

August 2007

# MILITARY TRAINING

## Actions Needed to More Fully Develop the Army's Strategy for Training Modular Brigades and Address Implementation Challenges



# Report Documentation Page

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## Why GAO Did This Study

The Army considers modular force transformation its most extensive restructuring since World War II. The Army has estimated that restructuring units from a division-based force to a more agile and responsive modular brigade-based force will require a significant investment through fiscal year 2011. To facilitate this transformation, Public Law No. 109-163 Section 353 directs the Army to develop and implement a training strategy for the modular brigades. This law also directs GAO to report on the implementation of the strategy. This report discusses (1) the extent to which the Army's training strategy addresses the five elements specified in the public law and (2) the actions the Army has taken to implement its training strategy and the implementation challenges it faces. To address these objectives, GAO reviewed Army training strategy documentation and interviewed Army training personnel.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Army (1) take a series of actions to improve its ability to assess unit training and identify funding needs for training by clarifying specific goals, metrics, and its funding model and (2) revise the training strategy, clarify capacity, and complete testing of the exportable training capability. In commenting on a draft of this report, the Department of Defense generally concurred with four recommendations and did not concur with two.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-936](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-936).

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Sharon Pickup at (202) 512-9619 or [pickups@gao.gov](mailto:pickups@gao.gov).

## MILITARY TRAINING

# Actions Needed to More Fully Develop the Army's Strategy for Training Modular Brigades and Address Implementation Challenges

## What GAO Found

While the Army's training strategy addresses each of the five elements specified in the public law to some extent, additional work needs to be done to fully develop the strategy. Section 353 of Public Law No. 109-163 requires the Army's training strategy for modular brigades to include five elements: (1) purpose; (2) performance goals, including specific performance goals for live, virtual, and constructive training; (3) metrics; (4) a reporting process; and (5) a funding model. GAO's analysis indicated that the Army articulated the purpose of its strategy, but the remaining elements require further development. While an overarching performance goal has been established, the Army has not completed development of specific goals for live, virtual, and constructive training. Moreover, neither constructive training events nor the goals for them are clearly articulated. The Army also has not developed objective metrics to measure performance against its goal, but relies on a commander's professional experience to make a subjective assessment. In addition, the reporting process does not provide detailed collective training status and the funding model does not realistically estimate training costs. Until the Army fully develops the required elements in its training strategy, it will not be in a sound position to assess if it can achieve the long-term institutional benefits of having a consistently trained force, measure how well units have been trained, and accurately determine training costs.

The Army has taken some actions to implement its training strategy, but key implementation challenges remain, such as the availability of forces, limited capacity of the Army's training centers, and the availability of training personnel. While the Army is developing guidance to implement its strategy, commitments to ongoing operations have limited the availability of forces to train as envisioned. The strategy is designed to support a model built on the assumption that a third of the Army's active duty brigade combat teams are deployed at one time; however, almost half of these brigades are deployed. Moreover, units are currently spending much less than the 2 years in training between deployments envisioned in the model, and training is focused on mission rehearsal instead of full spectrum operations. To support the model the Army's combat training centers must provide 36 combat training rotations for brigade combat teams by fiscal year 2010; however, the centers can only accommodate 28 rotations. While the Army is developing an exportable training capability to supplement the number of rotations conducted at the centers, the concept has not been tested and its costs are unclear, even though the Army has identified funding needs for fiscal year 2009. Personnel short falls at the combat training centers also hamper implementation of the strategy. Without developing a plan to address the challenges of current commitments and limited capacity, the Army will not know if it will be able to meet its training strategy goals. Moreover, until the Army completes the testing of the exportable training capability, it will be unable to verify that the concept is the most appropriate approach to meet its training requirements or what funding is required to establish the capability.

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United States Government Accountability Office  
Washington, DC 20548

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August 6, 2007

The Honorable Carl Levin  
Chairman  
The Honorable John McCain  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Armed Services  
United States Senate

The Honorable Daniel K Inouye  
Chairman  
The Honorable Ted Stevens  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Defense  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate

The Honorable Ike Skelton  
Chairman  
The Honorable Duncan Hunter  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Armed Services  
House of Representatives

The Honorable John P. Murtha  
Chairman  
The Honorable C.W. Bill Young  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Defense  
Committee on Appropriations  
House of Representatives

In 2004, the Army began its modular force transformation to restructure itself from a division-based force to a more agile and responsive modular brigade-based force—an undertaking it considers the most extensive reorganization of its force since World War II. According to Army estimates, this initiative will require a significant investment through fiscal year 2011, at a time when the Army is fully engaged in operations in Afghanistan and Iraq supporting the Global War on Terrorism. Transformation is guided by the Army Campaign Plan, which provides guidance about basing, restructuring specialties in the Army, increasing

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the length and stability of tours in the United States, and training. The Army is expanding its operational force from 33 existing combat brigades to 42 modular combat brigades in the active force and creating 28 National Guard modular combat brigades. Support units will also be reorganized into functional support brigades to provide independent support to several brigade combat teams during combat operations. The Army expects to complete reorganization of the force by the end of fiscal year 2011. In addition to transformation, the Army plans to increase in size from 512,400 to 547,000 personnel over the next 5 years.

To help manage its personnel and equipment, coordinate training, and prioritize resources, the Army developed a force rotation model called Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN). Under this model, active and Guard units will progress through a series of three stages, called readiness pools—reset/train, ready, and available. Active duty brigades will spend approximately 1 year in each pool over a 3-year cycle and Guard units will train under a 6-year cycle spending approximately 4 years in reset/train and 1 year each in the ready and available pools. Units will progress from the reset/train pool to the ready pool and from the ready pool to the available pool based on their commander's assessment following completion of an exercise at one of the Army's combat training centers.<sup>1</sup> Once a brigade is assigned to the available pool, it is considered fully mission ready and available to deploy.

Because of the magnitude and associated costs of the Army's transformation, Congress directed the Army to develop and implement a training strategy for brigade-based combat teams and functional supporting brigades to ensure their readiness. Public Law No. 109-163 Section 353 directs the Army to develop and implement a training strategy that includes the following five elements: (1) purpose; (2) performance goals, which should include specific goals for live, virtual, and

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<sup>1</sup>The Army's combat training centers enable commanders, their staffs, and units to execute advanced training under a variety of conditions that approximate actual combat as closely as possible. The combat training centers include the Battle Command Training Program at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, which focuses on computer-assisted battle commander-centric training exercises at the Joint Task Force, Army, corps, division, and brigade levels, and the maneuver combat training centers—the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany; the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, Louisiana; and the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California—which conduct brigade-sized live training exercises.

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constructive training;<sup>2</sup> (3) metrics; (4) a reporting process; and (5) a funding model.<sup>3</sup>

Public Law No. 109-163 Section 353 also directs GAO to report on the status of the Army's implementation of this training strategy. In February 2007, the Army issued a three-page report to Congress responding to the legislative requirement to report on its development of a training strategy.<sup>4</sup> This brief Army document touches on each of the five elements as directed, but does not provide a great deal of detail. Specifically, the report briefly discusses certain elements of the strategy, such as performance goals, training ranges, and funding requirements, and indicates that the Army has begun implementing its strategy. According to Army officials, the overall training strategy, however, is an integrated collection of documents reflecting the Army's guidance, strategies, models, systems, and processes that must work together to develop a trained and ready force. In addition, Army guidance, including the Army's Chief of Staff Memorandum on Army training transformation<sup>5</sup> and the Army's 2007 Posture Statement,<sup>6</sup> states that this training strategy directly supports the Army's Force Generation model. For this report, we focused our analysis on this broader collection of documents in addition to the three-page report. Specifically, we assessed the (1) extent to which the Army's training strategy addresses the five elements specified in the public law and (2) actions the Army has taken to implement its training strategy and identify challenges it faces in implementing the training strategy.

In conducting this analysis, we used the language of Public Law No. 109-163 Section 353, relevant Army regulations, and the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPR)<sup>7</sup> as criteria for determining

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<sup>2</sup>Live training is that which is conducted in a physical environment. Virtual simulation training provides crews, leaders, and units with realistic training experiences using sophisticated simulators. Constructive simulation training is the use of computer models and game-type simulations.

<sup>3</sup>National Defense Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2006 (2006).

<sup>4</sup>Department of the Army, *Report to Congress, Subject: Army Training Strategy for Brigade Based Combat Teams and Functional Supporting Brigades* (Washington, D.C.: December 2006).

<sup>5</sup>Army Chief of Staff Memorandum, *Transformation of Training* (Washington, D.C.: May 9, 2006).

<sup>6</sup>Army Posture Statement 2007, February 14, 2007.

<sup>7</sup>Pub. L. No. 103-62 (1993).

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how the elements of the Army training strategy address the five elements specified in the public law and to what degree further development is needed. In order to determine the extent to which the Army's training strategy addressed the five specified elements and actions taken to implement the strategy, we reviewed the Army's Report to Congress on the Army Training Strategy and Army Training Strategy documents, guidance, and funding plans. We performed content and data analysis on this material to determine if the elements identified by the Army met the requirements of the mandate and what implementing instructions and guidance have been developed. We also examined the extent to which funds and resources have been expended or programmed to support the strategy. Additionally, to determine the challenges facing implementation, we interviewed Army personnel responsible for developing and implementing the Army training strategy at the Department of the Army, National Guard Bureau, three of the Army's combat training centers, Army Training Doctrine Command, Army Forces Command, and the United States Army, Europe. We then compared the reports and testimony of officials in the field with the Army Training Strategy documents, guidance, and funding plans provided by Army headquarters to identify possible constraints. We conducted our review from August 2006 through June 2007 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

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## Results in Brief

While the Army's training strategy addresses each of the five elements specified in the public law to some extent, additional work needs to be done by the Army to fully develop the strategy. The purpose of the Army's training strategy is clearly articulated in the Chief of Staff's strategic direction and in the *2006 Strategic Training Guidance*. However, the performance goals, metrics, reporting process, and funding model require further development. A performance goal—as defined in GPRA—should be a target level of performance expressed as a tangible, measurable objective, against which actual achievement can be compared. The Army has established an overall performance goal for brigades in the modular force to be “fully mission capable” when they are available for deployment. In addition, the Army has developed specific performance goals for live and virtual training for all of the brigade combat teams and some of the functional supporting brigades. However, the use of these goals to guide training is not mandatory, and neither constructive training nor the goals for it are clearly articulated in the templates that units use to plan training. In addition, the Army's training strategy currently lacks metrics that can objectively measure achievement against its stated overarching performance goal. To measure achievement of fully mission

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capable status, the Army relies on a commander's professional assessment—a subjective evaluation on whether he or she believes a unit is fully capable of completing its mission. Additionally, while the Army has characterized two types of metrics it collects as measures of training performance, none of the metrics collected objectively determines fully mission capable status. Furthermore, the reporting systems the Army uses to support the new training strategy do not provide enough information. For example, the Army's reporting system, the unit status report, provides an overview of training status, but does not provide detailed information about the status of collective training. The Army intends to use a "new" Department of Defense (DOD) system to capture unit collective training information as part of the unit status report by the end of fiscal year 2008. Moreover, the Army's current funding model does not realistically estimate the costs associated with achieving the overall performance goal of being fully mission capable. Specifically, the model calculates costs for all of the training events identified in the planning templates, even though they are not mandatory or tied to the overall performance goal. Until the Army fully develops the required elements in its training strategy, it will not be in a sound position to assess if it can achieve the long-term benefits of having a consistently trained force, measure how well units have been trained, and accurately determine the costs of training. To improve the Army's ability to assess unit training and identify funding needs for training, we recommend that it clearly identify constructive training events and the total activity goals associated with them, develop metrics that can objectively and reliably measure achievement against the Army's stated performance goal, and revise its methods—including a funding model—to better estimate the costs associated with achieving the performance goal. In commenting on a draft of our report, DOD concurred with our recommendations to develop metrics and revise its methods to estimate costs. However, DOD did not concur with our recommendation that the Army establish milestones for developing constructive training goals. DOD stated that the Army has documented these goals. To support this position, Army officials provided us with additional evidence. After reviewing this evidence, we have modified our recommendation to emphasize the Army's need to clearly identify constructive training and the goals associated with it in the planning templates.

The Army has taken some actions to implement the training strategy, but key implementation challenges remain, such as the availability of forces, the capacity of the Army's training centers, and personnel shortages. Our analysis of the Army's implementation planning documents shows that the Army has developed guidance, such as training templates and instructions, for implementing the training strategy; however, actual implementation

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has been hindered by current operational commitments. The Army's overall training strategy was designed to support ARFORGEN, which is built on the assumption that one-third of the Army's active duty brigade combat teams are deployed at one time; however almost half of these brigades are currently deployed. Because of the pace of operations, active duty units cannot spend the 2 years in training expected by the model; in fact, units are spending much less time in training before being deployed again.<sup>8</sup> Training objectives for recent combat training center rotations are focused on mission rehearsal exercises to prepare troops for ongoing operations; they do not cover all the combat skills needed for full-spectrum operations. According to Army officials, implementation of the training strategy, which includes building full-spectrum operational skills, cannot occur until operational commitments decrease and forces are available to enter into the phased ARFORGEN cycles. The Army has not adjusted its training strategy to account for conducting the current high level of operations. Furthermore, the Army's combat training centers do not currently have the capacity to support ARFORGEN requirements. For example, to support the model, the Army estimates that its three maneuver combat training centers must provide 36 combat training rotations for modular brigade combat teams by fiscal year 2010. However, the centers can accommodate only 28 combat training rotations,<sup>9</sup> and there are no plans to increase the capacity of the fixed site combat training centers in light of the planned increase in the Army's end strength. Instead, the Army is developing an exportable training capability to supplement the number of rotations that can be conducted at the centers. This capability is intended to create a combat training center-like event for brigade combat teams at their home stations. While the Army has developed plans for establishing two organizations—one in the United States and one in Germany—to conduct this exportable training, the concepts have not yet been tested and it is unclear how much it will cost, even though budget documents show that the Army plans to request funding for building the exportable training capability in the United States in fiscal year 2009. Furthermore, it is unclear what adjustments may or may not be needed in order to fulfill existing training commitments in Germany. Implementation of the training strategy has also been hampered by a lack of personnel available to fill combat training center instructor slots because of other operational commitments. For example, the Army's training center for functional support brigades and theater brigades cannot execute training

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<sup>8</sup>Specific information about the length of time spent in training is classified.

<sup>9</sup>The centers can surge to accommodate 32 rotations a year.

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exercises because of a shortage of staff. The Army does not have a plan to address this challenge. Without developing a plan to address the challenges associated with the Army's current operational commitments, the Army will not know if it will be able to achieve its goals of having fully mission capable trained forces to conduct full-spectrum operations. Moreover, until the Army completes its testing of the exportable training capability, it will not know what resources—such as funding—are needed to implement the strategy or if the concept is the most appropriate approach for addressing the limited capacity of the existing combat training centers. To address the challenges facing the implementation of the strategy, we recommend revising or adjusting the training strategy to account for current operations and complete the proof of principle test for the exportable training capability, to verify that it can support increasing capacity requirements and use the results to guide future funding requests. DOD concurred with our recommendation to revise or adjust the training strategy and to establish milestones for the proof of principle test. DOD did not concur with our recommendation that the Army clarify the capacity needed at the combat training centers. DOD stated that the Army has been continuously identifying and updating capacity demands, leading the Army to recently decide it needed additional exportable training capability. As a result, we have revised our recommendation to emphasize that the proof of principle should be completed in order for DOD to verify whether the capability is the most appropriate approach for meeting its future capacity demands and to adjust its fiscal year 2009 request, and future funding requests, accordingly.

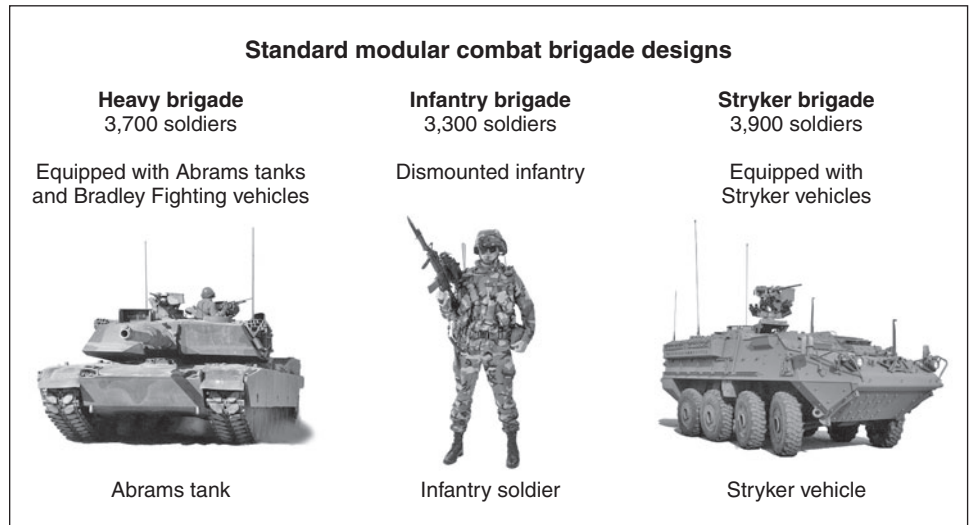
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## Background

The Army's conversion to a modular force encompasses the Army's total force—active Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve—and directly affects not only the Army's combat units but related command and support organizations. A key to the Army's new modular force design is embedding within combat brigades reconnaissance, logistics, and other support units that previously made up parts of division-level and higher-level command and support organizations, allowing the brigades to operate independently. The Army is also organizing support forces into functional supporting brigades. These brigades will continue to provide high-level support, such as aviation, rocket artillery, or large-scale logistics, as part of the brigade-based force. By fiscal year 2011, the Army plans to have reconfigured its total force into the modular design. The foundation of the modular force is the modular brigade combat teams that will have a common organizational design and are intended to increase the rotational pool of ready units. Modular combat brigades (depicted in fig. 1)

will have one of three standard designs—heavy brigade, infantry brigade, or Stryker brigade.

**Figure 1: Standard Heavy, Infantry, and Stryker Brigades**



Sources: GAO analysis of Army data and National War College, National War College, and U.S. Army (images left to right).

The Army plans to use a force rotation model—ARFORGEN—to manage the modular force. Under the model, active, reserve, and Guard units progress through a series of readiness pools. The Army uses these pools—reset/train, ready, and available, which are described in table 1—and mission requirements to prioritize resources and coordinate training, personnel, and equipment.

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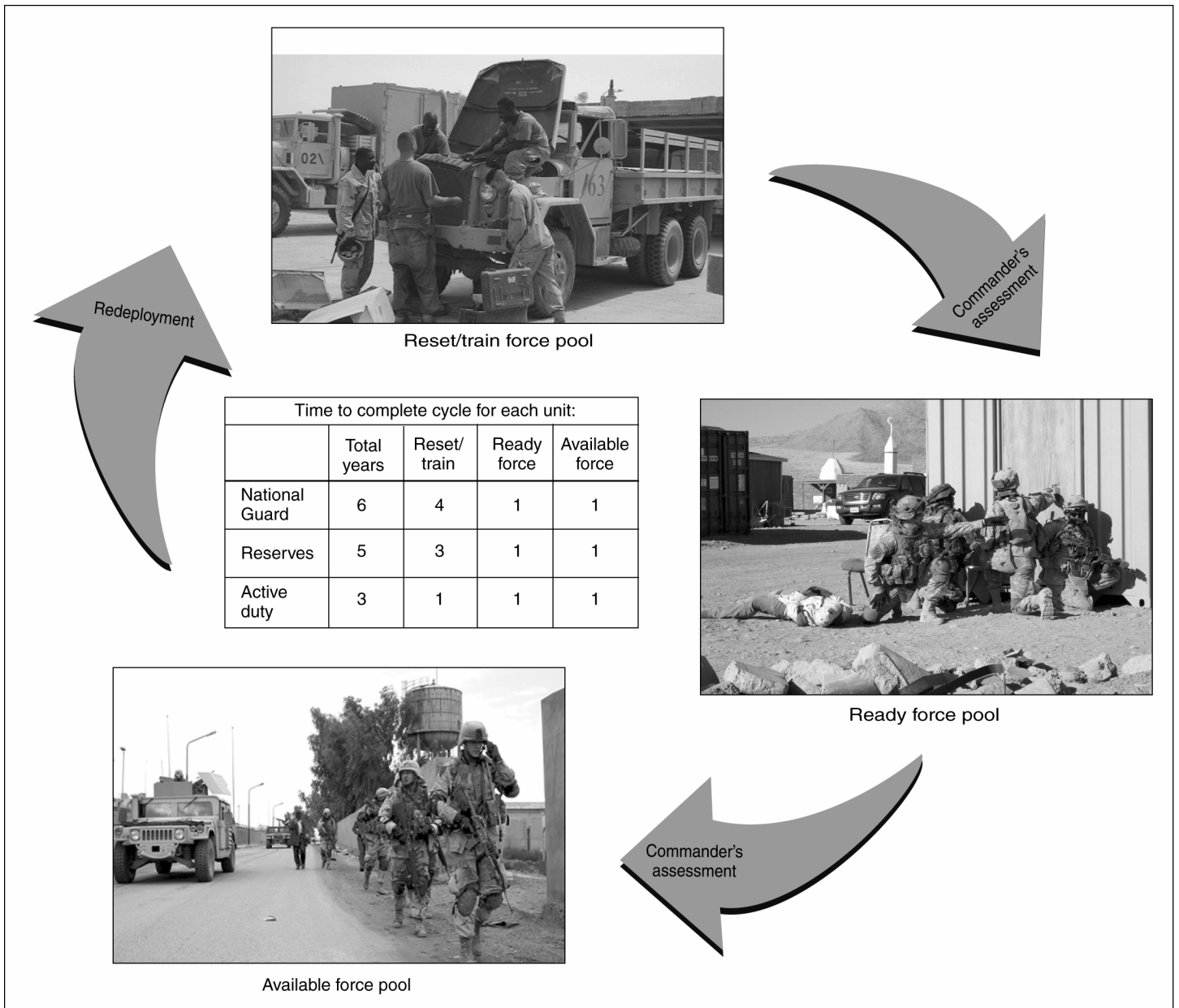
**Table 1: Details of Army Force Generation Readiness Pools**

<b>Readiness pool</b>	<b>Tasks being conducted</b>	<b>Available for</b>	<b>Move to next pool when</b>
Reset/train	1. Receiving personnel and equipment 2 Individual and collective training on core tasks	1. Homeland security 2. Humanitarian and disaster relief	Unit successfully completes combat training center-level collective training event
Ready	Collective training on theater-specific tasks	Mobilization for full-spectrum operations	Unit successfully completes theater-focused combat training center-level collective training event
Available	1. Deployed in operational mission 2. Standby for immediate deployment as required	1. Conducting active operations 2. Mobilization for full-spectrum operations	Unit returns to home station

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Army data.

Units will transition through these pools based on the commander's assessment of unit capability levels following a combat training center-level collective training event, validated by the next higher commander and monitored by United States Army Forces Command, as shown in figure 2. Army guidance, including the Army's Chief of Staff Memorandum on the transformation of Army training and the Army's 2007 Posture Statement, states that the Army's training strategy, from initial entry training to unit combat training center rotations, directly supports ARFORGEN.

**Figure 2: ARFORGEN Training Cycle**



Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Army data.

In addition to training at the home station, the modular force trains at the Army's combat training centers. These centers allow brigades to perform advanced training under a variety of conditions that approximate actual combat as closely as possible, enabling units to assess and build upon

skills learned at the home station using a combination of live, virtual, and constructive training. The Army maintains four combat training centers, as shown in table 2. The Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC), the Joint Readiness Training Center, and the National Training Center are collectively referred to as the maneuver combat training centers.

**Table 2: The Army’s Combat Training Centers**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Element trained</b>	<b>Focus</b>
Battle Command Training Program	Fort Leavenworth, KS	Corps, division, and brigade staff	Full-spectrum operations in a joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational environment
Joint Multinational Readiness Center	Hohenfels, Germany	Brigade combat team, selected division maneuver and support units, special operations forces, and selected brigade support elements.	Full-spectrum operations in a joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational environment
Joint Readiness Training Center	Fort Polk, LA	Brigade combat team, selected division maneuver and support units, special operations forces, and selected brigade support elements.	Full-spectrum operations in a joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational environment
National Training Center	Fort Irwin, CA	Brigade combat team, selected division maneuver and support units, special operations forces, and selected brigade support elements	Full-spectrum operations in a joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational environment

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Army data.

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## Army's Training Strategy Provides Purpose, but Other Elements Required to Support the Strategy Need Further Development

While the Army's training strategy addresses each of the required five elements to some extent, additional work needs to be done to fully develop these elements in the strategy. Section 353 of Public Law No. 109-163 requires the Army's training strategy for brigade-based combat teams and functional supporting brigades to include five elements: (1) purpose; (2) performance goals, which should include specific goals for live, virtual, and constructive training; (3) metrics; (4) a reporting process; and (5) a funding model. The Army has fully articulated the purpose of the strategy, but the remaining elements needed to manage training require further development. Although the Army has established an overarching performance goal, the specific goals for live, virtual, and constructive training are either incomplete or not mandatory. Moreover, the Army does not have an objective method of measuring performance against its stated overarching performance goal. In addition, the current reporting and funding systems do not provide the level of detail necessary to achieve the Army's stated performance goal. Until the Army fully develops the required elements in its training strategy, it will not be in a sound position to assess if it can achieve the long-term benefits of having a consistently trained force, measure how well units have been trained, and accurately determine the cost of training.

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## Purpose of the Strategy Is Fully Articulated

The Army has clearly articulated the purpose of training for its brigade combat teams and functional supporting brigades. The purpose is stated in the Army Chief of Staff's strategic direction memorandum of May 9, 2006, and the *Strategic Training Guidance* dated June 26, 2006. The overall purpose of the Army's training strategy is to train to win the current war while developing leaders for the next war using ARFORGEN. In order to achieve this purpose, the Chief of Staff of the Army established the guidelines for training, which are shown in table 3.

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**Table 3: Army Chief of Staff Guidelines for the Transformation of Army Training**

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**Guidelines**

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Retain the Warrior Ethos as training foundations

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Train to support the ARFORGEN

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Synchronize the modular transformation of units

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Appropriately resource the training base with equipment

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Improve home station training

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Achieve full-spectrum capability with full-spectrum training

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Focus on defeating improvised explosive devices

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**Guidelines**

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Assimilate future combat systems

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Stay current and relevant

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Build the bench (develop decision making at the lowest level)

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Remain a values-based Army built on standards and discipline while embracing a culture of innovation

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Preserve combat power by reducing accidents

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Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Army data.

Furthermore, the *Strategic Training Guidance* identifies the processes, skills, and technologies needed to meet the Army's goals and objectives. For example, among the issues the guidance explains are ARFORGEN for training units; the development of military and civilian leaders through training and education; the various training methods, such as institutional training (e.g., schoolhouse training) and operational training (e.g., home station and the combat training centers); and the systems and technologies present in the Training Support System. Our analysis of these documents, guidelines, and guidance showed that they defined the purpose of a strategy, which GPRA identified as necessary, such as including a description of the operational processes, skills and technology, and the human capital, information, and other resources required to meet goals and objectives.

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**Overarching Performance Goal Established, but Supporting Goals Are Not Complete or Mandatory**

Our review of training strategy documentation reveals that the Army has identified one overarching performance goal for its modular brigades. However, the specific supporting performance goals for live, virtual, and constructive training required by the mandate<sup>10</sup> are neither complete for all the brigades nor are units required to execute the training the goals measure. The Army has identified progression through the ARFORGEN readiness cycle to achieve fully mission capable status as the overarching performance goal for the modular brigade-based combat teams and functional supporting brigades. To achieve fully mission capable status, units must progress first from the reset pool to the ready pool and then from the ready pool to the available pool. To pass through each pool, brigade combat teams must undergo (1) a maneuver combat training center-level training event and (2) a commander's assessment. Functional

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<sup>10</sup> Pub. L. No. 109-163 § 353 (a) (2) (B) (2006).

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supporting brigades complete a command and staff training exercise at the Battle Command Training Center and a commander's assessment.

The Army is developing planning templates that identify supporting activity goals for live and virtual training. These planning templates list training events with recommended frequencies and associated activity levels for each live and virtual training event. While the templates include constructive training exercises, they are not clearly identified. In addition, the templates do not clearly articulate total activity goals for constructive training, as they do for live and virtual training. According to Army officials, commanders can use these planning templates to develop training programs for their units, and the Army can also use the total activity goals as indicators of readiness. In addition, the Army has not completed the planning templates for all the functional supporting brigades, although Army officials stated that they intend to complete them during fiscal year 2007. Army officials stated that preparing the templates for combat units had priority and they focused on completing those planning templates first.

In addition, according to Army officials, execution of the planning templates is not mandatory. Instead, commanders may opt to conduct different training events, or decide to train to activity levels that are higher or lower than those specified in the planning templates. Army officials stated they do not want to take away the commanders' flexibility in training their units by making the planning templates mandatory. Because achievement of the supporting activity goals is not required by the Army, they are not effective performance goals. By GPRA standards, effective performance goals are target levels of performance expressed as a tangible, measurable objective against which actual achievement is compared. Without requiring units to achieve these goals, units may be conducting different levels of live, virtual, and constructive training, and the Army will not be able to determine if units are trained consistently.

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**Army Lacks Metrics That Objectively Measure Achievement of Performance Goal**

Our analysis of the Army's training strategy shows that it currently lacks metrics that can objectively measure achievement against its stated overarching performance goal. The mandate requires that the Army's training strategy include metrics that measure training performance against the strategy's performance goals.<sup>11</sup> The Senate committee report on

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<sup>11</sup> Pub. L. No. 109-163, § 353 (a) (2) (B) (2006).

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GPRA states that performance indicators (metrics) are used to measure whether a goal is being achieved, and GAO standards identify clarity, objectivity, and reliability as key attributes of successful indicators.<sup>12</sup> However, the Army has decided to continue to rely on the subjective assessment of the commander to determine the readiness progression of its units in order to provide commanders with more flexibility in their training plans—just as it did before the development of the current training strategy. Units move through the ARFORGEN operational readiness cycle based on the commander’s assessment. The commander bases the assessment on personal observations, feedback from training events, and external evaluations. The Army has not developed a set of uniform standards or parameters to guide the commander’s development of the assessment; instead, the assessment is the commander’s subjective evaluation of the unit’s ability to complete its mission based on the commander’s professional experience. Consequently, the achievement of the overarching performance goal is not being objectively measured, making it difficult to evaluate training to a single Army standard across units.

The Army’s report to Congress also characterizes two systems as providing metrics to quantify training performance against the performance goals specified by the strategy: (1) the unit status report and (2) the training resource model (TRM). However, the metrics collected by these systems do not objectively determine fully mission capable status. The Army’s unit status report enables a commander to determine and report his or her unit’s overall level of readiness to accomplish its designed wartime mission based on the unit’s equipment, personnel, and training levels. The training component of the unit status report allows commanders to report their evaluation of their unit’s proficiency in its mission-essential tasks. While the unit status report includes objective measures—in the areas of equipment and personnel—training levels are determined based on the commander’s subjective evaluation of their unit.

In addition, the Army uses TRM to collect data on training activity. TRM determines operational funding requirements for unit training based on a unit’s activity level, measured in terms of miles driven—tank-miles—or hours flown—flight-hours. Army officials stated that tank-miles and flight-hours are indicators of estimated readiness, although driving large

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<sup>12</sup> See GAO, *Tax Administration: IRS Needs to Further Refine Its Tax Filing Season Performance Measures*, app. I, [GAO-03-143](#) (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 22, 2002).

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numbers of tank-miles does not necessarily indicate high readiness while failing to drive a required number of tank-miles does not automatically equate to low readiness. Instead, the activity measurements are weighed against a commander's assessment of unit readiness. Therefore, while units report their activity levels to the Army on a regular basis, these reports do not provide a basis for determining if units pass through the pools of the ARFORGEN cycle and reach fully mission capable status.

In using the unit status report and TRM to meet the requirements of the mandate, the Army is relying on systems and metrics that are not directly linked to the new overarching performance goal. To measure units' progress in achieving the strategy's overarching performance goal, the Army continues to rely on a subjective commander's assessment. As a result, the Army is using metrics that are not able to objectively quantify actual training performance against the performance goals currently specified by the strategy. Until the Army develops metrics that can objectively measure achievement of its performance goals, it will not be able to objectively measure how well its forces have been trained and achieve the long-term benefit of having a consistently trained force.

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## Reporting System and Funding Model Do Not Provide Enough Information

Current reporting systems and funding models do not provide all the information needed to manage the training progression of units through ARFORGEN. The mandate requires that the Army's training strategy incorporate a process to report the status of collective training<sup>13</sup> for monitoring the training performance of modular brigade-based combat teams and functional supporting brigades.<sup>14</sup> While the Army's unit status report provides an overview of unit training, our analysis shows that it does not provide specific details on unit collective training performance. By fiscal year 2008, the Army is scheduled to use a new system called the Defense Readiness Reporting System-Army<sup>15</sup> that is intended to establish new performance indicators to evaluate the ability of units to execute their

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<sup>13</sup>Collective training is training that is conducted within a unit and focused on preparing the unit to perform its assigned missions.

<sup>14</sup>Pub. L. No. 109-163, § 353 (a) (2) (D) (2006).

<sup>15</sup>In June 2002, DOD issued a directive establishing the Department of Defense Readiness Reporting System. This system is intended to measure and report on the readiness of military forces and the supporting infrastructure to meet missions and goals assigned by the Secretary of Defense. All DOD components are required to align their readiness reporting processes in accordance with the directive.

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mission-essential tasks as part of the unit status report. In addition, the system is intended to support the implementation of ARFORGEN by requiring commanders to submit a detailed assessment of their units' collective training, which ties directly to the mission-essential tasks. Moreover, the Army has developed an additional system, the Digital Training Management System, that allows commanders at brigade and lower levels to plan collective training, incorporate theater-specific tasks, and integrate lessons learned. It also allows their supervisors to monitor the progress of units as they complete training events and upgrade their collective training status. However, this system is not linked to the unit status report.

In addition, the Army's funding model (TRM) for estimating training costs does not fully estimate the costs required to achieve the Army's stated performance goals. The mandate requires that the Army's training strategy include a model to quantify and forecast the operation and maintenance funding required for each fiscal year to attain the performance goals specified in the strategy.<sup>16</sup> In its report to Congress, the Army identifies two types of costs needed to support the training of its brigade combat teams and functional supporting brigades: (1) operational unit costs, which include the resources required to conduct and support unit training, maintain unit equipment, and sustain day-to-day unit operations, and (2) costs to support the Training Support System, which include all of the training support products, training facilities, and services required to enable the execution of training. TRM is part of a broad process used to calculate institutional, operational, and Training Support System requirements. According to DOD, this process, which includes models and cost estimates based on expert judgment, is reviewed and validated by officials on the Army operations staff.

Army officials use TRM to forecast the operational unit costs for the training of active component and reserve component units. The estimated cost per tank-mile/flight-hour and the level of activity associated with recommended training events are generated by TRM. TRM uses reported activity data—the actual past costs of training, maintenance, and routine operations—from units to generate these estimates. TRM estimates costs based on the full execution of all of the training events and activity goals detailed in the planning templates. However, TRM activity goals represent recommended, not required, training events and frequencies. As a result,

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<sup>16</sup>Pub. L. No. 109-163, § 353 (a) (2) (E) (2006).

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the estimates generated by TRM do not necessarily reflect the cost of the actual amount of training that a unit will conduct. Moreover, TRM forecasts the greatest cost for training because it includes training that is not required to be completed. Because the Army has not standardized what training is necessary for all units to complete to become fully mission capable, it cannot link training costs to the achievement of its performance goals.

In using TRM to meet the requirements of the mandate, the Army is forecasting the costs of implementing the new training strategy with a funding model that does not realistically estimate the cost of achieving the overarching performance goal of the strategy. As a result, the Army risks not having enough information to determine the level of funds needed to fully train its units and risks investing funds in training that has not been tied to units achieving performance goals.

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## Actions Taken to Implement the Army Training Strategy, but Key Implementation Challenges Remain

The Army has taken some actions to implement its training strategy, but key implementation challenges remain. Our analysis of the Army's implementation documents, current training curriculum, and event training objectives show that the Army is developing guidance, such as training templates and instructions, to implement the training strategy. However, implementation of the strategy has been limited because the Army's current ongoing operational commitments limit the availability of forces as needed to fully execute the strategy and training is focused on mission rehearsal instead of full-spectrum operations. In addition, capacity at the Army's combat training centers is currently inadequate to support the requirements of ARFORGEN. While the Army intends to address combat training center capacity by developing an exportable training capability, this capability has not been tested. Furthermore, implementation is challenged by the limited availability of training personnel and the Army's current lack of a plan to deal with the issue. Without developing a plan to address the challenges associated with the Army's current operational commitments and the limited capacity of the existing combat training centers, the Army will not know if it will be able to achieve its goals of having fully mission capable trained forces to conduct full-spectrum operations. Moreover, until the Army completes its testing of the exportable training capability, it will not know what resources—such as funding—are needed to implement the strategy or if the concept will meet its needs.

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**Army Is Developing  
Guidance for  
Implementing the Strategy**

The Army is developing guidance, such as training templates and instructions, to implement its training strategy. As required by the mandate,<sup>17</sup> the Army is developing and attempting to implement a strategy for training brigade-based combat teams and functional supporting brigades. As part of this effort, the Army developed one-page training templates that illustrate ARFORGEN core tasks and reporting criteria for each type of brigade combat team and functional supporting brigade to help commanders design unit training plans. This is in addition to the previously mentioned planning templates that list possible training events and associated activity goals.

In addition to creating the training templates, the Army is developing instructions that will provide the Army training community with a road map to execute the training strategy. The Army's June 2006 *Strategic Training Guidance* indicates that these instructions, or master plans, will turn guidance into actions that support modular brigade training. Specifically, these instructions will provide planning guidance for several Army training entities, including the combat training centers, home station training, the training support system, deployed training, and institutional training as detailed in table 4.

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<sup>17</sup>Pub. L. No. 109-163, § 353 (a) (1) (2006).

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**Table 4: Status of Master Plans**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Status</b>
Combat Training Center Master Plan	Articulates the current state of the combat training centers and identifies resourcing requirements and outlines a road map to adapt the combat training centers to support the Army transformation/Army Campaign Plan efforts.	Complete/issued for fiscal years 2008-2013. Fiscal years 2010-2015 draft being staffed for publication with an issuance date of no later than the end of December 2007.
Home Station Master Plan	Addresses modular force operational and organizational concepts and doctrine, and describes the training support capabilities required at home station during reset/train and ready force pools.	Complete/under review at Department of the Army.
Training Support System Master Plan	Captures what resources are needed and are available to support training on all major U.S. Army installations.	Under development/estimated issuance November 2007.
Institutional Instructions	Integrates soldiers into units preparing for deployment and determines what skills can be learned hands-on or through distributive learning at other locations including home stations and deployed bases.	Will not be formally issued/concepts have been incorporated into current institutional training.
Deployment Instructions	Addresses deployment training for units as a component within the Training Support System Master Plan.	Will not be formally issued/incorporated into Training Support System Master Plan.

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Army data.

Although our review identified that the Army has developed preparation tools, such as templates and instructions, to implement the training strategy, the Army still faces many challenges in its implementation that these tools do not account for.

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### Ongoing Operational Commitments Limit the Availability of Forces Needed to Fully Implement the Training Strategy

While the Army's overall training strategy is designed to support ARFORGEN by training units through a series of phases, the Army has not fully implemented the model because ongoing operational requirements have prevented troops from being available for the required amount of time to complete the training phases. Army guidance, including the Army's Chief of Staff Memorandum on the transformation of Army training and the Army's 2007 Posture Statement, states that the Army's training strategy, from initial entry training to unit combat training center rotations, directly supports ARFORGEN. However, our analysis indicates

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that the Army's current operational commitments preclude ARFORGEN from reaching its steady state.

ARFORGEN as described in the Army Campaign Plan assumes that only one-third of the Army's combat brigades are deployed at any one time. However, because of the Army's current operational demands, almost half of the Army's active duty combat brigades are deployed. According to Army officials, ARFORGEN normally provides combatant commanders with 18 to 21 combat brigades to support operations. While the number of combat brigades needed to support the Army's operational commitments varies over time, as of April 2007, the number of combat brigades needed to support operations in Iraq and Afghanistan exceed those provided by the model. To meet these demands, the Army has reduced the time that units spend in ARFORGEN's rotation pools, revised its reserve mobilization policy, and extended active unit deployments from 12 months to 15 months. Furthermore, under ARFORGEN, active duty units are expected to spend 2 years resetting and training in between deployments; however, brigades are currently spending much less time in training before being deployed again.<sup>18</sup>

Additionally, the Army currently focuses training on preparing units for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, which does not necessarily include the development and maintenance of skills for full-spectrum operations, such as preparing for a wide range of scenarios from low-intensity combat to high-intensity combat. Our analysis of past and recent unit training plans and discussions with Army training officials indicate that unit commander training plans have focused solely on preparing for their unit's assigned mission instead of moving progressively from preparing for core missions to training for full-spectrum operations, as described in ARFORGEN. Since February 2004, all combat training rotations conducted at the Army's National Training Center have been mission rehearsal exercises to prepare units for deployments, primarily to Iraq and Afghanistan. Army officials we spoke with indicated that until the Army's operational commitments decrease, ARFORGEN will not reach its steady state, and because the Army's training strategy is designed to support ARFORGEN, it cannot be fully executed until that time. The Army has not adjusted its training strategy to account for conducting the current high level of operations. In addition—as stated in the Army's guidance—until ARFORGEN reaches its steady state, other programs essential to providing combat training to

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<sup>18</sup>Specific information about the length of time spent in training is classified.

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units such as functional brigades may be curtailed. According to the Army's ARFORGEN implementation guidance, until the Army fully executes ARFORGEN, its ability to train units for continuous full-spectrum operations may be at risk. Without revising the training strategy so that it includes a plan to support full-spectrum training while maintaining a high level of ongoing operations, the Army may not train the force to meet the full range of possible threats.

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## Army Faces Challenges in Expanding Capacity at Its Combat Training Centers

The Army faces challenges in implementing its training strategy because the current capacity of the combat training center programs cannot fully support the training requirements described by ARFORGEN and the model does not reflect the planned increase in Army end strength. While steps are being taken to expand the program—such as developing a mobile combat training center called the Exportable Training Capability (ETC)—these efforts are not yet fully developed or tested, and may be affected by a variety of existing training commitments. Moreover, the operations groups at the Army's combat training centers are not fully staffed because of ongoing commitments.

### Current Combat Training Center Capacity Does Not Support ARFORGEN Requirements

Capacity at the Army's three maneuver combat training centers is currently inadequate to support the requirements of ARFORGEN. ARFORGEN requires that combat brigades complete two combat training center-level events—one at the end of the reset/train pool and another during the ready pool—prior to entering the available force pool. While the Army has identified the increased resources needed to train the modular brigade combat teams as part of its Combat Training Center Way Ahead process, currently the Army's combat training centers only have the capacity to accommodate up to 28 combat training rotations per year.<sup>19</sup> However, by fiscal year 2010, the Army must conduct 36 combat training center rotations to support the modular force structure and the implementation of ARFORGEN.

The Army determined its combat training center capacity needs with the assumption that under ARFORGEN it would have to train a rotational pool of 70 combat brigades. However, the Army intends to increase the size of

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<sup>19</sup> According to an Army official, the maneuver combat training centers could surge to conduct additional rotations—adding one each at the National Training Center and the Joint Readiness Training Center and two rotations at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center for a total of 32 combat training rotations per year.

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Exportable Training Capability  
Not Fully Developed or Tested

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its active force from 512,400 to 547,000 over the next 5 years.<sup>20</sup> The Army intends to accomplish this by establishing 6 new combat brigades, resulting in a rotational pool of 76 combat brigades. As of June 2007, Army officials identified a requirement for 40 combat training center rotations per year to support the Army's increased end strength.

The Army plans to meet the increased demand for combat training rotations required under ARFORGEN by developing a mobile combat training center, the ETC. The ETC includes the essential combat training center support, including a fully equipped operations group with personnel and vehicles; an instrumentation system; and an opposing force, to conduct brigade-level training exercises. The Army intends the ETC to travel to training areas such as unit home stations to provide combat training center-level exercises. Normally, the ETC will conduct training events to units in the reset/train phase of ARFORGEN; however, in some circumstances the ETC may provide training events to units in lieu of a combat training rotation at a one of the current maneuver training centers.

The ETC concept, however, has not been fully developed or tested. While the Army has created an organizational and operation concept for the ETC and has conducted mobile combat training exercises before, it has not conducted these exercises on the magnitude the proposed ETC concept will employ. For example, Army officials at the National Training Center stated that the National Training Center has provided home station mission rehearsal exercises at three Army installations located in the United States, but these exercises were on a smaller scale than those conducted at the center. In addition, the Army's JMRC in Germany currently hosts a mobile training capability it calls the Expeditionary Training Capability. JMRC uses this capability to assist with joint training with allied forces based in Europe and to expand the capability of JMRC by providing combat training center capabilities to existing German and allied ranges. According to JMRC officials, the capability currently has the capacity to support the training of one battalion-size element. This is substantially different from the Army's ETC concept, which is intended to support an entire brigade. As this testing has not been completed, it is unclear how the Army identified \$19.3 million in fiscal year 2009 for the

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<sup>20</sup> Secretary of Defense, *Testimony on Iraq to the House Armed Services Committee* (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 11, 2007).

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establishment of the continental U.S.-based ETC in its fiscal year 2008 budget submission.<sup>21</sup>

The Army currently plans to establish two ETCs, one based in Germany at JMRC and another based in the continental United States at the Joint Readiness Training Center. However, current operational commitments—such as surging brigades to Iraq and Afghanistan and JMRC’s multinational support role—interfere with the Army’s ability to develop and test the ETC concept needed to support the Army’s fiscal year 2010 combat training center requirements. The Army planned to conduct a proof of principle of the capability in fiscal year 2007 using JMRC’s Expeditionary Training Capability; however, the proof of principle was delayed because units were not available to conduct the training because of operational commitments. Subsequently, the proof of principle has been rescheduled for August 2008. The Army indicated that past mobile training events provide it with the basis to determine what is needed to establish the ETC and that the proof of principle test will enable it to refine its concept for the ETC. Without this testing, the Army does not have an accurate picture of the instrumentation, training facilities, and personnel requirements needed or the insight to determine if this capability is the most appropriate approach to meet its future training requirements.

In addition, officials at JMRC stated that they may be unable to provide the number of ETC rotations required by ARFORGEN because of a variety of commitments. The staff supporting the Expeditionary Training Capability is drawn from the staff supporting combat training center operations on the ground at JMRC. Therefore, the Expeditionary Training Capability and JMRC cannot operate at the same time. Moreover, the Army intends for JMRC to provide 4 of the 12 ETC rotations required each year to support ARFORGEN. However, officials at JMRC indicated that their role in Europe is not limited to providing combat training center rotations to brigade combat teams in Europe and conducting training rotations in the United States; JMRC is also involved in training with U.S. allies in Europe and supporting company- and battalion-level training for the brigade combat teams and functional supporting brigades. Furthermore, to accomplish both of JMRC’s missions it would require precise coordination between combat brigade commanders and officials at United States Forces Command and United States Army Europe in order to efficiently

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<sup>21</sup>Department of the Army, *Fiscal Year (FY) 2008/2009 Budget Estimates, Operation and Maintenance, Army, Justification Book* (Washington, D.C.: February 2007).

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schedule training events. Army officials stated that ideally, given the logistical and cost challenges associated with bringing JMRC's Expeditionary Training Capability to the United States, the proposed training events would need to be scheduled consecutively, which may not be possible given the uncertainty caused by current operations and JMRC's existing commitments.

In addition to the challenges mentioned above, the Army's initial plans to develop the ETC may require revision to accommodate the proposed increase in the number of the Army's combat brigades. The Army designed the ETC based on an assumption that the Army would have a total of 70 combat brigades. Based on that assumption, the Army identified that in order to support ARFORGEN, it would have to provide 12 combat training center rotations each year through the ETC. However, as discussed earlier the Army intends to expand the size of its force, resulting in an additional six combat brigades. The Army has identified that the proposed increase will require the establishment of a second U.S.-based ETC and is developing plans for establishing it, but as of June 2007 these plans have not been approved. Without the additional capacity, the Army projects it will not be able to accommodate the number of combat training rotations required to carry out its training strategy.

### Operations Groups at the Army's Combat Training Centers Not Fully Staffed

The operations groups at the Army's combat training centers are not fully staffed because of ongoing commitments that require the assignment of officers and noncommissioned officers to operational units. According to Army Regulation 350-50,<sup>22</sup> the primary purpose of the Army's combat training centers is to develop leaders and soldiers with a joint expeditionary mindset and to train units for full-spectrum joint operations. The Army authorizes each of the combat training centers with the number of personnel needed to support the training of brigade or larger-sized units. However, because of the ongoing commitments, the combat training centers are experiencing staffing issues, such as personnel shortfalls at the Army's Battle Command Training Program.

The Battle Command Training Program is the Army's capstone combat training center. The center is currently staffed at 85 percent of its authorized level, but this level does not reflect the requirements of supporting ARFORGEN. The Army has expanded its Battle Command

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<sup>22</sup> Army Regulation 350-50, *Combat Training Center Program*, (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 24, 2003).

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Training Program from corps, division, and National Guard brigade combat teams to include training for the active duty brigade combat teams—conducted by one reorganized and expanded operations group—and has created two new operations groups specifically to provide training exercises for the functional and theater brigades. When the center’s staffing levels are compared to this expanded structure, the center only has 51 percent of the personnel required. Until the two new operations groups are fully staffed, they may be able to plan and conduct seminars, but cannot conduct the full-spectrum staff training exercises needed to support ARFORGEN. Based on ongoing operational requirements, an Army official stated that the Army’s Human Resources Command indicated that it will not fill all of the positions for the Battle Command Training Program until the first quarter of fiscal year 2009.

While personnel shortages are most critical at the Brigade Command Training Program, the operations groups at the maneuver combat training centers are staffed at an average of from 70 to 80 percent of their current authorization. Army officials stated that the personnel needed to fill observer/controller positions are not available because of the increase in the length of combat tours, the number of combat brigades needed to support the surge, the increase in the number of combat brigades, and the need for advisors for Afghan and Iraqi forces. These specific demands draw personnel from the same group of experienced officers and noncommissioned officers needed to staff the combat training centers. While Army officials told us that the staffing levels at the maneuver combat training centers have not degraded the centers’ ability to train leaders and soldiers to Army standards, officials indicated that this staffing level is not optimum.

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## Conclusions

The Army faces numerous administrative and operational challenges during current operations. These include—but are not limited to—the transformation to the modular brigade-based force, an increase in size, large operational commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan, and shortened training cycles at home stations. Nevertheless, the Army recognizes that it must continue to train its forces to meet the challenges at home and abroad. To this end, the Army’s current leadership has identified an overarching training goal to be achieved in its strategic guidance. However, without clearly stated training events and goals, fully developed objective performance measures, and a training resource management process—including funding models—that realistically estimates its funding needs, the Army may not be able to achieve the long-term benefits of having a consistently trained force, measuring how well units have been

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trained, and accurately determining the cost of training. While we fully acknowledge the Army's need to focus on its current operational priorities, these priorities call for units to spend less time in training and to focus on specific mission rehearsal exercises instead of full-spectrum operation training. The Army has not adjusted its strategy to take these factors into account. When forces are available to fully execute the training program as envisioned, the Army recognizes that the current combat training center capacity may not be adequate to provide the necessary rotations to train its current modular force structure. The Army has a plan to develop the ETC to meet the training capacity requirements for its current modular force, but has not yet tested the concept to determine its costs or its viability as a solution to meet the requirements of ARFORGEN and the proposed increase in the number of combat brigades. By further developing and refining its training strategy, the Army will be able to provide consistent training across the force and remain ready to confront the full range of threats around the world.

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## Recommendations for Executive Action

To improve its ability to assess unit training and identify funding needs while preparing the modular force and taking advantage of the long-term institutional benefits of the information provided by a fully developed strategy, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the Secretary of the Army to take the following three actions:

- modify the planning templates to clearly identify constructive training and the goals associated with it,
- develop metrics that support the Army's training strategy by objectively and reliably measuring achievement against the Army's overall performance goal, and
- review and revise the funding model to more realistically estimate the costs associated with achieving the Army's performance goals.

To address the challenges facing the implementation of the strategy, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the Secretary of the Army to take the following three actions:

- revise and adjust the training strategy to account for the current high level of operations so that it includes a plan to support full-spectrum threat training when most of the force is deployed;
- clarify the capacity needed at the combat training centers to support the expanded modular force; and
- complete the proof of principle for the ETC to verify that it is the most appropriate approach to meet the additional capacity requirements for

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both ARFORGEN and the proposed expanded number of brigades and use the results to adjust the Army's fiscal year 2009 and future funding requests as appropriate.

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## Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

In commenting on a draft of this report, DOD generally concurred with four of our recommendations and did not concur with two.

DOD did not concur with our recommendation to establish milestones for developing constructive training goals for modular brigade combat teams and functional supporting brigades. DOD stated that the Army has documented these goals. Specifically, DOD officials provided us with additional evidence on the establishment of specific constructive goals for the brigade combat teams and the functional supporting brigades. While we agree that the Army Training Strategy and ARFORGEN planning templates include some constructive training events, they are not clearly identified as constructive training. In addition, unlike live and virtual training, no total activity goals are established for constructive training. Consequently, we revised our recommendation to direct the Army to modify the planning templates to clearly identify which events are constructive training and the goals associated with it.

DOD concurred with comments to our recommendation that Army develop metrics that support the Army's training strategy by objectively and reliably measuring achievement against the Army's overall performance goal, but noted that it currently uses a combination of objective and subjective metrics to measure unit readiness. However, as stated in our report these objective metrics—such as the number of personnel, equipment, and the status of the equipment—do not relate directly to training. Training is subjectively evaluated based on the professional judgment of the unit commander. We recognize that the Army continues to adapt and refine the metrics used to evaluate unit readiness, however we continue to believe our recommendation to increase the objectivity and reliability of training metrics has merit.

DOD concurred with comment to our recommendation that the Army review and revise the funding model used to support the Army's training strategy so that it captures all of the costs associated with achieving the Army's performance goals. DOD stated that its TRM captures the Army's operations tempo requirements, but does not include training infrastructure requirements. DOD explained that these other costs are quantified and forecasted by the training resource management process, which incorporates data and estimates from multiple sources, and the

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outputs of which are reviewed, validated, and approved by Army staff. We have modified our report to recognize that the model is part of a broader process for estimating these costs. However, we continue to believe that the model DOD uses to estimate operations and maintenance costs does not provide a realistic estimate of training costs since it is based on the full execution of the planning templates, even though units are not required to complete all the events identified in the templates, and have clarified our recommendation accordingly.

DOD concurred with our recommendation that the Army revise and adjust its training strategy to account for the current high-level of operations so that it includes a plan to support full-spectrum threat training when most of the force is deployed. The Army is currently revising its strategy to recognize that it needs the capability to respond to a full-spectrum threat. This revised strategy is scheduled to be presented to Army leadership for a decision in fall 2007.

DOD did not concur with our recommendation to clarify the capacity needed at the combat training centers to support the expanded modular force. In its written response, DOD noted that the Army has continuously identified and updated the throughput and capacity demands required of its combat training centers to support the brigade combat team modular force. It noted that this process led the Army to identify the need to establish the ETC that is intended to increase training capacity through an ARFORGEN synchronization process, which prioritizes and allocates training rotations. In June 2007, the Army updated its capacity evaluation to support its increased end strength. DOD stated that by establishing two ETCs in the United States and an ETC in Germany to augment its existing three maneuver combat training centers, the Army will be able to meet the requirements of the 76 brigade combat team force. While we have not yet conducted a detailed analysis of the Army's evaluation, we believe this evaluation complies with the intent of our recommendation. In addition, the Army's analysis of its capacity requirements would be enhanced by completing the proof of principle testing for the ETC. The results of this testing will provide the Army with the insight needed to determine if the capability is the most appropriate approach to meet its future capacity demands and to develop resource requirements for the ETC.

DOD concurred with our recommendation to establish milestones for conducting the proof of principle testing and stated that the Army plans to conduct the test in August 2008. However, we note that the Army will not have the results of this testing before submitting its fiscal year 2009 budget request. As such, we revised our recommendation to stress the need to

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complete this testing, validate its concept, and use the results to adjust its fiscal year 2009 and any future funding requests as needed.

DOD's comments are reprinted in appendix II. DOD also provided technical comments, which we have incorporated as appropriate.

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We are sending copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Army, the Chief of Staff of the Army, and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. We will also make copies available to other interested parties upon request. In addition, this report will be available at no charge on the GAO Web site at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have any questions regarding this report, please contact me at (202)-512-9619 or [pickups@gao.gov](mailto:pickups@gao.gov). Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. Key contributors to this report are Laura Durland, Assistant Director; Vincent Balloon; Renee S. Brown; Natasha Ewing; Kevin Handley; John W. Lee; Lonnie J. McAllister II; and Tamika Weerasingha.



Sharon L. Pickup  
Director, Defense Capabilities and Management

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# Appendix I: Scope and Methodology

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In conducting this review, we first examined the language of Public Law No. 109-163 Section 353, which directs the reporting of the Army's implementation of its training strategy. On the basis of this mandate, we assessed the extent to which the strategy addresses the five elements specified in the public law by reviewing relevant regulations and by using as a model the principles embodied in the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA). We identified criteria for the Army's training strategy in the mandate language and in GPRA and the guidance for implementing GPRA. We used these criteria to evaluate how the strategy addressed the elements and to what degree further development is needed. Furthermore, we reviewed the Army's report to Congress on the Army training strategy to assess how the Army says it meets the requirements of the mandate. Moreover, we performed content and data analysis to determine if the elements identified by the Army met the requirements of the mandate, and to determine what implementing instructions and guidance have been developed. We also examined the extent to which funds and resources have been expended or programmed to support the strategy.

In order to determine how the five elements are adapted into the training strategy and to obtain information about the current status of the Army training strategy, we interviewed Army personnel at the Department of the Army, National Guard Bureau, three combat training centers, Army Training and Doctrine Command, Army Forces Command, and the United States Army, Europe responsible for developing and implementing the training strategy. Specifically, we interviewed various officials at the Department of the Army Office of the G-3/5/7 to discuss the details and status of the training resource model and the training strategy's master plans. Additionally, we reviewed documentation provided in the meetings to further assist our analysis. To ensure that we did not overlook the National Guard's perspective, we spoke with the National Guard regarding the effect of the Army's overall training strategy and its implementation. Additionally we visited two of the Army's three maneuver combat training centers—the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany, and the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, California—as well as the Battle Command Training Program combat training center in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. During these visits, we spoke to Army officials in charge of training to obtain an understanding of the training processes at the centers and to assess the implementation of the training strategy into their specific processes. Furthermore, to identify the constraints that may prevent the Army from implementing its training strategy and the potential impact on implementation, we reviewed the Army's strategy and schedule for implementation. Additionally, we spoke with training leaders to obtain

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their perspectives on the challenges we identified, what they recognized as challenges, and how they felt these challenges will affect the implementation of the strategy. Finally we compared the Army training strategy with the reports and testimony of the Army's training leaders in the field to identify and verify the possible constraints.

We conducted our review from August 2006 through June 2007 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

# Appendix II: Comments from the Department of Defense



PERSONNEL AND  
READINESS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

18 July 2007

Ms. Sharon L. Pickup  
Director, Defense Capabilities and Management  
U.S. Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Ms. Pickup:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the Government Accountability Office (GAO) draft report GAO-0-7-936, "MILITARY TRAINING: Actions Needed to More Fully Develop the Army's Strategy for Training Modular Brigades and Address Implementation Challenges," dated June 19, 2007 (GAO Code 350917).

The DoD appreciates the opportunity to provide input to this report. The training of the modular force while at war is a challenging endeavor. The Army has several key initiatives underway which address many of the issues noted in the draft report. The DoD concurs with recommendation Four. We concur with comment on recommendations Two, Three, and Six. The DoD non-concurs with recommendations One, and Five. Detailed comments are enclosed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul W. Mayberry".

Paul W. Mayberry  
Deputy Under Secretary of Defense  
Readiness

Enclosure:  
As Stated

GAO DRAFT REPORT – DATED JUNE 19, 2007  
GAO CODE 350917/GAO-07-936

“MILITARY TRAINING: Actions Needed to More Fully Develop the Army’s  
Strategy for Training Modular Brigades and Address Implementation Challenges”

**RECOMMENDATION 1:** The GAO recommended that the Secretary of Defense direct the Secretary of the Army to establish milestones for developing constructive training goals for modular brigade combat teams and functional supporting brigades.

**DOD RESPONSE:** The DoD non-concurs. The constructive training goals are documented in both the Army Training Strategy and the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) training templates. As stated on page 8 of the Army Training Strategy, the Battle Command Training Program (BCTP) executes its support to ARFORGEN with leader and staff seminars throughout a unit’s training cycle and a Brigade Command and Battle Staff Training exercise for BCTs early in their Reset/Train period. BCTP will be responsible for training functional and support brigade headquarters utilizing a Support Brigade Command and Staff Exercise beginning in FY2008. The ARFORGEN training templates establish constructive training goals in each phase of the ARFORGEN cycle for BCTs and functional/support brigades. AC Corps/Divisions conduct two BCTPs during their ARFORGEN training cycle.

**RECOMMENDATION 2:** The GAO recommended that the Secretary of Defense direct the Secretary of the Army to develop metrics that support the Army’s training strategy by objectively and reliably measuring achievement against the Army’s overall performance goal.

**DOD RESPONSE:** The DoD concurs with comment. The Army is and will continually adapt and refine training of the force to meet the realities of the current threat, operational environment, and other factors. We cannot predict what the enemy will do nor the conditions under which we will conduct operations, therefore the training strategy provides commanders a “doctrinal training template” that they modify based on the current operating environment, time, personnel and equipment available, into a “situational training template”. They are assisted by feedback and lessons learned from units in combat.

Army unit commanders measure their readiness against the unit’s core mission for which it was designed and organized and, upon receiving a directed mission, they also measure readiness against it. This assessment is made by the commander with a focus on mission accomplishment which serves as the basis for an informed decision using measures of resources in four key areas; personnel, equipment on hand, equipment readiness, and training. These areas yield a C-level assessment for unit readiness. The commander then has the prerogative to change (raise or lower) this assessment if he/she feels a change yields a more accurate assessment of the unit’s readiness. Finally, this evaluation by the commander is an informed, objective evaluation in which the commander will also leverage his/her experience, training, education, and judgment to make the final assessment.

The DoD is implementing the Defense Readiness Reporting System (DRRS) which focuses on mission accomplishment. The commander assesses the unit’s ability to execute its mission based on designated mission essential tasks. The tasks have specified conditions and standards that the commander uses to inform the assessment. The commander also considers the availability and

status of resources to inform this assessment. The DRRS is currently being implemented throughout the Army. Until the transition is complete, the Army continues to use the legacy reporting system.

The Army has established ARFORGEN readiness metrics/goals as published in the ARFORGEN Implementation plan (Annex F to the Army Campaign Plan). Readiness reporting published in AR 220-1 also establishes key objective data points and information requirements that will allow the Army to track a unit's level of tactical proficiency as it progresses through the ARFORGEN cycle.

The continuing process of assessing readiness, while a unit progresses through the ARFORGEN cycle, allows the Army to adapt and respond to the current threat. Our training strategy and the metrics we use to measure combat readiness is working and sustaining our warfighting readiness. We see the results every day in Afghanistan and Iraq. In support of this recommendation, the Army will continue to take steps to ensure we employ the appropriate metrics that accurately measure ARFORGEN performance goals and combat readiness.

**RECOMMENDATION 3:** The GAO recommended that the Secretary of Defense direct the Secretary of the Army to review and revise the funding model used to support the Army's training strategy so that it captures all of the costs associated with achieving the Army's performance goals.

**DoD RESPONSE:** The DoD concurs with comment. The Training Resource Model (TRM) is under constant review and revision. The TRM has adapted over time to support the validation and resourcing of Transformation, ARFORGEN, and, most recently, the Grow-The-Army training requirements. The TRM is a single model that accounts for every validated Operations Tempo requirement. These requirements are focused on unit operations and maintenance and by design do not include all of the training infrastructure requirements. The TRM has evolved just as the Army and the training strategy have evolved. The model contains the approved ARFORGEN BCT training strategies and costs each unit in its respective year of the multi year strategy. As such, the Army does have a model that reflects the overarching performance goals of the ARFORGEN training strategy.

The GAO report states that the current funding model does not account for all the costs; specifically, the model does not include the costs of expanding the combat training centers. The operations and maintenance costs related to the Exportable Training Capability (ETC) have been identified by the Army and are reflected in the Training Resource Model (TRM).

TRM is part of a larger training resource management process (PPBS) and a methodology that accurately quantifies, forecasts and prioritizes Army training requirements. The methodology encompasses a rigorous validation process that accurately captures all institutional, operational, and training support requirements. It includes cost estimates developed thru the TRM, ITRM (Institutional Training Resource Model), the Combat Training Center Directorate of TRADOC and the resource processes of the Training Support Systems. The outputs of all of these sources are reviewed, validated and approved by the Army's Training Program Evaluation Group which operates under the G3/5/7. It is this body that provides the single resource point of contact for training resources. The Army is committed to constantly reviewing the overall resource management process to ensure we accurately quantify and forecast Army training requirements.

**RECOMMENDATION 4:** The GAO recommended that the Secretary of Defense direct the Secretary of the Army to revise and adjust the training strategy to account for the current high-level of operations so that it includes a plan to support full-spectrum threat training when most of the force is deployed.

**DoD RESPONSE:** The DoD concurs. In January 2007, the Army began an effort to revise its Training and Leader Development Strategy. The revised strategy is scheduled to be presented to the Army leadership for a decision in the Fall of 2007. A draft version of the revised strategy was provided to GAO on June 26, 2007. This is a strategic document that applies to the Army's total force, not just to brigade combat teams and functional support brigades. The strategy describes a vision, with specific goals and objectives to be assessed at the strategic level. The capability for the Army to respond to a full-spectrum threat is a continuous theme restated throughout the strategy. In the near term, the Army is addressing ways to increase training time and regain full spectrum capabilities. Training guidance at the tactical level is addressing more core mission essential task list (CMETL) maneuver at home station and devoting more time to high intensity conflict training at the Combat Maneuver Training Centers (CMTCs).

**RECOMMENDATION 5:** The GAO recommended that the Secretary of Defense direct the Secretary of the Army to clarify the capacity needed at the combat training centers to support the expanded modular force.

**DoD RESPONSE:** The DoD non-concurs. Since October 2004 and under the ARFORGEN process and the CTC Way Ahead Study, the Army has been continuously identifying and updating throughput/capacity demands for the CTCs to support the BCT Modular Force. Based on the analysis conducted during the CTC Way Ahead Study and considering the current capacity of the maneuver CTCs, the Army will establish the first CONUS Exportable Training Capability (ETC) in FY 2010 and has programmed to do so. The ARFORGEN Synchronization process will prioritize and allocate CTC (and ETC) training rotations support training requirements associated with training the expanded modular force. Additionally, the Army is also programming resources to bring a second CONUS ETC on line in FY2012 to provide additional modular force training capabilities. Bottom Line: The CTC program with two CONUS ETC, the Joint Multi-National Training Center (JMRC) as a dual missioned CTC, the Joint Readiness Training Center, and the National Training Center (NTC) will be able to meet the ARFORGEN requirements for 76 Modular BCTs. The Army maintains a rigorous review of the CTC program and will continue to ensure the CTCs meet current and future training requirements.

**RECOMMENDATION 6:** The GAO recommended that the Secretary of Defense direct the Secretary of the Army to establish milestones for completing the proof of principle for the exportable training capability, complete the testing, and use the results to factor into future funding requests.

**DoD RESPONSE:** The DoD concurs with comment. The Army has established milestones for executing the proof of principle event in FY2008 and has programmed resources for this purpose. At the time of the initial GAO inquiry in Feb 2007, the Army was tentatively planning to conduct the ETC proof of principle in FY2007, but has now established milestones to execute the proof of principle in FY2008. The Army will also leverage previous experience gained conducting CTC supported mission rehearsal exercises at unit home stations in support of the Iraq "surge" initiative in its exportable training capability concept. The Army has exported six CTC rotations over the last few years, including two this year to Fort Stewart and Fort Lewis.

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