

NATIONAL GUARD MANEUVER ENHANCEMENT BRIGADE'S ROLE IN DOMESTIC MISSIONS

BY

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MISSIONS**

by

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The Maneuver Enhancement Brigade (MEB) is one of the more unusual organizations to come out of the Army Modular Force. It has very few organic elements but is capable of providing command and control (C2) for an array of subordinate units. MEB's C2 capacity exceeds that of any other brigade headquarters. The MEBs are uniquely designed for both a war-fighting and operational support role. MEBs' elaborate multiple capabilities are a microcosmic parallel with the National Guard's dual roles. The National Guard is organized to carry out dual missions, state and federal. The Guard prepares to serve in both an operations environment and in its local role in support of state missions, mostly in disaster and humanitarian relief operations. The MEB's design is well-suited to support both state and federal National Guard missions.

NATIONAL GUARD MANEUVER ENHANCEMENT BRIGADE'S ROLE IN DOMESTIC MISSIONS

The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) released a report in 2006 concerning the future of the National Guard and the Reserves. The utility of these components resides primarily in their capacity to protect the U.S. homeland. The report states that “almost five years after the September 11 attacks, it is still not clear how the Reserve Component should organize, train and equip for homeland defense and civil support, and what priority it should place on these missions.”¹ Today the National Guard (NG) is often referred to as an operational force, rather than a strategic reserve. It's evolution into an operational force began with the Total Force concept of the 1970s.

Evolution of the Total Force

In the 1970s a Total Force Concept was designed to join the Regular Army, Army Reserve, and National Guard into a unified land power force. This concept assumed that the Reserve Component (NG and USAR) could be sufficiently trained and equipped so that it could be deployed in a short time frame following mobilization with only minor shortfalls in manning, training, and equipment. While the Reserve Component (RC) was building its forces, the Active Component (AC) would be able to sustain any fight with its deployed forces and pre-positioned equipment. Later deploying AC forces would be maintained at high levels of personnel and equipment, then even later deploying AC and RC forces would be maintained at lower levels. The Army assumed this as acceptable risk, needed to operate within the Department of Defense (DoD) budget. “The 1970 Army was twice as large as the force we have today with over two million men and women in uniform (1.36 million in the AC and 667,000 in the RC).”² In the next

fifteen years, the Army personnel strength decreased by over 500,000 Soldiers. The first deploying forces continued at high levels of personnel and equipment strength. However, decreased budgets and the greater commitments of the U.S. force to peacekeeping missions led to greater reliance on the RC for meeting operational missions.

“Today, at just over 547,000 Soldiers, the AC is less than 40% of its size 35 years ago.”³ The combination of a smaller AC force along with a significantly greater number of operational missions has necessitated the RC to participate to a much greater extent than in its previous role as a strategic reserve. Today, our leaders rely on the Total Army to meet our military requirements for conducting our countries’ security operations. In meeting these requirements, the RC organizations must completely mirror the AC organization’s personnel, equipment, and training. Meeting these new requirements has led to a significant transformation of both the AC and RC.

Transformation

In the rapid pace of today’s changing environment, the Army is transforming to a capable and ready force to provide for our nation’s security and defense. This transformation focuses on building an Army that can successfully conduct a wide range of operations. For these operations, the Army needs lighter and more lethal forces that can rapidly deploy from the continental U.S. for a variety of operations. “Specifically the Army’s goal is to deploy a combat-capable brigade anywhere in the world in 96 hours, a division in 120 hours, and five divisions in 30 days.”⁴

By October 1999, the Army was transforming from its Cold War organization to a force more relevant to the contemporary strategic environment. This force is designed

to conduct peacekeeping operations and small, short-term operations while countering threats posed by terrorists and weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The capabilities of both light and heavy forces are used, to varying degrees, across the spectrum of operations. Light units can quickly deploy, but they have less fire power and overall capability for sustained operations than do heavy forces. The heavy forces on the other hand, such as armored vehicles, bring tremendous fire power and sustainment capability, but they require much greater supporting units and cannot quickly deploy.

The 1970s-80s ten division-centric force transformed to a brigade centric force of 48 active and 28 National Guard Brigade Combat Teams (BCT). This restructuring encompasses all components of our total army: the Regular Army, the National Guard, and the Army Reserve. This restructuring has yielded a larger pool of deployable forces and may provide more time between operational deployments.

The modular design of the brigade centric force throughout the Total Army should provide the Army with greater stability in its deployment cycles and thereby bring greater stability to individual Soldiers and their families. At the current operational tempo this restructuring will bring greater stability and reduce the stress on the Active and Reserve forces. All three components of the Total Force must contribute proportionally in order to balance deployments.

The NG is a vital component of our Total Army. To operate in any conflict today, an operational and deployment balance among all three components is necessary. Without the NG and the Army Reserve, the pool of operational forces cannot sustain a protracted conflict. This transformational restructuring shifted the NG from a strategic reserve to an operational force. As an operational force, the NG is still unique in its dual

status. The NG has retained its obligation to serve the nation when it is called upon and to conduct civil support operations as directed by their states' governors. In June 2005, the DoD issued its Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support. This document declares that "the National Guard is particularly well suited for civil support missions" and that reserve forces "currently provide many key homeland defense and civil support capabilities, including intelligence, military police, medical expertise, and chemical decontamination."⁵

Military Support to Civil Authorities

Military forces employed in military support to civil authority (MSCA) activities shall remain under military command and control of the Department of Defense at all times.⁶ "MSCA is generally provided during natural disasters, special security events, and accidental or international man-made disasters that have evoked a presidential or state emergency declaration."⁷ On the other hand, "Army civil support operations fall under defense support of civil authorities (DSCA). Defense support of civil authorities is defined as civil support provided under the auspices of the National Response Plan (now known as the National Response Framework)."⁸ The DoD Directive 3025 defines DSCA as support provided by U.S. military forces. "The Army's roles and responsibilities for civil support operations fall under the following three primary tasks: 1) Provide support in response to a disaster or terrorist attack, 2) Support civil law enforcement, and 3) Provide other support as required."⁹ When the Army conducts civil support operations, the RC is a significant contributor to MSCA activities. The NG is particularly visible in MSCA while conducting its support role for the states' governors. (Note that the term MCSA typically refers to the NG supporting state activities in a U.S.

Code Title 32 status, while DSCA typically refers to the DoD supporting federal activities in a U.S. Code Title 10 status). “A report on the future of the NG and Reserves issued in 2006 defines ‘civil support’ as ‘an umbrella term’ that encompasses the support the Department of Defense could provide as part of a response to a natural disaster or terrorist attack, to include an event involving chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high yield explosives (CBRNE), as well as support DoD could provide for other law enforcement activities.”¹⁰

While these role clarifications provide the federal perspective of the NG’s role for support to civil authorities, the state perspective may weigh more heavily with regard to the NG’s overall responsibilities. In the relationship between state government and the state NG, the governor effectively functions as the commander in chief for any given state’s NG force. The NG is the governor’s only military force available in times of emergencies, disasters, or for security matters. The National Governors Association (NGA) has very strong opinions regarding the National Guard’s role in support of civil authorities. The NGA’s current Army and Air National Guard Policy, which was subject to amendment at the association’s February 2007 winter meeting, affirms that the “states and territories have an enormous stake in the ongoing effectiveness and efficiency of the National Guard.”¹¹

The NG is considered a unique state-based military force (although primarily funded by the federal government and trained in accordance with federal standards). The NG is the “only military force shared by the states and the federal government.”¹²

Senator Diane Feinstein (D-CA) stated that the NG is well-suited to performing an enhanced homeland security mission for several reasons to include: 1) The Guard is already deployed in communities around the country, and integrated into existing local, state, and regional emergency

response networks, 2) The Guard is responsible for and experienced with homeland security missions, including air sovereignty, disaster relief, and responding to suspected weapons of mass destruction events, and 3) The Guard has existing physical, communications, and training infrastructure throughout the U.S.¹³

The DoD believes that “the nation needs to focus particular attention on better using the competencies of NG and RC organizations, and recommends the most promising areas for employment of the NG and Reserve forces are: air and missile defense; maritime security; land defense; CBRNE response; and critical infrastructure protection.”¹⁴ It is evident then that the NG’s dual mission has become more challenging since its federal role has been greatly ramped up in the past two decades.

The State Government’s Role in MSCA

George Foresman, Under Secretary for Preparedness, Department of Homeland Security, has warned that “we must recognize that in today’s Homeland Security environment characterized by asymmetrical threats, i.e., natural disasters, as well as the threat of terrorism, the NG must be capable of responding to support states when called upon and federal actions when required. The NG must be dual-hatted for either a domestic civil support role or a war time operations role in a way that keeps them ready and vigilant.”¹⁵ In concurring, the NGA declared their belief that “the National Guard can be an effective force multiplier to civil authorities in responding to terrorism at the local, state, and federal levels.”¹⁶ This added emphasis on the NG, especially among other Reserve forces, indicates a more definitive NG role in homeland defense. The NG’s dual role is well-suited for the homeland security mission. In February 2001, the U.S. Commission on National Security recommended certain enhanced capabilities for the NG to make it become a critical asset for homeland security. The Commission’s overall

recommendation was that “the Secretary of Defense, at the President’s direction, should make homeland security primary mission of the NG, and the Guard should be organized, properly trained, and adequately equipped to undertake that mission.”¹⁷ NG responses to domestic emergencies will probably be its most prevalent mission.

The National Guard Role in Domestic Emergencies

“The term domestic emergency is defined to apply to emergencies occurring the domestic U.S., its territories and possessions as a result of enemy attack, insurrections, civil disturbances, earthquakes, fire, flood, or other public disasters endangering life and property and disrupting the usual processes of government.”¹⁸ The federal government’s role in domestic emergencies is clarified by the “Disaster Relief Act of 1970 [which] enables the federal government to assist state and local governments in carrying out relief efforts in times of major disasters by broadening the scope of existing major disaster relief programs; encouraging states to develop comprehensive relief plans; and better coordinating federal disaster relief programs.”¹⁹

During Hurricane Katrina, the National Guard Bureau (NGB) demonstrated its capability as a joint force provider for homeland security missions. Throughout the emergency, the NGB provided continuous reporting of all NG assets deployed in both federal and non-federal status to U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), Joint Forces Command, Pacific Command, and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense. “The Chief of the NGB made a recommendation to the Secretary of Defense that the NGB be chartered as a joint activity of the Department of Defense. Achieving these efforts will serve as the foundation for National Guard transformation and provide a total joint force capability for homeland security missions.”²⁰ A significant

lesson learned from this event is that “the Department of Defense should ensure the transformation of the National Guard is focused on increased integration with active duty forces for homeland security plans and activities.”²¹ This integration is essential for emergency response planning.

Federal Emergency Response

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) conducts emergency preparation planning, including plans for natural and manmade emergencies. These plans are executed as part of civil support operations. USNORTHCOM “stands ready to assist primary agencies in responding quickly to man-made and natural disasters, when directed by the President of the United States or Secretary of Defense.”²²

Maneuver Enhancement Brigade

Regardless of which Army component is called upon to respond to such events, the Maneuver Enhancement Brigade (MEB) is perhaps the most effective organization in these domestic scenarios. The MEB performs essential tasks in event of an emergency response.²³ These general mission essential tasks include: respond to CBRNE incident, provide support to law enforcement, conduct post incident response operations, establish civil security, establish civil control, restore essential civil services, conduct C2, protect the force, and sustain the force. The MEB could be the lead DoD organization in such emergencies, or it may support a civilian organization or another military organization. The MEB’s robust staff can plan and coordinate any required consequence management action. Examples of such support would include: communications, transportation, engineering, maintenance, medical assistance, and public affairs.²⁴

The MEB is one of the more unusual organizations to come out of the Army Modular Force. With very few organic elements, it can provide C2 over a wide range of subordinate units. This C2 capacity exceeds that of any other brigade headquarters. The MEB staff has the capability to respond to CBRNE incidents as well. “Key tasks associated with responding to these incidents include: assess CBRN hazard, conduct risk management, respond to chemical/biological & explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) incidents, respond to a weapons of mass destruction incident, plan/prepare for CBRN support, and provide mass casualty decontamination support. The brigade task organization can easily be changed, under its headquarters for command and control, to accommodate these incidents.”²⁵

In providing support to law enforcement, the MEB conducts this task in foreign and domestic situations in accordance with the pertinent laws. Key MEB law enforcement tasks may include: conduct law and order operations, provide guidance on military police operations, plan law & order operations, and provide operational law support.

During events that require a post incident response the MEB staff requirements could include many of the tasks from stability and civil support operations to include tasks from support area operations and maneuver support operations. Some emergencies could require the MEB oversee debris removal, medical care, and the employment of specialized search and rescue teams. The MEB can C2 most search and rescue tasks on land but may require augmentation and task-organized capabilities depending on the mission.²⁶

MEBs are uniquely designed for both war-fighting and support operations. MEB’s versatility parallels the dual-mission roles of the NG, which require the capability to serve in both a wartime environment and in a common role in support for state

missions. This state role primarily involves disaster and humanitarian relief operations. Thus the MEB's design is well-suited for the NG's dual roles.

MEB Design

The Army's transformation process created modular brigades. Each one of these brigades has specific functions. The MEB is one of these new brigades. Normally the MEB will support division operations, but it is also capable of supporting a number of other organizations. These include multi-national, Army, and joint organizations; MEBs can also serve as part of civil operations in support of state or federal activities. The MEB has a command and control headquarters with a significantly larger staff than most brigade headquarters. This staff gives the brigade a multi-functional capability that focuses on maneuver, sustainment functions, and tasks and systems to enhance freedom of action. Primarily designed as a C2 organization, the MEB has some organic units, including a headquarters and headquarters company (HHC), a network support company (NSC), and a brigade support battalion (BSB).

Beyond its three organic units (HHC, NSC, and BSB), the MEB has no fixed structure. When assigned or attached in support of a theater specific operation, operations order, operations plan, or contingency plan, the brigade staff will conduct a mission analysis to determine the capabilities, task organization, and command and support relationships necessary to accomplish the mission. The organization is tailored to respond to the elements of mission, enemy, troops, terrain, time and civilian (METT-TC) considerations. It receives a mix of modular units from detachments to battalions. In many cases, the broad geographic responsibilities and extensive functional capabilities that the MEB represents will require a variety of subordinate, functionally based formations, mission tailored for the environment.²⁷

Each MEB is designed for a specific mission. "Those missions will vary by theater and are subject to the requirements of the organization it is tasked to support."²⁸

The task organization typically includes a mix of several types of battalions and separate companies which may include functional units of civil affairs (CA), CBRN, engineer, explosive ordnance disposal, and military police. It may also contain other units to include military intelligence assets and a tactical combat force (TCF) when assigned an area of operations (AO) with a significant threat. In certain circumstances, the MEB may also include air and missile defense (AMD) units. A MEB is a combined arms organization that is task-organized based on mission requirements. The MEB is not a maneuver brigade although it can be assigned an AO and control terrain. The MEB receives, commands, and controls forces to conduct operations. These brigades will typically be called upon to control terrain and potentially facilities as well.²⁹

MEBs typically undertake four general missions. These missions include maneuver support operations, area support operations, consequence management operations, and stability operations. Key tasks associated with these missions sets are: mobility and maneuver, protection, sustainment, operational area security, response operations, area damage control, terrain management, fire support coordination, airspace management, response to CBRNE incident, support to law enforcement, post-incident response operations, civil security, civil control, and restoration of essential civil services.³⁰

MEB Staff

The MEB is more diverse and robust than a typical brigade headquarters. It includes functional operations and planning cells, which themselves contain CBRNE, engineer, and military police cells. These additional capabilities are critical for mission accomplishment. The fires cell, area operations section, and airspace management section provide the MEB with an increased capability to function in an area of operations. The MEB staff's purpose is the planning and execution of identified tasks pertinent to protection, maneuver and movement, and sustainment. Attached and operationally controlled subordinates of the MEB headquarters conduct maneuver

support (MANSPT) operations in its AO and within the larger AO of any headquarters supported by the MEB. By virtue of the MANSPT operations, the MEB enhances security and defense while providing freedom of action for other units in the larger AO. “The capability to synchronize MANSPT operations and support area operations under the MEB provides a unique set of capabilities to other army, joint and multi-national elements for addressing challenges presented by the threat.”³¹ See the MEB staff diagram in figure 1. The variety of functional cells in the MEB staff enables it to participate in a variety of operations.

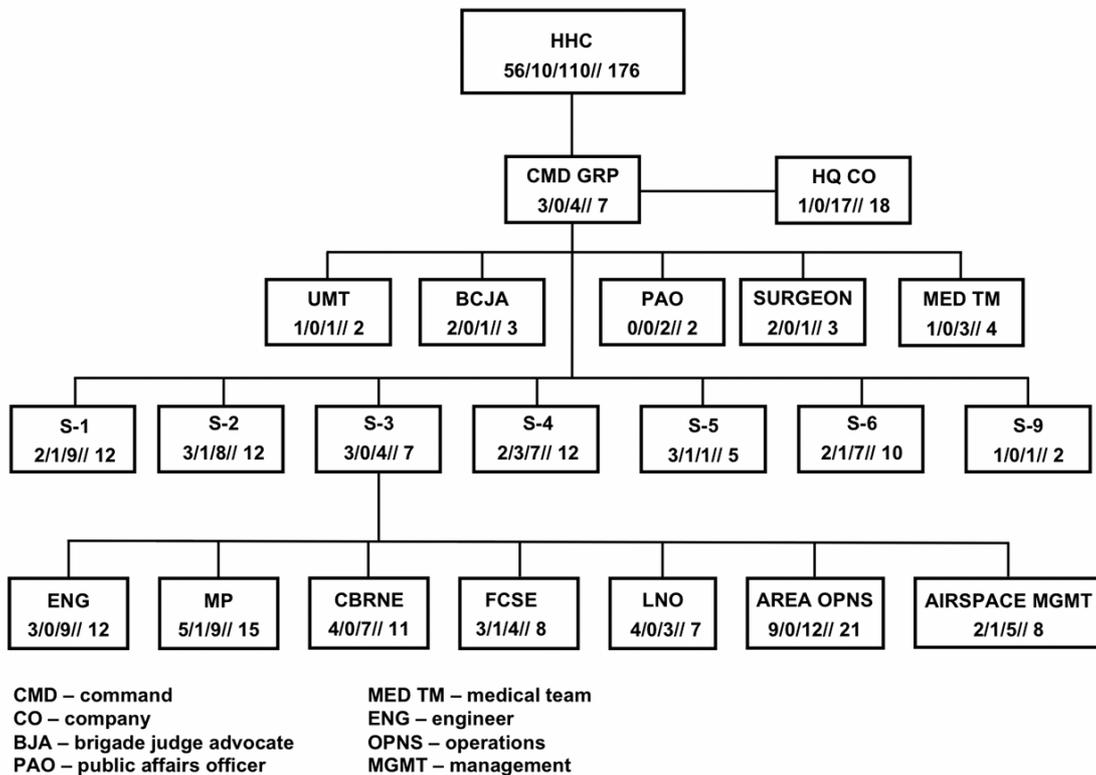


Figure 1 MEB Staff Diagram

MEB Operations

“The MEB may encounter a multitude of difficult political, economic, religious, social, and technological variables when conducting operations. During stability and civil support operations, the MEB may assist in performing functions that would otherwise fall to local governmental agencies. The MEB may also control populations or restore humanitarian infrastructure while supporting a division or corps or while directly engaged in combat operations. The MEB must prepare for operations in areas and environments where the fabric of society is in tremendous disarray.”³² According to Joint Publication (JP) 3-28, the MEB may provide civil support assistance as a unit or as part of a joint task force in support of a lead civil authority for civil support operations. For civil law support, U.S. laws carefully specify the actions military forces can legally conduct within the U.S., its territories and possessions. The MEB complies with these laws while assisting citizens affected by a disaster. It observes the 1878 Posse Comitatus Act, which “prohibits the direct use of federal military troops for domestic civilian law enforcement except where authorized by the Constitution or an act of Congress.”³³ While serving their State Governor, NG units are not subject to this Act. Thus the NG brings an operational dimension to MSCA activities while serving in a U.S. Code Title 32 status, but the AC cannot perform such duties.

Examples of essential service provisions encompass a complete spectrum of natural and manmade events, whether labeled as emergencies, incidents, hazards, natural or manmade disasters, or domestic acts of terrorism. Essential service categories are medical assistance; water, food, and everyday essentials; transportation; police and fire; electricity; schools; and sanitation. The MEB is particularly suited to provide support to civil authorities in cases of consequence management. NG MEBs

could be among the first military forces to respond to such events on behalf of state authorities. Civil support operational planning and preparation is similar to planning and preparation for stability operations. In both operations there is interaction with civil authorities and the people to provide essential services. The operating environment is different, but the MEB tasks are similar.

When the MEB conducts civil support operations, a lead federal or state governmental agency has the overall responsibility depending on the MEB's status as a U.S. Code Title 10 or Title 32 organization. If the MEB is a state title 32 asset, then it reports to its state NG chain of command. The military chain of command is not violated while the MEB supports the lead deferral agency in order to assist citizens affected by a disaster.³⁴

Possible activities for MEB civil support planning include: assistance with inter-organizational planning, assistance with initial needs assessment, logistics support for civil authorities, sustainment in a damaged austere environment, assistance for the lead civil agency in defining and sharing courses of action, understanding of agencies' roles, measurable objectives, coordination of actions with other agencies to avoid duplicating effort, plans for handing over operations to civilian agencies as soon as feasible; transition to the end-state based on the ability of civilian organizations to carry out their responsibilities without military assistance; transferring Army forces to other operations; essential support to the largest possible number of people; drafting legal restrictions and rules for the use of force; documentation of expenditures; identification and elimination of obstacles; plans for media operations; coordination with local officials; information operations; and liaison with the lead federal government agency. "MEB preparation for disaster response depends upon priority of other missions. If the MEB is an AC title 10 unit, then mission priorities may dictate minimal planning and preparation for civil support operations. On the other hand, a NG MEB may have enough time to plan and

prepare for civil support operations with other civil and military organizations.”³⁵

Incidents requiring civil support may include major disasters, emergencies, terrorist attacks, terrorist threats, civil unrest, wild and urban fires, floods, hazardous materials spills, nuclear accidents, aircraft accidents, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, tropical storms, tsunamis, war related disasters, and public health and medical emergencies.

In consequence management operations, MEBs may respond to emergencies that require close coordination with U.S. Government agencies. In stability operations, now considered core military missions, “the MEB staff may work closely with U.S. departments and agencies, foreign governments and security forces, global and regional international organizations, U.S. and foreign non-government organizations, and private sector individuals and for-profit companies. The MEB may routinely participate in interagency coordination during the conduct of consequence management operations within stability and civil support operations.”³⁶

MEB Capabilities

Given the MEB’s design and its robust staff, it has certain specialized capabilities, particularly for stability operations. It can conduct stability operations while simultaneously supporting the offensive or defensive operations of its higher headquarters. The MEB has the capability to provide C2 for many of the types of units needed to establish and maintain stability. The MEB establishes fusion cells to integrate intelligence from all organizations. It assesses requirements and conducts operations integrated and synchronized with others to shape the civil conditions. The MEB interacts with the populace and civil authorities and conducts MANSPT operations to provide full freedom of movement for friendly forces while denying it to the enemy. “The last two

decades saw a sharp rise in the use of military force for a completely different type of mission, stability operations, with a vastly different capability from typical offensive and defensive operations.”³⁷ The MEB’s organic staff is capable of conducting civil security, civil control, and restoration of essential services. It can plan civil affairs operations that are nested within stability mechanisms in order to attain desired conditions.³⁸ As “stability operations involve numerous legal, religious, and cultural issues, the MEB chaplain, civil affairs officers, and brigade judge advocate (BJA) will play key roles in the planning and execution of stability operations in these areas.”³⁹ Consequently, “the unique breadth and capabilities of the MEB staff and likely mix of units with constructive capabilities could make it the preferred headquarters to conduct some stability operations rather than use a BCT or other functional headquarters.”⁴⁰ During the conduct of stability operations, a MEB headquarters may present a less threatening organization than a BCT, depending on the operating environment. In an environment where there are no on-going combat operations, a MEB can address the operational need in a low-risk situation, making the BCT available for combat operations elsewhere.⁴¹

MEB versus BCT

The MEB is not a maneuver brigade, such as a BCT. It does not have the organic assets of a BCT. However, it does have a greatly enhanced staff that can provide core competencies across a wider range. The need for a MEB-like organization, with an enhanced staff, was evident in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF). “In operational environments such as OEF and OIF, ad hoc headquarters were thrown together to provide C2 for missions where no

standing headquarters previously existed...emerging missions call for even more flexible, adaptive headquarters, to alleviate these ad hoc requirements.”⁴² Likewise, “in OEF, military police chemical, engineer, CA biological defense, and various other support experienced C2 challenges because they arrived without their normal higher headquarters. In a theater like OEF, a properly tailored MEB might serve as an operational protection and maneuver support headquarters to oversee such orphaned units.”⁴³

During OIF I, the 3rd Infantry Division’s Engineer Brigade, located at the Baghdad Airport, conducted operations such as terrain management, life support, and force protection.⁴⁴ “With little guidance or notice, the unit assisted in initial assessments and efforts to restore power, water, and sewage to portions of Baghdad.”⁴⁵ Problems included staff personnel shortfalls, insufficient logistics support, and inadequate communications. In a similar situation, a MEB headquarters could provide more robust logistics and communications, but it would lack the engineer brigade’s functional planning expertise. The differences between MEBs and BCTs reside in their different purposes. Each brigade headquarters has a particular core competency for different sets of mission types.

Ten Core Competencies

The White House published “Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lesson Learned” in February 2006, to identify several critical challenges, such as integrated use of military capabilities, communications, logistics, evacuations, search and rescue, public safety and security, public health and medical support, human services, mass care and housing, public communications, environmental hazards, and debris removal.

In view of these critical shortfalls cited in the White House report, the NG can provide certain capabilities that address these challenges. “The DoD directed NG units to report in the Defense Readiness Reporting System on their capabilities to perform state-led but federally funded domestic missions, such as border security. As a step towards assessing these capabilities, the NGB began to identify the essential tasks that NG forces need to be capable of performing their domestic roles and mission.”⁴⁶ This essential task list was developed in 2005, designated the Joint Capabilities Database. It serves as an assessment tool for NG leaders in each state; the NGB then uses these states’ assessment to develop its national strategy. The primary strategic focus is on the states’ capabilities, in the Army and Air National Guard, to address domestic missions. The state NG leaders assess their collective ability to provide assistance in developing the ten core capabilities that the NGB indicated as being pertinent to domestic support. Table 1 provides a listing of these capabilities along with examples of tasks. “As of July 2006, 34 of the 54 states and territories (63%) reported having adequate amounts of all ten core domestic mission capabilities for responding to typical state missions. Of the 20 states and territories (37%) that reported an inadequate capability, 13 reported being inadequate in only one capability, and four reported being inadequate in two capabilities.”⁴⁷

Core capability	Examples of tasks associated with core capability
Aviation/airlift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide aircraft to transport personnel and cargo during times of emergency • Provide aircraft to facilitate reconnaissance, command and control, and communications during emergencies • Support first responders using air assets
Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide engineer units to assist local and state agencies in debris removal; construction of roads, bridges, and emergency housing; search and rescue; water purification and distribution; and power generation
Chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a certified civil support team • Identify chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosive agents and substances • Assess consequences, advise responders, and assist with requests for more support
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and maintain interoperable communications with local, state, and federal agencies, and volunteer organizations as necessary for domestic missions
Command and control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate a Joint Operations Center to process information and serve as a focal point for the National Guard response • Provide reception, staging, onward movement, and integration for arriving forces • Coordinate and act as a liaison with state and federal agencies
Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for and provide sustainment support to civil authorities to ensure continuity of operations • Rapidly deploy and monitor movement and placement of forces and equipment during support operations • Sustain deployed forces
Medical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support civilian emergency medical system during mass casualty operations • Assist the public health system in distributing and administering vaccines and antidotes to the public
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure equipment is available for state missions • Sustain equipment during all phases of state missions
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a military force capable of assisting civil law enforcement agencies in maintaining law and order • Provide security to critical infrastructure
Transportation (surface)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deploy the force and support first responders using ground transportation assets • Provide transportation assets to remove civilian personnel from affected areas and move supplies

Table 1 National Guard Ten Core Competencies

These capabilities vary greatly among the states and territories. Differences arise from the types of NG units in each state and territory. For example, some states may

have only a surface transportation detachment with a limited number of trucks available, but other states may have a transportation battalion with several hundred trucks available. Also reflected in this listing is the wide range of capabilities normally found in variety of different units. Other than command and control, the remaining nine capabilities are provided by nine significantly different units.

In the state NG structure many units are subordinated to a higher headquarters, not because of an organic relationship, but simply for administrative command purposes. While this arrangement serves well for providing a military chain-of-command throughout the state NG hierarchy, it provides little operational control. The administrative higher headquarters normally lacks the expertise and proficiency for operational control of some subordinate units. Consequently, these particular staffs are not designed for overseeing the planning and operations of subordinate units with special capabilities. The MEB, with its multi-functional staff, offers a practical solution for Army NG command and control of the ten core capabilities in the states that have them.

Conclusion

Assistant Secretary for Homeland Defense Paul McHale stated that “consistent with its force structure and end strength, we will see an enhanced homeland defense mission for the NG. The NG can play an extremely important role, in fact perhaps a central role in responding to those threats that manifest themselves within the U.S. The defense of the U.S. homeland is the preeminent duty of the Department of Defense.”⁴⁸

To defend the U.S. homeland, the NG will play a significant role, as stated above. The MEB is a very significant organization for meeting the NG’s operational requirements. Especially to address operational requirements, a MEB is uniquely

capable of planning, preparing, and executing the 10 core capabilities identified by the NGB as essential to support domestic missions.

With a robust staff that is more diverse than those of other brigade headquarters, the MEB is typically task-organized for a particular mission conducted by attached and detached units. MEB diverse staff enables it to tailor itself to a wide variety of missions in a very short time. A MEB headquarters is well-suited to the organizational constructs often found in NG state structures. Many states have headquarters to which smaller technical units are often attached for command and control purposes. These smaller units may have habitual organizational relationships beyond the states' border. But a local command and control attachment satisfies the state NG hierarchy. Thus most MEBs will function effectively with attached units, despite not having organic relationships with them.

Currently there are sixteen MEBs in the National Guard. The distribution of these units across the U.S. states and territories was based on decisions concerning force structure and transformations from pre-existing units. Because these MEBs are capable of overseeing domestic operations, they can vitally support even more state NG structures. This viability is clearly evident in domestic (and emergency) missions involving the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

FEMA is organized into ten regions for administrative and management purposes. These regions include all U.S. states and territories (see figure 2). When these FEMA regions are compared to the distribution of NG MEBs, the overlap reveals that all but two FEMA regions have at least one MEB in its boundaries. Although not by design, the area with the heaviest concentration of MEBs is FEMA region IV. This

region serves Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. (See Table 2 for a list of the sixteen NG MEBs.)

Coincidentally, this region is frequently vulnerable to hurricanes and seismic concerns over the New Madrid fault line.



Region I

Serving CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT

Region II

Serving NJ, NY, PR, VI

Region III

Serving DC, DE, MD, PA, VA, WV

Region IV

Serving AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN

Region V

Serving IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI

Region VI

Serving AR, LA, NM, OK, TX

Region VII

Serving IA, KS, MO, NE

Region VIII

Serving CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY

Region IX

Serving AZ, CA, GUAM, HI, NV, CNMI, RMI, FSM, American Samoa

Region X

Serving AK, ID, OR, WA

Figure 2 FEMA Regions

UNIT	UNIT LOCATION	ASSOCIATED FEMA REGION
26 MEB	Reading, Massachusetts	I
92nd MEB	Juanadiaz, Puerto Rico	II
110th MEB	Kansas City, Missouri	VII
111th MEB	Rio Rancho, New Mexico	VI
115th MEB	Roy, Utah	VIII
130th MEB	Charlotte, North Carolina	IV
136th MEB	Austin, Texas	VI
141st MEB	Fargo, North Dakota	VIII
149th MEB	Louisville, Kentucky	IV
157th MEB	Milwaukee, Wisconsin	V
158th MEB	Arizona	IX
196th MEB	Sioux Falls, South Dakota	VIII
218th MEB	Charleston, South Carolina	IV
226th MEB	Mobile, Alabama	IV
404th MEB	Illinois	V
648th MEB	Columbus, Georgia	IV

Table 2 National Guard Maneuver Enhancements Brigades

To address potential domestic and emergency missions, the alignment of NG MEBs with FEMA regions would enable greater responsiveness and viability for state governments and better regional emergency management of emergency and disaster scenarios. A minimum of two more NG MEB brigades would bring their unique capabilities to all FEMA regions. Specifically, the additional MEBs would be aligned with FEMA regions III and X, where there are currently no MEBs within the regional boundaries. A total addition of eight MEBs would provide each FEMA region with a redundancy of at least two MEBs. Should a single MEB be engaged or unavailable for any reason, the capability would remain available for the current situation.

The presence of a MEB in every FEMA region provides a command and control organization capable of addressing a multitude of domestic and emergency scenarios.

MEBs are well suited to serve state governments for domestic needs. The MEBs are also well suited to serve NORTHCOM and FEMA for a larger military response.

Endnotes

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²⁶ *Ibid.*, 8-3.

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