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**THE INDIVIDUAL READY RESERVE: A MOBILIZATION ASSET**

BY

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systems need refining both in determining mobilization requirements and in actually effecting a mobilization call up. Training is examined in relation to skill retention and the absence of standardized and effective programs for mobilization refresher training is highlighted. The study concludes that an effective mobilization training program for the IRR needs to be implemented.

# USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

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## THE INDIVIDUAL READY RESERVE: A MOBILIZATION ASSET AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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## ABSTRACT

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In the event of a future military mobilization, the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) would be an immediate source of pre-trained individual manpower. The IRR would be tasked to provide personnel as fillers for deploying active and reserve units and as individual casualty replacements in any theater of operations. The role of the IRR would be particularly critical in the event a mobilization were required with little or no warning. It takes time to institute a draft, substantially expand the current training base, and to produce trained and deployable soldiers. This time period would be no less than 90 days from the initial day of mobilization up to 180 days depending on the military occupational specialties (MOS) needed. It is in this first three to six months that the IRR plays such an important role. If the soldiers comprising the IRR or the personnel and training mechanisms responsible for their management are not ready, then the value of the IRR as a mobilization asset is questionable. This study examines the IRR as a mobilization asset and focuses on those elements which are critical in its early utilization. It observes that some automated systems need refining both in determining mobilization requirements and in actually effecting a mobilization call up. Training is examined in relation to skill retention and the absence of standardized and effective programs for mobilization refresher training is highlighted. The study concludes that an effective mobilization training program for the IRR needs to be implemented.

## INTRODUCTION

After World War II, the Nation's leaders saw a need for better organized and available military reserve forces. The Korean War further reinforced that belief and thus the Nation's lawmakers introduced legislation to enhance the organization and effectiveness of the reserves. In July 1952 the Congress of the United States passed the "Armed Forces Reserve Act of 1952." For the first time in our Nation's history a public statute clearly established categories of reserve forces for our armed forces.<sup>1</sup> The law further specified that there would be a Ready Reserve for each service and this category would be for personnel assigned to individual reserve units or with a legal service obligation.<sup>2</sup> The law also established a military service obligation of five years for all military personnel<sup>3</sup> and in so doing created a need for a "reserve manpower pool." Thus, this legislation created the requirement for the Army's Individual Ready Reserve (IRR).

Since the end of World War II, the United States has never fielded a force capable of conducting a major war or contingency operation without utilizing elements of the Reserve Components. With the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1990, and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact in 1991, the major military threat to the United States and the rest of the democratic world of the last forty-five years is rapidly disappearing.

With the decreased threat comes the inevitable down sizing of

the U.S. Armed Forces, both active and reserve. In the future the active army is projected to be reduced to 535,000 by 1995 from a level of 732,400 in 1990. Total projected Army Selected Reserve strength is 550,000.<sup>4</sup> Based on past strength levels and 1990 figures in particular, the Army National Guard will be 58% of the total with the Army Reserve at 42%.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, the Army National Guard has a projected strength in 1995 of 320,000, down from 444,300 in 1990. The Army Reserve is projected to level off at 230,000 from a high of 310,000 in 1990. These cuts represent a reduction in active, ARNG, and USAR forces of 27%, 28%, and 26% respectively from 1990 to 1995 strength levels. Coupled with these strength reductions is the implied increased reliance upon the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) for emergency strength level increases of active and reserve component units mobilized for a national military emergency.

Beginning in the mid 70's then Army Chief of Staff, General Creighton Abrams, began restructuring the Army so that any major mission would require mobilization of the Reserve Components. This was done to ensure that any major operation would be highly visible to the Congress and the American public thus requiring their approval prior to total commitment of forces. As a result of this initiative, reserve component (RC) troop program units (TPU's), were assigned critical combat, combat support, and combat service support roles. In addition to the reservists who were members of TPU's, there were many thousands of reservists in other programs who were the "first source for mobilization" in the event of a



national military emergency. These were individual soldiers assigned to the IRR, Individual Mobilization Augmentee (IMA) program, Inactive National Guard (ING), and Standby Reserve. The largest population group, the IRR, has the role of providing individual soldiers, either as casualty replacements or pre-identified critical skill fillers in mobilizing units.

There have been many studies conducted regarding the IRR and a countless stream of papers and articles have addressed various aspects of this pre-trained manpower pool in the last twenty years. In the past, the strength of the active Army and the Selected Reserves have been sufficient to avoid extensive reliance on the IRR. However, with the aforementioned reductions in the Army, it is highly advisable to relook this subject to determine if the IRR as it is currently managed and trained will meet the needs of the Nation in the event of a future military mobilization.

The recent war in Southwest Asia required the mobilization of over 20,000 IRR soldiers and provided valuable data on their mobilization and training. This study will also review the lessons learned regarding the IRR in Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm (ODS/DS), for to study the IRR without analyzing the role it played in its first major utilization since its inception would be remiss.

Whenever the subject of the IRR is addressed in mobilization planning, several questions always arise. Are there enough IRR soldiers with the right MOS's? How can we ascertain whether they have retained their military skills? What type and length of training should they receive? What percent of those called will



actually report? The answers to these questions are important and have a direct impact on resource allocation for the management of the IRR. The analysis that follows will provide a keener insight into this vital reserve manpower area and recommend improvements for future IRR training and management.

## THE INDIVIDUAL READY RESERVE

### Composition and Strength of the IRR

In order to analyze and make recommendations regarding the IRR, it is imperative to be familiar with the composition of this large manpower pool. As of April 30, 1991 the population of the IRR was 329,061.<sup>6</sup> This number can be divided into officer and enlisted personnel with enlisted being 273,257 of the total and the remaining 55,804 being officers. Of the enlisted personnel 227,734, or 83%, are grade E-4 or below; grades E-5 and above total 45,523 or 17%. Female enlisted soldiers total 42,560 or 15.5% of the total enlisted IRR.

Of the officer total of 55,804, 39,584 or 71% are company grade officers. Warrant Officers total 3,611 or 6.5%. Field grade officers total 12,601 while there are only eight general officers in the IRR; these officers represent 22.5% of the total IRR officer population.

While all personnel assigned to the IRR are considered available for mobilization, the bulk of those mobilized will likely be enlisted grades E-4 and below and company grade officers. These

personnel groups most probably will mirror actual battlefield requirements. The enlisted IRR has an average of 26 months of active duty service while the officers have an average of 49 months.<sup>7</sup>

While 273,257 enlisted personnel are theoretically available for immediate mobilization, further analysis is in order. First, it is helpful to understand that the IRR is organized into four basic control groups.<sup>8</sup> These control groups and their requirements for inclusion are:

(1) Annual Training Control Group - served less than three years on active duty and has not fulfilled the eight year Military Service Obligation (MSO).

(2) Reinforcement Control Group:

(a) Obligated - served three or more years on active duty but has not completed MSO or has served two years on active duty and one year in a RC Troop Program Unit (TPU) and has not completed MSO.

(b) Non-obligated - has completed total MSO and has voluntarily extended.

(3) Officer Active Duty Obligor (OADO) Control Group:

(a) Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) graduate granted a delay from entry on initial active duty or Reserve Forces Duty (RFD).

(b) Delayed from entry on initial active duty or RFD to participate in an Army Medical Department (AMEDD) educational, internship, or residency program.

(c) Chaplain candidates.

(4) Dual Status Control Group - Regular Army enlisted with USAR Commission or Warrant Officer status.

Of the above categories, personnel assigned to the Dual Status Control Group are not immediately available because they are in the Regular Army. True, this group comprises only a small number of the IRR (500)<sup>9</sup>, but it is evident they are not mobilization assets.

Another questionable population group is enlisted soldiers transferred to the IRR prior to completion of initial entry training. Soldiers in this group have failed to adjust or cannot meet Army standards and are transferred to the IRR under the provisions of Chapter 11, Army Regulation 635-200.<sup>10</sup> Soldiers in this category were transferred prior to October 1990 under the auspices of the Transfer in Lieu of Discharge Program (TLDP).<sup>11</sup> The TLDP was a controversial program and at one point, TLDP soldiers made up nearly 40 percent of the IRR.<sup>12</sup> Efforts have been made to reduce the number of transfers and this coupled with the increasing quality of recruits has reduced the numbers down to 17,772 as of November 1, 1991, or approximately five percent of the IRR.<sup>13</sup> For classification purposes the U. S. Army Reserve Personnel Center (ARPFRCEN) has grouped these personnel into a "zero skills" category and is currently "scrubbing" the files of these individuals to determine how many are viable mobilization assets. As of November 1, 1991, 17,400 records had been reviewed with 16,700 letters going to individuals requesting information.

From the return information 7,876 were given discharges and the remaining records are at various stages of review and action.<sup>14</sup> While this proactive step by ARPERCEN will significantly reduce the number of personnel who have been transferred to the IRR prior to completion of initial entry training, there will probably always be some in the "pipeline". The answer to this problem however appears to be total discharge at the training base rather than transfer to the IRR. Transferring individuals to the IRR who have not completed enough training to be awarded a military occupational specialty (MOS) mandates that upon mobilization they be reinserted into a training situation in which they were originally deemed unsuitable. Logic dictates that since such soldiers are not immediately deployable, they also should not be considered mobilization assets.

On 1 June 1984 the six-year MSO was extended to eight years,<sup>15</sup> thereby increasing the IRR by approximately 25%. Coupled with the personnel reductions in the active and reserve components between now and 1995, there will be a significant increase in the strength of the IRR. As the Army of the 90's "builds down" there will be fewer active and reserve forces for the Army to utilize in the event of an unexpected and large mobilization. With the reduction in active and reserve component units an implied need for a more dependable IRR from which to draw fillers and replacements in the early days of a mobilization results. Realizing the importance of identifying quality soldiers with the right MOS, Army leaders developed the concept of Recently Trained in the Last 12 Months

(RT-12) for IRR soldiers. RT-12's are soldiers who meet the following criteria: a. Transferred from active duty or a RC Troop Program Unit (TPU) within the last 12 months; b. Favorable assignment to the IRR; c. Personal and military specialty information assessed into the ARPERCEN Official Military File (OMF) (electronic data entries); d. Assigned to Control Group Annual Training or Reinforcement; e. Enlisted skill level other than "0"; f. Not assigned to an Active/Guard Reserve (AGR) or IMA position; and g. Not a dual component member or active duty obligor. Additionally, IRR soldiers who have been trained by ARPERCEN within the previous 12 months or whose military and civilian occupations are essentially the same and where civilian licensure, certification, or continuing education are required are also considered as recently trained.<sup>16</sup> Creation of the RT-12 concept was an outstanding management initiative and will ensure a reliable manpower asset that requires minimal training prior to being assigned as casualty replacements or deploying unit fillers.

One additional issue needs to be addressed and that is the evident trend of soldiers being released from active duty without a clear understanding of their remaining MSO. In January 1986, a voluntary muster was conducted for selected members of the IRR.<sup>17</sup> This muster was intended to update personal data on individuals, test military skill retention, and impress upon those called the seriousness of their service obligation in the IRR.<sup>18</sup> The muster revealed that approximately seven percent could not be located by mail. This supports past results of efforts made to accurately

predict contact rates.<sup>19</sup> As a result of the experience and data gained from the 1986 musters, Congress provided funding for mandatory musters in the Fiscal Year 1987 Appropriations Act.<sup>20</sup> One of the good things to come out of the musters was the issuance of a "red I.D. card" (U.S. Army Reserve Identification Card) with the ending date of an individual's MSO imprinted on it. As an amplification of this initiative, all personnel now being released from active duty (RFRAD) with a remaining MSO are also issued the "red I.D. card" with the remaining time imprinted on the card. This eliminates any confusion by the individual associated with the "fine print" of his/her enlistment contract and separation documents. It also helps to create a positive mind set and has turned out to be a very significant step in improving the reliability of the IRR.

#### Mobilization Requirements

Probably the most critical piece of the mobilization process is the identification of specific manpower requirements in both total numbers and by specialty. While the IRR is the "war reserve" of manpower for the Army, personnel managers need to know what specialties are needed to ensure that the right soldiers are mobilized. There are several systems which serve to identify mobilization requirements, the three most important are: the Mobilization Manpower Planning System (MOBMAN); the Wartime Manpower Planning System (WARMAPS); and the Mobilization Personnel Processing System (MOBPERS). MOBMAN and WARMAPS are scenario driven systems used to calculate requirements for an entire

conflict. MOBPERS is a force structure analytical program which essentially identifies the difference between personnel actually assigned and the mobilization requirement. While these systems are not directly associated with the IRR, the data which they produce impact on the management and training of the IRR as a whole.

Although MOBMAN and WARMAPS are different systems, the data which they produce are very similar. The Office of the Secretary of Defense requires that all military departments calculate their pre-trained manpower requirements consistent with the determinations of WARMAPS.<sup>21</sup> The WARMAPS process is a highly systematic methodology that determines aggregated manpower requirements from a given scenario. WARMAPS takes projected conflict locations, casualties, and convalescence times to arrive at the projected manpower requirements. These requirements span 180 days from conflict initiation under the conditions established for worldwide conflict by Defense Guidance.<sup>22</sup> The data derived from WARMAPS is used primarily to provide aggregate estimates to top military decision makers and does not provide the detail mobilization planners and trainers need to generate replacement personnel.<sup>23</sup> WARMAPS data is also questionable because it utilizes data which doesn't appear to fit into present day war assumptions or conditions. These assumptions and conditions involve estimates of return to duty of medical cases and are predicated on best case rather than worse case conditions.<sup>24</sup>

The MOBMAN system estimates projected, time-phased manpower aggregated surpluses and shortfalls by MOS, in 10-day and 30-day



increments.<sup>25</sup> Specifically MOBMAN is used by the U. S. Army Personnel Command (PERSCOM) to accurately determine manpower needs. Force structure requirements, based on wartime requirements documented in the Mobilization The Army Authorization Documents System (MOBTAADS), are added to projected net casualties (battlefield casualties plus non-battle injuries and sickness minus returns to duty) incurred during the time period. Other losses such as absent without leave (AWOL) and disciplinary confinement are accounted for elsewhere.<sup>26</sup> Like WARMAPS, MOBMAN computes data for the first 180 days but has the added capability to analyze data for up to 360 days after mobilization.

While MOBMAN and WARMAPS are different systems, MOBMAN produces output for WARMAPS to use in its aggregate report.<sup>27</sup> WARMAPS is used as the "roll-up report" while MOBMAN goes down to skill and grade level detail. PERSCOM provides the MOBMAN data to the DCSPER, HQDA so that the Mobilization Army Program for Individual Training (MOBARPRINT) can be developed. The MOBARPRINT helps HQDA and the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) to develop plans for training base expansion and the documentation of needed resources for such training. The MOBARPRINT basically identifies the delta between what TRADOC currently produces at peacetime levels and what must be trained to meet mobilization requirements.<sup>28</sup> With the MOBARPRINT data in hand, TRADOC mobilization planners can plan and resource for any given scenario.

The remaining system, MOBPERS, is a system operated by ARPERCEN to identify units and organizations in CONUS that require

mobilization filler requirements. Wartime personnel requirements are documented in MOBTAADS at grade and MOS level of detail. PERSCOM matches available active component forces with these requirements and the unfilled spaces are reported to ARPERCEN. ARPERCEN then matches available Reserve Component assets with the remaining requirements to arrive at the final mobilization numbers.<sup>29</sup>

If active component and reserve component unit personnel are available in the appropriate skill levels and numbers, then meeting mobilization requirements is relatively simple. However, if additional personnel beyond this initial manpower source are needed, then the IRR is the next source of pre-trained manpower. If the requirement is large and the RT-12 population cannot provide enough immediate fillers, then personnel other than RT-12 assigned to the IRR will be called. The use of personnel who lack recent training or the skills of a needed specialty requires reclassification training to meet mobilization requirements. The experience of the Army with reclassification training of IRR soldiers has not been good.

#### Training The IRR

While the size and composition of the IRR are important factors in manning the Army during a mobilization emergency, if IRR soldiers are not adequately trained their value as a pre-trained manpower asset is seriously degraded. Similarly, determination of skill retention and the development of training plans and policies which focus on overcoming skill erosion is essential in maintaining

IRR readiness.

Since the IRR was created by Congress to serve as a mobilization asset, a comprehensive assessment of IRR training requirements is necessary. It should be noted that in the early phases of a major mobilization emergency, there are only three major sources of manpower: the active Army, Reserve Component TPU's, and the IRR. If very large numbers of IRR soldiers are needed early on, the success of Army operations may very well depend on the quality of this mobilization asset. Since the early 1980's a great deal of attention has been focused on the IRR in an attempt to accurately determine the true quality of the IRR soldier. Much of this effort has been in the form of skill retention studies.

In the early 1980's Congress clearly recognized that a military draft was not a viable alternative short of a major military conflict of the magnitude of World War II. Recognizing that the services did not place a high priority on the readiness of their respective IRR's, Congress directed the Secretary of Defense to develop a training program for the IRR. This action was mandated by language in the Department of Defense (DOD) Authorization Act of 1984.<sup>30</sup> The goal of that program was to ensure IRR soldiers remained proficient in their MOS skills. As an apparent result of congressional interest, the Department of the Army's 1984 RC Action Plan tasked TRAPOC to develop refresher training strategies and a task retention methodology for the IRR.<sup>31</sup> The U. S. Army Training Board (USATB), was tasked to focus on

reserve training issues and to address Congressional concerns about RC training. The USATB was disbanded in 1989 and its major functions transferred to the Deputy Chief of Staff, Training (DCST), HQ, TRADOC. Several other studies of the IRR were initiated beginning in 1985 with the latest completed in April 1991 following Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. The purposes and findings of these studies have implications for future IRR management and training.

### Skill Retention

In January 1985, the Chief, Army Reserve formed a study group to conduct a Pre-trained Individual Manpower Review.<sup>32</sup> The purpose of the review was to provide the Army leadership with a comprehensive review of pre-trained individual manpower personnel management. The group addressed Army IRR personnel management across all established programs in place at that time and with a view to future program design and implementation. While not specifically targeted as a focal point, training surfaced as a central concern and limiting factor in the majority of the subject areas. Concomitantly another major study of the IRR by the Rand Corporation was completed in December 1986.<sup>33</sup> This study focused primarily on skill retention and training needs, providing comprehensive results and recommendations for designing, implementing, and managing a training program for the IRR. The study was sponsored by the Office of the Secretary of Defense and is unique as it was neither guided by the Army's Leadership nor influenced by Army service school parochialism. This study

utilized previous studies of the IRR as a foundation and starting point for its efforts.<sup>34</sup> It focused entirely on the enlisted segment, which comprised 85% of the IRR at the time, rather than the officer minority.<sup>35</sup>

The Rand Study evaluated the IRR as a mobilization asset, both as a whole and as the principal source of individual critical skill specialties with an eye to determining if a more viable mobilization asset existed.<sup>36</sup> The study focused extensively on skill decay and essentially concluded that it exists but in varying degrees. It also observed that greater initial learning helps in skill retention.<sup>37</sup> The authors of the Rand Study further concluded that skill complexity was a determinant in the rate of skill decay.<sup>38</sup> The Rand Study did not state training was necessary prior to mobilization but suggested three options for the Army to consider if it decided to utilize IRR soldiers: (1) do not refresh in peacetime; (2) refresh periodically during peacetime; and (3) refresh at mobilization.<sup>39</sup>

A follow-on study in 1989 by the CAE-Link Corporation mirrored much of the Rand Study.<sup>40</sup> This study attempted to measure skill decay of two groups of IRR soldiers undergoing specially designed refresher training at Ft. Benning, Georgia and Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri. The soldiers involved in the test were volunteers and the Army hoped to re-test the participants three times over a twelve month period. Unfortunately, the participant return rate was only 25%, 20%, and 5% respectively for each time period.<sup>41</sup> No determination was made for the poor return rates but course design

and individual motivation appears to be key factors.

The refresher courses mentioned above were pilot courses developed in response to taskings directed by the Department of the Army Reserve Component Training Development Action Plan (RC-TDAP).<sup>42</sup> The RC-TDAP is intended to be the Army's ultimate roadmap for improving RC training.<sup>43</sup> In the plan, IRR management and training is ranked 18th among 38 total issues. As indicated, attempts to improve IRR training prior to the publication of the RC-TDAP resulted in little re-direction of IRR training efforts.<sup>44</sup>

The many efforts to develop IRR peculiar training courses apparently never came to fruition because Headquarters, TRADOC decided to allow the service school commandants to develop training courses for IRR soldiers independently. As a result some schools developed totally new courses while others adapted on-hand programs of instruction. The quality of the resultant programs was commensurate with the level of interest of each particular commandant. TRADOC attempted to rectify these shortcomings by establishing a policy whereby the two-week annual training phase of Reserve Component Configured Courses (RC3) would be used to train IRR soldiers in the event of mobilization.<sup>45</sup> RC3 courses are active component MOS courses which have been modified to permit teaching/training in an RC environment. While this approach ensures a degree of uniformity of effort, there is still no inherent mechanism which critically reviews the two-week active duty phase for suitability in refreshing mobilized IRR soldiers.

#### IRR Training Plans and Priorities

While serving as the Chief, Army Reserve, MG William F. Ward stated in a July 1989 memorandum that in the last decade the IRR had evolved into a significant partner in the nation's defense.<sup>46</sup> He further elaborated on both the importance and difficulty of training IRR soldiers. In support of IRR and IMA training, ARPERCEN publishes annually a five-year IRR and IMA training management plan.

The FY 91-95 IRR/IMA Training Management Plan lists the training priorities for the IRR/IMA force.<sup>47</sup> These four priorities, in order are: (1) IMA annual training; (2) training of IRR scholarship Lieutenants (ROTC); (3) required professional development education; and (4) training IRR soldiers to meet mobilization requirements. Most training of IRR soldiers is voluntary, with individual soldiers receiving training in their specialty dependent on the availability of training opportunities and funds. Available training time is a major consideration for the IRR soldier as most can be excused from their job only two weeks each year. Often it is more beneficial to send the soldier to a school in order to complete critical military professional education than it is to send him to MOS specific training. However, the most limiting factor in how many IRR soldiers can be trained annually is funding. In 1980 \$20.2M was spent on IRR training and annual funding continued generally upwards until available funds peaked at \$72.9M in 1985. From 1986 through 1991 funding declined with \$23.0M being spent in 1991. For FY 92, \$10.3M has been authorized for IRR mobilization training. With



impending budget cuts and further funding constraints on the horizon, a hard look is required to determine exactly how IRR training dollars should be spent. While IRR personnel managers work hard at training critical MOS's, the Army will need to further narrow its focus on those MOS's which are the most critical during a mobilization.

#### IRR In Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm

While peacetime provides the Army the opportunity to prepare plans and training for its forces to mobilize and fight a war, only a mobilization, deployment, and war itself can truly test that preparation. Operation DS/DS did exactly that for the IRR. While well short of a full mobilization, Operation DS/DS utilized IRR soldiers in numbers sufficient enough to test plans and theories. Because much has already been written about the "mechanics" of the involuntary call of IRR soldiers, it is appropriate to review only summary events of the recent IRR call-up.

#### The Call-up

When Operation DS/DS concluded the U. S. Army had involuntarily called to active duty (issued orders) 20,920 IRR soldiers. Of this number 17,136 actually reported to a mobilization station.<sup>48</sup> This represents a 81.9 percent initial report rate, significantly higher than the 70 percent reporting rate used in pre-Desert Shield/Storm planning.<sup>49</sup> In a follow-up analysis of the "no-shows", all but 719 of the cases were solved with favorable administrative actions. Of the remaining 719 cases, 405 mailgrams were returned as undeliverable, 311 received

mailgrams the second time, and only three refused delivery. Of the 311 cases with which contact was finally established, 104 reported to a mobilization station. A final review of the remaining cases disclosed that individuals had bonafide exemptions, were living outside the United States, were currently incarcerated for crimes, had died, or were Absent Without Leave (AWOL). Only 80 individuals were finally classified as being AWOL which is only three tenths of one percent.<sup>50</sup> The AWOL cases were turned over to authorities for disposition.

Additional analysis revealed that the difference in reporting rates between a soldier who had been assigned to the IRR for three months or less and one who had been assigned four or more months was 17%.<sup>51</sup> It was concluded that the reason for this gap was when an individual transferred to the IRR from active duty or a RC TPU the transfer process sometimes made establishing initial contact between ARPERCEN and the individual difficult. The report concludes that during the first three months of an individual's assignment to the IRR, no adverse action should be taken if contact cannot be made during a mobilization call-up.<sup>52</sup>

It is worth noting that all IRR soldiers involuntarily mobilized were in the RT-12 category. At the time of the call-up there were approximately 39,600 RT-12 soldiers in the IRR base. Thus the 20,920 initially called to active duty was approximately 52% of all RT-12 soldiers.<sup>53</sup> Some RT-12 MOS categories were drawn down and had more IRR soldiers been required to support Operation DS/DS, it might have necessitated levying the non-RT-12 population

to acquire the appropriate MOS's. The skill retention and performance of these IRR soldiers would be hard to predict, although one would hope it would mirror that of the RT-12's.

#### Mobilization Station Training

When the IRR was tapped to provide personnel for Operation DS/DS, the Director of Military Personnel Management tasked the Army Research Institute (ARI) to determine the extent of skill retention among IRR soldiers reporting to mobilization stations.<sup>54</sup> ARI personnel developed and administered a questionnaire to IRR soldiers who had not yet deployed. From the data gathered under controlled conditions and data gleaned from ARI questionnaires and available personnel records, the information was consolidated and analyzed to determine skill retention.<sup>55</sup> In this particular study 5,442 IRR soldiers in 27 different MOS's were evaluated.<sup>56</sup> Five of the findings of the study were:<sup>57</sup>

- \* The Skill Qualification Test (SQT) was the strongest predictor of skill and knowledge retention, followed by the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT).
- \* Skill retention was higher in Infantry, Mechanical Maintenance, and Supply and Service Career Management Fields (CMFs). Armor and Combat Engineer CMFs had lower retention scores.
- \* Skill decay was evident in written diagnostic and certification tests and weapons qualifications scores.
- \* Skill retention was better for soldiers who had civilian jobs that had the same skills as their MOS.

- \* Lack of standardized "hands-on" test procedures prevented confirmation of expected skill decay patterns.

Another study conducted at Ft. Benning, Georgia by the Ft. Benning Field Unit of the Army Research Institute resulted in an interim report on Infantry IRR soldiers.<sup>58</sup> While not as comprehensive as the above study, the Benning study offers some interesting observations about skill retention. The test involved companies of mobilized IRR soldiers and companies of One Station Unit Training (OSUT) soldiers. One RT-12 company was closely tracked (RT-12 CT) from inprocessing through completion of training. The OSUT companies scores on various performance tests were used for statistical comparisons. It is important to note that while the OSUT soldiers were already in training, the median number of months reported by the IRR soldiers since End of Time in Service (ETS) and assigned to the IRR was seven(7).<sup>59</sup> The average length of prior service among the IRR soldiers was 36 months.<sup>60</sup>

In the RT 12 (CT) company, 100 percent were able to achieve qualifying or "GO" scores by the end of training in Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC), Individual Tactical Training (ITT), Battle Drills, M60 machine gun and M203 grenade launcher tasks.<sup>61</sup> First attempt at Military Operations in Urbanized Terrain (MOUT) produced an average of 88 percent first time "GO's". Additionally, 75 percent of the soldiers qualified on their first attempt with the M-16A2 rifle, while 89 percent qualified on their first attempt with the Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW) 10-meter firing.<sup>62</sup> Results of the SAW qualification showed the RT-12's being significantly

better with scores of 26.06 while the OSUT company averaged only 21.63.<sup>63</sup> Scores in mortar and Tube-launched, Optically-tracked, Wire Guided (TOW) missile (all categories) qualifications were also significantly higher for the RT-12 soldiers.<sup>64</sup>

#### RT-12 Attitudes, Motivation, and Concerns

An additional ARI study was requested by the U. S. Army's Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel to gather data on mobilized IRR soldiers. This study surveyed 3,051 mobilized IRR soldiers at seven locations.<sup>65</sup> The findings showed 61 percent had negative attitudes about being called up.<sup>66</sup> With regard to civilian occupations 60 percent said their incomes would decrease; 58 percent reported they provided income for two or more people.<sup>67</sup> There was substantial dissatisfaction voiced in all the surveys about treatment as "initial entry training soldiers". There was also the perception that the active component soldiers considered them "second-class citizens" because they had chosen to get out of the Army. Belief was expressed by the IRR soldiers that the active component no longer recognized their prior good service and years of experience, and that the sacrifices they were making were not appreciated.

#### IRR Automated System Support

While the performance of automated systems per se is not a measure of IRR readiness, if problems are present during a mobilization, tracking and managing mobilized IRR soldiers can become an all consuming task. The utilization of current systems to account for mobilized IRR soldiers was a significant problem

resulting in the devotion of much time attempting to determine the actual numbers.<sup>68</sup> Additionally poor communications and non-standardized procedures between ARPERCEN and PERSCOM hindered accounting efforts.

It was also evident in reading many comments from several sources that the MOBPERS system was not fully understood. Attempts at "system enhancement" often caused other problems and further made managing the mobilization more difficult.

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The IRR is a valuable and key component of the Total Army. Its ability to provide critical personnel in timely fashion for mobilization requirements was demonstrated in Operation DS/DS. Over the years much effort and resources have been devoted to determine how much MOS knowledge and skill IRR soldiers retain from their past military training and experience. Much energy has also been put into developing training programs to satisfy projected IRR refresher requirements. Unfortunately there is little proof that the military organizations charged with training IRR soldiers have incorporated the results of past studies into current course design. As the trainer of our Army's soldiers TRADOC must integrate the results of past studies with the lessons learned from Operation DS/DS to develop a viable training strategy for mobilized IRR soldiers. The present policy which allows individual service school commandants to design and structure training as they see fit

has failed to provide either a consistent or satisfactory training program. Based upon the many different training programs currently in place, a centrally developed and managed strategy is key to achieving uniform and acceptable results.

The individual IRR soldier deserves better personal treatment than that which he received during his mobilization and refresher training for Operation DS/DS. The active component, officers, non-commissioned officers and individual soldiers, must remember that the majority of IRR soldiers served previously in a commendable manner, earning promotions, service awards, and distinction for service. It is amazing how quickly their good service was forgotten and replaced with unfounded and misguided perceptions.

The IRR is an essential element of the national military strategy which our nation's leaders have promulgated. The critical role the IRR plays in the casualty replacement arena could conceivably make the difference between victory or defeat in future conflicts. Well thought out and carefully structured management and training programs would make a significant difference in how rapidly IRR soldiers are available for deployment. The keys to a successful IRR are a properly focused training strategy and adequate funding. Without these two elements, the IRR will not be the national resource our Congress intended.



## ENDNOTES

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