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THE EMPLOYMENT OF RESERVISTS

DURING OPERATION DESERT STORM

WHAT LESSONS CAN IT HOLD FOR FUTURE OPERATIONS

Ву

Emery L. Haskell LCDR USNR

A Paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
ABSTRACT	ii
PREFACE	iii
I INTRODUCTION	1
II DISCUSSION	2
AIR FORCE AND NAVAL RESERVE	5
MISINTERPRETATION OF AUTHORITY	9
MARINE MOBILIZATION	11
DISCUSSION OF MARINE AND ARMY EXPERIENCES	11
III CONCLUSIONS	15
NOTES	19
RIBLIOGRAPHY	

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#### Abstract of

THE EMPLOYMENT OF RESERVISTS DURING OPERATION DESERT STORM
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Operation Desert Storm witnessed the first major mobilization of Reservists in almost twenty five years and the most extensive in personnel numbers since the Korean War. paper looks to the manner in which the Reservists were called to active duty and the type of forces which were mobilized. A major dichotomy existed between the way in which the army and the Marine Corp choose to employ there combat arms units. future holds many contingencies which will require the integration of Reserve forces and with the growing dependence on the reserve component there is going to have to be clearly defined standards by which all members are judge ready. is no room for the manifestation of private agendas if we are to be a true total force . The limitations of defense dollars compel us to achieve the most effective return for our defense expenditure. The measure of readiness for combat arms components for all ground forces should be the same.

#### PREFACE

Although I was not mobilized in support of Operation

Desert Storm, as a Naval Reservist who confronted the immense task of unit preparation for mobilization and the incredible uncertainty associated with those days it seems a lot smoother integration could have been achieved. My old MIUW 202 unit was mobilized (sixteen days after I departed to take command of another unit on a set of orders issued in June) and approximately three months after the unit was placed in an imminent recall status.

During that time frame an incredible amount of effort went into insuring the unit was ready while the active component chain of command could provide us with no definitive insight as to if or if not we were going to go. Many hours of nondrill time went into insuring that when the gauntlet was thrown down the unit would be ready. This was a period of high stress for the reservists, their families and employers. Confronted with such uncertainty, no reasonable guidance as to what to expect from above and the roller coaster of emotions that accompany such events it was almost shock that struck when they notification to mobilize occurred. MIUW 202 mobilized on November 16 and the were in the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations, KTO on November 22, 1990 with their equipment.

When hearing of the events that occurred to the men of the 48th Mechanized Infantry Brigade, Georgia National Guard I felt a sense of sorrow for them. This was obviously an organization with an immense amount of pride and to be humiliated by their chain of command like this had to be intolerable. For this reason I felt that whatever insight might be garnered from this survey would perhaps serve as a starting point for someone elses more in depth analysis or provide room for discussion.

## INTRODUCTION

"I expect them to fight alongside us. They are, in fact, combat ready."! As an operational commander it would appear that General Schwarzkopf held a different perspective on the employment of the 48 Mechanized Infantry Brigade of the Georgia National Guard. This unit was supposed to provide a round out brigade to the 24th Mechanized Infantry Division as part of the much heralded total force concept which became a reality at the end of the Vietnam War in 1973. The total force concept was premised on the belief that the United States should never become involved in a major conflict in the future without the necessity of mobilizing the reserve component of the armed forces. The theory was put to the test in Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

Upon the culmination of the War in the Gulf, 'the AC (active component) praised those aspects of the mobilization compatible with its perception of what the Total Army means. '2 There appears to be a consensus between the active component and the RC (reserve component) that the Combat Support CS and Combat Service Support CSS units that were mobilized from the reserve component were very effective and performed better in many respects then there AC counterparts. In many cases the Reservists were performing functions which they performed in their civilian jobs where they kept abreast of professional industry standards which had not yet become recognized within

the military. This was the case with the medical units, engineer units and military police units in particular.

## DISCUSSION

The employment of combat arms units, specifically infantry was in contrast a failure for the U.S. Army. There was an unwillingness to employ the round out brigades to the active component. Despite this, there were successes RC combat arms other then infantry such as field artillery.

The experience of the CS and CSS units served to validate a number of underlying beliefs. Primarily, the focus of the active component should be on the creation of the most credible combat arms component to the Army as achievable with the hallmark being the CAPSTONE 3 program. The whole thrust of CAPSTONE was that National Guard Brigades would affiliate with active component divisions at the headquarters and battalion levels. This affiliation was expected to result in an ongoing relationship whereby the active component and reserve component would gain an appreciation for and respect of the strengths that each brought to the association.

For many years this worked out well and National Guard units were maintained at a Combat Readiness rating of C-2.

There was however an underlying atmosphere of contempt on the part of the active component toward the reserve component, which suggested that the Officer Corp of the reserve component was extremely politicized. It is noteworthy to distinguish that, within the army, there are two components that make up the bulk of the active component they include the U.S. Army Reserve and the Army National Guard which is dual functioned with both federal and state tasks. The active component Army feels a higher degree of respect toward the Army Reserve Officer Corp then it does toward the Officer Corp in the State National Guards. The belief being that the National Guard is a very politicized organization, especially in light of the state adjutant generals association and their appointments by their Governors. There may be a degree of credence to this argument.

Where this argument breaks down lies in the fact that the regular army trains, equips and generates the standards by which the states organizations are run and operated.

Theoretically, the training cycle for the active component and reserve component and the standards to measure their performance are the same. It appears, the problem was not with the performance of the troops but with the quality of the leadership that they received. It is unfortunate that these perceptions continue to exist today. The U.S. Army has a long tradition of the citizen soldier who has consistently filled

the ranks of the Army in time of national emergency and provided the nation with a strong sense of commitment to the cause at hand. 'The active services had already gone to war, but the nation didn't go to war until the Guard and Reserve were mobilized. 4 In fact, a measure of success in war relies on mobilizing the national will. It is subsequently true that the ability to generate support to the cause at hand is achieved when the communities of this nation have visible and tangible resources committed to the cause. When the National Guard Armory down the street no longer has rolling stock parked out back that little observation does not go unnoticed. What does go unnoticed except by those intimately affected, is that when a young man or woman goes off to Basic Training for attachment to the regular Army they are not in the community for the next three years. That is very sterile and removed. The absence of a young man working at the gas station or going to college as a commuter student is visible and his affiliation is noted. When he disappears that is noteworthy and is indicative of a true commitment. It is unfortunate that the active component fails to recognize that its true constituency is not best advocated by its own members but by the active component members. These are the people who are generally proactive within their communities, voting and conveying their sentiments to their Congressmen and Senators.

#### AIR FORCE AND NAVY RESERVE

No where is this us, them attitude more attenuated then it is in the Army. The experiences of the Navy and Air Force were somewhat different when it came to the mobilization of their respective AC. Due to the unique mission requirements associated with the air bridge provided by the Air Mobility Command the level of sorties that were maintained throughout the Gulf War could not have been supported without the early mobilization of Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard assets. The majority of officers in the Air Force and Naval Reserve Officers have a prior base of active duty experience, unlike a lot of the officers in the Army National Guard who obtain their commissions through state run military academies. This may not seem to be a significant point, but it does serve to undermine the credibility of the National Guard Officer Corp. The greater numbers that were called upon by the Army may have provided a wider basis from which to selectively validate any perceptions of inadequacy within the reserve component leadership (especially in the case of the National Guard).

It would further appear that the highly technical nature of a lot of the skills which Naval and Air Force Reservists brought to the theater of operations clearly distinguished the

nature of their contributions. After all there is requisite level of knowledge and skilled associated with flying an A-10 or with manning a Mobil Inshore Undersea Warfare Van, especially when there in no active duty comparable source of skill or expertise. On this note the reservist is clearly recognized for the skills he or she brings.

Upon arrival in the Kuwait Theater of Operations the reserve component provided 'almost 70% of the Army's combat support and combat service support forces.'4 This level of commitment and support to the active duty forces was recognized as true value. It costs approximately 25% of the costs associated with maintaining one service member on active duty to keep a comparably trained member in the reserves, clearly an excellent rate of return. The mobilization for Operation Desert Storm Desert Shield allowed the president under Title 10, U.S. Code, Sec. 673 & 673b to statutorily call up 200,000 reserve personnel, In fact when all was done approximately 231,000 National Guardsmen and Reservist were called to active duty. Of the 231,000 personnel mobilized 106,000 of them were in the Kuwait Theater of Operations, composing 20% of the personnel assigned to CENTCOMS Area of responsibility.

The fundamental and underlying concept which entered into the use of Army Reserve combat forces focused on the Round Out Brigades. The Marines' experience was somewhat different then that of the Army. It is not unfair to suggest that the Commandant of The Marine Corp, General Gray's hand was forced, despite a belief that the Marine Corp could support Desert Storm commitments with the existing active force structure. The fact was that Marine Reservists had been trained to a high standard and integrated easily, transitioning at the unit level effectively.

It has been argued that the reason that the Marines experienced such a smooth integration of their reservists was attributable to the training posture that they adopted. Unlike the Army, the Marine Corp did not train at the brigade level but placed the emphasis on training at the company and battalion levels. This difference in approach also created a difference in what was emphasized.

The Army placed a continuing emphasis on big picture associated issues such as how does the Brigade headquarters element integrate effectively with the division. This is clearly a legitimate concern but detracts from the concerns associated with how is the training going at the battalion and company levels. It is a reasonable observation that an

infantry brigade is a very large and complex organization to orchestrate in a maneuver warfare situation and the requisite command skills associated with the employment of such an organization do not evolve in a vacuum. It might reasonably be argued that this type of expertise cannot be developed within the National Guard environment due to the operational size and scheduling limitations associated with these units.

In defense of the National Guard it would appear that there were elements within the regular Army that were unprepared to allow the National Guard to succeed. This became apparent when Senator Alan J. Dixon asked Mr. Richard A. Davis, Senior Associate Director, National Security and International Affairs Division, General Accounting Officer (GAO) 'Are you saying ... although the Active Divisions to which these National Guard round-out brigades are assigned are part of the U.S. 10 Divisions in 10 days force for NATO, the Army currently plans to round out these specific divisions with other Active brigades instead of their designated round-out brigades? 'to which Mr. Davis responded 'yes'.! 5 What a revelation, clearly the contingency had been thought through and the assessment The active component perceived the concept as a matter made. of convenience and had no intention of ever utilizing the program as it was intended.

### MISINTERPRETATION OF AUTHORITY

President Bush signed a Declaration of National Emergency on August 7, 1990. Within the scope of authority allowed by this declaration he had the power to call to active duty one million members of the National Guard and Reserve for up to two years. Why this is significant lies in the justification of the Department of Defense in not calling up National Guard combat units.6 The president based his authority to call up the reservist and guardsman under Title 10, USC Sec. 671b.

The relevant point is that the perception of only being able to mobilize the combat elements for a maximum statuary authority of 180 days was unfounded. The fact is that under the authority of the Declaration of National Emergency the President had all the authority necessary to mobilize these forces for up to two years. The Department of the Army held that to mobilize the combat forces for a 180 days, that with post mobilization training, deployment time and arrival in the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations, KTO would allow for only two to three months in theater. The policy centered on an intent to rotate major combat formation for six month periods in theater.

Because of this failure to recognize the scope of the authority granted under the National Emergency the decision on

how to utilize guard combat forces was deferred. On November 8, 1990 Secretary of Defense Cheney informed the public of the doubling of the U.S. forces in the Gulf and the calling out of three Army Guard round out brigades. It was then decided that these units would begin workup training and upon completion they would deploy.

The events which unfolded during the work up period truly compels one to stretch the concept of good faith on the part of the Army. The first road block centered around the equipment which the brigade would be using. The 48th Mechanized Infantry Brigade of the 24th Infantry Division had trained on M60 tanks and Mil3 Armored Personnel Carriers. Upon arrival at Fort Stewart they were informed that they would be going to war in MIAI tanks and M2 Bradly Fighting Vehicles. This necessitated training on new equipment and familiarization with the equipment maintenance requirements. Additionally, upon arrival the brigade was informed that the combat readiness rating that had previously been assigned as C-1 was no longer appropriate but that some lesser level had been assigned because of the new equipment. All of this was to impact dramatically on the credibility and effectiveness of the guard brigade command element.

#### THE MARINE EXPERIENCE

Bravo Company, 4th Tanks a Maine Reserve Company out of Yakima, Washington received their mobilization orders on December 15, 1990 and promptly reported to Twenty Nine Palms for training on the MlAl. This course, normally eleven weeks was reduced to two weeks. 7 It is important to note that the MlAl was a new tank for these reservists and that previously they had operated with the M60 tank. Upon completion of this training they arrived in the KTO on January 18, 1991 and were quickly moved forwarded to support the 2d Marine Division receiving their MlAl tanks (which were provided by the Army).

## DISCUSSIONS OF MARINE AND ARMY EXPERIENCES

The critical question here has to be what distinguished the Maine Reservists of Bravo Company from their counterparts in the 48th Brigade of the Georgia National Guard. Clearly, the most noteworthy aspect of the distinction has to do with the level of the organizations sizes. It is far more difficult to train a Brigade at the operational level of warfare then it is to train a company at the tactical level. Here in lies the difference, despite the Marine Corps perception of it self as a national force in the ready it is obvious that the 48th Brigade was every bit as credible a tactical unit but it was being held

to a different standard then Bravo Company. The question has to be asked how successful would Bravo Company have been against OPFOR at the NTC, Fort Irwin. It appears that the Marines recognize that a Brigade is a very large maneuver warfare element to train and maintain from within the Reserve Component. It also appears that the warfighting skills can be much more effectively reinforced at the Company and Battalion level vice the Brigade. The proof was that Bravo company smoothly transitioned and was able to fight efficiently while being integrated with active Marine Forces. If the active component and reserve component are trained and held to the same standard then there is no need to experience the type of problems which the 48th Brigade experienced.

It only seems reasonable to suggest that qualitatively the two forces were comparable in terms of basic skills. 'They have demonstrated (their capability) through three demanding rotations at the National Training Center...'8. Clearly a lot of effort, money and emotion had been invested in the 48th Brigade. The problem was not with the quality of the personnel. For a basis of comparison the following numbers suggest that the dichotomy was perhaps not as great between the active component and reserve component combat components. The 48th Brigade (Mech) trained 56 days in FY 89 and 60 days in FY 90, 65 days, the 256th Infantry Brigade (Mech), Louisiana in FY

89, 60 days and FY 90, 64 days. It is noteworthy that this training had occurred prior to mobilization and that the active component unit that replaced the 48th Brigade, the 197th Infantry Brigade (Mech), Fort Benning, had in FY 90, 86 days of training and prior to August of 1990 had not conducted any field training above the battalion level.9 This is significant because it suggests a double standard. Either the troops are combat ready or they are not. If in fact they are not combat ready then accountability needs to be brought to bear. It is disingenuous to suggest that on the one hand they were ready and yet when push came to shove they were presented with a new standard by which to be judged. At a minimum it suggests an unacceptable patronizing attitude on the part of the active component toward the reserve component.

After much review of the situation on the merits it appears that there was no commitment to make the Round Out Battalion concept work on the part of the active Army. It might be suggested that in fact a hidden agenda existed within higher echelons of the active Army to create a perceived need to retain combat arms components within the active Army. It would appear thatt this is what did occur and constitutes, rice bowl management.

It is important to recognize that the round out program was part of the Capstone Program dating back to 1973. For the first time, reserve component units were integrated into war plans and, just as important, reserve component units now worked with their wartime active component headquarters in a regular basis to integrate planning, training, and force modernization. 10 It is also noteworthy to make some further observations, specifically the 24th Infantry Division was tasked under OPLAN 4102 to deploy within days to Germany and the round out Brigades to follow-on after post mobilization training. What is important is that this scenario assumed a period of buildup providing advance warning. Under the Joint Services Capabilities and Planning document the 24th Infantry Division was also assigned to CENTCOM for contingencies and as such went the 48th Brigade.11

An operational commander has to possess a sense of confidence in the forces which he is choosing to engage in combat operations. It is further evident that GEN Schwarzkopf while serving as commanding General of the 24th Infantry Division felt confident in the ability of the 48th Brigade to perform effectively, credibly and competently.

#### CONCLUSIONS

A great amount of pride can be taken by all participants in the success experienced by the both the active and reserve armed forces of all the armed forces during Operation Desert Storm. Clearly, even in the case of Combat Arms units of the Army National Guard, specifically the Arkansas and Oklahoma field artillery units were in combat two days after arrival in theater as part of the ground attack. The Oklahoma unit achieved the highest fire rate in Third Army. 12

Prior to Operation Desert Storm there was concern that too much of the combat support and combat service support functions within the Army were being given to the Reserves.13 Clearly this concern was invalidated by the level of support and quality of performance provided by Combat Support and combat Service Support units during Desert Storm. What is important is to recognize that the Active Army, despite concerns received an unprecedented return on their investment with the Reserve Forces. It would appear that in the future the use of Round Out Brigades will be modified so that such units will not be part of the immediate response but will be part of follow on forces as Round-Up Brigades capable of fully integrating after receipt of post mobilization training. Perhaps the expectations on both sides were to great.

The use of Reserve Forces poses some unique concerns for the future. Especially when one looks to the fact that the active duty force is shrinking and the growth of the reserve forces as a percentage of the total force is increasing, despite the fact that the aggregate size of the reserves is decreasing. 'By FY 1997, reserve personnel levels will be 22 percent less than they were in FY 1989... In FY 1987, the Selected Reserve constituted 35 percent of the total force, the largest percentage since the end of World War II. In FY 1997, the Selected Reserve will constitute 36 percent of the total force. 14 This poses some unique concerns for the ability of the active forces to respond in the future. For example, '100% of the Army's railroat units (vital to any major mobilization and an essential part of any theater logistics efforts) are in the Army Reserve...89% of maintenance companies. 15 When the gauntlet is thrown down it is reasonable to expect that the reserves will be needed to respond. Yet, there is a point of diminishing returns and as future contingencies will place an increasing reliance on the reserves to support operations. This has further implications for retention within the reserve community. There is clearly a need for more of a balance between reserve and active duty forces within the combat service and combat service support. If the current situation

is allowed to exist then the active forces will field a credible combat arms component with CS and CSS coming form the reserve to support any major future contingency.

The fact is that the Active Army needs to recognize that one of its greatest sources of political clout comes from the Reserve Constituency. Instead of playing hard ball all the time perhaps they should learn to develop, nurture and mature the relationship. It is significant that 71 reservists and guardsmen paid the ultimate sacrifice for their affiliation during Operation Desert Storm. The base force of tomorrow will be more dependant on the reserve component and the relationship is one that is here to stay. It is dynamic, evolutionary and requires refinement.

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