

**STRIKE FORCE: A MISSION ESSENTIAL TASK FOR  
THE XVIII AIRBORNE CORPS**

**A MONOGRAPH  
BY  
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Infantry**



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## ABSTRACT

**STRIKE FORCE: A MISSION ESSENTIAL TASK FOR THE XVIII AIRBORNE CORPS.** By Major Chris R. Toner, USA, 59 pages.

In March 1999, the Army established action teams to design a Strike Force with the mission to fill a recognized operational void by providing regional CINCs with forces that are adaptable, fully competent, and effective across the full spectrum of military operations. It will be based on a standing headquarters that will be able to accept forces from across the active and reserve force structure, and operate as a part of a joint or combined operation. This headquarters would be capable of serving as a Land Forces (LANDFOR) headquarters and potentially as a Joint Task Force headquarters.

The Strike Force embodies characteristics emerging from current Force XXI experimentation and Army After Next (AAN) programs and studies. It is a force designed for rapid deployability that would have the capability to deliver a decisive military response throughout the world. The purpose is to create a force that, although light enough to be rapidly deployed, maintains the capability to defeat a heavy enemy force through deep maneuver, speed, and information dominance.

There is a need to determine if a separate Strike Force is a new, complementary, or redundant force when compared to the mission and operational and organizational (O&O) concepts of the XVIII Airborne Corps. Aside from the budgetary implications of creating a separate specialized force are the issues of mission duplication, effective command and control, and joint and combined training.

This monograph examines the current concepts, missions, and capabilities emerging from the theoretical study of future Strike Forces. These concepts, missions, and capabilities are then compared to those of the Army's contingency Corps - XVIII Airborne Corps. This comparison will answer the question: Do the concepts, missions, and capabilities of the envisioned Strike Force fill an operational requirement that the XVIII Airborne Corps cannot meet?

This monograph concludes that the mission and organizational and operational concepts of the Strike Force do not fill an operational requirement that the XVIII Airborne Corps cannot meet. The Strike Force will provide a redundant capability that will be inordinately expensive, and due to its ad hoc nature, have a higher level of risk than headquarters that maintain daily connectivity with operational forces. Analysis or historical fact does not support the notion that only the Strike Force concept will allow Army forces to deploy with an effective mix of heavy/light forces that are sufficiently versatile, deployable, lethal, and adaptable. The Army maintains that capability now and it will increase that capability through the introduction of future technologies common to all Army forces.

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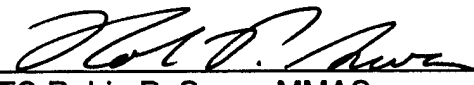
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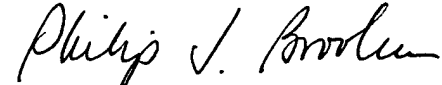
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Introduction.....	1
II.	The Strike Force.....	5
	A. Mission.....	5
	B. Operational Concept.....	6
	C. Organizational Concept.....	8
	D. Conclusion.....	15
III.	XVIII Airborne Corps.....	16
	A. Mission.....	16
	B. Operational Concept.....	17
	C. Organizational Concept.....	18
	D. Conclusion.....	24
IV.	Criteria Comparison.....	26
	A. Operational Level Command and Control.....	26
	B. Deployability.....	36
	C. Specialty Operations.....	37
	D. Versatility.....	39
V.	Conclusions.....	41
	Endnotes.....	45
	Selected Bibliography.....	53

*“By 2010, the Army will exploit the Force XXI effort to achieve nothing less than a technological and cultural metamorphosis. By then, over a decade of experimentation and field exercises will create a knowledge-based force, Army XXI, balanced across our traditional imperatives and possessed with a clarity of observation, degree of decentralization, and pace of decision making unparalleled in the history of warfare.”<sup>1</sup>*

## I. Introduction

This monograph examines the current concepts, missions, and capabilities emerging from the theoretical study of future Strike Forces. These concepts, missions, and capabilities are then compared to those of the Army’s contingency Corps – XVIII Airborne Corps.<sup>2</sup> This comparison will answer the question: Do the concepts, missions, and capabilities of the envisioned Strike Force fill an operational requirement that the XVIII Airborne Corps cannot meet?

In March 1999, the Army established action teams to design a Strike Force with the mission to fill a “recognized operational void” by providing regional CINCs with “forces that are adaptable, fully competent, and effective across the full spectrum of military operations.”<sup>3</sup> It will be based on a standing headquarters that will be able to accept forces from across the active and reserve force structure, and operate as a part of a joint or combined operation.<sup>4</sup> This headquarters would be capable of serving as a Land Forces (LANDFOR) headquarters and potentially as a Joint Task Force headquarters.<sup>5</sup> The Strike Force embodies characteristics emerging from current Force XXI experimentation and Army After Next (AAN) programs and studies.

The Army After Next mission is to provide the Army leadership a vision of war and land power's role thirty years into the future (2015-2025). This vision is based on a theoretical view of the geostrategic environment that continues the United States role as a multinational leader, active promoter of democratic principles, free market economies, and human rights.<sup>6</sup>

The challenge the United States faces, in the AAN, is a major military competitor that will offset technological inferiority with asymmetric approaches, that may include the ability to field mass armies, incite popular will, and to exploit the inherent strength of the strategic defensive.<sup>7</sup> During AAN wargaming, enemy forces reacted to dominate friendly maneuver by moving to complex terrain, "urban, suburban, and in some cases, forests and mountains."<sup>8</sup> "Vulnerability existed from barracks to foxhole. The [enemy] strategy called for an ambitious campaign of deployment denial. They attacked the entire [friendly] infrastructure, including ports, airfields, OCONUS staging bases, lift assets, fuel supplies, and information systems and software used to control deployment."<sup>9</sup>

The AAN studies further describe U.S. forces of the future conducting nonlinear, simultaneous offensive operations with the intent to conduct rapid decisive operations that disintegrate enemy capabilities. Rapid deployability, strategic, operational and tactical speed, information dominance, precision attack and just in time logistics characterize these operations.<sup>10</sup>

The Strike Force is a concept developed in support of the AAN studies. It is a force designed for rapid deployability that would have the capability to deliver a decisive military response throughout the world.

The purpose is to create a force that, although light enough to be rapidly deployed, maintains the capability to defeat a heavy enemy force through deep maneuver, speed, and information dominance.

There is a need to determine if a separate Strike Force is a new, complementary, or redundant force when compared to the mission and operational and organizational (O&O) concepts of the XVIII Airborne Corps. Aside from the budgetary implications of creating a separate specialized force are the issues of mission duplication, effective command and control, and joint and combined training.

The following criteria serve as a basis to determine if there is a need to create a separate Strike Force or if the capability exists within the XVIII Airborne Corps. These criteria were selected directly from the Strike Force mission statement and operational and organizational concept as existed in March 1999. First, the Strike Force must be versatile. It must have the ability to meet diverse mission requirements and allow for commanders to shift focus, tailor forces, and move from one form or type of operation to another rapidly and efficiently. It also includes the ability to be multifunctional and to operate across the full range of military operations.<sup>11</sup> Second, the Strike Force must be rapidly deployable. This is defined as the ability to deploy a Strike Force anywhere in the world in less than 96 hours. Third, the Strike Force must have the capability to conduct [specialty operations] airfield seizures, air assaults, military operations on urbanized terrain (MOUT). Fourth, is operational level command and control. The Strike Force must have the ability to command and control operations in battlespace that encompasses deep, close, and rear operations.

This includes the three operational-level tasks of the senior army commander: “the ability to establish the link among joint, multinational, interagency, Non-governmental organizations (NGO), Private voluntary organizations (PVO), or United Nation (UN) operations; executing functions to support continuous operations by subordinate army forces; planning and executing operations to support the joint campaign when designated as an operational commander by the CINC.”<sup>12</sup>

This monograph demonstrates that the Strike Force capabilities currently exist within the XVIII Airborne Corps and will be further enhanced by Force XXI and Army After Next technologies. This monograph analyzes current concepts, assumptions, and desired capabilities of the Strike Force and the XVIII Airborne Corps. Then, selected concepts are analyzed against criteria that are based on proposed Strike Force missions, capabilities, and concepts. These missions, capabilities, and concepts are then compared to the XVIII Airborne Corps to illuminate redundancy and shortfalls existent within the Strike Force concept.

The conclusion will focus on the results of the comparison of the Strike Force and the XVIII Airborne Corps. This conclusion highlights, based on the selected criteria, the concept failures of the proposed Strike Force. It demonstrates that the concepts, missions, and capabilities of the envisioned Strike Force do not fill an operational requirement that the XVIII Airborne Corps cannot meet. Based on the analysis, recommendations are made for concepts that best support Army After Next requirements.

## II. The Strike Force

The intent of this chapter is to define the Strike Force mission and operational and organizational concepts as they exist as of March 1999. This will provide a basis of understanding that will present the reader with the fundamental concepts of the Strike Force. While some of these concepts are theoretical and based on the implementation of future combat systems, the fundamental concepts will most likely not change and serve as the basis for defining what it is the Strike Force will be asked to do. Additionally, because the Strike Force is expected to operate at the operational level as a part of a joint and or multinational operation, an assumption made is that certain command and control functions will be similar to those inherent in Corps/Division operations. The chapter conclusion will highlight fundamentals that will be compared against selected criteria in chapter IV.

### A. Mission

“The Strike Force [will be] capable of rapidly responding anywhere on the globe with a tailored, lethal and mobile combat, CS, and CSS force package. It is designed to conduct offensive, defensive, retrograde, stability and support actions in early entry, peace keeping, and crisis deterrence/containment. The Strike Force conducts simultaneous distributed operations by deploying the full range of Army military forces, as well as Joint and interagency capabilities, employing superior situational awareness to gain operationally significant objectives. The Strike Force [will be able to] conduct high-end decisive operations and humanitarian assistance when properly resourced.”<sup>13</sup>

## B. Operational Concept

The Strike Force concept calls for an early entry force that can be employed to stabilize or preempt crisis situations. If the situation is not stabilized and decisive operations require follow-on forces, the Strike Force will establish the conditions to receive those forces. The Strike Force will have the capability to sustain high intensity combat operations for thirty days. This will support the timeline for the introduction of follow-on forces. The Strike Force is designed to be a standing headquarters that will draw from existing Army active and reserve units. This modular tailorability will allow the Strike Force to conduct operations across the full spectrum of military operations.<sup>14</sup>

The Strike Force headquarters is based on a "Revolutionary design" that embeds current Corps/Division capabilities in a headquarters comparable in size to that of a Brigade headquarters.<sup>15</sup> It will have the capability to operate at the Joint operational level, conduct planning for, and execute operations, while acting as the ARFOR or JFLCC. The headquarters will conduct training and initial planning using, not yet fully developed, information technologies. These technologies, such as distance learning, will allow Strike Force unit leaders to train together and resolve any mission issues, while being geographically separated.<sup>16</sup>

As of March 1999, the Army concept calls for the activation of the Second Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) as the experimentation force to test the Strike Force concept. Command and control capabilities will be embedded in the Second ACR in an attempt to make it the Army's "premier operational headquarters."<sup>17</sup> The Second ACR will become a standing headquarters "receptacle" into which can be "plugged" the units needed for specific operational requirements.<sup>18</sup>

This will then become an “activated” Strike Force containing the contingency forces required for each operation. The headquarters will link directly to the CIA, NSA, and all national systems. “Tactical operations, intelligence collection, surveillance, reconnaissance, logistical support, planning, joint coordination, liaison, and rehearsals will all be facilitated by the rapid exchange of high volumes of accurate, timely, relevant information made possible by the transforming the regiment into a unique knowledge based organization.”<sup>19</sup>

The Strike Force operational concept is designed to accomplish the following:<sup>20</sup>

1. Optimized for early entry, peace keeping, deterring/containment crisis; can also perform humanitarian assistance and high-end decisive operations.
2. Deployable via strategic sealift/airlift; C2 elements can also be transported by C-130 in theater.
3. Conducts high tempo operations, employing maneuver and precision fires.
4. Can employ entire range of force packaging – heavy/light, digital/non-digital, combat/CS/CSS, Army/Joint, US/Multi-National, Active/Reserve.
5. Possesses capabilities to export world class C2 via liaison teams to higher HQs and subordinate elements.
6. Communication systems capable of spanning extended AO with direct links to JTF/Corps.
7. Possesses reachback linkages to leverage external supporting capabilities.
8. Can assemble, prepare, and deploy active and reserve units from geographically dispersed installations.

9. Establishes relationships and conducts training with potential attachments during peacetime to compress the teaming process during crisis.

### C. Organizational Concept

As stated earlier, the Strike Force concept is based on the establishment of a standing headquarters that does not possess organic combat, CS, CSS elements (figure 1). The headquarters will maintain a cadre of experts that will incorporate personnel assigned based on METT-TC.<sup>21</sup> “The Strike Force cadre are prepared to accept Army, Joint, Coalition, and interagency specialized staff attachments.”<sup>22</sup> This chapter details organizational node concepts and capabilities. The personnel breakdown of each node is intended to display, for the reader, the ad hoc nature of the Strike Force headquarters.

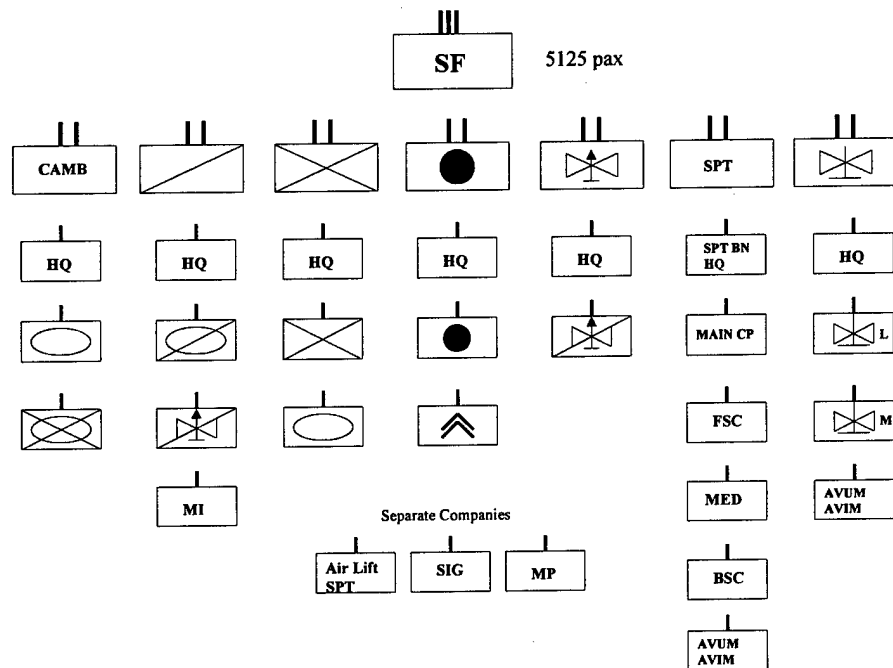


Fig. 1. Strike Force (Combat, CS, and CSS units are assigned as needed).

## 1. Command and Control

The Strike Force command and control (C2) design is predominately contained in two command group nodes (figure 2) that are supported by the Operations Informations and Control Node (figure 3) and the Effects Node (figure 4). The Command Group consists of two nodes that are designed to facilitate sustained operations and allow command presence in multiple locations.<sup>23</sup> It contains functions necessary for the conduct of operations but does not provide for long range planning. It is designed to be rapidly deployable and can operate in an airborne or ground configuration.

### Strike Force Headquarters Command Group - Node 1 (Pax 4/1/11)

*07 Commander	E7 Net Manager
*04 Battle Command Officer	E5 SATCOM Operator/Driver
03 Battle Command Officer	
E7 Battle Command NCO	
E5 Driver/Battle Command NCO	E5 Vehicle Commander/Switch Operator
	E4 Driver/SATCOM Operator
02 Battle Command Officer/Aide	E4 Driver/SATCOM Operator
E5 Driver/Mechanic	
	W2 Signal Support Tech
*E9 CSM	E5 Driver/ Signal Maintenance
*E4 Driver/Mechanic	
* Suggested Cadre (All others Ad Hoc)	

### Strike Force Headquarters Command Group - Node 2 (Pax 4/0/8)

06 Deputy Commander	E7 Net Manager
04 Battle Command Officer	E5 SATCOM Operator/Driver
03 Battle Command Officer	
E7 Battle Command NCO	
E5 Driver/Battle Command NCO	E5 Vehicle Commander/Switch Operator
	E4 Driver/SATCOM Operator
	E5 Driver/SATCOM Operator
02 Battle Command Officer	
E5 Driver/Mechanic	
All Ad Hoc	

Fig. 2. Strike Force Command Groups.

## 2. Operations Informations and Control Cell

Figure three depicts the organization of the Operations Informations and Control Cell (OICC). This cell contains the planning and operations cell and intelligence support cell. The OICC is linked to the Effects cell and the Chief of Staff supervises the conduct of future planning and current operations management that are functions of these two cells. The Intelligence Support Cell manages the intelligence systems that tie in directly with joint and national counterparts. This connectivity will enable the Strike Force to cover large areas and prevent non-productive reconnaissance and surveillance missions. To satisfy the Commander's Critical Information Requirements (CCIR), the cell plans, coordinates and employs ground and air reconnaissance complimentary with supporting higher level systems. Joint and national intelligence linkages are resident within digital liaison teams to facilitate the dissemination of information and intelligence throughout Strike Force units."<sup>24</sup>

The Operations Information Support Cell and the Planning and Operations Cell conduct future planning and coordination. Current operations will have the "primary function of synchronizing current deep, close, and rear operations. It also controls deep maneuver operations; synchronizes combat, CS, and CSS in support of deep operations; and maintains current situational awareness."<sup>25</sup> This cell will operate in conjunction with the two employed command nodes. The plans cell will plan future operations as branches and sequels for the current operation. "It coordinates all combat, CS, and CSS activities with higher and adjacent headquarters. It also synchronizes future operations within the [Strike Force] during the development of these plans."<sup>26</sup>

“The Strike Force possesses direct linkages to supporting Army and Joint effects that enable it to fight outnumbered and dispersed by quickly massing precision fires whenever and wherever they are required. Strike Force is capable of synchronizing attached and supporting fires (GS, joint, coalition) to achieve precise effects; readily accepts and employs joint fire control specialized staff attachments.”<sup>27</sup>

Strike Force Headquarters  
Operations Informations and Control Node (Pax 22/1/34)

<u>Control Cell</u>		<u>Operations Information Support Cell</u>	
*06 Deputy CDR/COS		*06 Battle Cmd Off/Cell Chief	*E8 Btl Cmd NCO
04 Battle Cmd Off/SGS		04 Battle Cmd Off	E7 Btl Cmd Opr
E4 Dvr/Specialist		03 Battle Cmd Off X2	E5 Btl Cmd Opr/Dvr X3
		03 Battle Cmd Off	E4 Btl Cmd Spc/Dvr X6
<u>Intell Support Cell</u>		<u>Common Ground</u>	<u>Planning and Operations Cell</u>
*06 Node Chief	E7 Intel Analyst X3	<u>Station Cell</u>	*05 Btl Cmd Off/Cell Chief X3
04 Intel Officer X2	E6 Intel Analyst X3	E7 CGS Chief	04 Battle Cmd Off X5
03 Intel Off X3	E6 Intel Analyst X3	E6 CGS Opr	04 Btl Cmd Off
W2 Intel Analyst	E5 Intel Analyst/Dvr X6	E5 CGS Opr/Dvr X4	
E8 Master analyst			
* Suggested Cadre (All others Ad Hoc)			

Fig. 3. Strike Force OIC Node.

### 3. Effects Node

The Effects Node contains the lethal attack and non-lethal effects cell, targeting cell, and air defense cell (figure 4). The lethal attack cell will manage all fire support assets available to the Strike Force. This cell works directly with the command nodes and the OICC with the responsibility to coordinate CAS, FA support, and EW. It has responsibility to: develop prioritized interdiction missions and target lists; control deep fires as part of the delivery function of deep targeting; and coordinate the use of airspace and the employment of joint air resources. The non-lethal effects cell accomplishes the command and control warfare tasks of Strike Force operations.

It has the responsibility for “synchronizing all activities to protect friendly C2 activities.”<sup>28</sup> It contains the deception, EW, and OPSEC sections along with the PSYOP support element and the CA element. The targeting cell “focuses the activities of all the participants involved in the planning and execution of deep operations. Its role is to act as the C2 facility, which exists to support the successful execution of deep operations. It confirms and validates targeting data, determines if the original decide criteria remains in place, then allocates the attack resource to engage the target.”<sup>29</sup> “The Strike Force maintains an accurate picture of the airspace and is prepared to accept and employ the full spectrum of Air Defense capabilities.”<sup>30</sup>

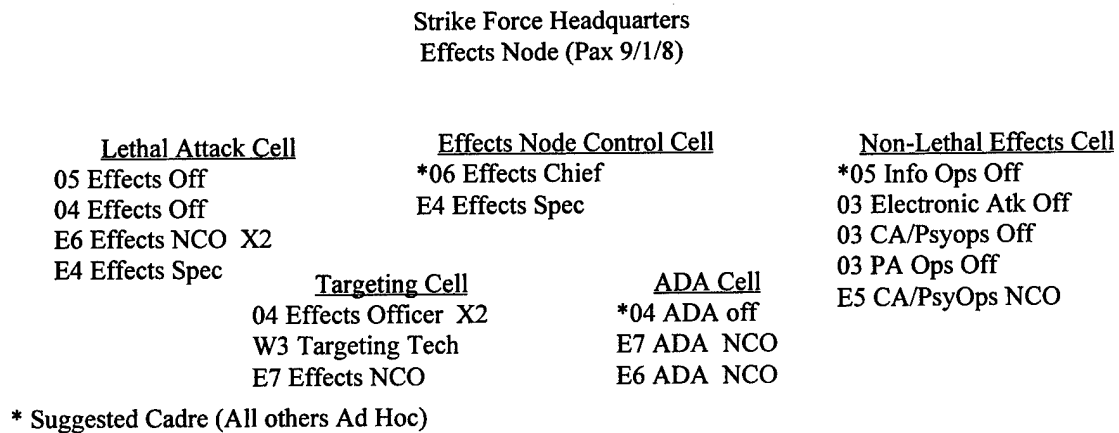


Fig. 4. Strike Force Effects Node.

#### 4. CS/CSS Nodes

The Strike Force CS and CSS Nodes work together to conduct specific forward CS/CSS support operations and rear logistical operations (figures 5 and 6). The CS Node contains the mobility cell, MP cell, NBC cell, and two communications support cells (SATCOM, Network).

The mobility cell conducts planning and coordination for engineer operations and topographical support. "Attached engineer assets are tailored to perform the full range of mobility, countermobility, survivability and construction tasks associated with Strike Operations."<sup>31</sup> The functions of the MP cell and NBC cell are to plan and coordinate the requirements inherent in their specialties. The communication and support cells plan and coordinate the communications systems supporting the use of satellite and computer network communications throughout the Strike Force. This includes the linkages required for joint and/or multinational operations.

The CSS Node accomplishes those tasks associated with a Rear Command Post. This includes: command and control of rear security operations; terrain management of the rear area; sustainment of close, deep, and rear operations; control of administrative movements. "The Strike Force logistics structure does not encumber the force nor present the threat with a vulnerability that can be exploited; it is primarily configured to provide support while enhancing rapid tactical and strategic movement. Strike Force CSS assets may operate from a sanctuary or forward operating bases established within the battlespace."<sup>32</sup>

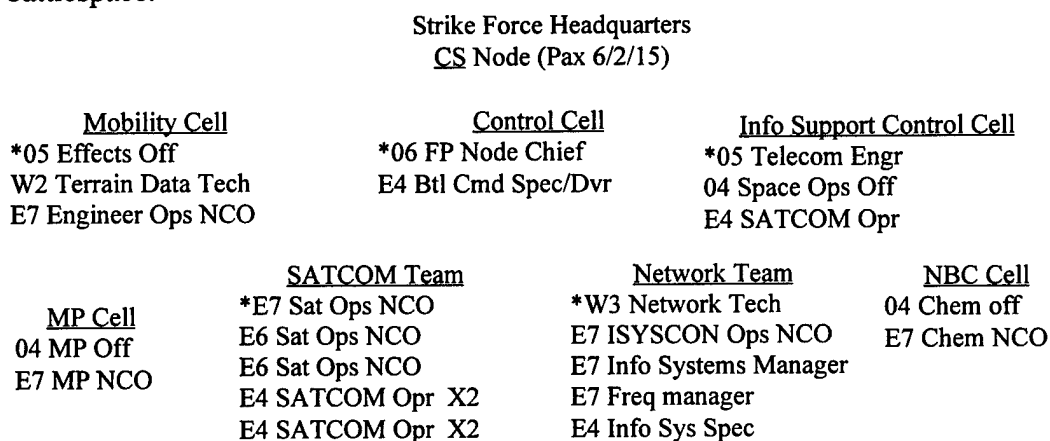


Fig. 5. CS Node.

Strike Force Headquarters  
CSS Node (Pax 12/3/14)

<u>Personnel Cell</u> *04 Per Off/Adj E7 Pers Str Mgr E6 Admin NCO E5 Pers Scv NCO E4 Pers Spec E4 Admin Spec	<u>CSS NodeControl Cell</u> *06 CSS Node Chief 05 Deputy E4 Commo Spec  <u>SJA Cell</u> 05 SJA (Intel Law) Off E6 Legal NCO	<u>Maint Cell</u> *04 Maint Off 03 Maint Off W2 Maint tech E4 Dvr/Maint Spec	<u>Supply Cell</u> *05 Supply Off 04 Contracting Off 03 Supply Off E8 Supply NCO E7 Ammo NCO E4 Automation Spec E4 SATCOM Opr
<u>Chaplain Cell</u> 04 Chaplain E6 Chaplain Asst	<u>Medical Cell</u> 04 Med Svc Off E7 Md NCO	<u>Food svc Cell</u> W2 Food Svc Tech E7 Food Svc NCO	<u>Trans Cell</u> *04 Trans off W2 Mobility Tech

\* Suggested Cadre (All others Ad Hoc)

Fig. 6. CSS Node.

5. Digital LNO Teams

“The Strike Force possesses communications linkages to Joint and supporting assets, as well as Strike Force subordinate elements, across an extended area of operations.”<sup>33</sup> This is facilitated through five digital LNO teams (figure 7) that will provide analog elements with the same situational awareness available to the Strike Force commander. These LNO teams are “robust and sufficiently multi-skilled to provide for continuous operations.”<sup>34</sup>

Strike Force Headquarters  
Control Group Digital LNO Teams (X5) (Pax 25/0/70)

<u>General Purpose LNO Cell</u> *04(1); 03(3) LNO Off E7 LNO NCO E5 LNO CSS E5 LNO AFTDS E4 Dvr/Btle Cmd Spec	<u>CSS LNO Cell</u> 03 LNO Off E7 LNO NCO E5 LNO CSS E5 LNO NCO E4 Dvr/CSSCS Spec	<u>Communications Cell</u> E6 Net Mgr E5 STACOM Opr E4 SATCOM Dvr  E5 Switch Opr E4 SATCOM Opr E4 SATCOM Dvr
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\* Suggested Cadre (All others Ad Hoc)

Fig. 7. Strike Force LNO Teams.

#### D. Conclusion

This chapter presented the Strike Force mission and operational and organizational concept as they exist in March 1999. In summary it details a concept for a versatile force that will combine just the right force mix for contingencies involving operations across the full spectrum of warfare. A force that is designed to be an early entry force that can be deployed rapidly and has the organic capability for improved links to joint forces, supporting governmental and non-governmental organizations. A force that can directly respond to emerging threats as an operational instrument for warfighting Commanders-in-Chiefs around the world.<sup>35</sup> This includes the capability to employ airborne, air assault, light, heavy, SOF, and Joint/Multi-National forces. Because the Strike Force is expected to operate at the operational level as part of a joint and/or multinational operation, current Corps/Division headquarters functions are included as a resident part of the cell functions within the Strike Force headquarters.

Several issues about the capabilities of the Strike Force headquarters will be examined as a part of criteria comparison in chapter IV. Among these issues are: the ability of the Strike Force to conduct joint and/or multinational operations; simultaneously control deep, close, and rear operations; operate as a ARFOR or JFLCC headquarters; organize "on the fly" command and control and ad hoc organizational units and personnel; and the ability to command and control extremely complicated forced entry operations.

*"If you are in one of the units in the [XVIII] Corps, and there is a crisis somewhere in the world, then you will be one of the first to deploy in defense of America's national interests. There is a saying around the Corps that ... when trouble breaks out somewhere in the world, the phone rings first at Fort Bragg."*<sup>36</sup>

### III. XVIII Airborne Corps

The intent of this chapter is to define the Corps mission, and operational and organizational capabilities as they exist in March 1999. This will provide a basis of understanding that will present the reader with the fundamental capabilities of the XVIII Airborne Corps. These capabilities will then be compared against criteria in Chapter IV to determine if the proposed Strike Force concepts fill operational requirements that the XVIII cannot meet. Corps units are discussed because they are primary candidates to fill Strike Force combat, CS, and CSS units. The chapter conclusion will highlight those fundamentals that will then be used in comparison against selected criteria in chapter IV.

#### A. Mission

The Corps mission is to: "Provide a strategic crisis response force manned and trained to deploy rapidly by air, sea, and land anywhere in the world; prepared to fight upon arrival and win."<sup>37</sup> They accomplish this through the Corps ability to rapidly deploy by sea and air to anywhere in the world, conduct forcible or permissive entry, and deliver overwhelming combat power. XVIII Airborne Corps is the only U.S. Corps that has the organic capability to conduct forced entry operations.<sup>38</sup>

## B. Operational Concept

Since the end of the Cold War, the XVIII Airborne Corps has responded to crisis in Grenada, Panama, Kuwait, Iraq, Somalia, Haiti and “many others that never made the evening news.”<sup>39</sup> During these operations, the Corps served as the Army Forces (ARFOR) subordinate to a Joint Task Force (JTF), a JTF subordinate to a regional Commander in Chief (CINC), and as a Corps subordinate to an Army headquarters.<sup>40</sup> The units within the Corps plan, prepare, and train to rapidly deploy and conduct operations anywhere in the world. The force mixture of XVIII Corps is purposely designed to ensure that the Corps can provide a tailored force based on the requirements established by the National Command Authority.<sup>41</sup>

The XVIII Airborne operational concept is designed to accomplish the following:<sup>42</sup>

1. Provide a strategic crisis response force that is able to ... rapidly meet National Emergencies; conduct forcible entry (ABN/AASLT).
2. Deploy rapidly by air, sea, and land to anywhere in the world.
3. Concentrate overwhelming power with force packages tailored to mission and lift available that include heavy/light, digital/non-digital, combat/CS/CSS, Army/Joint, Special Operations Forces, US/Multinational, Active/Reserve.
4. Command and control across the operational spectrum. Conduct operations as a Joint Task Force (JTF), Joint Force Land Component Command (JFLCC), Army Forces Command (ARFOR), or Corps command.
5. Can conduct and sustain high tempo operations employing maneuver and precision fires.

6. Has an organic communications system capable of spanning an extended AO with direct links to National assets.
7. Trained and ready to respond in 18 hours, 365 days a year. (One battalion task force each from the 82<sup>nd</sup>, 101<sup>st</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and a company team from 3ID.)

### C. Organizational Concept

The XVIII Airborne Corps consists of four divisions that comprise over “forty percent” of the Army’s total combat strength.<sup>43</sup> Each of the four divisions (3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division (Mechanized), 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division, 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, and 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne (Air Assault) Division) bring different capabilities to the fight and it is this diversity that has firmly established the Corps as “America’s crisis response force”<sup>44</sup> It is also this diversity that makes Corps units primary candidates to fill the Strike Force combat, CS, and CSS needs.

Although the Corps can conduct operations across the spectrum of warfare, one of the Corps singularly unique missions is to conduct forced entry operations. The NCA has the ability to call on forces to conduct three types of forcible entry. “One is a parachute assault, the second is an air assault, and the third is an amphibious operation from the sea. Obviously the Marine Corps is the centerpiece for the amphibious-type assaults, and the XVIII Corps provides the units for the parachute and air assaults.”<sup>45</sup>

The Corps capabilities have made it the most sought after force by regional CINCs for the conduct of wartime missions.<sup>46</sup> They are the Army’s priority for personnel fill and force modernization. The Corps is continuously training in a Joint and combined environment based on their operational plans.

This training is intensive and routine allowing the Corps to rightfully claim that they “train more with sister organizations [Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force] than any other organization in the U.S. Army.”<sup>47</sup> In Fiscal Year (FY) 1996 and 1997 the Corps participated in thirty-eight joint exercises.<sup>48</sup> Additionally, the Corps conducts deployment exercises quarterly, known as Sea Emergency Deployment Readiness Exercises (SEDREs), to maintain rapid deployability readiness. These intensive exercises involve the movement of a Brigade Combat Team by sea, air, and rail from their homestation to ports of embarkation (POEs) where the equipment is loaded on fast sea ships for movement to a port of debarkation. Personnel movement is also exercised as is the evaluation of the unit during the conduct of a training exercise. XVIII Airborne Corps is the only corps that routinely conducts readiness exercises of this size and intensity.<sup>49</sup>

### 1. Command and Control

XVIII Corps conducts combined arms operations as part of joint or multinational forces across the full spectrum of military operations. It possesses the organic capability to command and control operations and to synchronize collateral operations. Collateral operations “consist of major activities within the scope of any combat operation. They include intelligence, counterfires, deep/joint fires, special operations, joint suppression of enemy air defense (J-SEAD), humanitarian assistance, and deception.”<sup>50</sup>

The Corps may function as the Army service headquarters of a joint force, the JFLCC of a JTF, or as a JTF itself. Depending on the nature of the operation, the Corps may need augmentation to facilitate the execution of service and/or joint responsibilities.<sup>51</sup>

The Corps headquarters consists of the command group and staff and liaison elements. Within the command group, the deputy commander “extends the corps commander’s span of control in areas and functions the commander designates. He is normally responsible for monitoring or controlling several functions critically important to the corps operation’s success.”<sup>52</sup> The corps staff consists of coordinating and special staff under the control of the corps chief of staff (figure 8). Liaison elements “from outside organizations work with various corps staff sections and include: subordinate units, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Navy, special operations, echelons above corps, battlefield coordination element, multinational force representatives, host nations, government agencies, and non-government agencies.”<sup>53</sup>

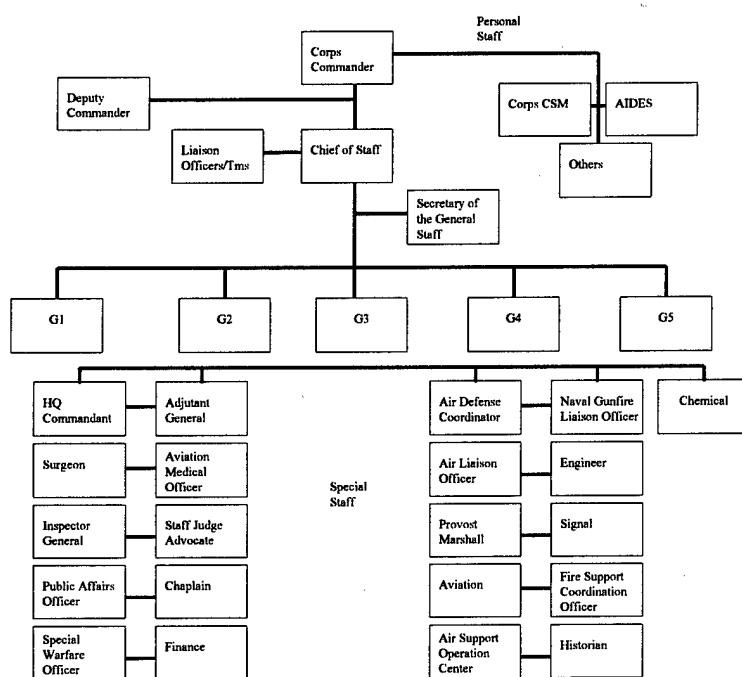


Fig. 8. Corps Staff.

“There are several key aspects of corps staff activities that are different from lower echelons. First, because of the increased, often habitual, interface with multinational forces, Host Nation (HN) agencies, and sister services, there are large numbers of liaison elements from these agencies working at the corps. Second, the coordination of USAF, USMC, USN, and SOF support is especially critical at the corps level. Third, the corps must continuously plan into the future to anticipate battlefield conditions and then move forces and assemble resources in time to successfully fight the enemy.”<sup>54</sup> Fourth, the Corps has the ability to tailor command and control nodes based on mission requirements. They have the ability to use subordinate division and separate brigade headquarters to support the conduct of contingency operations. This helps to increase the Corps Commanders span of control, helps focus subordinate missions, and alleviates administrative or non-operational requirements of subordinate commands. This tailored command structure is not ad hoc in the traditional sense due to the close relationship of corps units that develop during the conduct of various training exercises.

## 2. Units

XVIII Airborne Corps is 85,000 personnel strong and consists of four divisions and thirteen separate brigades. “Certainly in the U.S. Army, there is no parallel for that type of organization, with that particular mission, and also with the enormous versatility that we bring to bear.”<sup>55</sup> The Strike Force will draw heavily upon units within the XVIII Airborne Corps for filling their combat, CS, and CSS requirements. The Corps alert posture, unit deployability, joint training regimen, forced entry capability, and specific division capabilities are primary reasons for this.

The Third Infantry Division provides the Corps with a heavy force designed to provide massive armored combat power during land operations. It has an authorized strength of 17,000 personnel and contains 259 M1A1 main battle tanks, 419 M2/M3 Bradley Infantry Fighting vehicles as well as 30 Bradley Stinger Air Defense Systems. Third Infantry Division routinely conducts deployability readiness exercises and maintain an air deployable Armor or Mechanized Company Team that can be deployed within eighteen hours, 365 days a year. Additionally, they routinely conduct training that involves the use of Army prepositioned reserves as a part of their deployability readiness exercises.<sup>56</sup>

The Tenth Mountain Division is a light infantry division consisting of 8,700 personnel. There are two Infantry Brigades that have very limited vehicle and aircraft assets and a very streamlined logistics base. This allows the division to be moved very quickly and to operate in very austere conditions. They train to operate in restricted terrain at night and specialize in MOUT operations. "The Tenth Mountain Division has been deployed quite a bit over the past few years, participating in peacekeeping operations in Somalia and disaster relief operations following Hurricane Andrew, and [was] the primary force during Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti. In fact, since the end of the Gulf War in 1991, they have been the busiest infantry organization in the whole U.S. Army."<sup>57</sup>

The Eighty-Second Airborne Division is the only parachute division in the Army. It has an authorized strength of 14,000 personnel and is considered a strategic response force due to its ability to rapidly deploy and conduct forcible entry operations.

It is designed to be able to bring all of its combat power by parachute assault and can place an entire Brigade Combat Team on the ground within thirty minutes.<sup>58</sup>

The 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division (Air Assault) is the second specialized division within the Corps. It has an authorized strength of 15,000 personnel and the organic attack and lift helicopters to air assault a brigade size task force out to a distance of 150 kilometers. It's the only unit in the world that can move this size force, this fast and this deep. During Desert Storm, the Division moved 250 kilometers in twenty-four hours. The division operates independent of terrain and with seventy-two AH-64 Apache helicopters, brings an enormous amount of combat power to the fight.<sup>59</sup>

The Second Armored Cavalry Regiment is a light armored cavalry regiment capable of rapid deployment. It consists of approximately 3,500 personnel and has three ground squadrons and one air squadron. It performs reconnaissance, security, and economy of force operations for the Corps. Its wheeled and air capability allows it to operate in a variety of terrain during the conduct of operations across the spectrum of warfare.<sup>60</sup>

“Along with the major component units, we have thirteen separate brigades. The military intelligence brigade gives the Corps an enormous capability to plug into national intelligence assets and supply vital intelligence products to units. The brigade maintains the capability to tie into all national level platforms, agencies, systems, manned and unmanned, that supply intelligence at all levels.”<sup>61</sup> This includes the ability to downlink real and near-real time information. This is a significant improvement and a direct result from the Gulf War.

“This is a very powerful organization in terms of what it can provide to us in both basic information and intelligence data. In addition, they provide a robust analytical capability to take information and data, and then turn it into something useful for field commanders and their units.”<sup>62</sup>

The Corps separate brigades include: an artillery brigade that contains both tube artillery and the Multiple Launch Missile System (MLRS); an aviation brigade that contains two battalions of AH-64s and CH-47/UH-60 lift aircraft; an air-defense brigade with Patriot and Avenger/Stinger systems; an engineer brigade; and a Corps Support Command that supports the Corps logistically.<sup>63</sup> These separate brigades give the Corps Commander the flexibility (read versatility) to tailor combat multipliers for different contingency missions. These units are normally aligned with Corps combat units and enjoy a habitual working relationship. This relationship alleviates command and control problems normally associated with ad hoc organizations.

#### D. Conclusion

The XVIII Airborne Corps is an extremely versatile organization designed to rapidly deploy to areas throughout the world. It brings an enormous amount of combat power to the battlefield and maintains two out of three forced entry capabilities in the U.S. military.

It is important to note that the Strike Force headquarters would depend heavily upon the divisions and separate brigades within the XVIII Airborne Corps. It is also important to note that the Corps has the ability to tailor its command and control structure to facilitate the conduct of operations at the tactical through operational level. It simply can tailor, design, structure, and establish more combinations of headquarters within its internal organization than the Strike Force headquarters design.

It is also important to note that the units, and more importantly the leaders, within the Corps train together as a part of the Corps combined arms training regimen. This training includes the cross attachment of units from within the Corps, joint training, and multi-national training.<sup>64</sup>

*“Armies do not win wars by means of a few bodies of supersoldiers but by the average quality of their standard units.”<sup>65</sup>*

#### IV. Criteria Comparison

The intent of this chapter is to compare, using the fundamentals discussed in the preceding chapters, key aspects of the Strike Force and XVIII Airborne Corps missions, and organizational and operational concepts. This comparison will answer the question: Do the concepts, missions, and capabilities of the envisioned Strike Force fill an operational requirement that the XVIII Airborne Corps cannot meet? The significance of this is the issue with creating a redundant force that will unnecessarily burden the existing force structure through funding, training, and operational tempo (OPTEMPO) requirements. This chapter will compare the capabilities of the Strike Force and XVIII Airborne Corps in: operational level command and control, deployability, ability to conduct specialty operations, and versatility. These criterion, while analyzed separately, are dependent in many instances on each other. For instance, command and control impacts the versatility of the organization, its deployability, and its ability to conduct specialty operations.

##### A. Operational Level Command and Control

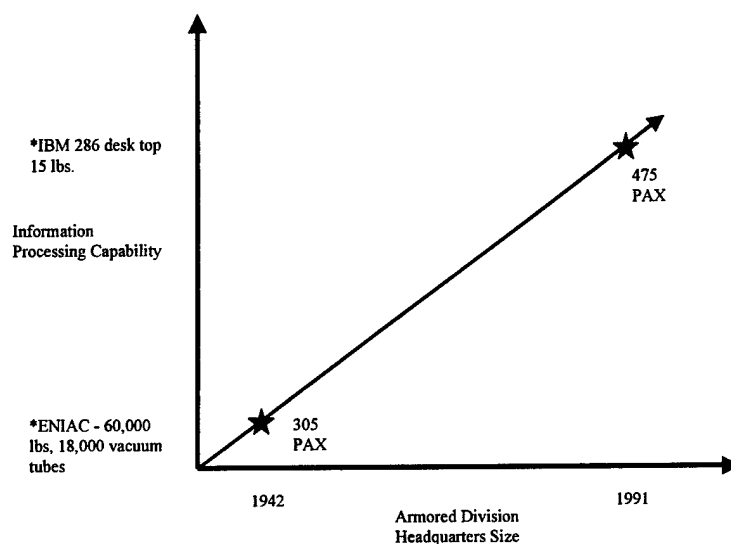
Chapter II identified the concept that calls for the Strike Force to operate at the operational level of war as a JTF, JFLCC, or ARFOR. For purposes of this monograph, this is defined as the ability to control operations in battlespace that encompasses deep, close, and rear operations.

This includes the three operational level tasks of the senior army commander: First, is the ability to establish an [effective] link among joint, multinational, interagency, Non-Governmental Organizations, Private Voluntary Organizations, or United Nations operations; Second, is executing functions to support continuous operations by subordinate army forces; Third, is planning and executing operations to support the joint campaign when designated as an operational commander by the CINC.

The Strike Force is designed to have a footprint as large as a brigade headquarters, conceptually using advanced technologies to rapidly gather, analyze, and disseminate information during the conduct of operations. This includes the ability to control (Joint/multi-national) combat, CS, CSS forces and governmental and non-governmental agencies. The ability to do this is based on the theory that the Strike Force headquarters will have “highly advanced information processing, employing automated filters, decision support aids, and comparative analysis... will be the means by which information is turned into knowledge.”<sup>66</sup> This austere Strike Force headquarters will have the ability to “accomplish a broad range of strategic tasks, often within the context of the same mission.”<sup>67</sup> (An example would be the conduct of combat and humanitarian assistance operations concurrently.)

It is important to compare this theory against two historical facts. First, as the ability to process more and more information increases, so does the size of military headquarters. Figure 9 graphically portrays the relationship between information processing capability and the growth of military headquarters from 1942 to 1991. As the graph shows, while the ability to process information has increased, so has the size of comparable headquarters.

This is a critical point because the Strike Force concept is dependent on reversing this historical trend. Specifically, the Strike Force concept calls for a substantial increase in information processing capability with a simultaneous decrease in headquarters size. Failure to reverse this trend will prevent the Strike Force from accomplishing the three operational tasks.



\*Note: The intent is simply to demonstrate the evolution of information processing over time.  
 ENIAC - The Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer. Obviously not a part of a field headquarters, it is relevant to the historical evolution of information processing.  
 The IBM 286 was a standard part of headquarter staff information processing and representative of baseline information processing technology present during 1991. It possessed a "far greater capability" than the ENIAC.

Fig. 9. Information and headquarters growth.

Secondly, historical analysis proves that even a division size headquarters has difficulty operating at the operational level.<sup>68</sup> In his monograph, "The Division Headquarters: Can It Do It All?," Major Wayne Grigsby concludes that a "division headquarters is suitable to dual function as a JTF and ARFOR headquarters [only] when it receives significant augmentation from a corps headquarters or combatant command."<sup>69</sup>

This initially would leave most people to believe that this would be the case regardless of the mission assigned to the Division. Closer analysis of the operation that MAJ Grigsby based this conclusion on reveals mission constraints that allowed the Division to operate effectively at the operational level.

MAJ Grigsby based his conclusion on the Tenth Mountain Division's participation in Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti in 1994. Tenth Mountain Division served as a JTF and ARFOR headquarters tasked with conducting peacekeeping operations. Several operational parameters allowed the Tenth Mountain to accomplish the requirements as a JTF/ARFOR headquarters. First, they were heavily augmented by the XVIII Airborne Corps with personnel needed to accomplish their JTF/ARFOR requirements. For instance, of the eighty-three personnel needed in the J2 shop, thirty-five were augmentees from Corps.<sup>70</sup> Second, the majority of the JTF were Army units. This facilitates the resourcing, administration, and control of units within the area of responsibility. This alleviated the requirement to command and control joint forces required for combat operations. Third, a well-focused and limited mission allowed the Division to accomplish JTF/ARFOR tasks. Again, the nature of the mission, peacekeeping, did not require the application of joint combat power. Fourth, because the mission was permissive in nature, the Division was able to use its DIVARTY to act as an additional headquarters facilitating the JTF/ARFOR requirements. This allowed the Tenth Mountain commander "to focus his efforts at the operational and strategic levels."<sup>71</sup> Fifth, the XVIII Airborne Corps initially conducted the planning for both the permissive and hostile entry into Haiti, which greatly contributed to the planning, and execution of the Tenth Mountain Division's mission.

Additionally, the XVIII Corps headquarters “also stayed in Haiti for several weeks until the Tenth Mountain Division had established itself and assumed control of the operation.”<sup>72</sup>

What does all of this mean with respect to the ability of the Strike Force to operate at the operational level of war? The Strike Force is expected to have the ability to “accomplish a broad range of strategic tasks, often within the context of the same mission.”<sup>73</sup> The historical examples presented bring into question the Strike Forces’ ability to accomplish the three operational tasks. “Operational level battle command requires longer lead times, involves a greater span of control, and is inherently joint and often multinational.”<sup>74</sup> The perception that knowledge processing capability will allow the Strike Force to accomplish these operational level tasks is also not supported by historical analysis.

The ability to sustain high tempo operations is predicated on the quality and quantity of the headquarters staff personnel. Strike Force operations require the capability to conduct continuous operations over a dispersed battlespace. This requires enough personnel to man staff controlling functions twenty-four hours a day for the duration of the operation. One lesson learned from wargaming future battle is that “the combined effects of [greater mobility and lethality, combined with digital communications links] led to unprecedented rates of operating tempo. The limiting factor was the endurance of man in battle [staffs and commanders controlling the battle].”<sup>75</sup> This is especially important when controlling joint and/or multinational forces across a battlespace that includes deep, close and rear operations.

## Brigade to Division to Corps Battle Rhythm Crosswalk

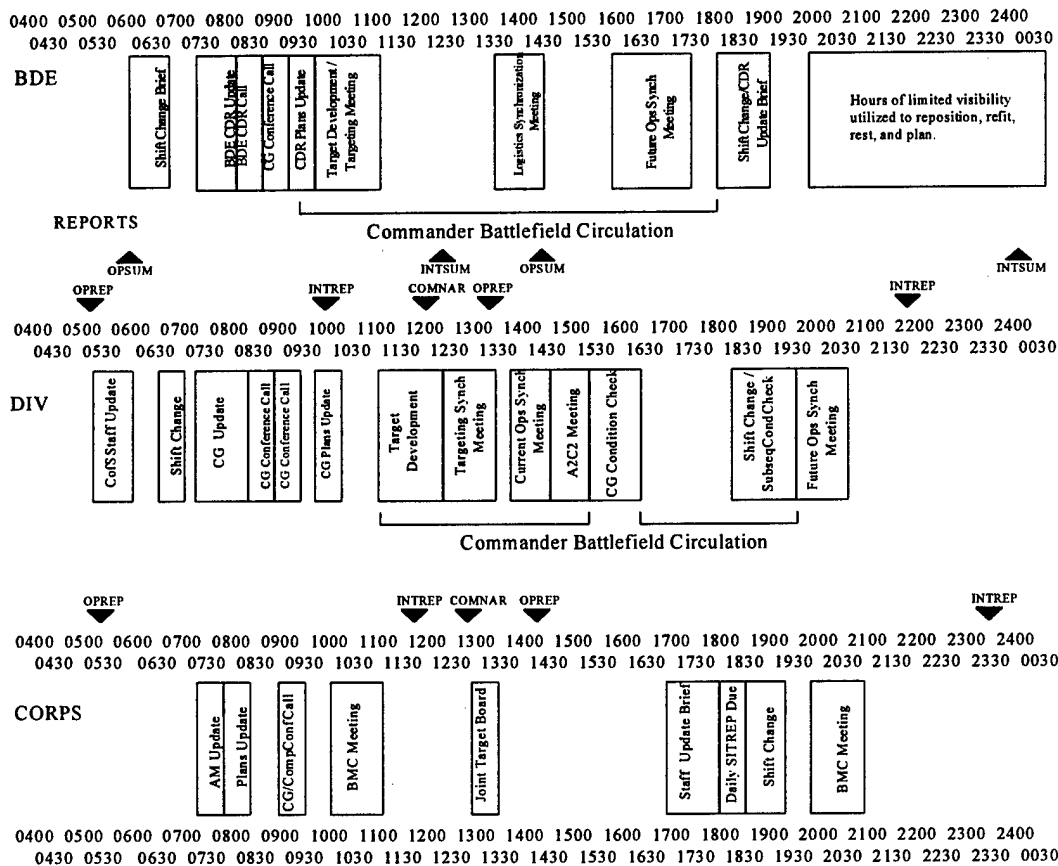


Fig. 10. Battle Rhythm

Figure 10 depicts the standard operating procedure for the XVIII Airborne Corps and 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division battle rhythm. It details how the 101<sup>st</sup> Division battle rhythm nests with the Corps JTF Battle rhythm.<sup>76</sup> The figure clearly demonstrates the routine command and control functions that occur during a twenty-four hour period. Joint and multinational operations create additional function requirements.

Based on the fundamentals outlined in chapter II, it can be assumed that the Strike Force headquarters is required to accomplish the entire battle rhythm depicted in figure 10 with a staff smaller than that of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division. This battle rhythm is difficult to sustain even by a robust command and control organization. It is reflective of a structure that maintains a sufficient number of staff specialists that man two, twelve hour, battle shifts. It unburdens, as much as possible, the tasks and responsibilities of the tactical commanders executing tactical operations. In essence, the higher headquarters staff allows the tactical commander(s) to focus on the tactical task at hand. The Strike Force cannot sustain this battle rhythm with its current headquarters structure. Technology is not the panacea that will enable the Strike Force to man or sustain the required joint/multi-national level centers and boards.

The command and control of joint, multinational, interagency, NGOs, PVOs, or United Nations operations is conducted through the use of centers and boards. Centers require permanent manning and include the descriptive terms: agency, office, element, cell, and bureau. Boards are meetings scheduled for specific purposes and include the descriptive terms: group and committee.<sup>77</sup> Figure 11 depicts the essential centers and boards required by a JTF during the conduct of operations across the full spectrum of war.

## JTF Centers and Boards

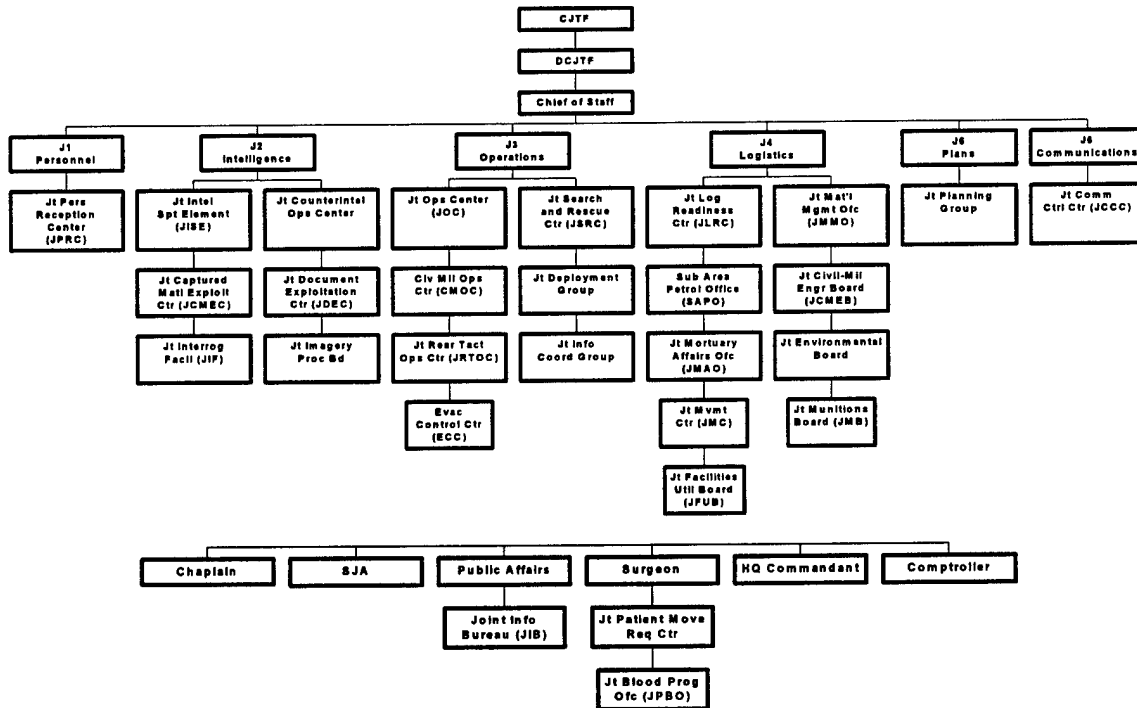


Fig. 11. Centers and Boards

The XVIII Airborne Corps maintains the capability to man the required centers and boards with some augmentation from combatant commands. This augmentation does not significantly dilute the core capability of the staff sections.<sup>78</sup> That is, the Corps' staff fills the primary staff positions and maintains the preponderance of personnel within the sections. This greatly enhances the staff section function and effectiveness through familiarity with SOPs and key personnel. This is a factor that differentiates the XVIII Corps from the Strike Force in terms of the ability to function as an JTF and/or ARFOR headquarters. This is critical because the Strike Force is expected to operate at the operational level, conduct planning, and execute operations, while acting as a JTF, ARFOR or JFLCC.

FM 100-7, Decisive Force: The Army in Theater Operations, states that “ while the corps and division, as organizations, may be able to accomplish [ARFOR] missions, they are not currently staffed or trained to assume these and other operational level missions... as the ARFOR to the JTF, the corps and division staffs require training on JOPES, management of TPFDD, operational-level functions, and theater movement control.”<sup>79</sup> Additionally as the ARFOR they may be tasked for Army responsibilities for support to sister services.<sup>80</sup> These increased responsibilities require augmentation packages and a corps requires less augmentation than a division.<sup>81</sup>

XVIII Corps has the ability, with augmentation, to simultaneously function as a JTF, ARFOR or JFLCC headquarters. Their headquarters structure is designed to facilitate the conduct of operations while acting either as a JTF, JFLCC, ARFOR, or corps. As stated in chapter III, the XVIII Airborne Corps routinely trains for and has participated in more joint operations than any other Army Corps. They participate as a JTF in annual exercises that form the third tier of the Corps training concept.<sup>82</sup> This ensures that the Corps maintains proficiency at executing joint and multinational operations. FM 100-15 states that the Corps headquarters is uniquely suited to be the ARFOR or JFLCC headquarters in a JTF.<sup>83</sup> The question that remains is how an austere staff as contained in the Strike Force concept is expected to “ accomplish a broad range of strategic tasks, often within the context of the same mission?”<sup>84</sup> Based on the organizational structure of the Strike Force, it seems obvious that it would quickly be burdened with operational level requirements that would cause the commander and staff to shift focus, based on operational needs, from one priority to the next.

This in effect does not promote a command and staff that can anticipate future requirements and act in a proactive, vice reactive, manner. This is also based on the expectation that Strike Force commanders will have near perfect situational awareness that will facilitate controlling functions. The Strike Force will become a knowledge-based organization with an intelligence picture so detailed that they will be able to counter enemy actions often before they occur. However, "controlling functions are certainly enhanced by information technologies, but command functions, especially during times of high stress and great uncertainty, are less easily accommodated."<sup>85</sup> Technological evolution will improve the accuracy and timeliness of information flow but future commanders will still have to make decisions with less than perfect information.<sup>86</sup> Burdening the Strike Force headquarters with operational requirements effectively neutralizes command functions and prevents Strike Force commanders from being proactive. They simply cannot cope with the tempo and complexity of simultaneous operational and tactical operations.

Command and control redundancy is not a strength of the current Strike Force design. Command and control redundancy is obtained through the establishment of multiple command and control nodes that can independently maintain the capability to continue operations. This is accomplished through "layers of sensors and communications routes, plus the inherent capability for rapid reconstruction of layers or components [headquarters/command nodes] taken out by enemy action."<sup>87</sup> Its austere command and control nodes coupled with the speed and tempo of future operations presents an enormous vulnerability to lethal or non-lethal attack. The Strike Force design is based on key specialty nodes filled with trained specialists.

There simply is no redundancy built into the command and staff specialties within the Strike Force. Neutralization of one of these nodes would be a potentially fatal event. XVIII Airborne Corps has the ability to tailor its command and control headquarters based on METT-TC. This provides the Corps commander the ability to tailor command and control nodes that, as an end state, allow the operational commander to focus on the operational and strategic level and the tactical commander to focus on the tactical level. Although it can be argued that neutralization of these nodes by lethal and non-lethal attack remain a vulnerability, the ability for the Corps to augment or replace nodes is greater than that of the Strike Force. More important, the ability of the Corps to extend its command and control footprint as a protection against lethal and non-lethal attack is greater.

#### B. Deployability

The Strike Force concept detailed in chapter II describes a standing headquarters cadre that will incorporate various CONUS based units into a force that has the ability to deploy anywhere in the world in less than ninety-six hours. This capability is based on not yet fielded transportation assets that will decrease the amount of time/lift required to move these forces. It is also based on the premise that the force structure of the Strike Force will be lightly tailorable and easier to move. This is a critical issue because the Strike Force is not designed to be a separate organization, but rather a force made up of existing Army combat, CS, and CSS units. These forces, through the evolution of Force XXI and AAN technologies will all be designed for rapid deployability and digital operations.

As stated in chapter II, the Strike Force will draw heavily on the XVIII Airborne Corps as a force provider. This is supported by the current and programmed force structure.

The XVIII Airborne Corps currently (March 1999) maintains the capability to deploy one of three Division Ready Brigades. These brigades, one each from the 82<sup>nd</sup>, 101<sup>st</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Divisions can begin deploying a battalion task force within eighteen hours from notification. Obviously, the ability to deploy these forces is predicated on the amount of air and sea lift available to respond to the crisis. The point to be made about deployability is that the current Strike Force design does not call for a force structure radically different from the standing forces maintained by the Army. Its concept is based on being able to draw from the existing force structure, the combat, CS, and CSS units required for each operation. Given the mission and O&O of the Strike Force, they would assume control of deploying forces very early in the deployment process.<sup>88</sup> Therefore, there is no deployment advantage gained by the Strike Force that does not exist within XVIII Airborne Corps. In fact, controlling the deployment of different units, out of different locations, to potentially different locations, is a task more suited to the robust capabilities of the Corps than it is to the Strike Force headquarters.

### C. Specialty Operations

The Strike Force must have the ability to conduct airfield seizures, air assaults, and military operations on urban terrain. These types of specialty operations require intensive training and resourcing to maintain task proficiency. The internal capability to accomplish all of these missions already exists within the XVIII Airborne Corps. The issue is the ability of the Strike Force to command and control these complex operations.

The Strike Force concept calls for the headquarters to conduct training with these forces using evolving distance learning technologies. Through the use of simulations and digital interface the Strike Force will maintain proficiency with forces that would potentially be assigned for contingency operations. The ability of the headquarters to maintain proficiency on all of the required tasks is questionable. Given the enormous amount of effort that these specialty units spend on maintaining proficiency on their respective tasks demonstrates the complexity of such an undertaking.<sup>89</sup>

There is a reason why the Army maintains division level specialists in airborne and air assault operations. These specialty operations require extensive command and control, training, and specialty expertise and knowledge on operational specifics. Each of these divisions are a part of the XVIII Airborne Corps and would be a primary combat force provider for Strike Force operations. The evolution of warfare to the year 2025 will not make these specialty missions obsolete. The theory is that technology will modify the way these forces conduct their operations and allow them to move faster, farther, and bring more precision lethality to the battlefield. The battalions provided to the Strike Force from these units will certainly maintain their proficiency and deploy at a high state of readiness. The issue resides with the Strike Force's ability to command and control airborne and air assault operations. The complexity of air operations, both airborne and air assault, call for headquarters that specialize in the command and control of these operations. Consider the command and control issues associated with the Strike Force headquarters controlling the forced insertion of a airborne brigade. Is it reasonable to assume that the Strike Force can combine an ad hoc command and control node with ad hoc units and conduct this type of forced entry operation?

Consider the operational traits of the Army's premier specialty force – the 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment. The Regiment enjoys the luxury of an unimpeded training regimen that allows its forces to conduct almost continuous training based on the focus of its mission essential task list. These operations, to a large extent, replicate the operational concept of the Strike Force in terms of employment and speed of action. Their differences, however, are many. Foremost is that the Regiment depends heavily on the fact that it has a robust, redundant, and permanent command and control structure. This facilitates the conduct of highly specialized operations, allows for the conduct of operations across a large battle space, and develops the cohesiveness of the leaders and soldiers that stimulates initiative, responsiveness, and mission effectiveness. It allows the Regiment to maintain the capability to deploy a Ranger Battalion Task Force within eighteen hours of notification.<sup>90</sup>

#### D. Versatility

The Strike Force must have the ability to meet diverse mission requirements and allow for its commanders to shift focus, tailor forces, and move from one form or type of operation to another rapidly and efficiently. It also includes the ability to be multifunctional and to operate across the full range of military operations.

The Strike Force concept does not produce a versatile force. As discussed earlier, the size and capability of the headquarters does not provide a command and control capability that can meet diverse mission requirements while operating at the operational level. They simply do not have the structure to maintain the operations tempo that contingency operations require. Additionally, they certainly are not robust enough to employ joint and/or multinational forces across the full range of military operations.

The ability of a small staff to process a greater amount of information, through the increase of information processing technology, is not supported by historical analysis. Simply put, the Strike Force staff will not be able to process information, apply joint combat power, control employed forces, plan, and advise the commander in a joint/multinational operation due to their size. Their ability to shift focus, tailor forces, and move from one type of operation to another is hamstrung by a staff that will be overwhelmed with operational level requirements.

The XVIII Airborne Corps has proved its ability to conduct decisive conventional and contingency operations across the full range of operations.<sup>91</sup> They maintain the capability to tailor forces and provide command and control nodes to support these operations in a joint and/or multinational operation. By effectively using subordinate headquarters, the Corps can shift focus, tailor forces, and move from one type of military operation to another rapidly and effectively. More important, the Corps readiness to accomplish an assigned mission is bolstered by its cohesive and habitual training regimen.

*"In unlimited war, after the first shock of mutual devastation had been survived, victory would go to the tougher, more resourceful infantryman. The easier and more gadget-filled our daily life becomes, the harder it will be to produce him."*<sup>92</sup>

## V. Conclusion

The mission and organizational and operational concepts of the Strike Force do not fill an operational requirement that the XVIII Airborne Corps cannot meet. The Strike Force concept, as envisioned in March 1999, will take years to develop into an effective capability that will only remain redundant to the capability maintained in XVIII Airborne Corps. The Corps can accomplish the mission and O&O of the Strike Force by organizing its command and control assets and units. They can do this while maintaining cohesive and habitual command relationships with its assigned units. More important, it can do it now (March 1999) and will only increase its capabilities as the evolution of Force XXI and AAN technologies continues.

The Strike Force will provide a redundant capability that will be inordinately expensive, and due to its ad hoc nature, have a higher level of risk than [JTF] headquarters that maintain daily connectivity with operational forces. Analysis or historical fact does not support the notion that only the Strike Force concept will allow Army forces to deploy with an effective mix of heavy/light forces that are sufficiently versatile, deployable, lethal, and adaptable. The Army maintains that capability now and it will increase that capability through the introduction of future technologies common to all Army forces.

The expectation that a brigade size headquarters, primarily composed of ad hoc personnel, will be able to command and control joint forces at the operational and tactical level of war is not supported by doctrine and historical precedence. It simply does not have the command and control structure to simultaneously support these operations. The requirements of a joint and/or multinational force will overwhelm the Strike Force headquarters and prevent the commander from exercising his leadership role on the battlefield. The Strike Force will not be able to synchronize the joint aspects of precision fires due to the size of its staff and its conflicting focus on the two levels of operations.

The XVIII Airborne Corps is the Army's premier contingency force. They have the capability to field force packages equivalent to the Strike Force concept and maintain training proficiency, operations tempo, and responsiveness. It contains the specialty forces required for decisive and distributed forced entry (both airborne and air assault), mechanized, and MOUT operations. It has the command and control versatility to operate, simultaneously, at the operational and tactical level. It can plug directly into Theater level command and control nodes and can exploit national level intelligence assets. It is not just a Brigade Task Force, it can tailor force packages from as small as a battalion to the entire Corps based on mission requirements. More important, it can do this while maintaining its inherent command and control relationships. It can conduct shaping operations, envelope laterally or vertically, conduct simultaneous operations, hold ground, exploit, and culminate the fight.

The Army plan to use the Second Armored Cavalry Regiment as a "Stalking Horse" to test Strike Force concepts is flawed.<sup>93</sup> The Second ACR provides the XVIII Airborne Corps with a dedicated force for security operations.

They are currently programmed in the operation plans and contingency plans for the XVIII Airborne Corps. While the Army plans for the Second ACR to maintain its readiness to deploy, certain phases of experimentation will impact the ability of the force to deploy in accordance with phased force deployment. Additionally, the experimentation may degrade the unit's METL proficiency. All of these impact the ability of the Second ACR to accomplish its contingency missions.

There are three recommendations for better use of the Second ACR. Each of these options is based on the assumption that the Army will transition the Second ACR from a light configuration to a medium configuration. They would have an increased capability to defeat enemy armor, operate in restrictive terrain, and be rapidly deployable. First, the Army could stand down the Second ACR headquarters and assign their squadrons to XVIII Airborne Corps divisions to enhance early entry armored operations. This would allow the divisions to increase their anti-armor and security operations capability. Second, the Army could stand down the Second ACR and convert the spaces gained to create light armor battalion task forces within selected divisions in XVIII Airborne Corps. This will provide a significant increase in the ground based anti-armor capability within XVIII Airborne Corps. Third, the Army could maintain the Second ACR as a key component to the XVIII Airborne Corps. This, coupled with their new capability, would give the Corps Commander the flexibility to tailor force packages required for contingency operations.

Independent study must be made on many issues prior to the fielding of a force that has the mission and O&O as detailed in chapter II. Several topics deserve detailed study prior to formation of a testing unit. Operational level tasks, command and control, readiness requirements, alert requirements, training requirements, and quality of life issues are just a few areas that need detailed analysis with respect to the Strike Force concept.<sup>94</sup>

It is “seductive to hope for development of advanced capabilities that will allow the U. S. to carry out relatively simple surgical applications of precision strikes... both historical evidence and insights from futures experimentation suggests that achieving strategic decision through such means is elusive.”<sup>95</sup> It is also seductive to hope for a force that will have the capability to accomplish the mission and operational concepts with the organizational structure of the proposed Strike Force detailed in this monograph. XVIII Airborne Corps currently maintains the ability to tailor multiple Strike Forces that can operate across the full range of military operations. They remain the Army’s premier contingency Corps and provides CINCs with a decisive and versatile combat force poised for operational employment.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Army, Knowledge and Speed: The Annual Report on the Army After Next Project to the Chief of Staff of the Army. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, July 1997), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> XVIII Airborne Corps, Capabilities Brief, (Fort Bragg, NC: Headquarters XVIII Airborne Corps, as of March 1999), slide 17.

<sup>3</sup> TRADOC, Information Paper, Subject: U.S. Army Strike Force, <http://www.tradoc.army.mil/pao/info.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> U. S. Army, Primer. (Washington D.C.: Office of the Chief of Staff of the Army, March 1999), p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> For a detailed reading on AAN see TRADOC Second Annual Report on the Army After Next (AAN) Project, (Fort Monroe, VA: U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 7 December 1998).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, page 2.

<sup>8</sup> Knowledge and Speed: The Annual Report on the Army After Next Project to the Chief of Staff of the Army., p. 14.

<sup>9</sup> Second Annual Report on the Army After Next (AAN) Project, page 15.

<sup>10</sup> Knowledge and Speed: The Annual Report on the Army After Next Project to the Chief of Staff of the Army., p. 15.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Army, FM 101-5-1, Operational Terms and Graphics, (Washington, D.C., Headquarters Department of the Army, 1997), p. 1-160.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Army, FM 100-7, Decisive Force: The Army in Theater Operations, (Washington, D.C., Headquarters Department of the Army, 1995), p. 2-23.

<sup>13</sup> Combined Arms Center, "Strike Force O&O Concept", (U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS., 25 January 1999), slide 8.

<sup>14</sup> U. S. Army, Primer, (Washington D.C.: Office of the Chief of Staff of the Army, March 1999), pages 6-7.

<sup>15</sup> Advanced Concepts Technology Demonstration, Information Paper, Subject: Army Experimentation Campaign Plan (AECPP), (TRADOC, Fort Monroe, VA: U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 20 November 1998), slide 16.

<sup>16</sup> TRADOC News Service, "Army Eyes New Swift Deployment Headquarters", <http://www.tradoc.army.mil/pao/FORCE.html>, 25 February 1999, p.2.

<sup>17</sup> U. S. Army, Primer, p. 6.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> See "Strike Force O&O Concept," the nine concept statements are derived from slides 5-7. The wording for each statement is, where possible, taken verbatim from the slides.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, slide 5.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, slide 23.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, slide 4.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, slide 16.

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Army, FM 100-15, Corps Operations, (Washington D.C., Headquarters Department of the Army, 1996), p. 4-10.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. This statement with the inserted[Strike Force] is included as part of the assumption that certain command and control functions will be similar to those inherent in Corps/Division operations.

<sup>27</sup> Strike Force O&O Concept, slide 17.

<sup>28</sup> FM 100-15, p. 4-11.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Strike Force O&O Concept, slide 20.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, slide 18.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, slide 20.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, slide 23.

<sup>35</sup> U.S. Army, Primer, p.10.

<sup>36</sup> Tom Clancy, Airborne, Berkley Books, New York, New York, 1997, p. xiv.

<sup>37</sup> XVIII Airborne Corps, "Capabilities Brief," as of March 1999, slide 5.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, slide 7.

<sup>39</sup> Clancy, p. xiv.

<sup>40</sup> XVIII Airborne Corps, "Capabilities Brief," slide 40.

<sup>41</sup> Clancy, pages xiv and 31.

<sup>42</sup> See Clancy, pages 31-52 and XVIII Airborne Corps "Capabilities brief." These two documents provide the basis for which the seven concept statements are derived. The wording for each statement is, where possible, taken verbatim from the two documents. Clancy's information is derived from an interview with then Corps Commander, LTG John Keane.

<sup>43</sup> Clancy (LTG Keane interview), p.31.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p.36.

<sup>46</sup> XVIII Airborne Corps, "Capabilities Brief," slide 4. The Corps supports 37 deliberate war plans worldwide. FORSCOM (13), USSOUTHCOM (13), USCENTCOM (7), USPACOM (2), USEUCOM (2).

<sup>47</sup> Clancy (LTG Keane interview), p. 36.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, p. 43.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> U.S. Army, FM 100-15, p. 1-2.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, pages 1-3 to 1-4.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, p. 1-5.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p. 1-6.

<sup>55</sup> Clancy (LTG Keane interview), p. 39.

<sup>56</sup> See Clancy (LTG Keane interview), p. 40 and XVIII Airborne Corps "Capabilities Brief," slide 13.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, p. 40 and slide 9.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p. 39 and slide 10.

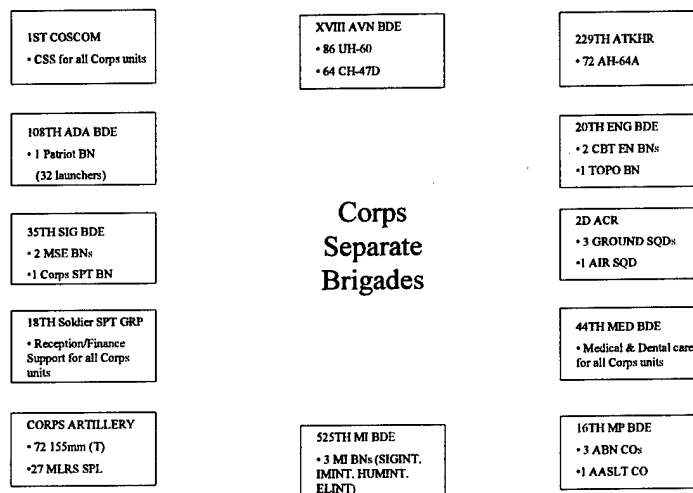
<sup>59</sup> Ibid, p. 39 and slide 11.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, p. 40 and slide 12.

<sup>61</sup> Clancy (LTG Keane interview), pages 40-41.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, p.41.

<sup>63</sup> See Clancy (LTG Keane interview), pages 40-41 and the chart below that depicts the XVIII Airborne Corps "Capabilities Brief," slide 12.



<sup>64</sup> Clancy (LTG Keane interview), pages 44-45, discusses in detail the XVIII Airborne Corps 1996 Royal Dragon joint exercise. XVIII Airborne "Capabilities Brief" slide 20 details the Corps Tiered Training Concept. Tier one is Army Component Training; Tier two is Interoperability Training that includes Joint Training Exercises (Royal Dragon, Purple Dragon); Tier three is JTF Training and includes Unified Endeavor which is a JTF exercise sponsored by the United States Atlantic Command (USACOM).

<sup>65</sup> Field-Marshal Viscount Slim, Defeat Into Victory, Papermac, London, England, 1986, p. 547.

<sup>66</sup> Second Annual Report on the Army After Next (AAN) project, p. 16.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Major Wayne W. Grigsby, "The Division Headquarters: Can it do it all?", School of Advanced Military Studies, (Fort Leavenworth, KS: United States Army Command and General Staff College First Term AY 95-96), pages G-1 to 43. And Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Pub 5-00.2, Joint Task Force Planning Guidance and Procedures, (Washington, D.C., 1991), p. G-1. Both of these documents discuss the difficulties that a Division has with assuming operational level responsibilities. In addition to the ones detailed in this monograph a few of the more important notes follow: JP 5-00.2 states that "a division plans for operations out to approximately seventy-two hours in the future; a JTF J5 plans for 72 hours and beyond." Also "a division staff is normally focused on the tactical level of war; a JTF staff is focused on the operational level of war." Planning seventy-two hours and beyond is not the focus of the division staff. Grigsby states that "a division would have had great difficulty planning for both a permissive and hostile entry like the XVIII Airborne Corps was planning for."

<sup>69</sup> Grigsby, pages 28-38. Grigsby's analysis of the Tenth Mountains participation as the JTF/ARFOR headquarters in Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti found that a Division force structure is not robust enough to perform a JTF headquarters mission. Expertise from the other three services of DOD are not present except for Air Force representation on a division staff. Communication with the other services and the NCA will require significant manpower and equipment augmentation. Peacekeeping operations require even more augmentation to form a CMOC and to have a fully functioning J5 staff section. Finally, if it takes this much augmentation to become a JTF it will take even more to dual function as both a JTF and ARFOR headquarters. In short, the Mission Training Plan (MTP) from USACOM says that a fully functional J2 shop needs 150 personnel in order to run.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, p. 38.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, p. 34. DIVARTY was responsible for coalition forces, Port-au-Prince operations, and Quick Reaction Forces.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, pages 43-44.

<sup>73</sup> Army Chief of Staff (Primer), p. 6.

<sup>74</sup> FM 100-7, p.5-15.

<sup>75</sup> Colonel Rolland A. Dessert Jr., "Mobile Strike Force An Experimentation in Future Battle Command," Military Review, (July-August 1996), p.35.

<sup>76</sup> 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division (Air Assault), Battle Staff Operating Procedures, (101<sup>st</sup> BSOP, February 1998), p.3-a-3.

<sup>77</sup> Colonel Mike Findlay and Colonel Joe Bolick, Campaign Planning Course References CD, School of Advanced Military Studies, 3 December 98, Centers and Boards presentation, slide 1.

<sup>78</sup> See XVIII Airborne Corps, Joint Planning SOP, XVIII Airborne Corps, Fort Bragg, NC., pages 32-34. This document details the personnel manning of the J5 Plans Cell. This cell is composed of fifty personnel of which 29 members are from XVIII Airborne Corps and the primary positions are filled by the Corps. This is a representation of all the joint staff cells that the Corps establishes when designated as a JTF. It allows the Corps to maintain the overall cohesiveness of Corps staff functions.

<sup>79</sup> FM 100-7, p. 6-5.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. This can include: mortuary affairs, casualty operations, postal operations, finance, signal support, environmental protection and cleanup, NBC decontamination, rear area protection, base security, transportation and distribution of Class I, III, V, and VIII supplies, real estate and contract support, theater topography support, general engineering and real property maintenance activities.

<sup>81</sup> In FM 100-7, p. 6-6. In Somalia for example, the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division "expanded its divisional signal element into the ARFOR G6 (Communications) section. The G6 controlled ten different nondivisional signal units and over 300 added personnel during Operation Restore Hope. The G6 had staff responsibilities on a much greater scale than the normal division signal officer."

<sup>82</sup> XVIII Airborne Corps Command Brief, slide 20.

<sup>83</sup> FM 100-15, p. 1-5.

<sup>84</sup> U.S. Army, Primer, p. 6.

<sup>85</sup> See Huba Wass de Czege, "Mobile Strike Force," *Military Review*, (July-August 1996), p. 75. And Strike Force homepage Information Paper. [Troop leading procedures in a 96 hour process.] The Strike Force concept calls for the ability to conduct enroute planning that is facilitated by digital connectivity. The Strike Force homepage details a scenario based on the Strike Force concepts outlined in chapter II. In this scenario, the Strike Force is alerted and deploys to conduct a forced insertion combat operation. "En route the Strike Force commander receives intelligence updates from joint, theater and national intelligence assets focused on the AO. Simulation centers in the US wargame possible courses of action for the Strike Force. The commanders of the Strike Force and its elements participate in the simulations while in the air." The question begs: How are the squads and platoons of the paratroopers, rigged for their combat jump, suppose to conduct troop leading procedures? Even our most highly specialized special operating forces (the type we don't often read about) require time to conduct rehearsals and mission planning specifics. In preparation for their airborne assault into Haiti, the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division conducted five deliberate planning iterations, eight Emergency Deployment Readiness Exercises (EDRES based on rehearsals for objectives in the planned attack), and fourteen months of pre-mission preparation.

<sup>86</sup> Dessert, p.35.



<sup>87</sup> Second Annual Report on the Army After Next (AAN) project, p.10.

<sup>88</sup> It is imperative to gain control of deploying forces as early in the process as possible. This facilitates mission planning, connectivity, and prevents units from preparing and equipping for non-related mission requirements.

<sup>89</sup> The commanders within the Corps have the responsibility to maintain the required level of unit proficiency. They accomplish this through supervising, resourcing, training (and evaluating training) on specific mission essential tasks. This never ending regimen facilitates the development of superior, peer, and subordinate relationships, shared learning, and overall unit cohesiveness. It also facilitates the combined arms training program that develops both the leaders and their staffs.

<sup>90</sup> Joint Special Operations Forces Institute, *Special Operations Reference Manual*, USSOCOM Center for Plans, Operations and Training, Macdill AFB, FL., (January 1998), p. 3-5.

<sup>91</sup> XVIII Airborne Command Brief. The Corps has participated in the following:

 <b>PREVIOUS XVIII Airborne Corps EXPEDITIONARY OPERATIONS</b> 				
<i>Flexible Crisis Response</i>				
TYPE OPERATION	NAME	SIZE FORCE	COMMAND & CONTROL	REMARKS
OOTW (DISASTER RELIEF)	HURRICANE ANDREW (MIAMI)	23,000	ARFOR	- FORCES ARRIVED 11 HOURS AFTER ALERT - 113 A/C DEPLOYED TO SUPPORT - 1.2 MILLION MEALS SERVED
OOTW (PEACE OPERATIONS)	UPHOLD DEMOCRACY (HAITI)	36,000	JTF / MNF / USF / ARFOR	- 36 NATIONS INVOLVED - RESTORED DEMOCRACY - REBUILT INFRASTRUCTURE
CONFLICT	JUST CAUSE (PANAMA)	11,965	JTF / ARFOR	- FORCIBLE ENTRY REQUIRED - 27 TARGETS HIT SIMULTANEOUSLY
WAR	DESERT SHIELD AND STORM (IRAQ)	118,000	CORPS	- 763 TANKS - 444 ARTY TUBES - 63 MLRS - 18 ATACMS - 284 ATTACK HELOs (145 APACHES) - 18 INF BNs (365 TOWs)

STRATEGIC FORCE DECISIVE VICTORY

<sup>92</sup> Slim, p. 550.

<sup>93</sup> Sean D. Naylor, "The Future Army Debate Rages On/ 2d Armored Cavalry A Trial Strike Force," *Army Times*, (April 20, 1998), p.4. This is a quote from TRADOC deputy commander, Lieutenant General John Abrams.

<sup>94</sup> Commanders spend in inordinate amount of time balancing these issues in an attempt to maintain readiness and quality of life. Reality teaches us that to fulfil the requirements of a given mission (training, deployment, et al) it takes three for every one assigned. Examples are every day training cycles where units rotate from training to support to mission. This allows a Brigade Task Force to maintain mission and training readiness while supporting the installation through soldier manpower. Also, an Army unit tasked for a deployment normally is supported by two other units to fill personnel and equipment needs.

<sup>95</sup> Second Annual Report on the Army After Next (AAN) project, p.4.

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