

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**MULTICOMPONENT UNITS:
WORTHWHILE ENDEAVOR?**

by

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The views expressed in this academic research paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or any of its agencies.

U.S. Army War College
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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved OMB No.
0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.

1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 07-04-2003		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED (FROM - TO) xx-xx-2002 to xx-xx-2003	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Multicomponent Units: A Worthwhile Endeavor? Unclassified			5a. CONTRACT NUMBER		
			5b. GRANT NUMBER		
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER		
6. AUTHOR(S) Resnak, Bruce A. ; Author			5d. PROJECT NUMBER		
			5e. TASK NUMBER		
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS U.S. Army War College Carlisle Barracks Carlisle, PA17013-5050			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER		
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME AND ADDRESS ,			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)		
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)		
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT APUBLIC RELEASE					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT See attached file.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:		17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON	
		Same as Report (SAR)	41	Rife, Dave RifeD@awc.carlisle.army.mil	
a. REPORT Unclassified	b. ABSTRACT Unclassified	c. THIS PAGE Unclassified	19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER International Area Code Area Code Telephone Number DSN		
				Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98) Prescribed by ANSI Std Z39.18	

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Lieutenant Colonel Bruce A. Resnak
TITLE: Multicomponent Units: A Worthwhile Endeavor?
FORMAT: Strategy Research Project
DATE: 07 April 2003 PAGES: 41 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

Attempts at integrating the Reserve Components (RC) and Active Component (AC) date back to the 1970s during Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird's tenure, and continues today with programs supported by the current administration. One program that appears to be gathering momentum is the Multicomponent Unit (MCU) program. Multicomponent units are comprised of soldiers and equipment from more than one component on a single source document. Great strides have been made since the inception of this program to overcome obstacles ranging from the day-to-day management of the units, how the units are resourced, compatibility of the automation systems to handle MCUs, and the congressionally mandated management of certain aspects of individual component resources. This paper will chronicle the evolution of MCUs at the macro level and discuss some of the major hurdles overcome in taking the program to where it is today. The study will point out some of the successful practices and guidelines that have made the MCU program a more flexible and responsive program offering some unique potential to the future of the Armed Forces.

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PREFACE

I would like to thank the countless staff officers and civilians who have taken the multicomponent concept from a program of utter frustration to a workable program that continues to show promise and potential. I also tender my grateful appreciation to Colonel Dallas Owens for his insightful writings and comments on the multicomponent subject. Finally, I could not have completed this project without the support of my family: Paula, for your countless hours of proofing and editing, and Jessie and Alex for keeping me honest and reminding me of what is important in life.

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MULTICOMPONENT UNITS: A WORTHWHILE ENDEVEAVOR?

DEFINITION AND INTENT OF MULTICOMPONENT UNITS (MCU)

The most recent and common definition of a Multicomponent Unit (MCU) is: A unit, which on a single document is authorized personnel from more than one component¹. The definition does not restrict the size of the unit, (platoon, company, or battalion), nor does it identify the composition or flag holder of the unit. The definition of MCU leaves the make up of the unit open to desires and needs of the components resourcing the MCU. The resourcing components consist of the Active Component (AC), the United States Army Reserve (USAR), and the Army National Guard (ARNG). MCUs must consist of at least two separate components to be classified as an MCU.

The intent of the MCU initiative is to integrate, to the maximum extent within statutory and regulatory constraints, resources from more than one component into a cohesive, fully mission capable Army unit, providing unity of command and control similar to that of a single component. MCU status will not change the priority of the parent unit (owner of the flag), but may change the priority of component derivatives so that they will align with the parent unit. The unit's priority is based on the force packaging, Department of the Army Master Priority List (DAMPL) sequence, and the tiered resource policies of the Army's components².

By following these intents, MCUs fulfill the four stated goals of the Headquarters Department of the Army Policy Letter 220-98-1 on establishing MCUs: (1) Enhancing Army AC/RC integration, (2) Improving readiness and resource posture, (3) Optimizing the unique capabilities of each component, and (4) Improving documentation³. An in-depth evaluation on these objectives will appear later in this paper and serve to answer the central question of this project, "Are MCUs Working?".

ORIGINS OF INTEGRATION AND TRANSFORMATION

The origins of multicomponent units (MCU) trace their roots back to 1970 in Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird's "Total Force Policy". In that policy, Secretary Laird directed that the services develop programs with an increased reliance on and a greater relevance for the reserve components. Historically, the Reserve component had been used to augment the active forces. However, with the escalating cost of the war in Vietnam, the disenchantment of the American people with the military, and the imminent end of the military draft, Secretary Laird issued the following directive:

A total-force concept will be applied in all aspects of planning, programming, manning, equipping and employing Guard and Reserve Forces. Application of the concept will be geared to the recognition that in many instances the lower peacetime sustaining costs of reserve force units, compared to similar active units, can result in a larger total force for a lesser budget. In addition, attention will be given to the fact that Guard and Reserve Forces can perform peacetime missions as a by-product or adjunct of training with significant manpower and monetary savings⁴.

General Creighton Abrams Jr., Chief of Staff for the Army, reinforced that philosophy by stating, "If we are ever going to war again, we are going to take the Reserves with us."⁵ This Total Force Policy has morphed into current day Active Component/Reserve Component (AC/RC) Integration. The integration of reserve components units with active duty forces has evolved over time. Adjustments have been made to accommodate congressionally mandated direction and actions, worldwide events, economics, and technological advances.

Desert Shield and Desert Storm further highlighted the need to integrate reserve component and active component forces. According to Lieutenant General Steven Arnold, Third Army Operations officer during Desert Storm, the Cold War coupled with the draw down of active military forces "... has increased the need to maximize U.S. AC and RC force capabilities and has created a new need for early deploying cells".⁶

The Active Component is currently about two-thirds of its Gulf War strength. Commitments both at home and abroad continue to grow. To meet these and future missions, the capabilities of the reserve components must be drawn upon. Composite active component units will support the majority of requirements. Reserve and integrated units must fill the delta of the shortfall as it relates to mission requirements. Timeliness and criticality of establishing a presence will have a significant impact on whether units will be active component, reserve component, or integrated.

Dramatic changes in the use and employment of reserve components in the 1990s will likely bring further refinements in the roles of the reserve components⁷. Resource constraint mandates that reserve force integration be used to provide a cost-effective military capability. Since that time numerous programs have been initiated, resourced, refined and redesigned⁸. In a study by the Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces, the Department of Defense was advised that better use be made of the reserve components. The commission's report included the following recommendation:

...where significant uncertainties or differences of opinion exist, ... [the Department of Defense should] establish a series of tests, experiments, and pilot programs to determine whether the reserve components can perform to standard and whether different organizational and training arrangements would be more effective.⁹

The MCU initiative is but one of numerous programs that attempt to fulfill the requirements of integrating and increasing the role of reserve components.

Secretary of Defense William Cohen further refined the AC/RC integration effort in his 1997 memorandum "Integration of Reserve and Active Components". His memorandum highlighted four principles of AC/RC integration: "(1) clearly understood responsibility for the ownership of the Total Force by the senior leaders... (2) clear and mutual understanding of the mission of each unit... (3) commitment to provide the resources needed to accomplish assigned missions, and (4) leadership by senior commanders...to ensure the readiness of the Total Force."¹⁰

In June of 1998, Chief of Staff of the Army, General Dennis J. Reimer released a White Paper titled, "One Team, One Fight, One Future: Total Army Integration".¹¹ The paper identified the world as a changing place and in order to remain relevant, the Army along with its leadership must adapt. A key part of the adaptation was the introduction of the multicomponent concept. Multicomponent units were introduced as an experiment that potentially could reshape the military. General Reimer referred to multicomponent units as "building blocks" that could be tailored to meet specific operational needs. Realizing that the reserve components are the strongest link to the American people, General Reimer sought to further strengthen the bond between the military and civilian communities while at the same time creating viable forces for deployment. By tying the reserve components to any large-scale endeavor undertaken by Army forces, the American people are more likely to solidify their support for the military.

Following the Secretary of Defense's memorandum, Headquarters Department of the Army (HQDA), Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations (DCSOPS) Force Development (FD) published Policy Letter 220-98-1. This policy letter gave official recognition of MCUs as (near) future Army organizations. Identification of units, resource allocation, and effective activation dates (E Dates) were established. Four objectives were the driving force of the initial MCUs: (1) enhancing Total Force Integration, (2) improving the resource and readiness posture of Army units, (3) optimizing the unique capabilities of each component, and (4) improving documentation.¹² An underlying, but not widely documented, reason for MCUs that was later de-emphasized was to save Army resources, primarily personnel.¹³

The current Chief of Staff of the Army, General Eric K. Shinseki continues to reinforce his predecessors' philosophies. He expressed his support for integration of active and reserve forces in his Fiscal Year 2001 Posture Statement to the United States Senate and House of Representatives. General Shinseki, added a new complexity to the issue by introducing transformation as his principle vision. Transformation has become the validity measure for any concept proposed for the Army.

This leads into the question of "Are MCU forces transformational"? Do they fit into the big Army's future vision of an objective force? A short answer is probably yes, but how the Objective Force is defined and documented will determine the degree that MCUs are included and how they fit. In the short run, MCUs force the Army to look at all of its assets and determine the best mix with the least risk to continue to fight and win the nation's wars. Included in this mix must be the recognition of the inevitable calls to arms for military operations other than war (MOOTW). The requirements of any Objective Force unit must show significant improvement in the identified characteristics of a full spectrum force: responsiveness, employability, agility, versatility, lethality, survivability, and sustainability. These characteristics are what current and future MCUs must be evaluated against if they are to be considered a valid part of Army transformation.

HISTORY OF ATTEMPTED INTEGRATION

Throughout the years, there have been numerous attempts to integrate the active and reserve components. Some programs trace their roots back to Secretary Laird's Total Force Policy. Others emerged over time as untested concepts and plans. The earliest programs date back to the militia/National Guard in 1903 and the Army Reserve since 1916.¹⁴

While it appeared that the goal was to integrate reserve component forces with active component forces into a *seamless integration of land combat power*, quite the opposite remained true. Seams or barriers remained due to geographical distances, availability of resources, modernization level of equipment, access to training areas, and general perceptions of each component by the other.

Some programs seemed to thrive in peacetime or training environments, but the trust never developed to allow the reserve units to augment the active forces under actual deployment conditions. The "Roundup" and "Roundout" concepts exemplify this. Active component units provided oversight and alignment with reserve component forces, but never fully integrated the forces into deployments, training, and field training exercises. Mixed success came from these programs, and both success and failures within this program are

largely attributable to the personalities of the senior leadership, both within the units as well as within the peacetime command structures of the associated headquarters.

Some programs gave the perception of reserve forces augmenting active forces while reducing personnel spaces of active component forces. For the most part, these attempts at integration were programs with good intentions, but were not well resourced or developed substantially to test for integration, let alone readiness or feasibility of deployment.

Currently there are nine documented AC/RC integration programs employed in the United States Army. Each program is uniquely set up to develop and extrapolate the best from each component in the integration process. These programs run the entire gambit from the integration of different component platoons at the company level to augmentation of specified individual positions within identified organizations. The programs and a brief description of their purpose are:

PROGRAM	FEATURES	PURPOSE
Integrated Division	2 AC divisions headquarters with training oversight responsibility for their enhanced separate brigades.	Provide guidance and oversight to improve their brigades' training and readiness.
Teaming	Expanded in September 2000 to align all ARNG divisions with corps and team them with an AC division.	Establish or strengthen training and operational relationships of the teamed units.
Force XXI Heavy Division	1 division experiment. Expansion planned to 2 more divisions and a corps.	Reduce the size of heavy divisions and fill some positions with RC individuals.
Bosnia Task Force	Alternate AC & ARNG division headquarters with major troop units provided by component not providing the headquarters.	Provide systemic RC participation in the Bosnia stabilization force. Reduce demand on AC units.
Multicomponent Units	A single unit with one MTOE, comprised of personnel from two or more components. Over 30 now organized with gradual expansion through 2007 to 113 units.	Improve readiness and resource allocations, optimize component unique capabilities, improve documentation and enhance total integration.
Integrated Light Infantry Battalions	27 ARNG companies to "round up" 3 AC & ARNG divisions.	Expand the capabilities of selected divisions by adding a battalion.

Training Support XXI	Created training support divisions under direct control of the U.S. Army Reserve Command and the Continental U.S. Armies.	Increase RC readiness levels by providing “synchronized, integrated, and effective training support” to RC units.
Active Component Associate Unit Mentorship Relationships	Matches AC & RC leaders at corps and divisions levels (senior) and junior leaders at below division (peer).	To provide senior RC commanders with the leadership and advice on training matters and junior commanders with peer mentors to share experience and information on training implementation.
Active/Reserve Component Battalion Command Exchange Program	AC& RC will exchange battalion commanders and brigade & battalion executive & operations officers.	Provide experience and better understanding of other components by battalion commanders and key staff at battalion and brigade level.

TABLE 1. ARMY AC/RC INTEGRATION PROGRAMS¹⁵

Over time, both the active and reserve component leadership has learned that units do not fit neatly into the AC/RC integration categories. Lessons have been learned, programs developed with clear end states, units selected by design, and resources applied to benefit all contributing components. Definite strides are being made toward the positive integration of active and reserve component forces. Mistakes will still be made as we transform from the interim force to the objective force. What works now, may not work in the future. But the ground work that has been laid, the documentation trail that has been established, and the hard work and efforts from soldiers and leaders of all three Army components will ensure that the learning curve will never again be this steep.

WHY MULTICOMPONENT

An integrated Total Force is the key to achieving the goals of assuring friends and allies, dissuading adversaries, deterring aggression, and decisively defeating any adversary if deterrence fails. Using the concepts and principles of the National Military Strategy (NMS), the Concept for Future Joint Operations (Joint Vision 2010), and the Total Force Policy, the Department of Defense will continue the evolution towards a seamlessly integrated, cost-effective force.¹⁶

This paper will focus on the multicomponent aspect of integration as it relates to the Army Reserve¹⁷. This program is the most comprehensive of the various integration programs due to the consolidation of more than one component on a single source document. The challenges associated with this task are enormous. Great strides have already been taken in remedying problems encountered by this integration program. Continued efforts are needed to totally integrate the forces and maximize the contributions of each component while minimizing the distractions.

Dating back to the early 1970s, when reserve component forces were first integrated into the actual warplans of the combatant commanders, the question has been raised: Are the reserve forces responsive enough? Through the 1990s and into the twenty first century, the number of reserve units mobilized and deployed has justified the inclusions. However, there is still a time lag for their employment and a perceived lack of responsiveness for support of combatant commanders' requirements. Through astute use of the Total Army Analysis (TAA) process, the identification, selection, and structuring of multicomponent units can overcome these perceived shortfalls. In doing so, the Army moves a step closer toward total integration.

Multicomponent units offer a unique capability of providing a full Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) unit that has a small inexpensive peacetime (day-to-day) requirement along with a major wartime responsibility. The active component cell, along with any full time reserve staffing within the MCU can address day-to-day requirements. The reserve component slice within the MCU, coupled with the active component slice will provide a composite unit to meet the combatant commanders wartime requirement.

RESOURCING OF MCUs

There are three different types of MCUs that may be activated; Organic Unit Structures, Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE), and a Hybrid configuration. Each component along with Forces Command (FORSCOM), the Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve (OCAR), and the Director of the Army National Guard (DARNG) have a voice in the type of MCU and how it is resourced. Only after concurrence of all the components making up the MCU will the nomination process continue. Unanimous concurrence was missing in the development of early MCUs. By garnering agreement from the concerned parties early in the process, MCUs now have a better chance at succeeding.

Regardless of the type of unit selected for MCU, careful consideration by the reserve component must be given to their soldiers' opportunities for career progression, demographics, stationing, and training. In order for this concept to be successful, the agreed upon resourcing

alternative must be beneficial to all components as well as offer an incentive (or at least not be a detractor) to the advancement potential of the individual soldier.

In the Organic Unit Structure, pure organic battalions such as an Engineer Battalion are established with specific components providing full companies that are consolidated under a single flag from one component. This appears to be the optimal use for a MCU, but the numbers of units available for consideration are not plentiful. Secondly, many of these units are found at the division level and while this in itself is not a deterrent, increasing the numbers of MCUs for early deploying war fighting is probably not the optimum employment of MCUs. Both the Army Reserve and the National Guard are in favor of resourcing MCUs configured by Organic Unit Structure.

The second variant of MCUs is the Individual Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) Unit Positions. Under this premise, individual positions are designated for fill by a specific component (Active, Army Reserve, or National Guard). This variant works well for organizational structures that are above the battalion level. Through careful identification of positions within the organization, all sections can perform their major functions with minimal staffing. This staffing allows continuity of planning and operations on a daily basis, with reserve component soldiers providing a longer-range capability and a near term surge capability. The Army Reserve supports this type of MCU, however the Army National Guard does not wish to resource individual placement of soldiers within MCUs.¹⁸

A third variant is a hybrid organization that is component pure at the company level, but augmented in certain positions within the companies with soldiers from a different component. This augmentation can occur at the platoon, company, or even the headquarters level. Again, because individual fillers are used and units are not affiliated with components, the Army Reserve supports the resourcing of these types of MCUs while the Army National Guard does not.

NOMINATION PROCESS FOR MCUs

The Army has taken careful steps to identify the correct types of units to nominate as MCUs. This process has not been without significant growing pains and considerable retracing of steps. The process now under review appears to be a well thought out systemic process with numerous checks and balances. Nomination, concurrence, and approval of all affected Major Area Commands (MACOMS) is required before a unit is nominated for MCU status. Nomination does not necessarily mean that the unit will come on line as an MCU. The next step is validation through the Total Army Analysis (TAA) process to determine if a future requirement

exists for that type unit. A closer review will determine the composition of MCUs. Only those units meeting these criteria will be considered for MCU status.

In a fully coordinated MCU concept plan (MCUCP) the sponsoring component must demonstrate that the nominated unit can be supported, execute its mission, and attain a C3 or better readiness rating by the EDATE (effective date of activation). This plan is submitted through command channels, with ultimate approval coming from the Director of Force Management, Department of the Army, G3. Once approved, the unit is added to the approved list of MCU nominees. The sponsoring component is still responsible for developing, refining, and resourcing the MCU concept plan. At any point along this process, the sponsoring component may request that the nominated unit be removed from the approved list by submitting written justification to the Director of Force Management.

After a unit is selected from the MCU nomination list, the activation process of an MCU does not differ radically from any other single component unit. All phases of documentation, requirements determination, and programming must be followed by resources being dedicated to the unit.

The following chart graphically depicts the MCU Process:

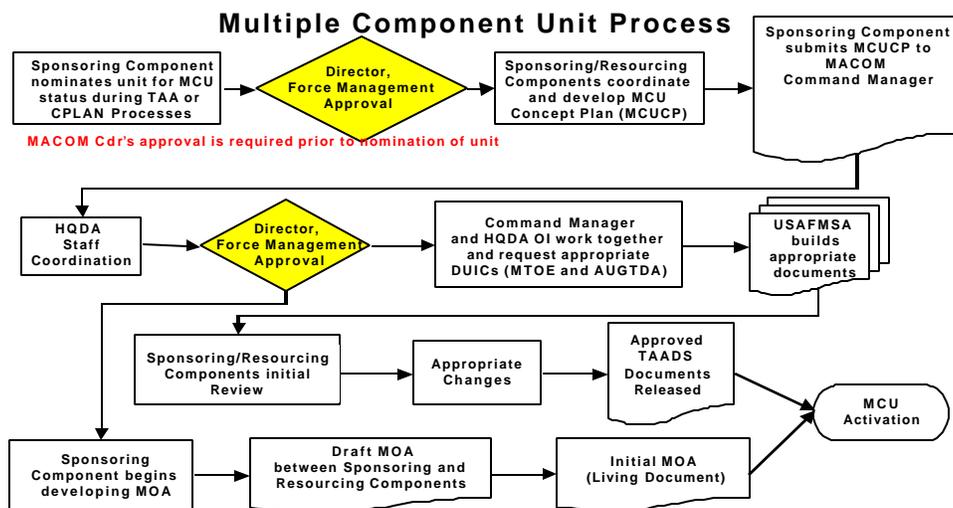


FIGURE 1. MCU PROCESS¹⁹

INITIAL ISSUES WITH MCUs

This definition, along with the intent of MCUs has remained constant since the concepts inception. By adhering to this definition, the most difficult issue of physically restricting documentation of a unit comprised of more than one component to a single document had to be addressed. Had a change to the definition, because of the task complexity, been allowed, the reality of a true MCU probably would not have been realized.

The original Department of the Army policy letter for establishing MCUs recognizes that there were issues with MCUs from the start. Paragraph six of this letter, titled Overview, clearly identifies that certain regulatory and legal constraints will have to be addressed. It states, "This multi-component policy establishes a single integrated unit. The policy provides unity of command and control similar to that of single-component units. The intent is to integrate, to the maximum extent within regulatory and legal constraints, resources from more than one component into a cohesive, fully capable Army unit."²⁰ Knowing from the start that there would be issues in trying to consolidate different components on a single document, a unified effort was needed in order to systematically identify, correct, and resolve inhibitors to the MCU process.

One of the principal barriers to overcome was in the use of the Unit Identification Code (UIC) naming convention. Since most Army Standard Information Management Systems (STAMIS) operate based on the unique UIC, classifying MCUs and tracking component specific resources was a formidable obstacle. Held to the limitations of five characters, the guidelines for MCU naming conventions were established.

The naming convention associated with MCUs was critical in successfully identifying specific component responsibilities and resources. Without getting into technical analysis of naming conventions, applying certain rules to MCUs provided the guidelines to expand and overcome some of the initial problems. An "N" in the second position of the UIC identified the unit as a MCU. The fifth character of the UIC designated which component was sourcing the requirement. "X" represented the active component, "R" the Army Reserve, and "G" represented the Army National Guard. The last character in the UIC represented the number of cells each component provided to the parent unit. An X2 in the last two characters meant that the active component had two distinct cells within the overall unit. An "R3" meant that the Army Reserve had three distinct cells within that parent unit. The primary reason for multiple occurrences of the same component (R1, R2, R3....) is the geographic disparity of like component cells.

The MCU program has shown significant improvements since its inception. While initial problems surfaced along all avenues, from personnel to logistics, and affected all areas, from readiness to resources, a concerted effort by all parties has overcome many of the obstacles associated with combining several components onto a single document. While some areas are still using workarounds to overcome these problems, for the most part long range corrections have been initiated which will eventually correct the problems.

In 1998, the Reserve Forces Policy Board identified barriers to integrating the active and reserve components. The four most prominent barriers were:

- Lack of coordinated total-force budget
- Incompatible pay and personnel systems
- Incompatible equipment and weapon systems
- Lack of coordinated training and military education

The remainder of this section will address these and other barriers that initially inhibited integrating MCUs.

STANDARD ARMY MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS (STAMIS)

The Standard Army Management Information Systems (STAMIS) presented unique problems for MCUs mainly because of their stove-piped development. Some systems were DOS based and unable to offer any flexibility for addressing unique problems of MCUs. Others were developed to not parallel the wartime requirements, but to augment Army Reserve and National Guard peacetime reporting requirements²¹. All Army legacy STAMIS are currently under examination with an orientation toward joint integration. Since these are the Army's primary means of reporting and tracking equipment, personnel, supplies, and maintenance, significant improvements or work arounds were required to overcome differences among the components.

PERSONNEL

Each component's personnel system was designed to keep the components separate. No forethought to future commingling of forces was given in the development of the legacy systems. Hence, each component had the same personnel program, but different iterations of the program. SIDPERS 1, SIDPERS 2, and SIDPERS 3 were all functional personnel management systems within each component, but they were not compatible for blending or combining information across components. In MCUs the inability to selectively manage

personnel was a hindrance to the command when it was necessary to compile a composite unit report. For the most part, each component had the required information available, but was unable to consolidate the information. In order to submit consolidated unit reports, commanders must manually compile data, an unacceptable requirement in the age of information management. For the time being, efforts to overcome this problem are addressed in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between components.

Personnel actions pertaining to individual soldiers are forwarded through their component specific chain of command. Unit commanders receive information copies of personnel actions for those soldiers outside of his/her component. The long-term fix to this problem is the Personnel Authorization Model (PAM) XXI. Although PAM XXI was not designed specifically for MCUs, an MCU application was developed and tests have proven its usefulness when addressing consolidated MCU personnel management. The MCU prototype was tested in September 2002 and it is expected to be available for selected MCU commanders in the summer of 2003.²² It will provide automated visibility and management of all soldiers, regardless of component, within the command. Overcoming the hurdle of automated personnel management within MCUs will be a tremendous step toward effective management of personnel.

Use of Full Time Manning (FTM) or Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) personnel to support MCUs has been an obstacle to full integration of the active and reserve components. Until recently, these full time personnel were prohibited from performing operational missions and restricted to performing administrative and training duties. This in turn allowed the "Part-time" reserve soldiers to devote a minimal amount of time to administrative details, while maximizing their training time and opportunities. The Reserve Component Employment Study 2005 (RCE 2005) identified this deficiency, and the Fiscal Year (FY) 2000 National Defense Authorization Act corrected it.²³ However, the correction only addresses the Title 10 AGRs (Army Reserve) and not the Title 32 (National Guard) AGRs working with state assigned duties. Even with this limitation, by allowing much of the AGR force to function as part of the MCU team, considerable flexibility was added to the unit in terms of staffing and operational deployment capabilities.

LOGISTICS

Logistical issues parallel the personnel issues. A tremendous amount of work throughout the logistics community identified corrective actions required in order for MCUs to take advantage of the legacy automated systems. Correct use of the Unit Identification Code

(UIC) and Derivative Unit Identification Code (DUIC) naming conventions has proven to be a key enabler when working with MCUs. Since most tracking of MCU was done based on the derivative UIC, tracking of component specific items was somewhat easier. While this did not alleviate the manual requirement for consolidation, it did eliminate concerns that components had about the visibility and accountability of their equipment.

A major requirement for maintaining visibility and accountability of component specific equipment is Department of Defense Directive 1225.6. This directive specifically prohibited the transfer of equipment from the Army Reserve or the National Guard without Secretary of Defense approval and a valid replacement plan identified.

Logistical STAMIS have developed to the point that they can account for multicomponent property while maintaining each component's identity using derivative UICs (DUICs). However, it fails to provide an organizational rollup of unit equipment. Since all equipment is still maintained by each component, feeder reports for each component providing equipment must be consolidated for any reporting requirements including readiness. Dual reporting chains must be maintained as each component, along with the unit commander has a stake in monitoring, resourcing, and tracking their equipment. MCUs structured organically have fewer reporting problems than other types of MCUs.

Another issue is that MTOEs, whether MCU or single component, are built with a standard configuration. There is one supply sergeant and personnel administrator per unit. Having a MCU with several components contributing equipment and personnel does not result in a supply sergeant and a personnel clerk from each component. Nor is a STAMIS computer system provided for each component for accountability or maintenance tracking of each piece of equipment. The additional tracking of equipment must come from another ad hoc organization, adding another element to the unofficial command and control structure of the unit.

Another issue that transcends logistics and crosses into financial management concerns maintaining separate operation and maintenance (O&M) money for each component. Legal constraints are in place to ensure that certain monies are used for specific things. Further division of those monies ensures that each component is provided a certain amount for use on the repair and operation of their component specific equipment. The active component has OMA monies, the Army Reserve OMAR monies and the National Guard OMARNG monies. (These fund categories are often referred to as the "color of money".) The congressionally titled funds are to be used specifically for the components and cannot be cross-leveled to address MCU issues. Crossing these boundaries is in direct violation of congressional funding guidance. This situation places the unit commander in the unenviable position of having funds

available, yet being unable to affect repair cycle times, because the funds are not the right “color”. The unit commander is responsible for the entire unit, but has little say in the funding received for the maintenance and operation of component specific equipment. While no component would consciously undermine the funding of a MCU, year-end fiscal constraints or continuing resolution authority may have an unintended impact on MCU units.

In the Training Resource Module (TRM), each component receives funds based on their expected use of equipment. These funds include all normal operating costs associated with the equipment assigned. Funding is different for each component primarily due to the availability of soldiers for training. Extended use of reserve component equipment by active component soldiers from normal wear and tear, would increase maintenance costs for that piece of equipment beyond what is normally resourced. Additional funding for the upkeep of that piece of equipment would have to come from the component owning the piece of equipment even if another source of funding was readily available. While any quality hands-on training increases readiness, managing this convoluted process is but another area that competes for the unit commander’s time.

DEPLOYMENT

MCUs do not replace active duty units; rather they augment the total force capability. Units requiring short or no notice mobilization and deployment should not be considered candidates for MCUs. The reserve components offer limited responsiveness when it comes to deployability. MCUs were not conceived to be rapid deployment units. That said, organic unit structure MCUs does offer a flexible modular deployment capability not present in pure reserve component units.

Recent mobilizations of the reserve components have come under scrutiny of the Secretary of Defense²⁴. Selective call-ups or the use of volunteers has affected not only the unit providing the majority of the capabilities, but also any unit providing resources, i.e. personnel or equipment. Through prudent staffing of MCUs with either full time reservists (AGR) or active component soldiers, along with restricted voluntary procedures, a MCU can provide a scaled down capability that is both responsive and fully capable of expansion. The use of this “flyaway” capability is currently being employed in numerous MCU headquarters, predominately at levels above battalion. Future employment should look at MCUs at the company level that require short duration, limited capabilities operations.

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENTS (MOAs)

A significant player in the success of MCUs has been the MOA. A well-crafted MOA can identify obstacles that must be overcome, and assign responsibilities in an otherwise ambiguous situation. The MOA is required for all MCUs and an increasingly detailed outline has been developed throughout the evolution of MCUs. Initially, MOAs were a weak link in the activation of MCUs. In some cases, MCUs were activated without a formal agreement between components. Lieutenant Colonel Thomas O'Donovan stated that the MOA for his battalion MCU was started early in 1999 but still had not been completed with official MACOM signatures by mid-summer 2001.²⁵

MOAs have improved in content and process since the initial days of MCUs. Appendix Q of Army Regulation (AR) 71-32 specifically suggests topics for MCU MOAs. While the list is by no means comprehensive, it provides significantly more guidance than the former Headquarters Department of the Army Policy Letters or commander's guidance statements. As MCUs continue to be fielded, new issues will be raised, but the guidelines of Appendix Q are an excellent starting point for any unit or MACOM to consider when identifying units as MCU.

CULTURE AS AN ISSUE

Throughout history, not only in the U.S., but also within the British and German Armed Forces, there has been friction between the active and reserve component forces.²⁶ This friction is based upon the cultural differences of each component. These cultural differences have the potential to be the single biggest detractor in MCUs. While personalities play a big part, even more important is the basic understanding of capabilities and limitations of reserve forces during peacetime.

While all reserve forces have had some exposure to active duty, albeit may have come in the form of basic training for both officers and enlisted, the same is not true for active component soldiers having had experience or even exposure to the reserve components. This lack of exposure does nothing to accelerate the learning curve of the leadership within the components, and in fact, may hinder the effectiveness of the unit. Even within the Reserve Component elements of the Army Reserve and the National Guard, cultural differences affect the areas of training, employment, financial support, and deployment.

This lack of understanding can lead to a breakdown in the trust among unit members. Going back to the basics of teambuilding, trust is required in order for the team (unit) to reach higher levels of proficiency, efficiency, and readiness. "When trust is present, you will usually be able to create teamwork. When it is missing, you won't."²⁷ John Kotter further stated that,

“This single insight about trust can be most helpful in judging whether a particular set of activities will produce the kind of team that is needed. If the activities create the mutual understanding, respect, and caring associated with trust, then you’re on the right road. If they don’t, you’re not.”²⁸ In order to foster this trust, leaders must understand the requirements and limitations of the other components, maximize combined training time, and have compatible equipment, and a common training strategy. Only when the leadership and soldiers understand the idiosyncrasies of the other components can the contributions of each component be realized. Through understanding will come trust, through trust will come maturity, and through maturity will come efficiencies. Efficiencies that factor into strategies, maximizing resources and minimizing waste.

Lieutenant Colonel Thomas O’Donovan highlighted the importance of having senior people serve on his staff that had experience working with reserve components in prior assignments²⁹. This familiarization accelerates the learning curve associated with MCUs, which in turn increases other efficiencies within the unit. While this example depicts a pure Engineer Battalion with an active duty headquarters and staff coupled with both Army Reserve and National Guard companies, the same could hold true for a reserve element holding the flag with active companies assigned. Familiarization and education among the leadership of MCUs concerning the others’ culture, requirements, and idiosyncrasies will better position the unit for success.

It is not being suggested to start a new track for personnel management of active duty soldiers that identifies senior personnel with reserve component experience. Rather, expand the education process available to all leaders within MCUs, regardless of component to break down the cultural barriers for future MCU leaders. Over time, the capabilities and limitations associated with the reserve components will not be foreign to active component soldiers and the stigma associated with reserve components can be capitalized upon to make it a strength as opposed to a detractor.

CURRENT TRENDS

From the thirteen initial MCUs activated in fiscal year 1999 to the sixty-two MCUs projected through fiscal year 2003, consistent improvements are noticeable. Undoubtedly, Army transformation will continue to influence the way we fight, and therefore the way we deploy. Smaller elements that are more lethal will be the trend of the future. Asymmetric warfare is becoming increasingly prevalent with each new encounter. Based on the number of

units scheduled for activation in the upcoming fiscal year, it appears that MCUs will play a definite role in the Army's Objective Force.

As stated earlier in this paper, the MCU process has changed. From nomination through activation, every phase of the process has been refined to take better advantage of the contributions of each component. Technically, every unit is a candidate for nomination to become multicomponent. The realities of the situation, particularly the need for rapid deployment and synchronized training, make some units better suited to function as MCUs than others. The chart below identifies both successful and challenging profiles developed during the phase one MCU initiative (July 1998 – January 2002).

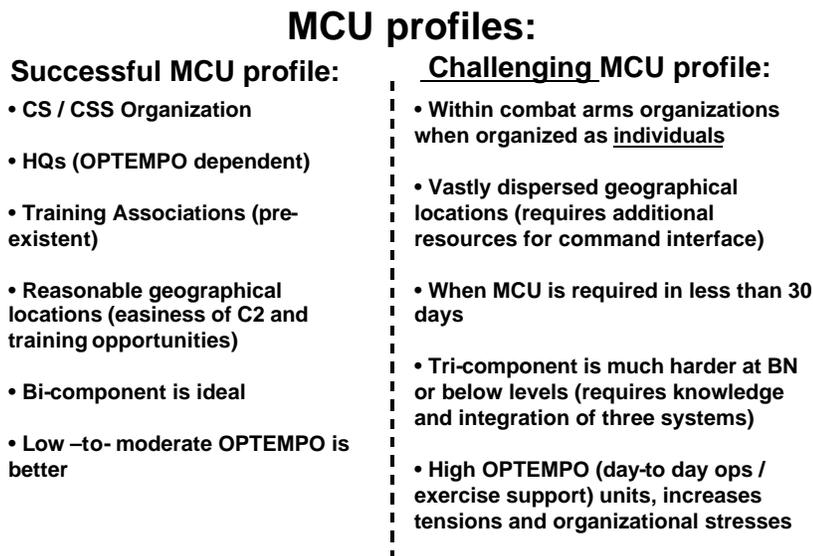


FIGURE 2 MCU PROFILES³⁰

MCU enablers have been identified and are being tracked and reported at the highest levels within the Army.³¹ Work will continue to improve automation issues in the logistics and personnel area, documentation issues, the information campaign of educating MCU leaders and soldiers, funding restraints, and memorandum of agreements (MOAs). Legal and congressional reviews will occur when deemed necessary. A concerted effort to eliminate barriers for the success of MCUs is underway, and will continue with each subsequent iteration. “MCUs have transitioned from experiment to experience”.³²

Improvements in automation will continue and make reporting and managing easier at the unit level. Merging and interactions of the current systems will only progress so far, and

ultimately newer, more modern and capable STAMIS are necessary. These newer STAMIS will account for the required flexibility of accounting for and managing MCUs.

Another trend that is likely to continue is the Army Reserve's desire is to resource MCUs with both individual fillers (primarily in senior headquarters) and with sections, platoons, or companies in battalion and below organizations. The Army National Guard's desire is to continue to resource MCUs with company level (AA) or above elements.³³

Probably one of the most influential programs used to accelerate success of MCUs is the information campaign targeting the leadership of identified units for MCU activation. This campaign can identify unique opportunities, challenges, and the realities of integrating active component and reserve component units. This campaign has the *potential* for accelerating the cultural understanding needed by all components involved. Understanding the cultural differences within the components will accelerate the building of trust between the unit member and leadership. Success in this program area is critical if MCUs are going to become force multipliers.

Memorandum of Agreements (MOAs) will remain the interim solution to the technical long-range issues and the areas of congressional and legislative impasses. While admitting that MOAs are not the most effective way to operate, the Herculean effort that was poured into standardizing and simplifying MOAs will pay dividends for future MCUs.³⁴ This thought process affects both the MOA process as well as the nomination process for MCU units.

ARE MCUs WORKING?

Are MCUs meeting the requirements they were designed to achieve? The answers can be based on the four objectives identified in the Department of the Army policy letter 220-98-1 of (1) enhancing total force integration, (2) improving the resource and readiness posture of Army units, (3) optimizing the unique capabilities of each component, and (4) improving documentation. There is certainly a positive trend toward achieving those objectives. While none of the objectives is fully completed, and in some cases, much work remains before total integration is achieved in a seamless manner, all objectives are progressing toward their desired objective. A recent Headquarters Department of the Army Brief gave passing grades in all the four areas³⁵.

Enhancing total force integration. This goal may never reach total culmination, and MCU is only a small part of the solution. Clearly, the Army is more integrated now than when the first MCU was activated. MCU has played a major role in contributing to the integration of the components. Continuing efforts are required before the systems will allow seamless integration.

Legacy automation systems with moratoriums on upgrades restricting improvements continue to hinder MCUs. Consolidation and standardization by the Joint Staff and within the Department of Defense will further propel MCU into the seamless realm. Legal and congressional restrictions on maintaining separate accounts between the components make managing and operating MCUs difficult. Nevertheless, nothing identified to date is insurmountable.

Improving the resource and readiness posture of Army units. While readiness will depend on numerous factors, ranging from personnel proficiency and grade structure, to equipment compatibility and readiness, the Army has improved its readiness posture (primarily in the personnel readiness arena), through the MCU initiative. This is noticeable primarily in the senior headquarters such as the Army Service Component Commands (ASCC) and the Theater Support Commands (TSC). By adding reserve component elements to these headquarters, the readiness posture of the headquarters increased with little or no cost in terms of the Army budget. By staffing certain positions with reserve component personnel, significant value in terms of readiness is added to the organization. Additionally, by establishing ground rules for the readiness rating of newly organized MCUs as part of the nomination process, MACOMS have added incentive to ensure MCUs reach their required readiness level not later than their activation date.

Optimizing the unique capabilities of each component. The current rules for nomination of MCUs require added benefit to not only the MCU itself, but also to the components resourcing the unit. This area received the most scrutiny in identifying traits that benefited all concerned parties. By restating the guidelines required for nomination of MCUs, components obtained a clearer focus, and selected units that better fit the MCU profile for success. Over time, a “successful” MCU profile was developed allowing MACOMS to better screen MCU nominees and further enhanced the chance of success for both the MCU and the component. Continued evaluation of newly activated MCUs will further define the “successful” profile. Optimizing the selection process allows each component to select the “best” fit based on the doctrinally defined unit role.

Improving documentation. Overall, documentation of MCUs has improved, but system limitations in certain areas still hamper some composite rollups. Unit visibility on a single document is a reality that was made possible through painstakingly difficult and tediously detailed work. Interaction within the system of systems prevalent throughout the Army documentation system identified several coordination issues. Diligence and persistence by refusing to put the documentation issue into the “Too hard to do” box, kept efforts focused on solving the issues at hand and developing workable solutions. While not perfect, continued

efforts along with the modernization of systems will allow for improved visibility at both the component and unit level.

The information campaign is one area whose dividends have not been fully realized. Education of the leadership within the MCUs, regardless of component, is critical in overcoming stereotypes and cultural differences. Implementing these programs must start with the unit leadership, but continue down to the junior leaders and ultimately to all unit members. Only through education and the understanding of the cultural differences are the barriers to teamwork eliminated and trust built. Current plans target this education/information campaign to reach the Pre-command courses, as well as the Officer Education System (OES) and the Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES). Success in the information campaign will assist in the rapid transition of MCUs to ready units, capable of immediately contributing combat ready forces. Increased emphasis must be provided in this area before the formal instruction is integrated into the TRADOC schooling system. Money must be set aside to train MCU leaders on the differences between the components. Areas that must be addressed included training barriers, administrative requirements imposed by the components peacetime chain of command, differences and limitations of money provided by the components, differences in the personnel systems of each component, and actions to take when obstacles are encountered that can't be solved at the unit level. Only by addressing up front the differences between the components will those differences turn from perceived weaknesses to actual strengths.

The above efforts combined with the development, monitoring, reporting and visibility of the MCU enablers at the General Officer level, give legitimacy to the MCU effort. Continued efforts and monitoring of the newly identified MCUs will further strengthen the contributions of the MCUs to the total force.

CONCLUSION

MCUs offer a critical capability that lies somewhere between the high cost, high responsiveness of an active duty unit, and the low cost, less responsiveness of a reserve component unit. Finding the right mix of active and reserve components within an MCU will provide responsive, trained units at a fraction of active component units cost.

Strategically selected MCUs offer the Combatant Commanders force multipliers that enhance the war fight while maximizing component specific resources. The key to MCU success lies in the selection and resourcing of these units. Early buy-in from the components

that resource those units are critical to fielding a unit that is both responsive and trained. A properly resourced and trained MCU offers a cost-effective war fighting capability.

MCUs were not meant to replace active component units in terms of flexibility or responsiveness. Rather, they offer another alternative that lies somewhere mid-stream between active and reserve forces. Not all units can or should function as MCUs. MCUs offer a core competency that can be further enhanced over time if required.

Let us not forget the reason behind our current force structure. From Secretary of Defense Laird's "Total Force Policy", through General Creighton Abram's Abraham's Doctrine, and continuing through Secretary of Defense Cohen and General Shinseki's AC/RC Integration Plan, use of the reserve components is recognized as being critical in mobilizing national will. MCUs offer a unique way to keep reserve forces involved in the war fight and bring the need for a strong military into the local communities.

Current news articles emphasize the Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld's displeasure with the current force mix of active and reserve components³⁶. While seeking to provide the active component forces a "more balanced portfolio of capabilities", the cost benefit ratio of active to reserve forces is only realized when the unit is deployed. If the unit is not deployed, the added benefit of responsiveness must be weighed against the overhead cost of manning the unit full time. An added benefit of MCUs, allows a tailoring of unit capabilities without the need to task organize, and degrade two or more units in order to ascertain the capability. Properly resourced MCUs offer both rapid responsiveness and increased readiness because of their scalable capability.

MCUs offer a total force capability that is responsive, scalable, cost effective, and critical when mobilizing or deploying in order to protect national interests. They are a force multiplier when it comes to mobilizing the national will due to the reserve component ties to the community. The concept should continue to be developed, refined, and implemented when prudently justifiable. At the conclusion of each phase of MCU activations, MACOM input concerning nomination, activation, training and employment of MCUs must be applied to further refinements of the MCU process.

WORD COUNT = 7,965

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¹¹ Reimer, Dennis J., One Team, One Fight, One Future, U.S. Department of the Army, 1998.

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¹⁴ Dallas D. Owens, Jr., "AC/RC Integration: Today's Success and Transformation's Challenge", (Carlisle Barracks, U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2001), 10.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ William S. Cohen, Secretary of Defense, Department of Defense Annual Report to the President and the Congress, 1998; available from http://www.intellnet.org/resources/dod_annual_report_1998/index.html; Internet. Accessed 11 December 2002.

¹⁷ While there are many commonalities between the issues of the Army Reserve and the National Guard, this paper will concentrate primarily on the Army Reserve perspective of multicomponent units. There are many issues that are specific to the National Guard that will not be addressed in this paper.

¹⁸ The Army National Guard published a policy letter in 2002, stating they are not in favor of resourcing units below the company level. They wish to retain unit affiliation for all Army National Guard soldiers.

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²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Nyunt, Thet-Shay, "Multicomponent Units Require Integrated Systems", *Army Logistician*, July/August 1999.

²² Bienvenido Rivera, "Personnel Asset Visibility for Multi Component Units (Multi-compo)", Information Paper, Headquarters Department of the Army DAMO-FDF, Washington D.C., 11 June 2002.

²³ Owens, "AC/RC Integration: Today's Success and Transformation's Challenge", 23.

²⁴ Shanker, Thom, "U.S. Considers Limits In Role of the Reserves", *New York Times*, 26b January 2003, 1.

²⁵ O'Donovan, Thomas E., "The Multicomponent Concept, A case Study of AC/RC Integration in Action", Strategy Research Project, (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, 9 April 2002), 10.

²⁶ Walker, Wallace Earl, "Comparing Armed Forces: A Tale of Multiple Ironies, Conflicting Realities, and More Certain Prospects", *Armed Forces and Society*, Spring 1992, 303

²⁷ Kotter John P., *Leading Change*, (Boston, Massachusetts,: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 61.

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³¹ An MCU enabler is defined as those activities, systems, guidance and agreements that make possible the path to seamless integration of the Army components at the unit and instillation level.

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