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RESERVE COMPONENT READINESS EVALUATION

Edmund W. Sullivan

Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania

15 November 1972

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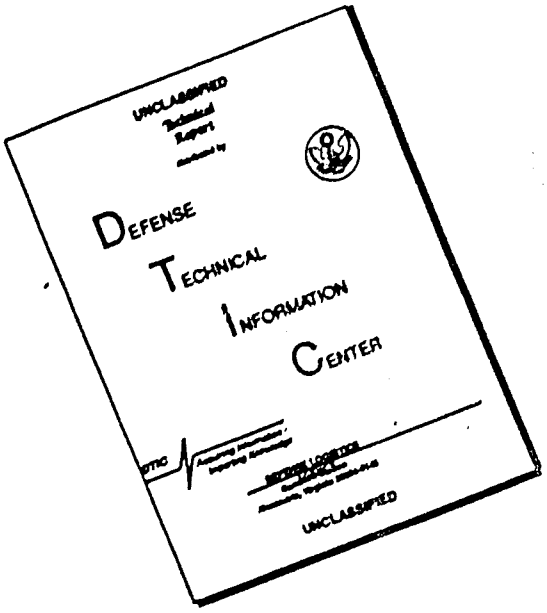

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RESERVE COMPONENT READINESS EVALUATION

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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Edmund W. Sullivan, COL IN.
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The readiness or lack of readiness of Reserve Component units has been a subject of much discussion. An essential part of the problem has been the lack of accurate readiness information. This essay examines current US Army methods of determining operational readiness. Material was collected by a review of appropriate reference books, after action reports, previous studies of the problem, directives, Army Training Tests, and by interview.

Current procedures do not correlate readiness indicators to arrive at accurate reliable evaluations. Certain deficiencies exist in the Army Training Test, which is the principle measurement device. Accurate readiness information is deemed essential under present conditions. This essay recommends improvements to the Army Training Test and to other evaluation procedures.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Our founding fathers recognized that one of the principle responsibilities of a central government is to provide security for its citizens. One June 14, 1775, the Second Continental Congress created the Continental Army. Later, when the constitution was adopted, Congress was charged with the responsibility " To raise and support armies " and " To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the Militia.... ". Since that time the " Common Defense " has been entrusted to various combinations of active and reserve forces.[1]

If security was the only governing factor, the defense of the United States (US) would surely be provided entirely by active forces. However, the nation has never consented to maintain sufficient active forces to provide the necessary security. A large " Standing Army " has historically been repugnant to Americans. Recalling the experiences of their forbears in other lands, Americans have remained reluctant to support a large active force. Oskar Morgenstern discussed another reason for this reluctance in " The Question of N ational Defense " as he asks, " How large a burden can be imposed upon the economy in

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[1] Albert B. Saye, et al. Principles of American Government (1962), pp. 29, 451-456.

order to make us 'safe' if safe we can be? "[2] He later states, " The true limit of the burden is the willingness of the people to carry it. " In peacetime the people have not been willing to carry a large burden. Reducing military expenditures is a recurring political issue. Thus the US, like most of the other nations of the world, relies on a combination of active and reserve forces.

Current emergency planning relies on the Reserve Components to make a significant contribution to the nation's security. Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird recently stated:

> One major step we have taken is our new policy with respect to Reserve Forces. Members of the National Guard and Reserve instead of draftees, will be the initial source of augmentation of the Active Forces in any future emergency requiring a substantial expansion of Active Forces.[3]

Contingency plans now require earlier deployment of some Reserve Component units in the event of a future emergency. These early deploying units will have limited time for post mobilization training. Planners and commanders of gaining commands need to know the capabilities of these units. The evaluation of Reserve Component units is more important than it has been in the past.

This research addresses the problem of evaluation of Reserve Component units of the Army.

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[2] Oskar Morgenstern, The Question of the National Defense (1961), pp. 198, 201.

[3] Melvin R. Laird, Statement of the Secretary of Defense before the Senate Armed Services Committee (15 March 71), p. 36.

CHAPTER II

THE VIET NAM MOBILIZATION

Elements of the Reserve Components have been utilized in all major conflicts in which the US has been involved. The significant contributions that they have made to the security of the nation is amply documented in military history. However, many problems have been encountered in augmenting the active forces with forces from the Reserve Components. Mobilization planning has been a matter of concern for military leaders throughout our history.[4] Their recommendations have frequently been ignored and each mobilization has found us dealing with some of the same problems. A recurring problem has been the lack of real knowledge of the status of Reserve Components readiness. This chapter reviews experiences in the most recent mobilization.

On April 11, 1968, a partial mobilization was directed. On May 13, 1968, 76 units from the United States Army Reserve (USAR) and the Army National Guard (ARNG) were mobilized. These were primarily units from the Strategic Reserve Forces (SRF). Some units had been designated SRF as early as the fall of 1965 and had received extra funding, training, and equipment.

The mobilized units moved to mobilization stations, and

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[4] US Department of the Army, Pamphlet 20-213: History of Military Mobilization in the US Army 1775-1945 (June 1955).

in most cases, began training on May 27, 1968. Most of these units were unable to complete post mobilization training in the anticipated time. Two brigades, which were mobilized, expected to complete training through Advanced Unit Training (AUT) in eight weeks. This was based upon estimates made prior to mobilization. These estimates were subsequently re-evaluated and changed to 13 weeks for one brigade, and 11 weeks for the other. The brigades actually required 17 weeks and 13 weeks, respectively, to complete training.[5]

Lack of qualified personnel, and equipment shortages were cited as major reasons for extended post mobilization training. Considered as other contributing factors were: Lack of MOS and branch training, personnel shortages, late reporting fillers, and leadership. A few units had recently been reorganized and required extensive retraining.[6] A significant factor in some of the mobilized units was the failure to stabilize strength. Many individuals who had received the extra training were not mobilized. Even at mobilization, those personnel whose enlistments expired prior to December 12, 1968, were exempted from mobilization.

In this latest mobilization the selection of units was not

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[5] US Department of the Army, Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations, (S) The Army Study of Guard and Reserve Forces (U) (June 1972), pp. 38,39. (hereafter referred to as the Army Study)

[6] Ibid. p. IV 32.

based on accurate readiness data.[7] Unit estimates of required post mobilization training was re-evaluated by installation commanders after mobilization, and in most cases the time was extended. The actual post mobilization training, in many cases, was longer than either estimate.[8]

A review of other mobilizations does not reveal any instances where more accurate readiness data was available. In the past there has been time to mobilize, equip, and train forces for combat. Many Reserve Component units now have mobilization assignments that do not allow similar amounts of time. The limited time available for post mobilization training must be used efficiently.

Recently steps have been taken to improve the readiness posture of reserve forces. Department of the Army has supplied additional funds and equipment. Periodic testing is required and readiness reporting has been resumed. Succeeding chapters of this study will examine the effectiveness of this program.

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[7] The Army Study, p. IV 31.
[8] Richard P. Weinert, COMARC and the 1968 Reserve Mobilization (U), Secret (August 1970).

CHAPTER III

READINESS AND READINESS OBJECTIVES

A common understanding of readiness is desirable prior to a further discussion of readiness evaluation. Readiness involves qualified personnel, operational equipment, and necessary supplies. In 1965 General Creighton W. Abrams, then Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, held these views on readiness:

> The number one objective of the Army's readiness program is to insure that each TOE company, battery, or troop has its authorized personnel with the required skills available for duty; that its authorized equipment is on hand and maintained in operational condition; that its needed supplies are on hand; and each company, battery, or troop is maintaining a state of training that will permit mission accomplishment.[9]

Army Regulations (AR) 135-8 establishes readiness standards and objectives for Reserve Component units. It states, " The post mobilization readiness objective for each unit is full TOE personnel and equipment and a training status which will permit the unit to accomplish its TOE/TDA mission. "[10] Units of the Reserve Components, which are organized at less than TOE strength, with equipment shortages, and personnel turnover, will not reach this status prior to mobilization. AR 135-8 assigns these units lesser pre-mobilization objectives.

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9 Creighton W. Abrams, GEN, " The Army Readiness Program, " Army Information Digest,(May 1965), p. 2.

10 US Department of the Army, Army Regulations 135-8: (March 1969), pp. 1,2. (hereafter referred to as AR 135-8).

US Continental Army Command (CONARC), in its Reserve Component (US Army) Training Guide, establishes training objectives and furnishes training guidance to Reserve Component units. The current training objective (1972-73), during pre-mobilization training, is the attainment and maintainance of company or comparable level of proficiency, verified by the successful completion of the applicable Army Training Test (ATT), with 85% or more of authorized unit strength participating.[11] This establishes a readiness objective of company or comparable level for these units.

Ideally, a unit commander would be assigned the required number and type of MOS qualified personnel and would begin a Basic Unit Training (BUT) cycle, utilizing the appropriate Army Training Program (ATP). At the conclusion of the cycle, the unit would undergo an appropriate ATT. If the unit successfully completed the ATT they would have reached their prescribed objective.

The Reserve Component unit does not progress through the training program in this manner. A typical Reserve Component unit consists of personnel at various levels of training. Some personnel have been with the unit for some time and require

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11 US Department of the Army, Headquarters, US CONARC, Reserve Component (US Army) Training Guide (June 1972), Annex F. p. 4.

only refresher training; some personnel have recently returned from RCP 63 training and require unit training; some personnel have partially completed unit training; and a few personnel are untrained, awaiting RCP 63 training. Special training programs are required for these units.

For these reasons, it is difficult for a Reserve Component unit to attain and maintain proficiency at a specific level. Although certain exceptions exist, especially in the service support units, few units will reach combat readiness in the pre-mobilization status. This is recognized, and post mobilization training time is allowed to correct shortcomings. However, while the turnover of personnel creates difficulty in maintaining specific levels of training, the retention of career personnel results in degrees of proficiency at all levels, even above the prescribed objectives. The evaluation process should reveal the status of the unit at each level, so that post mobilization time can be efficiently utilized.

CHAPTER IV

EVALUATION TECHNIQUES

The educational process is normally accompanied by some form of evaluation. There are several purposes for evaluation, among which are: to determine student progress; to determine teaching proficiency; and to determine areas needing additional emphasis.

Evaluation and measurement are sometimes used as synonyms. However, in relating these terms to education there is a difference. Measurement refers to quantitative descriptions as determined by tests and such devices. Evaluation is more inclusive and qualitiative, it seeks to determine what progress has been made towards previously determined objectives. Measurement is usually a part of the evaluation process, but there may be a qualitative evaluation without measurement.[12] Most educators would agree, however, that a sound evaluation program will include both measurement and none-measurement (judgement) techniques.

Three important qualities to consider when constructing an evaluation or measurement device are: validity, reliability,

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[12] Norman E. Gronlund, Measurement and Evaluation in Teaching (1971). p. 8.

and useability.[13] To be valid a test must produce the desired results, that is, it must test the areas desired to be tested. To be reliable a test must produce consistant results. Finally, the procedure must be useable, it must be practical and easily administered.

The evaluation process is especially important to the armed forces as they seek to determine when individuals and units are prepared to perform their operational mission. Each of the services has developed testing, evaluation, and readiness reporting procedures. Two devices utilized by other services are examined in this chapter.

The Second Marine Division has developed a tactical training test (TACTEST) to test training readiness of infantry and artillery units. They have produced comprehensive standard operating procedures (SOPs) which details all phases of the test. The SOP specifies responsibilities and duties of tested personnel and umpires. Evaluation procedures are explained, and evaluation sheets are prepared. A list of test events are specified, from which the TACTEST director selects events to test the unit. Squad and platoon tests are conducted as part of the company test. Company/battery size units are tested semi-annually, and battalions are tested annually. This test appears to standardize testing in the division, and could be

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[13] H.H. Remmers, et al., Measurement and Evaluation (1966), p.119.

used as a basis to standardize testing of other Marine units. The test is intended to reveal deficiencies for correction, as well as to measure readiness.[14]

Annually (sometimes more frequently), the Air Force conducts an Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI) and a Management Effectiveness Inspection (MEI), concurrently, on its operational units. These two inspections examine all phases of the unit operation, to include administration, operations, and logistics. The various command echelons, air force through US AIR FORCE, have test teams. A unit is subject to being inspected by any of it's higher headquarters on a " no notice " basis. Reserve Component units are normally inspected by their " gaining command " headquarters, but higher headquarters observers or teams may monitor the inspection and/or the team.

The unit is inspected as it simulates a contingency mission. Inspectors accompany the pilots on these missions, and they are graded on a gunnery phase as well. Support elements are also inspected. The ORI serves to verify the commanders evaluation which he has submitted in the semi-monthly readiness report. The inspections are standardized, and the same standards apply to active and reserve units. The inspections evaluate unit

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[14] US Marine Corps, Second Marine Division, Division Order P3500.11, (July 1971).

readiness, and reveal deficiencies. The unit commander is furnished a critique to include a complete report wich identifies problem areas for further training.[15]

Measurement and evaluation is not an exact science. Evaluation will continue to be in part subjective and subject to errors. A sound evaluation program will produce more accurate results. The devices utilized must be valid and reliable. To the extent that tests can be standardized they will produce comparable results. The Air Force program, and to some extent the Second Marine Division TACTEST, contain many of the qualities desired in measurement and evaluation devices.

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[15] Interview with Donald W, Forney, COL, Commander, 185 Tactical Fighter Group, Iowa National Guard, 28 September 1972.

CHAPTER V

CURRENT US ARMY EVALUATION PROCEDURES

The two main purposes for evaluation of a unit are to determine the unit readiness status and to identify those areas in which the unit is deficient. There are several tests and inspections utilized to arrive at this evaluation. The results of most of these are reflected on a semi-annual readiness report. The devices utilized are primarily subjective, although within each, there is some opportunity for objective measurement. These current procedures are examined in this chapter.

THE ARMY TRAINING TEST

ATTs have been prepared for many types of units. Tests have not yet been prepared for some units. Some tests are prepared for battalion level and are not available for lower levels. The purpose of the tests is to evaluate the ability of the units to perform assigned missions under simulated combat conditions.

The test examines the unit's operational procedures, maintainance procedures, SOPs, and levels of performance of specific functions and missions. It also includes an umpires evaluation of unit equipment shortages that are considered essential to the accomplishment of the mission. Check lists are provided as guides for umpires. The chief umpire has

scoring responsibility, and provides the final pass or fail evaluation.[16] The ATT is the primary device utilized by the US Army to measure operational readiness. It is the best device currently available for this purpose, and when administered as intended it provides relatively valid and reliable results. The test has certain deficiencies which are discussed in succeeding paragraphs.

Authorized modifications and scoring latitude subject the test to loss of validity and/or reliability. Major commanders and chief umpires are authorized many modifications to the test. If a number of these modifications are implemented it will reduce the test validity. There is no standard weighting system between the elements of the test. The final grade is dependent upon the chief umpire's judgement. There could be considerable variation in rating between two like and equal units, contingent upon the modifications and scoring. The test is not considered completely standardized, and will not necessarily produce consistent results.

The ATT is not entirely practical for Reserve Component units who must administer their own tests. The testing headquarters, with other concurrent requirements sometimes finds it difficult to provide qualified test personnel. It usually means that some of their best qualified personnel will be lost for

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[16] US Deparment of the Army, Army Training Test 7-47: Rifle Company Mechanized Infantry Battalion (14 March 1966), and Army Training Test 29-202: Direct Support Maintainance Units (11 August 1971).

the testing time and the time required to prepare. Further, the results of tests conducted within an organization are subject to question. The Army Study found instances where scoring grades had been readjusted after completion of the tests.[17] While this practice is certainly an exception, the possibility exists, and weakens the effectiveness of the device.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL INSPECTION

Each unit receives an Annual General Inspection (AGI) by a representative of the Inspector General. Over the years the format has varied, but the intent is to provide an impartial evaluation of the unit. An officer, sometimes accompanied by a non-commissioned officer, visits the unit for a short period of time, (usually one day or less, depending upon the type of unit). Time limitation preclude and in-depth inspection and it is normally limited to selective checks. It provides an insight as to whether the unit is properly organized and operating with current regulation, according to Department of the Army (DA) standards. A beneficial side-effect is the preparation made by the unit to be ready for inspection. The inspection is an indicator but, by itself, cannot determine the operational readiness of a unit.

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[17] The Army Study, p. II23, 24.

ANNUAL TRAINING EVALUATION

Each year at annual training (AT) each unit is evaluated by representatives of their Continental US Army (CONUSA) Commander. The format of the inspection varies, from year to year, as does the size and composition of the evaluation team. Other Army commitments have sometimes limited the availability of qualified evaluation. The effectiveness of the AT evaluation is dependent upon both the size and the quality of the team. It is difficult, for example, for one officer to evaluate all of the units of a battalion in this short time. It is an effective device but is more an evaluation of a unit's operating efficiency than operational readiness.

THE ADVISOR REPORT

Active Army personnel assigned as advisors to Reserve Component units submit semi-annual reports on the units they advise. In this report they evaluate the unit's progress and report problems encountered. This report can provide an intimate insight on the efficiency and progress of the unit. This is a subjective evaluation and is completely dependent upon the competance of the advisor.

READINESS REPORTING

Reserve Components are required to submit semi-annual readiness reports. AR 135-8 and National Guard Regulations (NGR) 135-8 establish readiness reporting procedures. DA Form 2841 is utilized for this report. Major Army commanders forward a narrative summary evaluation of unit readiness to the Chief Office Reserve Components, Department of the Army. DA Form 2841 reflects the status of personnel, training, and logistics. It also furnishes the results of the unit's current AGI, ATT, and AT evaluation. Included in the training evaluation are: the unit commander's estimate of his readiness condition (REDCON), and his estimate of the number of weeks required to reach REDCON One. Space is provided for the unit commander and higher commander's comments.[18]

This form collects most of the current readiness indicators relative to a unit's readiness condition. The "meat" of the report is the commander's estimate of the unit's REDCON. There is not necessarily any correlation between his estimate and an ATT. The evaluation is subjective and depends upon the commanders experience, judgement, and competence.

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[18] US Department of the Army, Army Regulation 135-8: Reserve Components Unit Readiness (10 March 1969).

SUMMARY

This chapter has reviewed most of the devices utilized to measure a unit's readiness condition. Other tools not considered here are: the maintainance assistance inspection, the command inspection, and the commander's estimate. While these devices provide readiness indicators, there is a need for considerable improvement. Because of the infrequency of the ATT, the latitude allowed in conducting it, and the lack of correlation among various indicators, the evaluation may not be current or accurate.

Most significant, the final evaluation is essentially an estimate. Unlike a piece of equipment, a unit, composed of people, cannot be evaluated entirely in an objective manner. Further, since the commander has an intimate knowledge of his unit, his subjective evaluation must remain a vital part of the evaluation. It seems essential, however, that the final evaluation should include objective measurement, and evaluation by an impartial observer as well as the commander's evaluation.

The Air Force's procedure seemingly provides an effective method of evaluating their units. Because of operational differences the methods are not necessarily adaptable to US Army units. For example, " no notice " inspections would not be practical for all Reserve Components units. However, the principles utilized are worthy of consideration as we seek to improve US Army procedures.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

The secretary of defense has directed that reserve forces will play an essential role in the future security of the US. This requires a higher state of readiness for Reserve Component units. Most of these units will not attain combat readiness in a pre-mobilization status. However, a primary objective of these units is to prepare to deploy with a minimum of post mobilization training.

In past mobilizations there has been a lack of accurate readiness information. Post mobilization training was based on estimates. Current mobilization assignments of Reserve Component units require current and accurate readiness evaluation. Since, in most cases, these units will not be operationally ready, it is essential that the evaluation reveal post mobilization requirements.

Since the last mobilization, an evaluation program has been established. ATTs are required, and readiness reporting has resumed. This program is not entirely satisfactory. The ATT, which is the principle measurement tool, is not available for all units. The existing ATTs need to be improved. The latitude allowed by the scoring system and by test modification leads to

inconsistent results. The requirements for units to administer tests to subordinates overburdens the units, and can compromise the results. The readiness reporting system is submitted administratively, and does not necessarily correlate readiness indicators. The projection of post mobilization training remains primarily an estimate.

Additional emphasis needs to be placed on evaluation and phase of it which reveals post mobilization requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

ATTs should be developed for all units. Existing tests should be standardized and improved. Modifications should be limited to retain test validity, and the scoring system should be standardized to provide reliable results. Emphasis needs to be placed on determining post mobilization requirements as opposed to just rating the unit.

ATTs should be administered annually by impartial qualified test teams. Methods considered feasible are: Active Army test teams; Reserve Forces test teams; gaining command test teams; or a combination of these methods. At least two of these methods have been partially utilized. Round out units have been tested by gaining commands and USAR Manuever Area Commands have formed teams and conducted tests.

Readiness reporting should be more closely related to the

to the results of an ATT. A joint evaluation by the chief umpire and the unit commander at the completion of the ATT could provide an accurate status report. The evaluation should include a projection of post mobilization requirements as well as the current unit readiness condition.

Edmund W. Sullivan
Colonel, Infantry

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