather, the doctrine was developed separately from the equipment. Much of the equipment of the Division 86 Tables of Organization and Equipment (TOE) had been on the drawing boards or existed in prototype for years before funds were available to procure it in quantity. The Division 86 itself was an outgrowth of the Division Restructuring Study (DRS) begun in 1975 by TRADOC. The doctrine, however, was an evolutionary growth from Active Defense. The Division 86 equipment includes M1 Abrams tanks, M2 Bradley fighting vehicles, and the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS); the organization includes aviation brigades in all divisions with Blackhawk and Apache⁵ helicopters. In short, the Army was leaping ahead in the early 1980's with new equipment, organizations, and doctrine. Along the way, the total manpower bill for these organizations was added up (about a million men required) and the total on hand, as reflected by the authorized end strength (about 781,000) was⁶ over 200,000 personnel short of what was needed. The units were there, but many could be manned at only a greatly reduced Authorized Level of Organization (ALO). It was evident that the doctrine, the structure, and the end strength did not fit together. The AOE study was an effort to bring these elements into balance.

THE AOE STUDY

Following the July 1983 Commanders' Conference, the Chief of Staff of the Army tasked the TRADOC Commander to conduct a feasibility study for restructuring the Army. The study was to

focus on approaches to reduce the manpower and resource "hollowness" within the Army structure while maintaining or enhancing current combat capability. The TRADOC Commander directed the Fort Leavenworth Combined Arms Center (CAC) Commander to form a study group and provide the study results to the CSA during the October 1983 Commanders' Conference.⁷ In brief, the question was, "How is the Army going to pay the manpower bill?" Guidance provided by the Army Staff to the study group included:

(1) The recommended designs will not exceed the Army's programmed personnel end strength.

(2) Determine whether the Army can be manned at ALO 2.

(3) Develop a proposal for a light, division-size force optimized for rapid deployment for contingency missions.

(4) Recommend reductions to the end strength of heavy divisions that will increase the maneuverability of the organizations. In the recommendations, consideration should be given to centralizing assets at echelons above division.

(5) Redesign corps and EAC [Echelons Above Corps] structures to improve their warfighting capability.⁸

Due to the relatively limited time (July to October) available for the study, TRADOC's Concept Based Requirements System (CBRS) for force design was compressed and accelerated.⁹ A criticism of the AOE is that only superficial attention was paid to the CBRS process.¹⁰

The methodology employed dictated that the divisions' designs be done before the corps and EAC. As soon as the concepts were solidified, ensuring compliance with doctrine, light division design began. Besides a limitation of approximately 10,000 soldiers, some other design criteria were:

(1) The division force design will be optimized for employment at the lower end of the conflict spectrum in a contingency mission, yet will retain utility for employment at higher conflict levels (NATO).

(2) The division must be deployable in 400 to 500 aircraft sorties.

(3) The division will contain approximately 50 percent infantry.

(4) The division design will have nine maneuver battalions.¹¹

Heavy division force design followed, with a goal of retaining the combat capability of the Division 86 design while reducing the division end strength. Additionally, some of the principles applied to light forces could be applied likewise to heavy forces. Reductions could not be made without some loss of capability, however. Proponent schools and the Combined Arms Combat Development Activity (CACDA) proposed cuts of 15% of personnel from the structure of the heavy divisions, along with "significant amounts of materiel."¹² Where possible, the cuts were made in the support and service support areas in order to maintain combat capability.

Realizing that many formulas for combat service support force requirements were based upon documentation tied to World War II experience, the Army had initiated the Logistics Unit Productivity Study (LUPS) in 1982.¹³ This examination of unit Tables of Organization and Equipment (TOE) sought ways to replace as many soldiers in combat service support units as possible with modern high-technology equipment, seeking efficiencies from productivity enhancement. LUPS, conducted by the Logistics Center, provided many lessons learned which were

considered in the redesign of the heavy division's support command. Some examples of lessons learned are the palletized loading system and the use of Materiel Handling Equipment (MHE),¹⁴ such as forklifts and cranes. Further, efforts were to be made to "increase unit productivity while improving the efficiency of the organizations."¹⁵

The AOE modifications to the heavy divisions were based on the 1 October 1983 J-series TOE, leaving the basic design intact. Modifications moved some functions out of the division and reduced "robustness, redundancy, and resiliency"¹⁶ from the remaining. A target figure for functions or organizations to be moved out of the division to corps or higher was a one-third personnel reduction, with a goal of achieving economies through centralization.¹⁷

The reductions and economies were achieved. The Division 86 Armored and Mechanized Divisions were reduced by 3,156 and 3,225 personnel respectively in the AOE Divisions.¹⁸ So successful were the designers in reducing resiliency, redundancy and robustness, that two 10,220 man Light Infantry Divisions were created. The AOE designs were such that functions and capabilities that would always be needed were made organic to the divisions. Those assets providing specific capabilities which were only occasionally used were placed in the division's parent corps structure. An augmentation concept allowed the augmenting organization to "plug in" as required.¹⁹ On the surface this is not an unworkable means of addressing the problem. However, when we look at those "specific

capabilities" which are to be augmented, doubts grow. Because its role is seen primarily as Low Intensity Conflict (LIC), and major enemy conventional capability would be minimal, the Light Infantry Division (LID) has reduced air defense, engineer, anti-tank, artillery support, NBC, transportation and maintenance capability. Maintenance in the LID focuses on component replacement over component repair, and newer systems, like the UH60 Blackhawk and High Mobility Multi-purpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV) are supposed to be less maintenance-intensive and, therefore supportive of the concept. ²⁰ If conflict levels increase in intensity, or the campaign is extended in duration, augmentation becomes necessary. Among problems the Army must address in the future are training exercises involving the augmentation assets and the LID.

SUMMARY OF AOE CHANGES

The AOE design applied to light and heavy forces balanced the manpower books, the first objective of the study. As the design process trimmed fat from heavy divisions, economies were achieved to such an extent that two light divisions could be created, another objective. These economies included impacts on combat, combat support, and service support operations of both light and heavy divisions. In summary they are:

COMMAND, CONTROL, COMMUNICATIONS AND INTELLIGENCE: The AOE design on the Division 86 structure enhanced the centralized intelligence analysis of the division by adding a support element to the G2 section. Personnel for this enhancement came

in part from a reduction in the brigade staffs of two intelligence analysts, the assistant S2, and the assistant chemical officer. An addition to the division staff was the creation of a deception cell in the G3 section. Besides the earlier noted changes to the brigade staff, the brigade Scout Platoon was also eliminated. The Signal Battalion reductions included the elimination of two redundant communications centers and associated messengers. and reduction in Radio Teletype (RTT) and circuit control functions. The LID does not have a Military Intelligence battalion: it relies on corps support. The heavy division retains an MI battalion, but in reduced size. Some functions (interrogation, linguists) are elevated to corps, and others (HUMINT) are shifted to the reconnaissance squadron of the Combat Aviation Brigade.²¹ Command, control, and intelligence may have been improved, although less flexible in application; communications to execute command and control have been degraded.

CLOSE COMBAT: As indicated earlier, the LID was only going to have nine maneuver battalions, all infantry. The heavy divisions maintained ten, with different mixes for mechanized divisions (five armor and five mechanized battalions) and armored divisions (six armor, four mechanized). Among the personnel reductions which took the mechanized infantry battalions from 896 to 827 personnel was a reduction in the size of infantry squads to nine men.²² One analysis of the impact of this reduction, when coupled with the doctrine of the use of the M2 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle (IFV), shows that the

mechanized battalion dismounts only 240 soldiers, and of those, only 180 are riflemen, less than a quarter of the battalion.²³ TRADOC, in analyzing the same information, reported "[t]he reductions secured a personnel savings, increased the leader-to-led ratios within the units, and took advantage of improved technology such as...improved small arms

firepower."²⁴ CACDA states the rationale for reducing the squad to nine men was:

(a) To standardize the infantry squad in all division structures.

(b) The Bradley Fighting Vehicle (BFV) was designed for a nine-man squad.

(c) To effect a personnel savings which could be used to offset the army shortfall in personnel authorizations.²⁵

Except for the reduction in the size of rifle squads, changes were limited to the Headquarters company. The Personnel Administration Center (PAC) was reduced and enhanced with TACCS. One supply specialist, two maintenance clerks and four mechanics, and two radio operators were eliminated in both armor and mechanized infantry battalions. The Cavalry Brigade (Air Attack) became the Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB). The Aviation Maintenance Company was transferred to the DISCOM, eliminating the need for the General Support Aviation Battalion, since it would be left with only a headquarters and one company. Long Range Surveillance and three staff personnel were added to the reconnaissance squadron; the NBC reconnaissance platoon and the motorcycle reconnaissance platoon were eliminated. One attack helicopter battalion was elevated to corps for augmentation, and

door gunners were eliminated by dual-training aviation mechanics²⁶ and other personnel. The combat capability of the heavy division seems to have taken a nose-dive at the expense of the light division, which itself must be augmented.

FIRE SUPPORT: The size of the howitzer crew was reduced from eleven to nine men. This reduction was offset by labor saving devices and techniques such as the Field Artillery Ammunition Support Vehicle (FAASV). The AOE heavy division has also eliminated the 8-inch howitzer and elevated it to the corps. This achieved savings by eliminating the entire General Support battalion, and the associated maintenance and ammunition personnel since now the division has only one type of howitzer and one caliber of ammunition. By the placing of the 8-inch in the corps artillery, the corps' commander can provide increased artillery support to the division. The sound and flash ranging platoon was eliminated, DIVARTY communication capability was reduced by eliminating some RTT nets. Air observers and lasing teams were also reduced, although lasing teams may be restored as terminally guided munitions are developed and fielded. A greater reliance is placed on automation with the development and fielding of the Positioning Azimuth Determining System (PADS). The PAC and maintenance sections were reduced as a result of transferring the 8-inch battalion, and the Fire Direction Center (FDC) was reduced by two personnel. The MLRS is a battery under the DIVARTY structure, not a part of any²⁷ battalion. Fire support is now reduced in communication capability and target acquisition, and the Division Commander has lost his general support capability except for MLRS.

MOBILITY, COUNTERMOBILITY, AND SURVIVABILITY: Although the LID does not have an NBC company, the airborne, air-assault, and heavy divisions retained theirs without modification. In the engineer battalions, the haul requirements were cut by half, so the equipment and personnel needed to haul it could likewise be reduced. That is, by reviewing what made up the 70 tons per day of engineer materials to be moved, and then determining that half would not normally be needed, requirements could be reduced. This reduces engineer capability, perhaps by as much as half.

AIR DEFENSE: Similar rationale as applied to the 8-inch howitzers was applied to the air defense structure and the Chaparral missile batteries were elevated to corps. Similar savings in personnel and maintenance and ammunition structure were achieved. When the Chaparrals were moved, however, the Stinger missile teams located in those batteries were moved, also. This was partially offset in the division area by incorporating 57 non-dedicated Stinger gunners throughout the area. The basis is two per MP squad, one per heavy mortar platoon, two per howitzer battery, one per brigade headquarters, and two in the division HHC. This is also the system utilized in the LID. Two of the Forward Area Alerting Radars (FAAR) were also eliminated, leaving six to provide early warning. Once more with the elimination of personnel to be supported, personnel to provide the support could also be reduced. Air defense is a part-time activity in the AOE divisions.

COMBAT SERVICE SUPPORT: Some structure changes which will lead to reduced support requirements have already been identified above. Those are the elimination of unique weapons systems, and the elimination of whole structures, like the division AG company. The division AG company was eliminated and the wartime functions of strength accounting, replacement operations and casualty reporting, were transferred to the G1. This elimination of the AG company saved 208 spaces and made for a more compact and efficient personnel operation. The basis for this reduction is the anticipation of the fielding of a high technology personnel system utilizing a small, lightweight computer system called TACCS for management and control of personnel administration functions. The intent is to take advantage of technology. This reduces the division commander's direct control of personnel actions, and places reliance on the Personnel Services Company (PSC) in the corps Personnel and Administration (P&A) battalion. The Staff Judge Advocate section was reduced, and there was a general reduction in the number of dedicated radio operators, drivers, and other duties which can be accomplished by dual-purpose soldiers. The Military Police company was also reduced in size and some personnel assigned dual-employment as air defense gunners. Other changes in the DISCOM consolidated the HHC and the Division Materiel Management Center (DMMC), eliminating redundancy. Another combining resulted in the creation of the Main Support Battalion out of the consolidation of the S&T and Maintenance battalions and the last company of the Medical

battalion. This also streamlined support by establishing a single manager of assets. While reducing overhead, repair capability was also reduced. A greater reliance on direct exchange (DX) resulted.

LOGISTICAL UNITS

While the combat elements were being made less robust, redundant, and resilient, the combat support organizations were being made excellent, also. The LUPS had found ways to shift the tooth-to-tail ratio. Similar techniques to shorten the logistics tail were found: replace soldiers in combat service support units with high technology equipment, and/or transfer the function to the Reserve Components. LUPS has been credited with freeing some 30,000 combat service support soldiers for assignment, perhaps, to the Army's new light divisions. Economies of scale and efficiencies through technology should not be confused with combat effectiveness or readiness. A 17% reduction (3303 to 2742 personnel) in the size of the DISCOM of the heavy division has a dramatic impact on the effectiveness of the division, particularly when the automation technology has not yet arrived. The logistics capability in direct support of the division has been decidedly reduced. Even with the elevation of some support to corps level, an argument could be made that it is still available. That is only partially the case: in reality there still has been an erosion of capability, to the point that support and service support are probably inadequate to meet operational demands. The 30,000

soldiers saved from support roles by LUPS have seen many of their spaces and units replaced by the Reserve Components. Today, about 70% of all of the Army combat service support is in the Army Reserve and National Guard. Nearly half of all combat service support for forward-deployed units now in Europe must be provided by Reserve Components. The active units would fight without adequate support in the event of a surprise attack; a short war would be largely unsupported due to the time to mobilize and transport Reserve component units from CONUS. 34

PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATION

A last area to examine in this limited look at AOE effectiveness is the goal of utilizing technology to supplement reduced numbers of soldiers in administrative roles. Office automation has received much attention in the civilian business world, particularly to streamline highly repetitive tasks. The Army is likewise involved in automating offices from the battalion and separate company up, and the AOE MTOE's reflect this. "Technology will soon bring about significant changes in the way we communicate information...and the job...will be greatly simplified. New TO&E's already reflect a trimming of G1/Adjutant General rosters in anticipation of these changes." 35 The same technology problems (delays in fielding, the personnel cuts are effective now, but the equipment fielding schedule is delayed) that effect logistics likewise impact on personnel and administration. The impact on personnel may also be misleading: much of what is being automated is the peacetime,

garrison-type administration, for example, word processing and Standard Installation/Division Personnel System (SIDPERS), not the wartime actions. A newer SIDPERS, version 2.75, was "developed to address manpower reductions in the personnel service support area. These reductions created a need for automating manual, labor-intensive personnel service support functions."

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CONCLUSION

On the surface the Army of Excellence force design goes a lot further toward supporting the combat execution of AirLand Battle than did the Division 86. For one thing, all of the numbers add up. That is, units are not committed to mutually exclusive missions. All of the personnel requirements in the active and Reserve Components equal the authorizations: the books balance. The combat effectiveness of the force is what should be paramount, not necessarily economy or efficiency. The effectiveness of the Army of Excellence is what is in question. This essay has shown that the reductions in combat capability have come about as a result of an attempt to eliminate a structure which could not be manned. The elimination of the "hollowness" is/was an achievable goal and a desirable one, too. The elimination of a hollow force and the replacement of it with one which has limited combat capability is only a shell game, however. Further, creating extremely limited capability units, the LIDs, can lead us into assuming a combat readiness that we do not really possess.

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17. Ibid.
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21. US Army Combined Arms Combat Development Activity, Final Report: The Army of Excellence, Vol. III. pp. 2-2 to 2-10.
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31. Odorizzi, p. 84.

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