

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**TRAIN, CERTIFY, ALERT, DEPLOY – IMPLICATIONS OF A NEW
MOBILIZATION MODEL FOR THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD**

by

Lieutenant Colonel Michael E. Erdley
United States Army

COL William L. Wimbish III
Project Advisor

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

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ABSTRACT

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The Army National Guard (ARNG) is transitioning from a "train, alert, mobilize, train, certify, deploy" mobilization model to a new "train, certify, alert, deploy" model. This paper defines each model, highlights inefficiencies in the old model, and offers suggestions on what strategies should be pursued to achieve the level of readiness required to meet the time lines of the new model. The focus is on training and personnel readiness in units with discussion of family and employer readiness. Further, this paper explores the potential impact force rebalancing and other Department of Defense initiatives might have on the ability of the ARNG to sustain required readiness levels.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT..... iii

TRAIN, CERTIFY, ALERT, DEPLOY – IMPLICATIONS OF A NEW MOBILIZATION MODEL FOR THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD 1

CURRENT MOBILIZATION MODEL – TRAIN, ALERT, MOBILIZE, TRAIN, CERTIFY, DEPLOY.....2

NEW MOBILIZATION MODEL – TRAIN, CERTIFY, ALERT, DEPLOY.....4

ACHIEVING READINESS LEVELS TO MEET TIMELINES OF THE NEW MODEL5

 ARNG TRANSFORMATION 6

 FORCE REBALANCE AND RESTRUCTURE7

 STANDARD OPERATING CYCLES.....10

 SERVICE MEMBER / FAMILY / EMPLOYER TRIAD11

The Service Member..... 12

The Family..... 13

The Employer 14

CONCLUSION15

ENDNOTES 17

BIBLIOGRAPHY23

TRAIN, CERTIFY, ALERT, DEPLOY – IMPLICATIONS OF A NEW MOBILIZATION MODEL FOR THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

We must change the Army's go-to-war protocols. It is no longer practical to follow cold war regimens of train, alert, mobilize, train, certify, deploy. We must move to train, certify, alert, deploy.

— LTG Steven Blum

Today's model for mobilizing the Army National Guard (ARNG) was developed to support the nation's defense strategy during the Cold War. This strategy included mobilization of ARNG units as an integral part of the total force and included adequate time in the process for units to achieve readiness levels required to accomplish assigned missions. The Cold War ended nearly 15 years ago. In the decade following the end of the Cold War the national defense strategy called for armed forces that were appropriately sized and shaped to simultaneously fight and win two major theater wars.¹ The 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review lays out the current defense strategy that requires forces to be sized and shaped to:

- Defend the United States;
- Deter aggression and coercion in critical regions around the world;
- Swiftly defeat aggression in two overlapping major conflicts while preserving the President's option to call for a decisive victory in one of those conflict;
- Conduct a limited number of smaller-scale contingencies.²

The nation will continue to adjust its defense strategy to account for ever-changing global threats to national interests. Regardless of the strategy developed to protect United States interests at home and abroad, the ARNG has always been and will continue to be essential to ensuring the strategy is successful.³

The new defense strategy calls for a review of how the ARNG is organized and its capabilities employed to support the strategy.⁴ Part of this review must focus on how the nation resources, trains and mobilizes the ARNG. In a report looking at how to improve the efficiency of mobilization for the reserve forces, the General Accounting Office (GAO) noted the mobilization process had to be modified after September 11, 2001 because it was not responsive to the requirements to react to terrorist attacks or unplanned contingency operations.⁵ Today we find ARNG soldiers serving in ongoing contingency operations in many places including Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Sinai.⁶ They are also serving in ongoing contingencies here in the United States. Many of the operations have no definitive end date and will require continued contributions from the ARNG.

While the defense strategy has changed over the years to account for an ever-changing security environment, the processes used to train and mobilize the ARNG have changed little. This paper explores the new mobilization model and its implications for the ARNG. It lays out initiatives that should be implemented and suggests a few key readiness areas that must be improved to assist the ARNG in achieving and sustaining the readiness levels required to meet the timelines of the new model.

The mobilization timeline begins when a Combatant Commander identifies a requirement for forces to support operations in his Area of Responsibility and ends when individuals or units are deployed. A series of complex steps in between include validating and sourcing the requirement, alert notification, and mobilization.⁷ In examining the current and new mobilization models, this paper addresses these steps. It focuses more specifically, however, on the tasks units and individuals must accomplish, prior to the mobilization timeline starting, to be ready to fulfill a Combatant Commander's force requirements when needed. It is successful accomplishment of these tasks that ultimately ensures readiness of ARNG units and their subsequent ability to meet shortened mobilization timelines.

CURRENT MOBILIZATION MODEL – TRAIN, ALERT, MOBILIZE, TRAIN, CERTIFY, DEPLOY

The current mobilization model of “train, alert, mobilize, train, certify, deploy” is lengthy, cumbersome and inefficient. Its processes are not optimized to provide trained and ready ARNG units to Combatant Commanders when needed in today's operational environment.^{8,9} The mobilization process begins to bog down when tasks are duplicated at various levels within the process, both at home station and at the mobilization station. For ARNG units, implementation of this model is largely governed by two U.S. Forces Command (FORSCOM) Regulations. The first, FORSCOM Regulation 500-3-3, Volume III, Reserve Component Unit Commander's Handbook (RCUCH), specifies numerous tasks and actions with associated standards and requirements that units must accomplish in order to successfully mobilize and deploy. The second, FORSCOM Regulation 350-2, prescribes pre-mobilization training requirements and expected training proficiency levels, and prioritizes required training support.¹⁰ A brief discussion of each of the elements of the current mobilization model and how they fit in the process outlined in these regulations follows.

Units generally focus training on one primary federal (wartime) mission while maintaining the ability to respond to requirements of the state Governors. Units train on a set of mission essential tasks - designated as pre-mobilization tasks and approved by a higher headquarters - during their allocated 39 training days each year. These tasks come from the unit's mission

essential task list (METL). The METL is derived primarily from the requirements of the unit's wartime mission and is a list of tasks units must be able to perform in order to successfully accomplish that mission. Every one to three years, units receive an external assessment of their ability to properly perform pre-mobilization tasks. The frequency of this assessment is determined by a unit's deployment priority. Higher priority units are assessed annually with lower priority units assessed less frequently.¹¹

Once alerted, units begin preparing for the transition from reserve component (RC) to active duty status. Units notify soldiers of the alert and possible mobilization. The Joint State Headquarters is the organization responsible for monitoring readiness of ARNG units within each state. During the alert phase, this headquarters usually conducts soldier readiness processing for units to ensure the individual soldiers meet required deployment standards. This processing includes screening to verify soldiers meet the medical and dental standards and other requirements for mobilization. If a unit is short personnel due to medical problems or simply a lack of assigned and available personnel, cross leveling is initiated to ensure the unit mobilizes with sufficient personnel to accomplish the mission.¹² This cross leveling not only adds a requirement to integrate and train new personnel in the deploying unit, but also negatively impacts the readiness of the unit(s) from which the personnel were cross-leveled.

Upon mobilization, units have 72 hours to be ready to move to mobilization stations. During this time they assemble and conduct required home station tasks, such as accounting for personnel and preparing unit equipment for movement. Home station tasks may also include individual certification of soldiers in performing common soldier tasks. Upon completion of home station tasks, units move to mobilization stations, where personnel are accessed onto active duty and usually undergo additional soldier readiness processing to verify they meet deployment readiness standards.¹³ This processing is, in many cases, a duplication of processing already done by units and the Joint State Headquarters prior to mobilization.

While at mobilization stations, units also conduct the individual and collective training required to accomplish the operational mission.¹⁴ This training generally covers both pre-mobilization tasks and post-mobilization mission essential tasks that were not previously trained. The training may involve a virtually new task set depending on the operational mission assigned. For example, the 2117th Maintenance Company, Alabama Army National Guard was mobilized in support of OPERATION NOBLE EAGLE and assigned a force protection mission. This mission required the company to train and certify on a set of tasks that were not on their METL. This additional training extended the time the company spent at the mobilization station.¹⁵ Prior to deployment, units are trained and certified, possibly for the second or third

time, on those tasks deemed essential to successful accomplishment of the mission for which the unit was mobilized.

Throughout the processes of the current mobilization model numerous actions and tasks are duplicated. This duplication produces inefficiency and only serves to lengthen an already long mobilization timeline. The contemporary operating environment requires a new model that ensures timely mobilization of ARNG units.

NEW MOBILIZATION MODEL – TRAIN, CERTIFY, ALERT, DEPLOY

The new mobilization model of “train, certify, alert, deploy” is not specifically defined. However it suggests, if only through a reduction in the number of steps, a shorter mobilization timeline. For the ARNG, the main implication of a shorter timeline associated with this new mobilization model is that units must maintain a higher level of readiness. Readiness is indeed a priority for the National Guard as communicated by LTG Blum, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, to state Adjutants General. He stated, “readiness has got to be the thing you focus on, 24/7/365.”¹⁶

One of the goals of a shorter timeline, made possible by implementing the new mobilization model, is to move from “just in case” to “just-in-time” mobilizations.¹⁷ The “just in case” approach to mobilization involves mobilizing too many units for the exact reason the phrase implies – just in case they are needed. In today’s operational environment, a mission and its corresponding force requirement may change after units identified to fulfill the requirement have already been alerted and mobilized. The “just in case” approach to mobilization can lead to force requirements being overestimated to ensure the right capabilities are available if the operational mission does change after the mobilization timeline has started.¹⁸ While this approach alleviates the need to restart an already long mobilization timeline, it does not contribute to shortening that timeline. The new mobilization model is envisioned to shorten the timeline and to facilitate a “just in time” approach to mobilization. This approach is quicker and more flexible and involves mobilizing the right forces for the right mission only when needed.¹⁹

The primary difference between the new mobilization model and the current one is the concept of units or individuals being trained and certified prior to alert and subsequent mobilization. When addressing attendees at the 2003 National Guard Association conference, the Chief of Staff of the Army noted that ARNG units should be trained before being mobilized and brought on active duty, as opposed to training them after mobilization. Additionally, he acknowledged that the ARNG needed more resources in order to increase training readiness.²⁰

More resources, which include funding, equipment, facilities, personnel and additional training days will assist ARNG units in completing required training and certification prior to alert and mobilization.

Another element of the new mobilization model that distinguishes it from the current model deals with where responsibility for mobilization rests. LTG Blum maintains that the Joint State Headquarters should have both the responsibility and authority for mobilizing and deploying units and individual soldiers directly from home stations and that moving units and soldiers to mobilization stations is only necessary when it is beyond the capability of the individual States to train, equip and process soldiers for deployment.²¹ This will not always be feasible when mobilizing large numbers of ARNG units in support of operations like OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM, where battalion-level and higher combat arms units were required. It may however be feasible for mobilization of small, modular units providing combat, combat support or combat service support capabilities to support major wars or smaller-scale contingencies.

Moving to a “train, certify, alert, deploy” mobilization model with a “just in time” approach to mobilization will facilitate providing the Combatant Commanders the forces and capabilities they need at the right time. Sustaining a high level of readiness of ARNG units is clearly the key to meeting the timelines of this new mobilization model and fulfilling the “just in time” approach to mobilization.

ACHIEVING READINESS LEVELS TO MEET TIMELINES OF THE NEW MODEL

Many improvements and efficiencies can be made at individual and unit level in order to achieve a level of readiness required to meet the timelines of the new mobilization model. However, the preponderance of effort and change must be made at organizational levels up to and including the Defense Department and Congress. LTG Blum acknowledged that, “Readiness is a product of resources and training. We must focus our training on the myriad of missions we will be asked to perform and we – the National Guard Bureau – must obtain the resources necessary for the soldiers and airmen to accomplish the mission.”²² With adequate resources applied to the right efforts, improved readiness in ARNG units can become a reality.

The following sections outline a number of ongoing or recommended initiatives designed to improve ARNG readiness levels. These initiatives include transforming the ARNG, rebalancing and restructuring the force, establishing standard operating cycles and improving soldier, family and employer readiness. Implementation of these initiatives supported with adequate resources will contribute to achieving the readiness levels in ARNG units required to make the new mobilization model feasible.

ARNG TRANSFORMATION

“Although the basic mission of the National Guard has not changed, future defense strategy will necessitate internal changes to meet new roles.”²³ The ARNG must change to ensure it remains relevant and ready to accomplish its basic mission in support of the national defense strategy. Relevant for the ARNG means possessing the capabilities Combatant Commanders require to successfully accomplish assigned missions. In order to be relevant, the ARNG must be ready.²⁴ Ready, in the context of this paper, refers to regulatory standards of readiness that must be maintained in order for individual soldiers and units to be deemed available for deployment in support of Combatant Commanders’ requirements. ARNG transformation is one effort that will assist ARNG units in achieving the personnel and training readiness levels required to meet the timelines of the new mobilization model.

Readiness is one of the primary focuses of ARNG transformation.²⁵ A major impediment to maintaining a level of unit readiness required to meet quicker mobilization timelines is the significant difference in the authorized end strength and force structure authorizations in the ARNG. The current authorized end strength of the ARNG is 350,000 with a force structure authorization of 388,000 spaces.²⁶ The difference clearly indicates the ARNG cannot have a sufficient number of soldiers to fill all authorized units to meet required personnel readiness levels. Absent an increase in authorized end strength, the ARNG will have to reduce force structure to fill units with enough soldiers to increase personnel readiness. This means eliminating units that make up the overall force structure. The ARNG should eliminate units whose capability is excess to what the Army requires and are therefore not relevant. This may make possible a proposal from LTG Roger Schultz, the Director of the Army National Guard, that units be authorized to maintain 103 percent of the required number of soldiers for their unit type.²⁷ This additional authorization would enhance personnel readiness in ARNG units by offsetting the effects of unanticipated loss of soldiers who, upon mobilization, do not meet deployment standards. While eliminating non-relevant units from the current ARNG force structure and restationing forces within States will be challenging, these decisions will improve personnel readiness overall.²⁸

The ARNG is also exploring new training strategies as part of transformation with the ultimate goal of increasing training readiness. The National Guard Bureau (NGB) established a distributive training technology project (DTTP) in 1995 to provide a repository of training information that can be accessed via the web. Along with other information technology initiatives, they continue to improve DTTP. As part of transformation, the ARNG is increasing its focus on leveraging this technology to provide training to soldiers. The ARNG demonstrated the

effectiveness of this technology in providing pre-deployment training to the 29th Infantry Division Headquarters in preparation for a peacekeeping mission in Bosnia.²⁹ Unit readiness is frequently lowered due to soldiers not having completed the training required for qualification in their military occupational specialty. Approximately 20% of the soldiers now in the ARNG are not qualified because they either have not completed their initial entry training, or they need reclassification training.³⁰ In many cases soldiers have not completed required training because the training dates offered conflict with the soldiers' already existing civilian obligations. The ARNG and NGB should continue to improve training technology and leverage it to assist soldiers in completing required training. This not only benefits individual soldiers, but also leads to increased training readiness in ARNG units. The emphasis of ARNG transformation on developing and capitalizing on web-based technology for training will facilitate units achieving readiness levels required to meet the timelines of the new mobilization model.³¹

ARNG Transformation involves more than just the initiatives mentioned briefly above. Additional initiatives such as the ARNG Restructuring Initiative (AGRI) and efforts to improve healthcare for soldiers and family members will be discussed later in this paper. The two areas outlined above, however, focus specifically on personnel and training readiness of individual soldiers and units. Continued implementation and improvements in these areas will serve significantly to assist ARNG units in achieving and sustaining the readiness levels required meet the timelines of the new mobilization model.

FORCE REBALANCE AND RESTRUCTURE

A review of reserve component (RC) contributions to national defense directed by the 2001 QDR noted that the balance of capabilities in the active component (AC) and RC today is not what will best serve the nation in the future. The review suggested that in order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency with which the Department of Defense accomplishes its mission, the military must rebalance to be more flexible, agile and have better capabilities across the force.³² A desire to reduce the need for frequent involuntary mobilization of RC personnel is one of the main reasons for considering rebalancing. Rebalancing does not just mean taking RC units that are mobilized frequently and moving those units' force structure to the active force. It also includes adjusting force structure in the RC to have a greater number of soldiers in high demand specialties. This aspect of rebalancing will increase the number of qualified soldiers available for mobilization and therefore reduce frequent mobilization of a small pool of soldiers and units.³³ The ARNG has already initiated rebalancing by converting less demanded field artillery units to more highly demanded military police units.³⁴ Rebalancing

efforts will not only improve the defense department's ability to fulfill its mission and reduce involuntary mobilizations but will, in conjunction with restructuring, improve the ability of the Army National Guard to sustain readiness levels required to meet the timelines of the new mobilization model.

The ARNG contains a significant portion of the Army's heavy combat forces. A number of defense studies have suggested that there may no longer be a need to maintain a large number of these heavy units.³⁵ The necessity for more agile, flexible forces to support the new defense strategy will require the Army to convert some of these units as part of force rebalancing and restructuring.³⁶ The Army National Guard Restructuring Initiative (AGRI) is an ongoing initiative designed to do just that. The concept of the AGRI includes establishing multi-functional divisions (MFD) and mobile light brigades (MLB) by converting existing heavy and light combat force structure.³⁷ The ARNG should establish MLBs first because they will not only provide a capability to respond more rapidly to a major war and other military operations across the spectrum, but will also be able to respond to state emergency missions more quickly than heavier combat units.³⁸ "In general, lighter forces would be more strategically deployable, easier to train and less costly to sustain."³⁹ These type units will require less training, both pre- and post-mobilization due to reduced complexity in mission essential tasks and will be better able to maintain the readiness levels required to meet the timelines of the new mobilization model.

Senior officials within the Department of Defense are committed to rebalancing the force that in the long term will enable the ARNG to meet the timelines of the new mobilization model. In a memorandum to Service Secretaries, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Under Secretaries of Defense, addressing rebalancing AC/RC forces, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld directed Services to "submit Program Change Proposals to correct imbalances that result in lengthy, repeated, or frequent mobilization of RC individuals and units by changing force structure and/or mix, using contractors or civilians, or mitigating shortfalls through technology. Specifically address capabilities that reside exclusively or predominately in the RC and are in high demand because of ongoing operations and the Global War on Terror, capabilities that are required for homeland defense missions, and capabilities critical to post hostilities operations."⁴⁰ The Chief of the National Guard Bureau stated that critical components of National Guard transformation include, "...streamlining forces and organizations, creating or changing forces to meet near and long-term needs, making organizations leaner, smaller and more effective; and, training and equipping to full readiness levels..."⁴¹ The Chief of Staff of the Army has stressed that both active and reserve components must be modular and tailorable,

and that they must be structured to enable combining elements of both components into different force packages with specific capabilities. This will get the right force and capabilities into the fight quicker by reducing the time required to train and mobilize.⁴²

The Army's vision for balancing and structuring the force is depicted in Figure 1. This vision includes portions of the RC, including the ARNG, which must maintain the highest readiness levels. This force structure consists of combat, combat support and combat service support units with a capability to respond very quickly in support of homeland security and homeland defense either in State or Federal status. Additionally, the RC will be structured to provide a campaign quality force that builds depth for forward presence rotations. Further depth is build into the structure with primarily combat support and combat service support capabilities to allow the Army to sustain major wars.⁴³

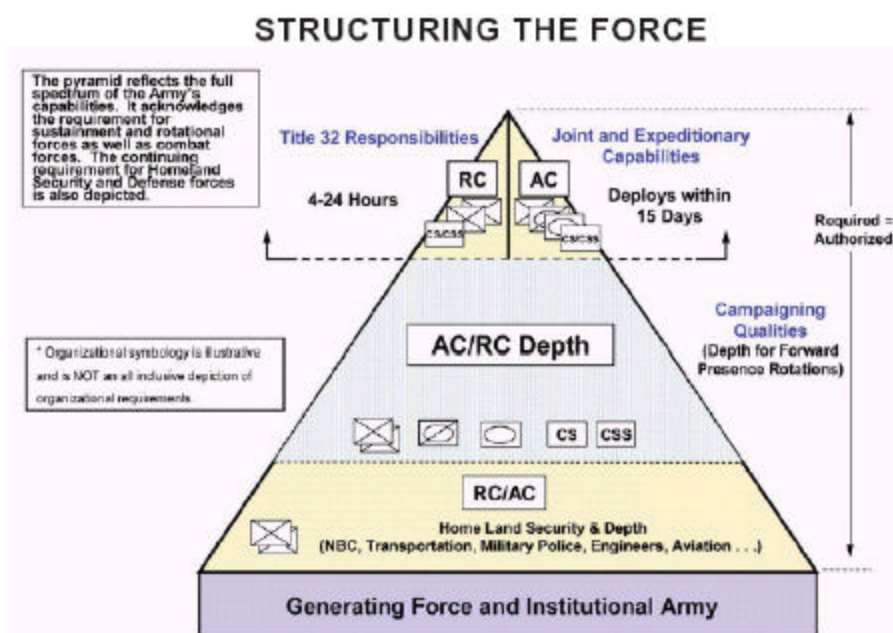


FIGURE 1. STRUCTURING THE FORCE⁴⁴

The Army and the ARNG must continue to aggressively implement ongoing force rebalancing and restructuring initiatives. Specifically, they must focus on rebalancing to ensure depth across the force in high demand capabilities. They must also restructure the force to consist of lighter, more modular and tailorable ARNG units with less intensive training

requirements that will ultimately enable those units to sustain the readiness levels required to meet the timelines of the new mobilization model.

STANDARD OPERATING CYCLES

As previously highlighted in this paper, significant numbers of ARNG units and soldiers are currently deployed around the world in support of ongoing operations, many of which have no definitive end date. To sustain these operations, use of ARNG units will continue. The continued use of the ARNG, both in support of ongoing operations and in contingency operations, highlights a need to provide a level of predictability to assist units and individual soldiers in achieving readiness levels required to meet the timelines of the new mobilization model.⁴⁵

The Army should establish standard operating cycles for ARNG units to provide this predictability. In its simplest form, this operating cycle would begin with periods of maintenance and training followed by a standard length deployment and ending with periods of maintenance and training.⁴⁶ The operating cycle would be similar to a concept the Air Force established in 1998. Their Expeditionary Aerospace Force concept “established a standard 15-month operating cycle and divided the Air Force into 10 groups, each containing a mix of active, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserve. Two groups were scheduled to deploy during each of the five, 3-month increments within the standard 15-month operating cycle.”⁴⁷ The Army would have to lengthen these timelines to ensure that maximum effectiveness of the capabilities required for an operation was achieved during the maintenance, training and deployment periods.

In addition to providing predictability, standard operating cycles can provide a method for determining priority of and resource levels for ARNG units. The Army provides resources to units based on priorities. High priority units, those identified to mobilize and deploy first, are resourced at higher levels while units scheduled to deploy later are resourced at lower levels. Resource levels directly affect readiness of ARNG units. The level at which a unit is resourced “affects its priority with respect to (1) recruiting and filling vacancies, (2) full-time staffing, (3) filling equipment needs, (4) maintaining equipment, (5) obtaining access to schools and training seats, and (6) funding for extra drills.”⁴⁸ The impact on personnel and training readiness can be significant without adequate resources. The Department of Defense clearly cannot resource all ARNG units at levels required to consistently meet deployment readiness standards, but could fund units based on standard operating cycles. Resource levels could be adjusted as units

prepare for a rotation based on a standard operating cycle. Using this concept, units would increase readiness as a predictable mobilization approaches.⁴⁹

The advantages of having a standard operating cycle can be demonstrated by an example from one unit in the Alabama Army National Guard. B Battery, 1-203d ADA, Alabama Army National Guard deployed as part of an active duty PATRIOT battalion rotation to Southwest Asia in support of OPERATION SOUTHERN WATCH. The battalion was notified of the requirement to provide one PATRIOT battery for a scheduled rotation approximately 18 months from the mobilization date. The battery was identified and appropriately resourced and trained to accomplish the mission under a derivative unit identification code (DUIC). About 3 months prior to mobilization the unit was officially alerted and had already completed most of the training and certifications required to deploy. Due to the advance notification as part of the standard rotation schedule, soldiers were prepared and readiness of the unit was high.⁵⁰ This one vignette provides an excellent example of how a standard operating cycle can both provide predictability and improve readiness.

Standard operating cycles provide predictability that will assist ARNG units in increasing readiness as they prepare for mobilization. Predictability allows units to anticipate periods of time in which the possibility of mobilization is lowest and therefore facilitates scheduling extended military training for soldiers. It also gives units windows of time when the likelihood of mobilization is the highest. This allows units to place additional emphasis on increasing readiness with a particular focus on screening medical, dental and personnel records and fixing any problems found before the unit is mobilized.⁵¹

Unanticipated “surge” requirements will reduce predictability, and the resulting improvements in ARNG unit readiness offered by standard operating cycles, as they did with the Air Force’s Expeditionary Aerospace Force concept following the events of September 11, 2001 and during OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM.⁵² However for “steady state” operations the Army should establish standard operating cycles, which will ultimately lead to an improved level of readiness and enable ARNG units to meet the timelines of the new mobilization model.⁵³

SERVICE MEMBER / FAMILY / EMPLOYER TRIAD

“The three legged stool of the guard and reserve is only as sturdy as the weakest leg – service member, family, employer.”⁵⁴ Service members, families and employers of ARNG soldiers compose a triad that can have a significant impact on unit readiness levels and ultimately on the ability of units to successfully mobilize within the timelines of the new

mobilization model. All must be adequately supported in order for units to sustain required readiness levels.

The Service Member

To assess the service member leg of this triad one must look at it in terms of individual soldier readiness. Individual soldier readiness is a substantial limiting factor in the ability of ARNG units to mobilize quickly.⁵⁵ A key to sustaining required unit readiness levels is ensuring individual soldier readiness. Unit readiness is primarily a function of having the required number individual soldiers in a unit who meet requirements for deployment.⁵⁶ Medical and dental fitness and training certification are two areas that are particularly challenging to maintaining required unit readiness levels.⁵⁷

Medical and dental-related deficiencies were fairly common during mobilizations for Operations NOBLE EAGLE and ENDURING FREEDOM.⁵⁸ These deficiencies negatively impact unit readiness overall and result in delays in the mobilization timeline. The Department of Defense Mobilization Symposium suggested two initiatives to prevent medical-related deficiencies from negatively impacting individual soldier readiness. The first was to apply resources to conduct pre-mobilization medical screening for individual soldiers.⁵⁹ The second was to then provide soldiers who have medical or dental deficiencies access to treatment through permanent changes in existing laws and regulations.⁶⁰ The 2004 National Defense Authorization Act authorized, as a permanent health benefit, medical and dental screening and care for reserve component soldiers who were alerted for mobilization.⁶¹ This will assist in identifying and correcting many medical and dental deficiencies prior to mobilization. But it may not result in a significant increase in readiness because soldiers with conditions rendering them non-deployable may not have sufficient time between alert and mobilization to have the conditions corrected. Consideration must also be given to providing necessary resources for medical and dental screening and follow-up care prior to units or individuals being alerted for mobilization. The Department of Defense established a number of demonstration projects regarding healthcare to support operations in Bosnia and Operations, NOBLE EAGLE and ENDURING FREEDOM.⁶² The Department of Defense Mobilization Symposium recommended wider implementation of a couple of those projects. One is to make full-time access to TRICARE available to RC members, "on a self-pay basis".⁶³ The second is to "Promote commitment and resources by all the Reserve components for FEDS-HEAL, an agreement to use Veterans Affairs and Federal Occupational Health medical facilities nationwide to provide physical exams, dental screening and care, immunizations and other medical readiness needs

of Reserve component members.⁶⁴ Implementation of these projects will enhance medical and dental readiness of individual soldiers and will assist ARNG units in achieving required levels of readiness.

Individual soldiers who are not qualified in their duty positions also adversely affect unit readiness. Lack of available training slots and conflicts with civilian commitments are a couple of the most common reasons preventing soldiers from achieving required qualifications. Non-qualified soldiers in units identified for deployment cannot be involuntarily mobilized for training under current laws. Partial mobilization authority permits involuntary mobilization but is restrictive in that only training associated with the “post-mobilization, pre-deployment phase” may be conducted.⁶⁵ Given a standard operating cycle or advanced notice of deployment with sufficient time before mobilization, one approach that would increase unit readiness and shorten the mobilization timeline is to bring soldiers on active duty for training then release them from active duty and later mobilize them for deployment. Changes in existing U.S Code or policy guidance from the Department of Defense to authorize mobilization for training would improve unit readiness by allowing non-qualified soldiers to receive required training prior to mobilization.⁶⁶

The Family

“The use of the Reserve Components during the Gulf War was a “wake up call” for the Services in all areas of support – individual, family and employer. As a result, much has been done and there are many success stories. Yet even with significant improvements over the past decade, *there remains a widespread lack of understanding of all facets of support – benefits, protections, and responsibilities.* So it is critical that communication between the Department, the members, and their families be strengthened. Moreover, *additional resources are needed to provide effective family support, equitable healthcare, and sustain employer and educator support.*”⁶⁷

As mentioned previously, family members are a vital component of the triad. A main concern of RC families and an area of support that should be improved is healthcare.⁶⁸ Issues surrounding healthcare for families when service members are mobilized include difficulty in gaining access to and lack of availability of providers close to where they live. Approximately 70 percent of RC family members live extended distances from military medical facilities around which most TRICARE network providers are concentrated.⁶⁹ One way healthcare support to families could be improved is by increasing the number of TRICARE network providers.⁷⁰ The Department of Defense Mobilization Symposium recommended a number of other initiatives the Department of Defense should pursue to improve healthcare support for RC soldiers and families. They include:

- “Allow eligible family members to pre-enroll in TRICARE Prime
- Establish a recurring TRICARE education program for Reserve component members and their families
- Establish a stipend/voucher that would off set the cost to reservists of continuing their employer sponsored healthcare plan⁷¹

The ARNG should not overlook the importance of educating soldiers and families about the benefits of TRICARE and other healthcare programs. Many soldiers and families fail to learn about the benefits until mobilization is imminent. Families have a significant number of other issues and decisions to make during the pre-deployment process. A solid health benefits education program, conducted at least annually, will prepare soldiers and families to make healthcare decisions that are best for their families long before they are forced to upon mobilization.⁷²

The Employer

Employers are the final component of the triad. The sacrifices they make while employees are deployed in defense of the nation are considerable. The employer link to ARNG readiness comes primarily in the areas of recruiting and retention. Potential loss of a civilian job is a significant concern of RC members.⁷³ This concern could cause soldiers to choose to terminate their military service, or it could prevent potential recruits from enlisting to begin with. Employers are often able to work with soldiers with regards to job protection or other employment matters. But sometimes this is feasible only if they receive advance notification of possible mobilization of their employees. The Defense Manpower Data Center established an employer database intended to enable the Services to maintain effective communications with employers. Soldiers are the sole source for the employer information in the database and do not consistently provide current updates. In order to improve employer support, soldiers should be required to provide employer information for the database.⁷⁴ This requirement could be established either in legislation or in regulatory guidance at National Guard Bureau level.⁷⁵

The risk of losing pay and benefits can also cause anxiety for soldiers when facing mobilization. Many soldiers are self-employed or own small businesses and stand to face financial hardship when mobilized. Some employers may also face hardship when continuing to provide compensation to deployed soldiers or simply by reduction in productivity due to the extended loss of employee(s) as a result of mobilization. This is especially significant for owners of small businesses. In light of frequent, extended mobilizations of RC soldiers in recent

years, consideration should be given to providing compensation as appropriate to affected employers and self-employed soldiers.⁷⁶

The National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) is an agency within the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. "It was established in 1972 to promote cooperation and understanding between Reserve component members and their civilian employers and to assist in the resolution of conflicts arising from an employee's military commitment."⁷⁷ Their mission is the same today. The ESGR is a key agency in sustaining employer support and alleviating soldier concerns. The Defense Department must continue to resource the ESGR to ensure unit readiness is not negatively impacted due to concerns over civilian jobs.⁷⁸

One may initially only consider the readiness of individual soldiers as affecting the mobilization process. Clearly all three elements of the service member, family and employer triad are major players in the ability of the Army National Guard to achieve readiness levels required to meet the timelines of the new mobilization model.

CONCLUSION

The Army National Guard historically has been and will continue to be a critical part of the Total Force the nation relies on to protect its interests both at home and abroad. The Chief of Staff of the Army said, "The Army's ability to successfully provide the Joint Team both rapid expeditionary capabilities and the ability to conduct sustained land campaigns across the full spectrum of conflict requires both active and reserve component contributions."⁷⁹ GEN John Abizaid said U.S. Central Command could not execute operations in Iraq and Afghanistan in the war on terrorism without National Guard and reserve forces. He stated, "It isn't a matter of 'nice to have,' it's a matter of 'must have.'"⁸⁰

" The Reserve components will continue to be a significant part of the Total Force, operating along side the active-duty force in an environment where the pace of change is rapid, where requirements evolve, and where enemies are far less predictable than in the past. Thus, it is essential to make the mobilization process more relevant and effective in this environment."⁸¹

The new mobilization model, "train, certify, alert, deploy" aims to provide Combatant Commanders the right forces and capabilities "just in time" to accomplish their operational mission in this new security environment. The implication of the new model for the ARNG is that it must increase overall personnel and training readiness in units to sustain the readiness

required to meet the shorter timelines of the new mobilization model. Improvements in personnel readiness will result from: reducing ARNG forces structure while sustaining end strength; rebalancing the force to reduce frequent involuntary mobilizations; providing predictability of mobilization to soldiers with standard operating cycles; and improving support to soldiers, families and employers. Improvements in training readiness will result from: leveraging web-based technology as part of ARNG Transformation; continuing the AGRI and fielding MLBs that are easier and less costly to train than existing heavy combat units; establishing standard operating cycles to provide predictability to units, thus enabling them to more effectively schedule required training for soldiers and changing existing laws to allow soldier to be mobilized for training. Transforming the ARNG, rebalancing and restructuring the force, establishing standard operating cycles and improving soldier, family and employer readiness will, in combination, assist in posturing the ARNG for success in achieving and sustaining readiness levels required to meet the timelines of the new mobilization model.

WORD COUNT=6223

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¹⁵ Michael E. Erdley, The author served as Battalion Commander of 1st Battalion, 203d Air Defense Artillery, Alabama Army National Guard from June 2001 to June 2003. 2117th Maintenance Company is a subordinate unit of this battalion.

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¹⁷ Donna Miles, "Hall Says Rebalancing Will Reduce Multiple Reserve Mobilizations." 3 October 2003. available from <<http://www.ngb.army.mil/news/story.asp?id=872>>. Internet; accessed 9 October 2003.

¹⁸ OASD and CJCS, J-4, *DoD Mobilization Symposium*, 8.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, ix, 8-9.

²⁰ "Schoomaker on the Guard." *Army Times*, September 29, 2003, p. 5.

²¹ H. Steven Blum, "Speech from 125th NGAUS General Conference."

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²⁴ John R. Groves, *Crossroads in U.S. Military Capability: The 21st Century U.S. Army and the Abrams Doctrine*. Land Warfare Paper No. 37. (AUSA Institute of Land Warfare. Arlington, VA, August 2001), 8-9.

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²⁶ *Ibid.*, 102.

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³⁰ Walter Pudlowski, "Army War College," briefing slides with notes. Briefing presented at Carlisle Barracks to U.S. Army War College students and instructors during Term II Elective class #108c - Reserve Components: Organization, Roles, and Current Issues on 12 March 2004.

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⁴² Peter J. Schoomaker, *The Way Ahead: Our Army At War...Relevant & Ready*. (Washington, D.C.: Army Strategic Communications, 2003). available from <<http://www.army.mil/thewayahead/forward.htm>>. Internet; accessed 31 January 2004, 11.

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⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 35.

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