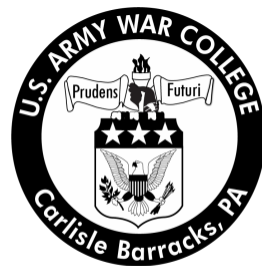


Strategy Research Project

Installation Management Transformation – Promise, Impact and Contemporary Challenges

by

Colonel Jeffrey M. Sanborn
United States Army



United States Army War College
Class of 2012

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**INSTALLATION MANAGEMENT TRANSFORMATION – PROMISE, IMPACT AND
CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES**

by

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ABSTRACT

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The Army's installation management transformation process has been underway for a decade. This paper describes that basic transformation, describes its timeline, describes its intended purposes, evaluates how well the transformation has led to achievement of stated objectives, and analyzes evolving issues that are resulting from changes in the strategic environment. Transformation has achieved obvious benefits. However, a historically generous fiscal environment has masked the extent to which the cost of maintaining increased overhead management structure may cancel out those benefits in the future. As the Army moves into an increasingly constrained fiscal environment, IMCOM leaders must flatten organizational overhead, continue to eliminate redundant programs and pursue aggressive energy, water and waste management programs to preserve precious fiscal resources. This paper will examine all of these critical challenges facing installation management. Smartly targeted cost savings, coupled with business process reforms will allow our Army to continue to fulfill the contract our nation has with the Soldiers, civilians and families who volunteer to serve.

INSTALLATION MANAGEMENT TRANSFORMATION – PROMISE, IMPACT AND CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

Installation Management Command (IMCOM) is all about installation, Soldier and family readiness. IMCOM provides ‘The Army’s Home’ to thousands of men and women in uniform and the families that support them. Our mission is to provide the Army with installation capabilities and services to support expeditionary operations in a time of persistent conflict and to provide a quality of life for Soldiers and families commensurate with their service.¹

—Lieutenant General Robert Wilson,
Former Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management, US Army

The Army’s installation management transformation process has been ongoing for nearly a decade. As is the case with most multi-year, large scale, organizational changes, the Army’s intended purpose for that transformation has evolved over time. This paper describes that transformation and its timeline, describes its intended purposes, evaluates how well it has led to the achievement of stated objectives, and analyzes unresolved and evolving issues in response to continued changes in the strategic environment.

A fundamental understanding of why our Army’s installations exist is central to all analysis on the subject of installation management transformation. Our Army’s installations exist to support readiness: readiness of Army organizations, Soldiers, families and civilians. Our nation has an unwritten contract with its all volunteer force. Meeting and exceeding the expectations implicit in that contract is necessary to retain quality people and for building and maintaining readiness. Taking care of Soldiers, families and civilians is essential to installation success.

In the late 1990s, United States Army leaders understood their installations were failing to meet expectations – expectations levied by leaders, Soldiers and family

members alike. In 1998, Army leaders formed the Installation and Facilities Management Reinvention Lab. That effort aimed to evaluate barriers to efficient and effective installation management and base operations support.² Unfortunately, Army leaders managed little significant progress for several years.

After years of debate and discussion, Army leaders solidified initial plans for installation management transformation in early 2002.³ In this endeavor, our nation's commitment to the War on Terror played a pivotal role. On one hand, the expected demands of protracted expeditionary warfare provided both real and perceived impetus for change. On the other hand, that same set of expectations created necessary buy-in for changes Army leaders desired with or without the War on Terror. As described in the Army's introduction of its Installation Management Command (IMCOM) several years later, "Army officials opted for centralized installation management as a way to transform installations into 'flagships of readiness' that could support a transformed, expeditionary Army."⁴ That same Army introduction stated that earlier installation management transformation efforts were "intended to help solve problems as old as the Army itself."⁵

Prior to 2002, local senior mission commanders "owned" their installations and those local commanders "requested funds for particular base operations according to their own priorities."⁶ Furthermore, "Funding levels and installation standards fluctuated widely, leading to wide-range funding discrepancies among installations."⁷ The usual outcome was that base commanders perpetually underfunded base operations. Base commanders had a natural inclination to fund mission readiness as fully as possible at the expense of supporting facilities and services.⁸ In the event a critical base operations

requirement needed funding, base commanders typically had some form of back-up mission readiness funds available to meet the immediate need. In this regard, the pre-Installation Management Agency (IMA) system allowed flexibility. However, while leaders could avoid a gross lack of funds in any given fiscal year, funding was always unpredictable.⁹

Beyond the unpredictable underfunding issues at any given installation, extreme inequities existed between installations. Soldiers and family members regularly experienced vastly different levels and types of services when moving from one Army installation to another. Defining and meeting the expectations implicit in our nation's contract with its volunteer force was haphazard at best.

At a more fundamental level, pre-IMA installation operations funding methods caused Army leaders to never have a firm understanding of what the proper price tag for base operations should be.¹⁰ Since installation level base operations funds were not directly controlled at the Army or even major command level, and since patch-work funding efforts were used at the installation level, funding was difficult to track. This resulted in Army resource management leaders typically relying on flawed estimates when determining how many base operations dollars to include in operations and maintenance funding.

All these reasons for change existed prior to 2001. In fact, they had been the source of dissatisfaction among senior Army officials for several years. The Global War on Terror provided additional necessary justification for change. Early statements and official publications frequently made reference to the need for transformed installations that could operate as 'flagships of readiness' to support an expeditionary Army. Later, in

2003, Chief of Staff of the Army General Peter Schoomaker designated 'installations as flagships' as one of the Army's core focus areas.¹¹ More specifically, Army leaders suggested transformed installations would support expeditionary formations while at home and while deployed. While units were deployed, installations would theoretically render support through reach-back capabilities. Senior Army leaders branded installation transformation as part of a larger transformation toward an expeditionary Army. That larger transformation included the remaking of tactical formations and command and control capabilities to meet expeditionary requirements.

How and to what extent installations would support a deployed, expeditionary Army through reach-back support were never clear. Public statements notwithstanding, it is possible Army leaders never really were sure of a reach-back role for their transformed installations. In any event, linking the need for installation transformation to the Global War on Terror was powerful. It provided senior leaders with politically unassailable justification allowing them to overcome opposition to needed change. Army leaders knew installation transformation on this scale would encounter opposition both from within and external to the Army. The Global War on Terror offered an opportunity and Army leaders seized upon it. Similarly, Army leaders used the Global War on Terror as justification for transforming brigades, divisions and corps during the same period of time. In internal dialogue with emerging leaders, senior Army leaders frequently identified the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq as having provided a window of opportunity to accomplish transformation to a potent, modular force --- transformation that was required whether or not our nation was currently embroiled in conflict.¹² While this internal dialogue only made reference to a fiscal window the Global War on Terror

opened, Army leaders used the wars to overcome internal opposition to change as well. In both cases – installation transformation and transformation of our tactical formations – internal opposition was significant in the early stages. Internal opposition notwithstanding, Army leaders activated IMA in October, 2002.

Much of the internal resistance to installation transformation logically came from base commanders: those senior Army commanders on installations the Army now calls senior commanders. Carving out and protecting base operations from their purview lowered their operating budgets and greatly diminished their flexibility. Base commander concern for the impact of IMA was logical and partially justified. Furthermore, much of their concern appeared to be validated during the early, start-up years of IMA's processes. During those initial years, base commanders and tenant organizations frequently voiced dissatisfaction with unfunded services – services base commanders were previously able to maintain support for to some degree.

However, the IMA framework itself did not cause these shortfalls in services. They were a result of faulty accounting created by the pre-IMA paradigm. The fluid, flexible way base commanders had previously used operations and maintenance funds to backstop critical base operations shortcomings led to a flawed initial centralized funding model for Army budgeters. Over time, IMA was able to begin capturing and accounting for these shortfalls, and used them to improve funding models.

Concurrent to the Army's transition to IMA supported base operations, Army and Congressional leaders invested heavily in facilities modernization. Two realities initially drove this modernization effort. First, existing facilities were old and poorly maintained on average. Second, fighting two wars motivated national level leadership to fix this

problem in order to fulfill public expectations about how we were taking care of those who were fighting the wars. Third, as Army end-strength grew to support expanding wartime demands, there was a requirement to garrison additional force structure.

By the year 2000, a high proportion of existing Army facilities were old, outdated and in a state of disrepair. This condition was largely due to endemic underfunding of Sustainment, Restoration and Maintenance (SRM) requirements. Symptomatic of pre-modernization facilities conditions, a 2008 YouTube video showing dilapidated barracks conditions at Fort Bragg initiated a firestorm for Army leaders to grapple with. Similar fallout resulted from another video related to conditions at Walter Reed Army Medical Center shortly thereafter. These videos came several years after Army facilities modernization efforts had begun. The fact such conditions still existed in 2008 and beyond is a testament to the scope and scale of the problem many years earlier.

While not directly linked to installation management transformation specifically, facilities modernization was critical to overcoming a key and lingering base operations shortfall: the staggering unfunded deficit in SRM requirements. Even so, concurrent to the Army's facilities modernization, the Army invested more in facilities restoration and maintenance from 2004 to 2006 than it [had] in the ten previous years.¹³ It is not clear to what degree these improvements resulted from moving to IMA oversight as opposed to a general recognition by Army and congressional leaders that something had to be done about the state of existing facilities. In either case, public and congressional generosity driven by a desire to take care of the Soldiers who were fighting our nation's wars and those Soldiers' families provided an opportunity Army leaders seized upon.

Another initiative linked to installation transformation as a whole but not specifically to transition to the IMA (or later IMCOM) framework is the Residential Communities Initiative (RCI). Under this program, Army installations turn over control of family housing to contracted private companies. According to former Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management (ACSIM), Major General Lust, “The Residential Communities Initiative is an excellent example of how the Army is partnering with the private sector to get commercial expertise and working capital in support of the housing management business.”¹⁴ In parallel with the facilities modernization discussed earlier, the Army began significant and sustained modernization of its on-post housing in the late 1990s. As RCI partnership contracts came on line across the various installations, the Army leveraged the RCI arrangement to continue modernization and contractually guarantee it in the future.

Obviously, facilities and housing modernization were part of a larger effort to “give our Soldiers and their families who live on and off installations the same quality of life as the society that they are pledged to support.”¹⁵ Another key element was the standardization of levels of service across the various installations in our Army. For example, an Army family should be able to expect to have the same access to and general level of youth services no matter what installation they might move to. As Lust described, “By reducing process deviation between our installations, the Army will improve mission readiness and installation services, preserve the environment, and enhance the well-being of Soldiers, family members and civilians.”¹⁶

To reduce this ‘process deviation’, IMA “initiated two major installation standardization initiatives: Army installation design standards and Army baseline

services standards” in 2004.¹⁷ Installation design standards (IDS) aimed to standardize the size of and amenities located in newly constructed facilities. Army baseline services (ABS) aimed to standardize what level of support a Soldier, family member or civilian could expect from any given supporting agency on an installation. Also in 2004, IMA redesigned its Installation Status Report (ISR) so that it directly reported on performance against the 95 different ABS standards and would allow Army leaders to predict future requirements.¹⁸

On October 24, 2006, after four years of standardization efforts and business process development under IMA, the Army activated its Installation Management Command to “consolidate and strengthen installation support services to Soldiers and their families through the full authority of command.”¹⁹ The potential benefits implied by “full authority of command” are appreciable. First, it gives installation interests a three star command with a direct line to the Army Chief of Staff. A subordinate commander often has greater influence on the senior commander than a member of the senior commander’s staff. In this case, the IMCOM commander has parallel authorities as the ACSIM and can exert influence through both channels. In the words of one former garrison commander, “The stand up of IMCOM with a [three] star commander is the best thing to happen to the organization.”²⁰ He continued, “It provides IMCOM with a seat at the table with command authority.”²¹ Second, it provides a three star command that can represent installation interests in lateral coordination with other direct reporting units (DRUs), major commands (MACOMs), and senior commanders on larger installations.

On the occasion of IMCOM's activation, official Army press releases commented "IMA was created to innovate, and IMCOM will take that effort to the next level to find new and better ways to do business."²² It is also interesting to note that at the time of IMCOM's activation the acting ACSIM, Dr. Craig College, made the following comment with respect to IMCOM responsibilities:

The three essential tasks developed by OACSIM and approved by the Chief of Staff, Army are [to]: develop strategies to posture installations as deployment platforms with strong reach-back capabilities; adjust installation support to meet the needs of the Army at war ... [while] transforming; and support [the] well-being of all Soldiers and their families by increasing quality of life on camps, posts and stations.²³

The concept of Army installations as deployment platforms was not new, and is unassailable. The focus on quality of life is also no surprise. However, the echo of earlier desires for installations to support deployed formations through 'reach-back' capabilities is intriguing. This was a central tenant to the need for transformation several years prior. However, IMA never instituted any appreciable changes to bring this 'reach-back' capability into being. Five years hence, it appears IMCOM still has not achieved any 'reach-back' support capability from its installations.²⁴

From its inception, IMCOM placed a greater emphasis on achieving efficiency and cost effectiveness than IMA had. As of its 2006 activation, "IMCOM's most pressing commitment to Soldiers and senior commanders [was] to focus its efforts on providing the right set of critical services and either divesting other services, or partnering with local communities to buy or share services."²⁵ This increased focus on efficiency is obviously commendable. To the extent it was successful, it allowed IMCOM and the Army to do more with available resources. Additionally, this focus on efficiency could

help to pay the bills associated with the activation of IMCOM and the maintenance of its initial seven regional offices.

In a particularly innovative initiative, in 2006 Dr. College described an ACSIM and IMCOM effort to generate increased operating funds by leasing access to and use of non-excess military property to the private sector. One of his examples was to lease limited private access to installation buffer areas.²⁶ Another involved the leasing of excess space in non-excess facilities (an existing facility in which the installation requires some, but not all, floor space). For decades, Army installations have leveraged timber sales and exploitation of other natural resources to generate funds under centralized fiscal control. However, the push to find other, more innovative ways to leverage valuable assets for financial gain is another step in the right direction.

A push for environmental sustainability is perhaps IMCOM's most intriguing initiative. Under the guidance of Katherine Hammack, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Energy and the Environment (ASA, IE&E), IMCOM is pursuing a broad initiative termed 'Net Zero'. Net Zero has three general components: energy, water and waste management. Each is centered on sustainability. The premise of Net Zero is to attain zero net environmental impact. IMCOM has a goal to eventually reach overall Net Zero status across the force. So far, it has only designated a deadline in the energy category. That deadline is 2030. For now, IMCOM has designated six installations as pilot programs in each of the three categories. In addition, it designated two installations as pilot programs to reach overall Net Zero status across all three categories.

Under the energy component, an installation achieves Net Zero status when it generates as much energy as it consumes. Conservation is obviously a major part of

the Army's Net Zero energy strategy. Generating energy on site using renewable resources is another. Obviously, achieving Net Zero energy status is much easier for an installation in a temperate climate with small population and with access to abundant renewable energy capabilities like solar, wind or even wood. Several Army installations, including Fort Carson and Fort Irwin have invested heavily in solar power. In Fort Irwin's case, the Army leveraged a partnership with a private power company to make their solar energy project possible.

Under the water component, an installation achieves Net Zero status when it returns as much water to local natural aquifers as it removes. Of the three components, water offers the greatest possibility for installations to achieve or come very close to Net Zero status. Key components of this effort include: 1) reduction of water use, 2) capture and use of rainwater and 3) treatment of wastewater with subsequent return to the aquifer.

Fort Huachuca is one installation that has achieved Net Zero status for water. In doing so, they realized a 60 percent decrease in water consumption for 2010 compared to 1993. This was particularly impressive since they experienced a 25 percent increase in population during the same timeframe. Most of Fort Huachuca's water comes from deep wells and is expensive to pump to the surface. As such, the installation realized energy savings valued at \$2.4 million. Therefore, beside the impact on Net Zero water status, this effort saved operating funds and positively impacted Fort Huachuca's Net Zero energy status as well.²⁷

Under the waste management component, an installation achieves Net Zero status when it produces no landfill over the course of a year. Key elements of this effort

include: 1) reduction of packaging materials, 2) recycling and 3) conversion of waste products to energy. Elements two and three above result in what is termed waste diversion -- the amount of generated waste that does not wind up in a landfill. Of the three Net Zero components, progress toward Net Zero waste status has proven to be the most elusive. In 2010, IMCOM had a waste diversion rate of 33 percent compared to an estimated national average of 45 percent. More troubling, IMCOM had essentially not made any progress since 2007.²⁸

While pursuing efficiency, IMCOM continued to focus on providing services and maintaining quality facilities. Carrying forward from IMA commitments, IMCOM pledged to keep sustainment, restoration and maintenance (SRM) funding at 90 percent of requirements.²⁹ Compared to general perceptions of how well base commanders generally maintained facilities prior to IMA, this is commendable. Unfortunately, the 90 percent figure is derived through a model rather than actual maintenance requirements. That model factors in the size, age and type of facility. It is logical that IMCOM managers can drive this model to be more accurate over time assuming they collect and factor in appropriate feedback. However, average SRM numbers still may leave some installations better off than others due to variable levels of degradation caused by prevailing weather patterns, storms, or other local differences.

When measured against stated objectives, installation management transformation appears to be a general success for the Army – at least on the surface. Soldiers and their families are living, working and training in vastly improved facilities compared to ten years ago. IMA and IMCOM efforts nearly eliminated the paradigm of ‘have’ versus ‘have not’ installations. In many areas, our Army’s installations have made

great strides towards environmental sustainability. Army installations are more capable power projection platforms that play a key role in deploying units and Soldiers as well as reintegrating them upon return. The one stated objective reiterated over time for our transformed installations that never came to fruition was the need for our installations to support the deployed force through reach-back capabilities. It could simply be the case that Army leaders were never really sure of this requirement but used it to strengthen justification for transformation.

However, when looking at our Army's installation management successes through a slightly more critical lens, a fundamental question arises. To what degree are IMA/IMCOM successes the result of the operating environment rather than a transformation of installation management organization and processes? In other words, to what degree would the Army have seen similar progress without having activated IMA and IMCOM?

Years before the activation of IMA, the Army began investing heavily in military housing improvement. By 2003, the Army was beginning to invest heavily in barracks modernization as well. Army leaders programmed that modernization years earlier. As our nation became embroiled in two regional wars; public, congressional and administration emphasis on supporting our troops and their families soared. A senior IMCOM official commented in 2011 that the Army had enjoyed record military construction spending in the previous decade.³⁰ The Residential Communities Initiative (RCI) initially took shape without the influence of an IMA or IMCOM organization as well.³¹ The Army Family Covenant and other initiatives provided funding and programs aimed at increasing support and services available to families. Additionally, the Global

War on Terror opened opportunities for installations across the Army to creatively leverage funding authorized for fighting the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to accomplish many local priorities.³² Relatively robust installation funding provided working capital for selected installations to pursue environmental sustainability initiatives that would not have been possible in a more austere fiscal environment.

All these facts notwithstanding, our Army's installations are performing better in their core functions today than they were a decade ago. The IMA and IMCOM framework has provided four fundamental benefits to the Army that contribute to improved installation performance. First, it has prevented senior (base) commanders from diverting necessary base operations funds away from their intended purposes. Second, it has improved our Army leadership's understanding of base operations funding requirements. Third, it has ensured a generally equal level of support and services to Soldiers, families and civilians across all Army installations. Finally, it has amplified the voice of needed installation programs and funding that reaches senior Army decision makers via the IMCOM command's position as a direct reporting unit and its commander's parallel responsibilities as the ACSIM.

However, the simple fact that IMCOM provided benefits to the Army does not mean maintaining the IMCOM framework in its current configuration is prudent. IMCOM comes at a price; the maintenance of IMCOM's headquarters and its current five regional offices incurs considerable cost to the Army. The fundamental question is: is the benefit worth the cost? Unfortunately, the robust fiscal environment IMA and IMCOM have operated in over the last nine years has made that assessment very difficult. The scale and scope of improvements to facilities and services across our

Army's installations deceive the eye. The discerning observer has to remember much improvement has been driven by public and congressional generosity while our nation's sons and daughters were away at war.

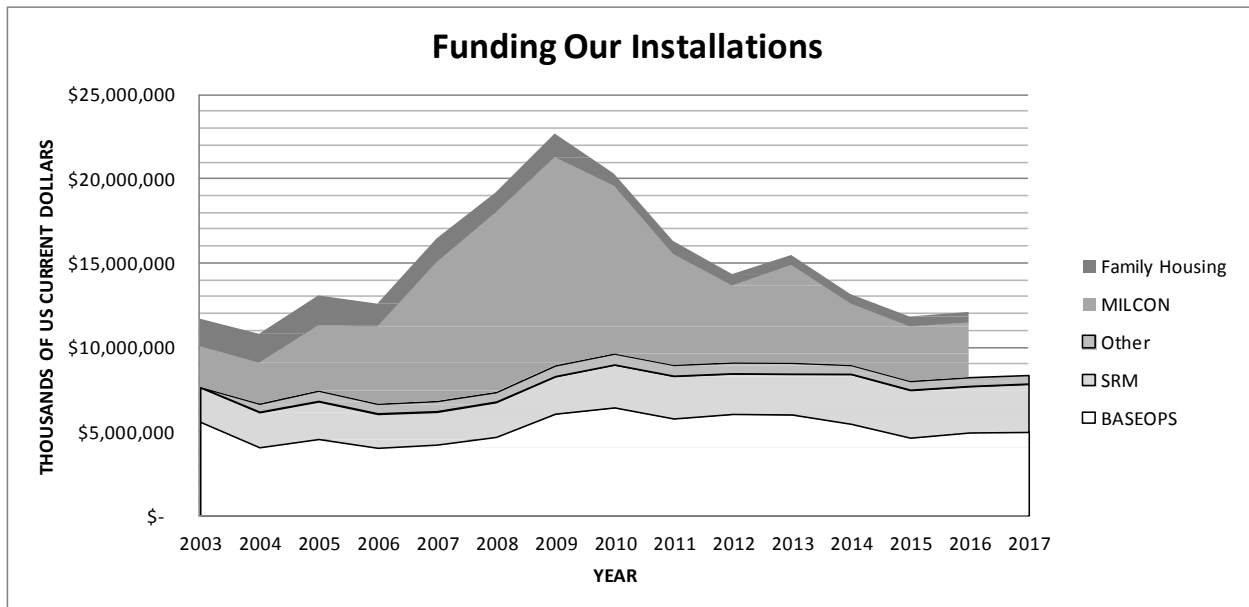


Figure 1. Installation Related Funding³³

Figure 1 clearly shows the extent of generosity our installations enjoyed from 2005 to 2010. It is important to note the Army required a large proportion of the MILCON spending during that timeframe to meet the demands of an increasing active Army end-strength. Figure 2 shows that Army end-strength began increasing in 2006 and continued until about 2010. However, not all military construction during this timeframe was to accommodate new end-strength. Some of it was also required to meet demands associated with moving units and organizations as a result of Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC) directives. At the same time, the Army was replacing a great deal of old, difficult to maintain structures and facilities. It is illustrative to recall that Fort Bragg's YouTube barracks video event took place in 2008. The Army

has since replaced those barracks, along with many others, with new facilities on Fort Bragg.

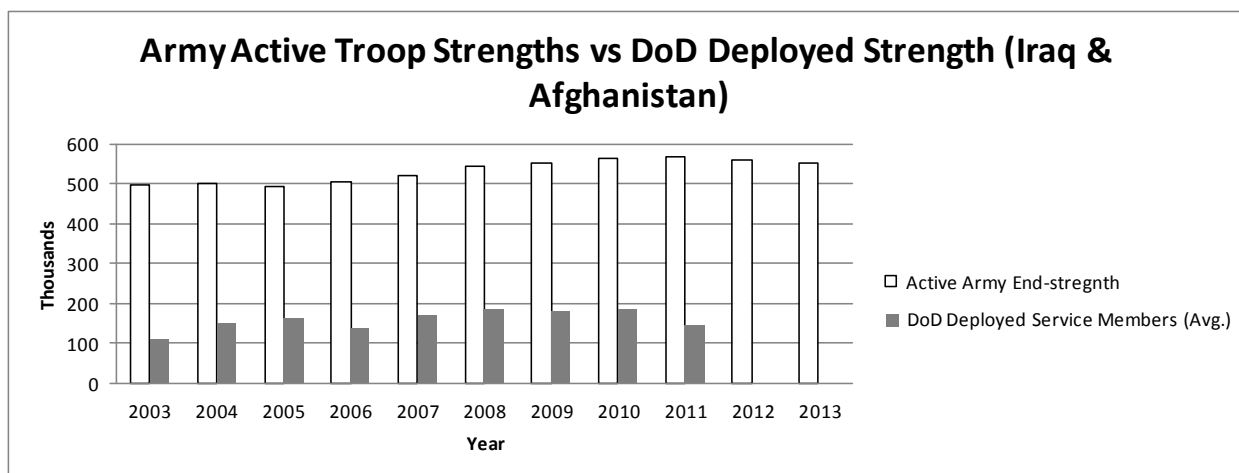


Figure 2. Army End-strength vs Deployed Strength.³⁴ Average deployed strength data for 2012 and 2013 not yet available.

All this new facilities construction should have driven down SRM requirements across the Army. While it is true this new construction significantly increased the square footage of facilities on our Army’s installations, those facilities were newer on average and less in need of repair. Furthermore, contractors turn new facilities over to the Army with a warrantee period thereby alleviating the Army’s requirement to spend money on their upkeep for a period of time. Figure 1 demonstrates that contrary to this logic, SRM has actually been increasing since 2006.

The days of Congressional generosity are behind us, and IMCOM’s real test is just beginning. Given our nation’s current debt crisis and poor economic conditions, the fiscal environment is changing rapidly. Furthermore, the fact that most of our troops have either come home or are coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan means installations will require greater base operations funding to support increased garrison populations. Our Army installations have already felt the pinch.

A culture of service characterized IMCOM's first four years. Through feedback mechanisms like the interactive Customer Evaluation (ICE) system, installations and IMCOM leaders worked hard to improve services within funding limitations. While acting as a limit on funding, Common Levels of Service (CLS) aimed at achieving a minimum acceptable level of service. In other words, there was a minimum standard installations had to achieve.

Due to fiscal constraints, IMCOM's service oriented culture began to shift toward a cost culture between 2010 and 2011. By the fall of 2011, IMCOM leaders were acknowledging the shift in official publications:

Generally speaking, no matter the organizational level, there are really only three ways to adjust service cost down: do less, do it at a lower-quality level or lower its unit price. ... Sometimes, however, in the face of significant impediments, it may not be possible to redesign the business process and we must confront the reality of doing less or doing it at a lower quality.³⁵

According to one serving garrison commander, a cost culture was, in fact, beginning to take hold. His recent reflection indicated that in 2011 IMCOM leaders began to ignore CLS and defined success as being able to achieve designated funding and personal cuts.³⁶ In other words, IMCOM leaders realized their long-held common levels of service were no longer attainable.

Initial indications suggest that upon assuming duties as IMCOM commander and ACSIM in November 2011, Lieutenant General Michael Ferriter began placing command emphasis back on common levels of service. The same current garrison commander who observed that IMCOM leadership had begun to ignore CLS in 2010 reflected that under Lieutenant General Ferriter's command a cost culture is still there, but it is no longer the primary driver. This comment came just one month after

Lieutenant General Ferriter assumed command. As that garrison commander further explained, “General Ferriter has made it very clear that he wants to go back to CLS.”³⁷ He continued, “CLS may be called something different, but [we are] definitely going back to something like that.”³⁸ The language in version 4.0 of the Installation Management Campaign Plan, which was published concurrent with Lieutenant General Ferriter’s assumption of command, is consistent with this renewed emphasis on service. One imperative detailed in it renews the emphasis on customer satisfaction: “The voice of the customer will be our highest metric for how we are doing.”³⁹ That same campaign plan states the following:

Our mission has not changed, but our resources have been significantly reduced. Our strategy for achieving the same *ends* with reduced *means* is to dramatically improve the *ways* we deliver services and programs. We will target our resources to meet high priority needs of our customers while eliminating redundancies and achieving high return on investments. We will pursue every opportunity to ensure we are doing the right things and doing them efficiently and effectively.⁴⁰

IMCOM’s renewed commitment to achieving designated levels of service is commendable. The key question going forward is: will IMCOM be able to achieve desired levels of service without watering those levels down? If they do not succeed, a central question will be to what degree failure will have been caused by a challenging fiscal environment and to what degree it will have been caused by the cost of operating IMCOM’s headquarters and regional structure.

If facilities conditions and service levels drop significantly due to fiscal constraints, senior installation commanders will certainly cry foul. Understandably, they see it as their responsibility to provide for the needs of their Soldiers and families. While those senior commanders feel responsible, the current IMCOM paradigm takes the ability to flexibly use resources to fulfill that responsibility away from them. That is

exactly what happened in 2003 and 2004. Fortunately, the fiscal environment then allowed IMA to provide relief in subsequent years once they understood the resourcing requirements better. IMCOM's path to success may not be as easy this time.

There are five keys to IMCOM's success going forward. The first is to insist on continuing to meet ambitious common levels of service and facilities maintenance standards. There are three important components of this: sufficient funding, sufficient garrison staff, and customer focus. This key to success is all about accomplishing the mission. The remaining keys describe how to facilitate mission accomplishment in an increasingly challenging fiscal environment. The second is to eliminate redundancies, especially in the Soldier and Family support systems that have proliferated during the last decade. The third is to fold the various regional offices into the new IMCOM headquarters in San Antonio. The fourth is to streamline business processes and knowledge management practices within IMCOM to reduce data management requirements at the garrison level. The fifth, and potentially most significant way to achieve cost savings, is to pursue fiscally responsible environmental programs, policies and programs.

People represent the lion's share of IMCOM's operating expense. As such, much of IMCOM's efforts to devise more cost effective ways have and must involve reductions of personnel cost structure. IMCOM's leaders currently are approaching this requirement in two ways. First, they are targeting services that are redundant to those provided by other agencies and organizations. In other words, IMCOM is already moving in the right direction on at least one of the keys to future success. Second, they

are instituting sweeping cuts to the IMCOM force structure. As IMCOM moves forward in the face of increased fiscal pressures, it obviously must be very careful where it cuts.

Installation level directorates, agencies and staffs are the organizations and people who provide actual services. Meanwhile, everyone above installation level serves an enabling function – or at least they should. Proportional personnel cuts across the board will be counterproductive. IMCOM leadership must do everything possible to retain the installation level people who actually provide the common levels of service and facilities maintenance IMCOM desires. Given that the majority of the Army will be home – at its garrisons – for the first time in many years, increased staffing may actually be required at some garrisons.

To the extent possible, IMCOM leaders should be looking for personnel savings within the higher levels of IMCOM structure. IMCOM leaders must remember the very existence of IMCOM's structure above the installation level levies a virtual tax on the Army as a whole. The funds and other resources required to operate these higher organizations are not available for use in maintaining installation level services. While the overwhelming majority of IMCOM structure exists at the garrison level, Army leaders must flatten the overall organization to continue to ensure mission accomplishment at lesser cost. The potential does exist for future cuts at the garrison level. However, those future cuts must be synchronized with changes in Army end-strength. Current plans suggest end-strength will not decrease appreciably for as many as three years.

Now is the time to achieve personnel savings at higher IMCOM structural levels. All regional offices should be closed and consolidated into the new IMCOM headquarters in San Antonio. Doing so would allow reductions in combined staff levels,

streamline reporting systems and eliminate redundancies. IMCOM should retain its civilian regional directors, but those directors should be designated deputy commanders, each of whom is responsible for a given region. Under such a framework, a principle duty of the regional deputies would be to travel to installations under their purview, provide mentorship and supervision to garrison commanders, collaborate and coordinate with senior installation commanders, and work with the IMCOM headquarters staff to eliminate friction and solve problems that affect garrison commanders' abilities to accomplish their mission.

There is a perception among many installation level leaders that a disproportionate percentage of their staffs spend too much time and effort gathering, packaging and transmitting data to regional offices or IMCOM headquarters. Furthermore, those leaders perceive that this effort never results in any appreciable benefit to an installation's ability to take care of soldiers and their families. IMCOM leaders must find ways to streamline what IMCOM headquarters and regional office staffs do and how they do it. This is another way IMCOM under Lieutenant General Ferriter is already moving in the right direction. He has drastically reduced the number of metrics required by the latest version of the Installation Management Campaign Plan. Consolidation of higher level IMCOM structure would also facilitate reduced data management burden at the garrison level. Streamlining the knowledge management practices within IMCOM will facilitate garrisons continuing to provide desirable levels of service to an expanded 'at home' population of Soldiers in the near term.

Perhaps the most important key to IMCOM success going forward is its approach to sustainability. Army and IMCOM leaders will need to fully conceptualize and pursue

sustainability as a means to save money rather than a lofty environmental agenda. Energy, water and waste sustainability are necessary to reduce costs and to maintain access to affordable energy and water resources over the long haul. Ms. Hammack, the current Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Environment and Energy (ASA, IE&E), reflects this reality in a fall, 2011 publication:

We are faced with limited natural resources, yet we require access to those resources in order to meet the Army's mission. Securing and sustaining our energy and water sources is operationally necessary and financially prudent.⁴¹

The trouble is the Army's Net Zero goal is conveyed in ways that suggest it is desirable regardless of its fiscal impact. The ASA, IE&E and IMCOM have a goal to achieve full Net Zero status across the Army, with a deadline of 2030 for achieving Net Zero status in energy. Zero impact is admirable as long as it saves precious taxpayer dollars over the long haul. Now is no time for the Army to be altruistically pursuing lofty environmental goals. Emerging fiscal realities dictate that fiscal responsibility trumps environmental aspirations. If we allow environmental aspirations to dictate policy and decision making, we will not succeed in taking care of Soldiers and their families.

Furthermore, achieving Net Zero status for waste has very little to do with maintaining access to resources, whether affordable or not. Landfills do limit the possible uses of Army installation land. However, old landfill areas can be used in many ways such as maneuver training. This does not mean the Army should not make efforts to limit the amount of waste going into landfills. Recycling can generate income if done properly. Furthermore, handling and disposing of waste is costly.

It may be important for the Army to achieve energy independence at some point because external energy sources will be too costly. However, timing is critical and now

may not be the time. The Army must take steps toward resource independence when and only when those steps are cost effective. There is a reason the rest of the world is not yet rushing to switch to renewable energy sources. Efforts toward water and waste sustainability must be pursued in the same light.

Ample opportunities for Army installations to save money by pursuing sound energy, water and waste policies surely exist. Installation leadership will find them as long as the need for change is cast in the light of improving cost effectiveness. As a goal, Net Zero confuses the issue and allows room for installation leadership to pursue projects that waste fiscal resources. Most installation leaders likely understand the conflict of interests. However, it is relatively easy for Army leaders to embrace lofty goals such as Net Zero and pursue them in fiscally irresponsible ways when they are spending somebody else's money. When IMCOM and ACSIM fund large Net Zero projects at pilot installations they are vulnerable to the same trap. In all cases, leadership's attention on environmental issues should be focused on meeting statutory and regulatory requirements on one hand, and saving money on the other.

The transformation of installation management our Army's leaders initiated a decade ago was visionary and ambitious. Facilitated by the Global War on Terror and a commonly accepted desire to support an expeditionary Army, those leaders and those who followed them have seen installation management transformation through to its current state. While this transformation has achieved obvious benefits, a historically generous fiscal environment has masked the extent to which the cost of maintaining increased over-head structure may erase those benefits in the future. As our Army continues to move into an increasingly challenging fiscal environment, it must

streamline higher IMCOM organizational structures and its processes to provide just enough enabling capability to allow fully resourced installations to succeed. Our leaders also must continue to identify and eliminate redundant Soldier and family assistance programs, and must pursue aggressive energy, water and waste management programs that preserve precious fiscal resources. Smartly targeted cost savings, coupled with business process reforms will allow our Army to continue to fulfill the contract our nation has with the Soldiers, civilians and family members who volunteer to serve.

Endnotes

¹ Robert Wilson, "Leading the Army Installation Enterprise," *Army*, October 2008, 227.

² Anonymous, "Installation and Facilities Management Reinvention Lab Named," *Army Logistician*, January/February 1998, 45.

³ U.S. Federal News Service, Including U.S. State News, *Introducing Installation Management Command* (Washington, DC: U.S. Federal News Service, Including U.S. State News, November 2006).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ John Di Genio, "Installation Management – From Camp Swampy to the Starship Enterprise," *Army Logistician*, May/June 2005, 19.

¹² This assertion is based on personal observations of the author. In non-attributational settings such as the Army's pre-command course, the author heard similar lines of reasoning by senior Army leaders.

¹³ U.S. Federal News Service, Including U.S. State News, *Introducing Installation Management Command* (Washington, DC: U.S. Federal News Service, Including U.S. State News, November 2006).

¹⁴ Larry J. Lust, "Army Installations – Sustainable Foundations for Combat Power," *Army*, October 2003, 162.

¹⁵ Larry J. Lust, "Army Installations – The Army's Flagships," *Army*, October 2004, 157.

¹⁶ Larry J. Lust, "Army Installations – Sustainable Foundations for Combat Power," *Army*, October 2003, 162.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Larry J. Lust, "Army Installations – The Army's Flagships," *Army*, October 2004, 160.

¹⁹ U.S. Federal News Service, Including U.S. State News, *Army Activates IMCOM to Improve Soldier Support* (Washington, DC: U.S. Federal News Service, Including U.S. State News, November 2006).

²⁰ Betty J. Sumpter, *The Evolution of Installation Management Command*, Strategic Research Project (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, March 30, 2007), 4.

²¹ Ibid.

²² U.S. Federal News Service, Including U.S. State News, *Introducing Installation Management Command* (Washington, DC: U.S. Federal News Service, Including U.S. State News, November 2006).

²³ Craig E. College, "Army Installations – Flagships of Readiness," *Army*, October 2006, 224.

²⁴ COL Stephen Sicinski, U.S. Army, Commander, Fort Bragg Army Garrison, telephone interview by author, December 16, 2011.

²⁵ U.S. Federal News Service, Including U.S. State News, *Introducing Installation Management Command* (Washington, DC: U.S. Federal News Service, Including U.S. State News, November 2006).

²⁶ Craig E. College, "Army Installations – Flagships of Readiness," *Army*, October 2006, 225.

²⁷ Timothy Faulkner, "Sustainable Water: Reaching Net Zero." *U.S. Army Journal of Installation Management* (Spring 2011), 23.

²⁸ Greg Kuhr, "Flatlined – IMCOM's Progress with Municipal Solid Waste." *U.S. Army Journal of Installation Management* (Spring 2011), 25.

²⁹ Stephen Sicinski, U.S. Army, Commander, Fort Bragg Army Garrison, telephone interview by author, December 16, 2011.

³⁰ Al Aycock, "Army Installation Stationing 2020." *U.S. Army Journal of Installation Management* (Fall 2011), 10.

³¹ Congress made what would later become known as the Residential Communities Initiative possible in 1996 by creating authorities that allowed the services to privatize family housing. As early as 2002, limited privatization was beginning. The RCI program started shortly thereafter. As IMA activated in October, 2002, it clearly did not initiate or conceptualize RCI's beginning. Information taken from "Residential Communities Initiative (RCI) Family & Senior Unaccompanied Housing," April 2010, Microsoft Powerpoint file. http://www.rci.army.mil/programinformation/docs/RCI-Overview_draft_2May10.pdf (accessed February 26, 2012).

³² Based on detailed discussions between the author and installation level leaders at Fort Bragg in the summer of 2011.

³³ BASEOPS, SRM and other funding data were taken from unpublished data provided by Marsha Hesse-Oxley at IMCOM G8 on February 16, 2012. MILCON and family housing data are from Office of the Undersecretary of Defense (Comptroller), *National Defense Budget Estimates for 2012*, (Washington, DC, U.S. Department of Defense, March 11, 2011), 167-168.

³⁴ Army end-strength data taken from Office of the Undersecretary of Defense (Comptroller), *National Defense Budget Estimates for 2012*, (Washington, DC, U.S. Department of Defense, March 11, 2011), 233-234. Deployed strength data are average monthly deployed strength for the entire Department of Defense and come from Amy Belasco, *The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11* (Washington, DC: U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, March 29, 2011), 44-45.

³⁵ Thomas A. Horlander and Diane Random, "Institutionalizing Fiscal Reductions and a Cost Culture." *U.S. Army Journal of Installation Management* (Fall 2011), 30.

³⁶ Conveyed to the author by a current garrison commander in a non-attribitional interview in December 2011.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ U.S. Department of the Army, *Installation Management Campaign Plan, version 4.0* (Washington, DC, U.S. Department of the Army, November, 2011), 4.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Katherine Hammack, "Energy Sustainability Priorities and Opportunities." *U.S. Army Journal of Installation Management* (Spring 2011), 1.