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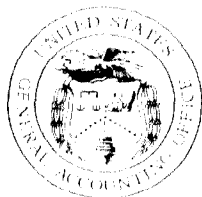
United States General Accounting Office

Report to the Chairman, Subcommittee
on Military Personnel and
Compensation, Committee on Armed
Services, House of Representatives

February 1990

INDIVIDUAL READY RESERVE

Army Needs to Make More Effective Use of Limited Training Funds



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United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

**National Security and
International Affairs Division**

B-222994

February 7, 1990

The Honorable Beverly B. Byron
Chairman, Subcommittee on Military Personnel
and Compensation
Committee on Armed Services
House of Representatives

Dear Madam Chairman:

This report responds to your request that we examine the Army's Individual Ready Reserve training program. The report shows that the Army has assigned Individual Ready Reserve training a low priority and has not always made the best use of the limited training funds that were available.

As you requested, we plan no further distribution of this report until 15 days after its issue date. At that time we will send copies to the Chairmen of the House and Senate Committees on Armed Services and on Appropriations; the Director, Office of Management and Budget; and the Secretaries of Defense and the Army. Copies will also be made available to other interested parties upon request.

Please contact me at (202) 275-4141 if you or your staff have any questions concerning this report. GAO staff members who made major contributions to this report are listed in appendix II.

Sincerely yours,

Richard Davis
Director, Army Issues

Executive Summary

Purpose

To meet the demands of the nation's defense, the Army must be able to swiftly mobilize and deploy combat-ready units. As part of its plan to meet this need, the Army maintains the Individual Ready Reserve, composed primarily of soldiers who have previously served in the Army and have some period of service obligation remaining. In the event of mobilization, Individual Ready Reserve soldiers will be called up to fill gaps in deploying and stateside units and to replace early combat casualties.

Upon mobilization, many Individual Ready Reserve soldiers will be deployed within the first 30 days; consequently, their preparedness is of great importance to national readiness. Unlike members of the Selected Reserve, who train several times every year, Individual Ready Reserve soldiers have no mandatory, regularly scheduled training. In light of the Army's heavy reliance on the Individual Ready Reserve, the Subcommittee on Military Personnel and Compensation, House Committee on Armed Services, asked GAO to determine whether the Army's Individual Ready Reserve training program focuses funds on skills that require refresher training and are most needed in the early days of conflict.

Background

At the end of fiscal year 1988, the Individual Ready Reserve numbered about 293,000 soldiers—approximately 12 percent of the Army's total manpower available for mobilization. Of these, about 47,000 (16 percent) were officers, and the remaining 246,000 (84 percent) were enlisted personnel. By the early 1990s, the size of the Individual Ready Reserve is expected to reach 400,000, due to an increase in the military service obligation period from 6 to 8 years.

In time of war, Individual Ready Reserve soldiers report to mobilization stations for assignment to units. In peacetime, the Individual Ready Reserve is managed by the Army Reserve Personnel Center, a field operating agency of the Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve. In fiscal year 1988, approximately \$54 million was spent on the Individual Ready Reserve mobilization training program.¹

Results in Brief

Individual Ready Reserve training has low priority within the Army, as evidenced by the limited funding and small percentage of soldiers trained in recent years. In addition, the Army did not always make the

¹Funding levels mentioned in this report do not include costs associated with the annual screen, which is used to determine the status and availability of Individual Ready Reserve members.

best use of the limited training funds that were available. GAO's findings were as follows:

- The Army's first training priority was professional development education for those Individual Ready Reserve soldiers needing it for promotion, rather than mobilization readiness training for soldiers needed in the first 30 days of mobilization.
- Mobilization training funds were used for non-training purposes and to provide multiple training tours for some Individual Ready Reservists as well as to train soldiers in specialties not required in the early days of mobilization.
- The Army lacks information on the Individual Ready Reserve's refresher training needs and has not adequately defined training priorities.

Principal Findings

Few Individual Ready Reserve Members Receive Training

The Army is not providing Individual Ready Reserve members refresher training consistent with their wartime roles. The readiness of Individual Ready Reserve soldiers is essential because many of them will be deployed early and will function interchangeably with active duty forces. In the first 30 days of mobilization, the Army will rely on about 115,000 Individual Ready Reserve soldiers to bring forward-deployed, deploying, and stateside support units to wartime strength. However, the majority of these soldiers have received no mobilization training in the last 2 years.

There may not be enough time and resources available between mobilization and deployment for Individual Ready Reserve soldiers to become proficient in the skills they will need in combat. Therefore, they must maintain these skills through peacetime refresher training. However, in fiscal years 1987 and 1988 the Army provided training to only about 18,000 Individual Ready Reserve soldiers needed in the first 30 days of mobilization. Also, the Army has not determined which skills of Individual Ready Reserve members need refresher training.

Furthermore, Army officials told GAO that, in recent years, Individual Ready Reserve training has been the lowest funding priority in the Army Reserve Personnel account because the Army considers training for other reservists and Reserve Officer Training Corps members more

important. In fiscal year 1988, almost \$18 million (25 percent) of the \$72 million budgeted for mobilization training was reprogrammed.

Training Funds Are Not Focused on Mobilization Readiness Training

Professional development education—not mobilization readiness training for Individual Ready Reserve members needed in the first 30 days of mobilization—was the Army's first priority for Individual Ready Reserve training, because it is required for promotion and because of the "up-or-out" requirement for officers. The Army's projections of requirements for filling shortages in deploying and stateside support units indicate that almost 70 percent of the Individual Ready Reserve soldiers needed in the early days of conflict will be in the lowest enlisted skill levels. However, nearly 50 percent of the Individual Ready Reserve soldiers who received training in fiscal year 1988 were officers. In addition, of those Individual Ready Reserve soldiers who received training, many were not required for the first 30 days of mobilization.

More than \$14 million (26 percent) of the funds budgeted for Individual Ready Reserve mobilization training in fiscal year 1988 was spent on non-training activities. These activities include support for marksmanship competitions and service as liaison officers to the United States Military Academy, West Point.

Also, although most Individual Ready Reserve soldiers received no training at all, others were given multiple training tours in the same year. In fiscal year 1988, 16 percent of all officer and 11 percent of all enlisted training tours were given to Individual Ready Reserve soldiers who had already had one tour that year. These figures do not include programs that Army Reserve Personnel Center officials identified as requiring multiple tours.

The Army Lacks Information on Refresher Training Needs and Has Not Adequately Defined Training Priorities

In its defense guidance for fiscal years 1986 to 1990, the Department of Defense directed the services to (1) determine Individual Ready Reserve skill decay and the most appropriate timing of refresher training and (2) begin refresher training no later than fiscal year 1988. Over the last 3 fiscal years, the Army has made little progress in making the required determinations. Currently, it does not know which skills require refresher training or the required frequency of refresher training. As a result, the Army cannot focus refresher training on those skills most in need of it.

Although in fiscal year 1987 the Army contracted for a study of the task retention and refresher training requirements of the Individual Ready Reserve, that study has experienced serious methodological problems that have made its results highly questionable. Despite these problems, the Army continued to collect data for the study.

In addition, although the Army headquarters' Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans developed a model for prioritizing the training of Individual Ready Reserve members needed in the earliest days of mobilization, it is not being used to determine which soldiers to train. Army Reserve Personnel Center officials attribute the failure to use the model to a lack of guidance on how to apply the priorities to training decisions.

Recommendations

GAO recommends that the Secretary of the Army make more effective use of mobilization training funds by taking the following actions:

- establishing overall guidance and controls directed towards ensuring that available training funds are focused on mobilization requirements with special emphasis on Individual Ready Reserve members needed in the first 30 days of mobilization and
- determining the content and frequency of required refresher training.

Agency Comments

The Department of Defense generally agreed with GAO's audit findings and recommendations (see app. I). In a draft of this report, GAO proposed that, on the basis of the level of funding made available to train Individual Ready Reserve members in recent years and the limited number of soldiers trained for mobilization, the Secretary of the Army (1) assess the risk associated with depending on the Individual Ready Reserve to fill early mobilization requirements and (2) decide whether the benefits realized from the Individual Ready Reserve training program warrant its continuation. The Department has decided that the Individual Ready Reserve is essential to meet wartime requirements and recognizes that the management of Individual Ready Reserve training, particularly the management of enlisted refresher training, must be improved. It recently formed a joint task group with a principal objective of improving Individual Ready Reserve management.

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Abbreviations

ARPERCEN	Army Reserve Personnel Center
DOD	Department of Defense
GAO	General Accounting Office
IRR	Individual Ready Reserve

Introduction

The Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) is the primary source of trained individuals upon whom the Army depends to augment active and Selected Reserve units in the event of war or national emergency.¹ At the end of fiscal year 1988, the IRR comprised more than 12 percent of the Army's total manpower available for mobilization. Members of the IRR will be used to increase active and Selected Reserve units from peacetime to wartime strength, provide replacements for combat casualties during the early days of conflict, and increase the size of the support base in the continental United States. The IRR consists primarily of men and women who have completed some active duty and who have some remaining period of their statutory military obligations to be served in the IRR. Also in the IRR are men and women who have voluntarily remained beyond their statutory obligations.

As of September 30, 1988, there were approximately 293,000 soldiers in the IRR. Of these, about 47,000 (16 percent) were officers, and the remaining 246,000 (84 percent) were enlisted personnel. By the early 1990s, the size of the IRR is expected to reach 400,000. This is due to an increase in the military service obligation period from 6 to 8 years effective June 1, 1984.

In peacetime, the IRR is commanded and managed by the Commanding General, Army Reserve Personnel Center (ARPERCEN), a field operating agency of the Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve. In time of war, IRR soldiers are to report to mobilization stations for assignment to units.

Following policy guidance from the Army headquarters' Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans and from the Chief of the Army Reserve, ARPERCEN, in conjunction with major Army commands, is responsible for providing training that ensures that IRR members are qualified in their military specialties and available to meet projected mobilization requirements. ARPERCEN officials told us that this training includes hands-on training with Army units as well as classroom training. Examples of classroom training include specially designed refresher training courses and professional development education programs such as the Command and General Staff Officer Course.

¹Selected Reserve members serve in organized units and are paid for drilling on weekends (generally 1 weekend each month) and for attending a 2-week period of active duty training each year.

In 1988, approximately \$54 million was spent on IRR training, although the program was budgeted at about \$72 million.² IRR training is funded by the Army Reserve Personnel mobilization training account. IRR training program costs include costs associated with the actual training of IRR members as well as the costs to support Army Reserve missions, projects, or exercises by IRR members. These costs include all pay, allowances, retired pay accrual expenses, and travel expenses for both officer and enlisted personnel.

Although the Army has the authority to require training for up to 15 days a year for IRR members whose skills require periodic refresher training and are needed during the first 30 days of mobilization, Army officials told us that this authority is not used. As a result, training in the IRR differs from that of active duty or Selected Reservist training in that training participation is voluntary. However, incentives are offered to IRR soldiers to encourage them to train. They are paid and receive retirement points for their active duty training. All IRR soldiers earn 15 points annually for membership in the IRR. They also receive one point for each day of active duty training, one point for each 3-hour correspondence course satisfactorily completed, and one point for each 4 hours of drill. A total of 50 points is needed in 1 year to qualify as a service year, and 20 service years are needed for retirement. Retirement points are used in calculating retirement pay, and more points equate to more money.

Role of IRR in Total Force Policy Is Significant

The defense of the United States relies heavily upon the Army's ability to quickly mobilize, deploy, and reinforce combat-ready forces. The manpower ceiling for the active-duty component has led the Army to develop a Total Force Policy in order to carry out that defense. Under the Total Force Policy, all available troops, active and reserve, will be used to meet the needs of combat.

Since the Total Force Policy was established, the role of the reserve component has grown as the Army has increased its reliance on reserve forces to perform many missions required in the first stages of conflict. Instead of using reserves as supplements to a standing army, the Total Force Policy requires many reserve units and soldiers to deploy in the same capacity, at the same time, as their active-duty counterparts.

²Funding levels mentioned in this report do not include costs associated with the annual screen, which is used to determine the status, qualifications, and availability of IRR members.

In the first 30 days of mobilization, the Army will rely on about 115,000 IRR soldiers to bring forward-deployed, deploying, and stateside support units to wartime strength. Furthermore, the Army will use additional IRR soldiers to replace early combat casualties. Accordingly, the ability of the soldiers in the IRR to perform their wartime skills is an integral part of the Army's war-fighting strategy.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

In light of the Army's heavy reliance on the IRR, the Subcommittee on Military Personnel and Compensation, House Committee on Armed Services, requested in August 1988 that we determine whether the Army's IRR training program focuses funds on skills that require refresher training and are most needed in the early days of conflict. To answer this request, we reviewed guidance, regulations, and funding documents on the Army's IRR training program, interviewed program officials, and obtained data at the following locations:

- Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Reserve Affairs), Washington, D.C., to identify the policies that have been established for training IRR soldiers and how these relate to the IRR mobilization mission;
- Department of the Army, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans, Washington, D.C., to determine how the Army's mobilization requirements are translated into training priorities for IRR soldiers;
- Office of the Chief, Army Reserve, Washington, D.C., to determine amounts budgeted and expended for IRR training;
- Headquarters, Training and Doctrine Command, Fort Monroe, Virginia, to determine the type and frequency of training needed for the IRR to meet its mobilization mission;
- U.S. Army Reserve Personnel Center, St. Louis, Missouri, to determine the nature and extent of IRR training and the processes that have been established to provide training to IRR members;
- Headquarters, Forces Command, Fort McPherson, Georgia, to determine the importance of the peacetime training of the IRR;
- Allen Corporation of America, Hampton, Virginia, to determine the status and results to date of the skill degradation study it is conducting for the Army; and
- U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, Alexandria, Virginia, to determine the methodology developed for assessing skill degradation in the IRR.

Throughout this review, we relied on published Army and Department of Defense (DOD) reports for the data used as background support, such

as population figures. Also, we used data from ARPERCEN IRR management databases to support our analyses and conclusions. We performed limited reliability assessments of these databases. Our work was conducted between August 1988 and July 1989 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

IRR Training Does Not Focus on Skills That Are Most Needed in the Early Days of Conflict

The IRR plays a vital role in this nation's defense under the Total Force Policy. Because there may not be enough time to train IRR soldiers after mobilization, their readiness must be maintained in peacetime through periodic refresher training. However, IRR training is a low priority within the Army, and few IRR members receive training. In addition, the IRR training program does not focus available funds on skills that require refresher training and are most needed in the early days of conflict. The Army's failure to focus funds on such skills is due to several factors. First, the Army's first training priority is to provide professional development education to IRR members needing it for promotion, rather than to provide refresher training to IRR members required in the first 30 days of mobilization. Second, training funds are used to provide non-training tours (such as those for recruiting for the United States Military Academy, West Point, or for participating in a marksmanship program) and multiple training tours to some IRR members, thus limiting the number of soldiers trained. Third, funds and training are not distributed based on early mobilization requirements. Lastly, the determination of which skills require refresher training and how frequently has not yet been made.

Importance of Training to IRR Preparedness

Because there may not be enough time upon mobilization to provide refresher training to IRR soldiers, the failure to provide that training during peacetime could jeopardize the performance of these soldiers and the success of the units they join.

The importance of having a well prepared IRR was highlighted recently by the Chief of the Army Reserve. In a report to the Congress, he stated:

"The readiness of IRR soldiers to fill identified wartime shortages, and their ability to perform successfully in active and reserve units upon mobilization are essential factors in the mobilization equation."¹

To help ensure the ability of IRR soldiers to perform successfully, the Department of Defense emphasized the need for IRR refresher training in its defense guidance for fiscal years 1986 to 1990:

"In order to maintain the readiness of personnel in the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) the services will develop and program refresher training, as necessary, by skill, to maintain the minimum proficiency necessary to support employment or deployment of the IRR upon mobilization."

¹Posture of the U.S. Army Reserve, Fiscal Year 1989.

According to DOD, the Army also has a system to provide post-mobilization refresher training to IRR soldiers. Under this system, units to which soldiers are assigned will evaluate their proficiency and provide any necessary refresher training. In cases in which the unit cannot provide adequate refresher training, the soldier will be returned to the training base.

However, according to Army officials, this system does not ensure that IRR soldiers can be trained and sent to the theaters within 30 days after mobilization. This situation is significant because the Army assumes that only personnel trained in the last 12 months are deployable with minimal post-mobilization training. As of September 30, 1988, IRR members in this category numbered about 43,000. According to Army officials, all of these personnel would be used to replace early combat casualties.

Few IRR Members Receive Training

In fiscal year 1988, only 4 percent of IRR soldiers received training. In the prior fiscal year, only about 5 percent received training. ARPERCEN officials told us that additional volunteers had been refused training due to budgetary constraints. Army officials attribute this low level of training to the low priority IRR training has in the Army. ARPERCEN officials told us that the low initial budget amounts and the frequent reprogramming of IRR training funds have resulted in insufficient and unreliable funding for the training program. According to the Department of Defense Reserve Forces Policy Board, the lack of mobilization training funds reduces the readiness of the IRR and IRR soldiers' effectiveness upon mobilization.² Despite this view, the Army has not made IRR mobilization training a high priority. According to Army officials, the Army considers the training of other reservists and Reserve Officer Training Corps members to be more important.

The level of funding provided to IRR training is one indicator of its low priority. In fiscal year 1988, \$54 million was provided for IRR training, whereas \$1.2 billion was provided for the training of Selected Reserve members. Despite the fairly constant level of the IRR population from 1985 to 1989, funding for IRR training has dropped considerably from the fiscal year 1985 level of about \$87 million. The training budget for fiscal year 1989 was \$51 million; however, an official of the Chief of the Army Reserve, Comptroller Division, said that he expected the actual amount spent to be approximately \$5 million lower than the amount

²Reserve Component Programs, Fiscal Year 1988, Report of the Reserve Forces Policy Board.

budgeted. Another indicator of IRR training's low funding priority is the reprogramming of funds from the IRR mobilization training account. In fiscal year 1988, for example, although almost \$72 million was budgeted for IRR mobilization training, about \$18 million (25 percent) of that amount was reprogrammed. Most of these funds were reprogrammed to other Army Reserve Personnel accounts to provide training to members of the Selected Reserve and the Reserve Officer Training Corps. Army officials said that the reprogramming of funds makes it difficult for ARPERCEN's managers to plan training for IRR soldiers. ARPERCEN officials told us that IRR members generally need 2 months' notice in order to leave their civilian jobs and make other necessary arrangements before attending training. Uncertain funding levels make it more difficult to ensure the training of IRR members.

IRR Training Funds Are Not Focused on Wartime Requirements

The IRR training program does not focus funds on skills that require refresher training and are most needed in the early days of conflict. Instead, the Army's first priority for IRR training is professional development education. In addition, mobilization training funds are used (1) for non-training purposes such as participation in a marksmanship program, (2) for multiple training tours to some individuals even though most soldiers received no training, and (3) for training in military specialties not required in the first 30 days of mobilization.

In fiscal year 1988, the Army provided 16,410 active duty tours to IRR soldiers. However, less than one-half of the tours were for training soldiers required in the first 30 days of mobilization. Some training tours were for non-training activities; some were multiple tours to the same soldiers; and others were given to soldiers not required in the first 30 days of mobilization. As a result, only about 8,000 soldiers required in the first 30 days of mobilization received training. Table 2.1 summarizes the distribution of training tours.

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**Table 2.1: Distribution of Active Duty
Tours in Fiscal Year 1988**

Tours/soldiers trained	Officers	Enlisted	Total
Total tours	8,376	8,034	16,410
Non-training tours	-1,504	-701	-2,205
Training tours	6,872	7,333	14,205
Multiple training tours	-1,117	-840	-1,957
Individual soldiers trained	5,755	6,493	12,248
Number of soldiers trained not required in first 30 days	-3,662	-584	-4,246
Number of soldiers trained required in first 30 days	2,093	5,909	8,002

In fiscal year 1987 the Army provided training to about 10,000 IRR soldiers needed in the first 30 days of mobilization.

According to ARPERCEN officials, because of funding constraints, IRR mobilization training should be based on requirements in the first 30 days of mobilization. In this time frame, the majority (almost 70 percent) of the IRR requirements to bring deploying and stateside support units to wartime strength are for enlisted soldiers in skill levels 1 and 2, the lowest enlisted skill levels.³ Despite this fact, the IRR officer population received more than half—62 percent—of all training dollars in fiscal year 1988. Furthermore, officers received nearly 50 percent of all training tours, despite the fact that, as ARPERCEN officials told us, enlisted volunteers are refused training.

We found that professional development education—not mobilization readiness training for IRR members needed in the first 30 days of mobilization—is the Army’s first IRR training priority because professional development education is required for promotion and because of the “up-or-out” requirement for IRR officers. Although professional development education is a type of mobilization training, putting priority on those who need professional development education without regard to the timing of the Army’s need for them during mobilization tends to skew training away from IRR members needed in the first 30 days of mobilization.

³Skill level 1 - Enlisted E-3 to E-4.
Skill level 2 - Enlisted E-5.
Skill level 3 - Enlisted E-6.
Skill level 4 - Enlisted E-7.
Skill level 5 - Enlisted E-8 to E-9.

According to ARPERCEN officials, the "up-or-out" requirement for officers is a primary reason that officers received 66 percent of the professional development training. Because of this requirement, IRR officers have a greater incentive to train than enlisted members. First lieutenants, captains, and majors who are passed over for promotion twice are either transferred to the Retired Reserve (if eligible) or discharged. In addition, officers are required to complete certain professional development courses prior to being eligible for promotion within the IRR. Although enlisted soldiers in grades E-5 and above have professional development education requirements to fulfill in order to be eligible for promotion, they are not subject to the "up-or-out" requirement; they are not removed from the IRR if they are not promoted.

In fiscal year 1988, some mobilization training funds were used for non-training purposes. Of the \$54 million budgeted for mobilization training, more than \$14 million (26 percent) was spent on tours to perform active duty for special work. By the Army's definition, these tours are not training tours, but they provide essential support for the accomplishment of Army Reserve missions, projects, or exercises. The Army considers any training benefit received from active duty for special work tours as incidental. An example of active duty for special work is the Military Academy Liaison Officer program. In this program, IRR soldiers serve as liaisons in admission-related activities between the United States Military Academy, West Point, and prospective candidates. In fiscal year 1988, IRR officers and enlisted soldiers conducted 675 military academy liaison tours, at a cost of about \$448,000.

ARPERCEN officials told us that the Army's marksmanship program is another example of a non-training activity. Under this program, IRR soldiers provide support to and participate in marksmanship competitions. In fiscal year 1988, IRR members went on 750 marksmanship tours at a cost of about \$2 million. While some of these tours were classified as active duty for special work, 592 at a cost of about \$1.6 million were not.

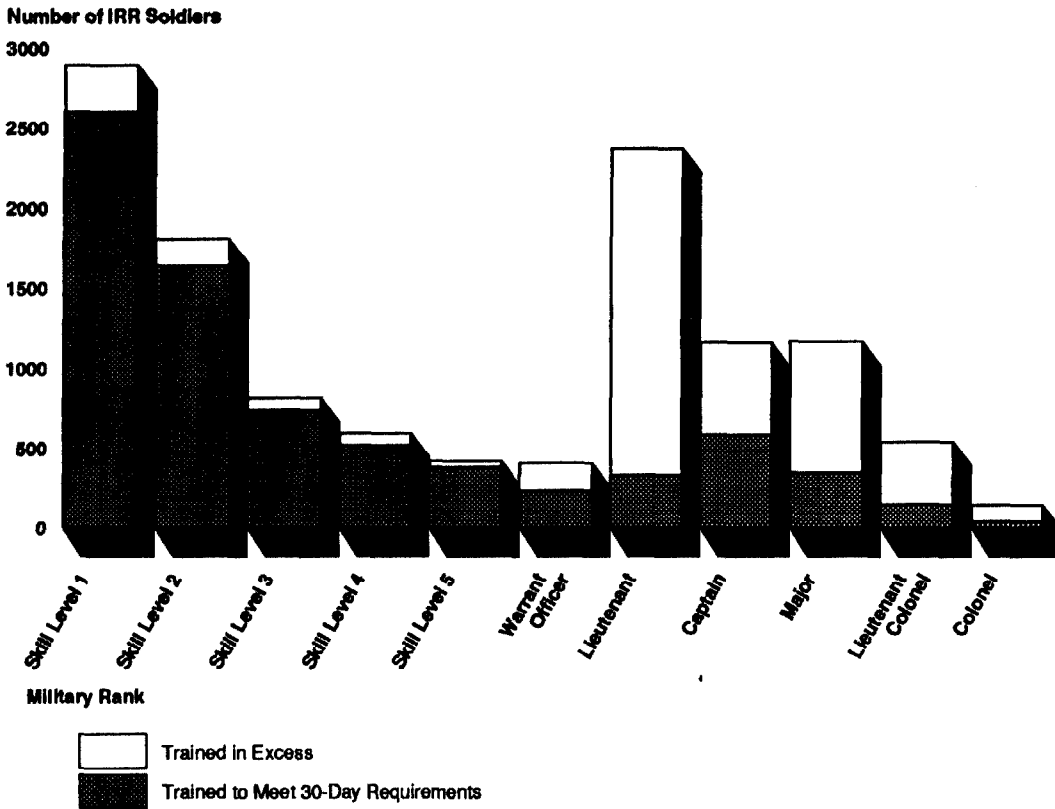
Training funds also are used to provide multiple training tours. The Army has not determined how frequently IRR soldiers' skills need to be refreshed and, therefore, assumes that only personnel trained within the last 12 months are deployable with minimal post-mobilization training. One way to maximize the percentage of soldiers immediately deployable is to provide as many as possible with a training tour during a given year and to minimize the number of soldiers who receive multiple tours during the year. However, in fiscal year 1988, the Army provided

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almost 2,000 multiple tours to IRR soldiers. Sixteen percent (1,117) of all officer and 11 percent (840) of all enlisted tours were multiple tours. These figures do not include programs that ARPERCEN officials identified as requiring multiple tours. Additionally, ARPERCEN officials cited professional development education as a program that does not require multiple tours in the same year. ARPERCEN officials told us that they recognized that multiple tours reduce the number of soldiers who can be trained and thereby reduce the number of soldiers who can be deployed with minimal post-mobilization training. These officials said that in January 1989, they issued guidance that included the direction to keep multiple tours to a minimum.

We also determined that training is given to IRR soldiers in military specialties not identified as requirements for the first 30 days of mobilization. In fiscal year 1988, 64 percent of the officers and 9 percent of enlisted personnel in the IRR who received training were not required for the first 30 days of mobilization. For example, despite the fact that no IRR officers with transportation-related military specialties were needed in the first 30 days of mobilization, 45 officers with these specialties were trained. The portion of all IRR soldiers trained who were not required for the first 30 days of mobilization is shown in figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Portion of IRR Soldiers Trained in Fiscal Year 1988 in Excess of 30-Day Requirements



The Army Lacks Information on Refresher Training Needs and Has Not Adequately Defined Training Priorities

The Army has not determined which IRR skills require refresher training and how frequently refresher training should be conducted. In addition, although the Army has developed a model for prioritizing the training of IRR members needed in the earliest days of mobilization, it is not being used as the basis for providing training.

Army Lacks Data on Skill Decay

In its defense guidance for fiscal years 1986 to 1990, the Department of Defense directed the services to (1) determine IRR skill decay and the most appropriate timing of refresher training and (2) begin refresher training no later than fiscal year 1988. In fiscal years 1985 and 1986, the Training and Doctrine Command developed and tested refresher

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training courses designed for enlisted IRR soldiers whose military specialties had been identified as most critical by the Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve. Courses were established for skill level 2 and 3 soldiers in 44 military specialties. In fiscal year 1988, approximately 900 IRR members took these courses.

Also, in 1987, the Army contracted, at a cost of about \$251,000, for a study of the task retention and refresher training requirements of the IRR. The study was designed to determine skill degradation and refresher training needs of IRR soldiers in three enlisted military specialties. In addition, using the data gathered on the three specialties, the Army hoped to validate the active Army's skill retention prediction method for use for IRR enlisted soldiers in all specialties. Of nearly 360 enlisted military specialties, almost all are represented in the IRR.

One military specialty from each of the Army's three branches—combat arms, combat support, and combat-service support—was selected for study. According to the study methodology developed by the Training and Doctrine Command with the assistance of the Army Research Institute, at least 120 soldiers in each of the three specialties were to be trained and tested. Once trained, the soldiers participating in the study were to receive no additional training from the Army until after they returned for skill retention retesting at one of three predetermined intervals (2 months, 6 months, or 12 months). The methodology required a minimum of 40 soldiers per military specialty at each of the three retest periods. The study methodology is illustrated in table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Numbers of Soldiers to Be Tested in IRR Skill Degradation Study

Military specialty	Initial test	Retest interval		
		2-month	6-month	12-month
Combat arms	120	40	40	40
Combat support	120	40	40	40
Combat-service support	120	40	40	40

The actual study methodology, however, differed significantly from the designed methodology. As shown in table 2.3, participation at the retest intervals was insufficient in all three military specialties.

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Table 2.3: Number of Soldiers Who Actually Participated in IRR Skill Degradation Study

Military specialty	Initial test	Retest interval		
		2-month	6-month	12-month
Combat arms	141	26	30	10
Combat support	153	31	22	3
Combat-service support	53	25	10	0

In the combat service-support specialty, only 53 soldiers were initially trained and tested, even though the design methodology required at least 120 soldiers. Further, some soldiers in this specialty were retested at 2-month and 6-month intervals, even though not enough soldiers were initially tested to use the data collected. Additionally, the minimum of 40 soldiers was not retested at any interval for any of the specialties.

Training and Doctrine Command officials told us that, as a result of the low participation in the study, the Army has decided to do additional retesting in an attempt to gather more 12-month interval data for the combat arms specialty. The officials said that this was the only specialty selected for additional retesting because they believe they are more likely to get retest participants in that specialty than in the others.

Although there are problems with the number of soldiers tested at each interval, there are even greater problems with the data collected. The contractor's preliminary analysis of the data gathered as of May 1989 indicates that skill retention increases over time, a finding that appears questionable. The contractor found that participants at the 6-month and 12-month retest intervals generally performed better than those at the 2-month interval. The contractor determined that the civilian occupations of those tested did not account for these improved test results.

Despite the lack of participation and questionable results, Training and Doctrine Command officials said that data collection efforts on the combat arms specialty continued in an attempt to validate the active Army's skill retention prediction method for the IRR. According to the Army Research Institute official who helped design the study methodology, however, validation cannot be achieved with data on only one military specialty. According to DOD, data collection has been completed, and results are being compiled.

The Army's System for Setting Training Priorities Was Not Used

The Army headquarters' Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans developed a model for prioritizing the training of IRR members needed in the earliest days of mobilization. The model produces separate priority lists for enlisted and officer IRR members. The model prioritizes training based on factors for (1) the projected number of IRR soldiers required at each skill level in each military specialty in the first 30 days of mobilization and (2) the number of weeks required to train an individual to fill each of the requirements.

However, although priority lists were produced for fiscal year 1988, the model was not used to produce these lists, and officials of the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans could not explain how most of the factors used in establishing the priorities for that year had been determined. Moreover, the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans did not provide ARPERCEN with adequate guidance on using the priority lists. As a result, ARPERCEN training officials stated that they had not used them.

Conclusions

Readiness training for the IRR has low priority within the Army, as evidenced by the limited funding and the small percentage of soldiers trained in recent years. With the Army's reliance on the IRR to fill early mobilization requirements, limited IRR training opportunities create some risk in terms of the Army's capacity to implement its Total Force Policy.

The Army lacks information on the refresher training needs of its IRR soldiers, and the study designed to validate the active Army's skill retention predication method for use for IRR enlisted specialties is seriously flawed. Despite these flaws, the Army continued to support data collection for this purpose.

Furthermore, the Army did not always make the best use of the limited training funds that were available. If the IRR training program is to be more effective, the Army needs to take a number of steps to provide some assurance that available training funds are spent wisely and result in a greater contribution to mobilization readiness.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Secretary of the Army make more effective use of mobilization training funds by taking the following actions:

- establishing overall guidance and controls directed towards ensuring that available training funds are focused on mobilization requirements

-
- with special emphasis on IRR members needed in the first 30 days of mobilization and
- determining the content and frequency of required refresher training.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

DOD agreed with all of our recommendations (see app. I). In a draft of this report, we proposed that on the basis of the level of funding made available to train IRR members in recent years and the limited number of soldiers trained for mobilization, the Secretary of the Army (1) assess the risk associated with depending on the IRR to fill early mobilization requirements and (2) decide whether the benefits realized from the Individual Ready Reserve training program warrant its continuation. The Department said that it had determined that there were no viable alternatives to using the IRR to meet wartime requirements and that it would work with the Army to refine the process of assessing the risks associated with depending on the IRR when deciding how best to meet potential wartime manpower requirements. DOD cited meeting statutory requirements and enhancing total Army readiness as benefits of IRR training and said that the Army considered benefits derived from the current program sufficient to warrant continuation of the training program.

In response to our recommendations on the use of mobilization training funds, DOD made the following comments:

- It will work with the Army to develop better methods of focusing available training funds on refresher training for IRR members needed in the first 30 days of mobilization. DOD has formed a Joint Task Group on Army Manpower Mobilization/Training to conduct a comprehensive review of mobilization training. The task group is developing additional guidance with more definitive procedures on the management and mobilization training of IRR members.
- It will work with the Army to determine the content and frequency of required refresher training. It expects to develop a policy statement on the training of the IRR to be followed by the publication of a DOD directive. Drafting the directive is one of the tasks of the DOD Joint Task Group on Army Manpower Mobilization/Training, and according to its Chairman, the group expects to address the specific means by which these determinations can be made.

DOD generally agreed with our audit findings. DOD noted, however, that in all but the worst case scenarios, mobilization will occur through a phased process that will permit time for refresher training for many

Chapter 2
IRR Training Does Not Focus on Skills That
Are Most Needed in the Early Days
of Conflict

mobilized IRR members. DOD stated that it supports refresher training in peacetime for those who need it and, within available resources, will provide it.

DOD further stated that the initial call-up of the Army IRR will consist largely of individuals who have been serving in active or selected Army National Guard or Army Reserve unit programs sometime in the previous 12 months and who are still considered trained. We agree that some of the IRR members called up initially will most likely fit into this category. However, the majority will not. The Army anticipates a need for about 115,000 IRR members in the first 30 days of mobilization. As of September 30, 1988, there were only about 43,000 IRR members in the group trained in the previous 12 months. Because not all of them have the particular military specialties the Army anticipates needing in the early days of mobilization, it is clear that this group of soldiers will not form the bulk of the IRR members needed in the early days.

DOD did not agree with a statement in our draft report that there was no system in place to convert IRR members from their civilian status, provide refresher training to them, and get them to the theaters within 30 days after mobilization. We have changed the report to recognize the Army's system to provide post-mobilization refresher training. However, this system does not ensure that necessary training can be completed within 30 days.

DOD agreed that only a small portion of the IRR had received training in any given year and said that more can be done to provide training for these soldiers, especially for junior and mid-level enlisted soldiers with skills for which wartime shortages exist. DOD maintains, however, that many IRR members do not require proficiency training because (1) they have separated from active duty or reserve unit status within the prior 12 months and are considered trained or (2) they are within 12 months of completing their military service obligations, and generally, training funds are not expended on them. In addition, DOD commented that peacetime training is not necessary for a large number of IRR members who hold combat and certain combat service-support military occupational skills, since these soldiers can be provided tailored, short-duration refresher training either in the units to which they will be assigned or from the training base during the early periods of mobilization. A DOD official told us that this comment was based on DOD's overall perception of skill retention rather than an analysis by military occupational specialty. The official said that the DOD Joint Task Group on Army Manpower Mobilization/Training expected to make such an analysis.

Comments From the Department of Defense

Note: GAO comments supplementing those in the report text appear at the end of this appendix.



ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

RESERVE AFFAIRS

December 7, 1989

Mr. Frank C. Conahan
Assistant Comptroller General
National Security and
International Affairs Division,
U.S. General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Conahan:

This is the DoD response to the GAO Draft Report "ARMY TRAINING: Benefits of Individual Ready Reserve Training May Not Warrant Its Continuation", dated October 23, 1989 (GAO Code 393313), OSD case 8158.

The DoD generally agrees with the GAO findings and recommendations. The Department emphasizes, however, that the professional development and training of leadership skills for Individual Ready Reserve officers and non-commissioned officers is necessary to maintain the wartime readiness of these valuable pre-trained leaders and trainers. Upon mobilization these Reservists will be required, in many cases, to assume immediate leadership roles in combat, combat support, and combat service support units or in the training base. Individual Ready Reserve training, in conjunction with support of active force exercises, annual training activities, real-world base operations functions, as well as individual refresher training with active force units, is performed largely on a volunteer basis. These activities contribute directly to the readiness of the members who participate, as well as to the wartime readiness of the Total Force.

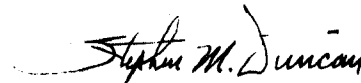
The DoD agrees that the management of Individual Ready Reserve training must be improved, particularly in enlisted refresher training. In order to address this problem and other related issues, in August 1989, the Office of the Secretary of Defense formed a Joint Task Group with representatives from the Joint and Service Staffs. The principal objectives of this Joint Task Group are the improved manpower management and mobilization training of the Pre-trained Individual Manpower resources of the armed forces. New policy guidance and more definitive management procedures will be established and incorporated in appropriate DoD Directives.

**Appendix I
Comments From the Department of Defense**

2

The detailed DoD comments on the report findings and recommendations are provided in the enclosure. The Department appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft report.

Sincerely,



Stephen M. Duncan

Enclosure
As Stated

GAO DRAFT REPORT - DATED OCTOBER 23, 1989
(GAO CODE 393313) OSD CASE 8158

"ARMY TRAINING: BENEFITS OF INDIVIDUAL READY RESERVE
TRAINING MAY NOT WARRANT ITS CONTINUATION"

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMENTS

* * * * *

FINDINGS

FINDING A: Background: Individual Ready Reserve. The GAO observed that the Individual Ready Reserve numbered about 293,000 soldiers--approximately 12 percent of the Army's total manpower available for mobilization at the end of FY 1988. The GAO noted that about 47,000 (16 percent) were officers and the remaining 246,000 (84 percent) were enlisted. According to the GAO, the Individual Ready Reserve is expected to reach 400,000 by the early 1990s because of an increase in the Military Service obligation period from 6 to 8 years.

The GAO reported that, in the time of war, Individual Ready Reserve soldiers report to mobilization stations for assignment to units. The GAO noted that, in peacetime, the Individual Ready Reserve is managed by the Army Reserve Personnel Center--a field operating agency of the Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve. The GAO observed that, in FY 1988, approximately \$54 million was spent on the Individual Ready Reserve mobilization training program.

DoD Response: Concur.

FINDING B: Role of Individual Ready Reserve in Total Force Policy is Significant. The GAO observed that the defense of the United States relies heavily upon the ability of the Army to mobilize, deploy, and reinforce combat-ready forces quickly. The GAO noted that the manpower ceiling for the Active component has led the Army to develop a Total Force policy in order to carry out that defense. The GAO explained that, under the Total Force policy, all available troops, Active and Reserve, will be used to meet the needs of combat.

The GAO pointed out that, since the Total Force policy was established, the role of the Reserve component has grown as the Army has increased its reliance on Reserve forces to perform many missions required in the first stages of conflict. The GAO learned that the Total Force Policy requires many Reserve units and soldiers to deploy in the same capacity, at the same time, as their Active-duty component counterparts.

According to the GAO, in the first 30 days of mobilization the Army will rely on about 115,000 Individual Ready Reserve soldiers to bring deploying and stateside support units to wartime strength. The GAO further indicated that the Army will use additional Individual Ready Reserve soldiers to replace early combat casualties. The GAO concluded that the ability of the soldiers in the Individual Ready Reserve to perform their wartime skills is an integral part of the Army warfighting strategy.

DoD Response: Partially Concur. The DoD emphasizes however, that training priorities reflect the fact that most scenarios, except worse case, anticipate that mobilization will occur through a phased process. The phased process permits time for refresher training for many mobilized Individual Ready Reserve members. The DoD supports refresher training in peacetime for those who need it and, within available resources, will provide it.

The initial callup of the Army Individual Ready Reserve will consist largely of individuals who have been serving on active duty or in Selected Reserve unit programs sometime in the previous twelve months and are still considered trained.

The Individual Ready Reserve pool will be used initially to meet forward deployed and deploying unit shortfalls. Requirements for stateside support units will be met using retired members, Standby Reservists and civilians along with small numbers of Individual Ready Reservists.

FINDING C: Importance of Training to Individual Ready Reserve Preparedness. The GAO observed that, since there may not be enough time upon mobilization to provide refresher training to Individual Ready Reserve soldiers, failure to provide that training during peacetime could jeopardize the performance of these soldiers and, ultimately, the success of the units they join. The GAO referenced a recent report by the Chief of the Army Reserve that highlighted the importance of having a well prepared Individual Ready Reserve. The GAO pointed out that the Department of Defense has emphasized the need for Individual Ready Reserve refresher training in its FY 1986 to FY 1990 Defense Guidance to help ensure the ability of the Individual Ready Reserve soldiers to perform successfully.

The GAO found that, according to Army officials, there is no system in place to (1) take Individual Ready Reserve members from their civilian status, (2) provide refresher training to them, and (3) get them to the theaters within 30 days after mobilization. The GAO concluded that this is a significant deficiency-- because the Army assumes that only those personnel trained in the last 12 months are deployable with minimal post-mobilization training. The GAO observed that, as of September 30, 1989,

Individual Ready Reserve members falling in this "trained" category numbered about 43,000. The GAO indicated that all of these personnel would be used to replace early combat casualties.

DoD Response: Partially Concur. The DoD agrees that the Individual Ready Reserve soldiers are primarily used to bring Active and Reserve component units to full combat strength and as replacements for combat casualties. The Department does not agree, however, with the GAO statement that there is no system in place to process Individual Ready Reserves.

The Army has a system for accessing, processing and training of mobilized Individual Ready Reservists. This process is carried out at each of the 54 mobilization stations. Upon reporting, each individual will be evaluated to determine the currency and proficiency of his or her skill(s). Post mobilization refresher training will occur in the unit of assignment where appropriate. In cases where adequate refresher training cannot be accomplished in the unit, the individual will be returned to the training base for necessary training.

Post mobilization training is addressed in the Army's Reserve Component Training Development Action Plan, dated May 18, 1989. In addition, a joint task group at the Office of the Secretary of Defense, which included representatives of the Army staff, was formed in August, 1989. One purpose of the task group is to conduct a comprehensive review of mobilization training. The task group has already determined that additional guidance on the management and mobilization training of Individual Ready Reserve members is necessary and that a DoD Directive on the subject, providing more definitive procedures, should be published. The directive should be issued by the end of FY 1990.

FINDING D: Few Individual Ready Reserve Members Receive Training. The GAO observed that, in FY 1988, only 4 percent of the Individual Ready Reserve soldiers actually received any training. The GAO also noted that, in the prior fiscal year, only about 5 percent received training. According to the GAO, Army Personnel Center officials stated that there were additional volunteers--but who were refused training due to budgetary constraints. The GAO reported that Army officials attribute this level of training to the low priority training has in the Army. The GAO found that the low initial budget amounts and frequent reprogramming of Individual Ready Reserve training funds has resulted in insufficient and unreliable funding for the training program. The GAO referred to a Department of Defense Reserve Forces Policy Board statement that the lack of mobilization training funds reduces the readiness of the Individual Ready Reserve and reduces the effectiveness of the Individual Ready Reserve soldiers upon mobilization. The GAO indicated that, despite this view, the Army has not made Individual Ready Reserve mobilization training a higher priority--the Army continues to consider the training of other Reservists and Reserve Officer Training Corps members to be more important.

See comment 1.

The GAO explained that the level of funding provided to Individual Ready Reserve training is one indicator of its low priority. The GAO pointed out that, in FY 1988, only \$54 million was provided for Individual Ready Reserve training--whereas \$1.2 billion was provided for the training of Selected Reserve Members. The GAO further pointed out that, despite the fairly constant level of the Individual Ready Reserve, training has dropped considerably from the FY 1985 level of about \$87 million. The GAO estimated that, of the \$51 million for Individual Ready Reserve training available for FY 1989, only about \$46 million would be spent.

The GAO cited the reprogramming of funds from the Individual Ready Reserve mobilization training account as another indicator of the low priority of Individual Ready Reserve training. The GAO explained that, in FY 1988, almost \$72 million was budgeted for Individual Ready Reserve mobilization training--however, about \$18 million (or 25 percent) of that was reprogrammed. The GAO pointed out that most of these funds were reprogrammed to other Army Reserve Personnel accounts to provide training to members of the Selected Reserve and the Reserve Officer Training Corps. The GAO concluded that the reprogramming of these funds makes it difficult for Army Personnel Center managers to plan training for Individual Ready Reserve soldiers. According to the GAO, Army Personnel Center managers stated that Individual Ready Reserve members generally need two months' notice in order to leave their civilian jobs and make other necessary arrangements before attending training. The GAO concluded that uncertain funding levels make it more difficult to assure Individual Ready Reserve members of training.

DoD Response: Partially Concur. The DoD agrees that only a small portion of the Individual Ready Reserve receives training in any given year. Many individual Reservists, however, do not require proficiency training because (1) they have separated from active duty or reserve unit status within the prior 12 months and are considered trained or (2) they are within 12 months of completing their military service obligation and the Department generally does not expend training funds on them. In addition, peacetime training is not necessary for a number of individual Reservists who hold combat and certain combat service support military occupational skills, since these soldiers can be provided tailored short duration refresher training either in the units to which they will be assigned or from the training base during the early periods of mobilization. Nevertheless, the Department recognizes that more can be done to provide training for individual Reservists, especially for those junior and mid-level enlisted soldiers with skills for which wartime shortages exist. The Department's Joint Task Group on Army Manpower and Mobilization/Training is addressing this issue and will recommend policies in this area by the Second Quarter of this Fiscal Year. Another reason for reduced training was that it was necessary to reprogram Individual Ready Reserve training funds to meet legally mandated higher priority training programs during FY 1989, such as officer basic courses.

FINDING E: Individual Ready Reserve Training Funds Are Not Focused On Wartime Requirements. The GAO found that professional development education was the Army's first priority for Individual Ready Reserve training--not mobilization readiness training for Individual Ready Reserve members needed in the first 30 days of mobilization--because it is required for promotion and because of the "up-or-out" requirement for officers. The GAO learned that, based on the Army projection of requirements for filling shortages in deploying and stateside support units--almost 70 percent of the Individual Ready Reserve soldiers needed in the early days of conflict will be in the lowest enlisted skill levels. The GAO observed, however, that nearly 50 percent of the Individual Ready Reserve soldiers who received training in FY 1988 were officers--i.e., 16 percent of the total Individual Ready Reserve received approximately 50 percent of all the training. The GAO also pointed out that, of those Individual Ready Reserve soldiers who received training, many were not required for the first 30 days of mobilization.

The GAO also calculated that more than \$14 million (26 percent) of the funds provided for Individual Ready Reserve mobilization training in FY 1988 was spent on nontraining activities. According to the GAO, these activities include support for marksmanship competitions and the Service liaison officer to the United States Military Academy, West Point.

In addition, the GAO found that, although most Individual Ready Reserve soldiers received no training at all, others were given multiple training tours in the same year. The GAO noted that, in FY 1988, 16 percent of all officers and 11 percent of all enlisted training tours were given to Individual Ready Reserve soldiers who already had at least one tour that year. The GAO pointed out these figures do not include the programs that the Army Reserve Personnel Center identified as requiring multiple tours.

DoD Response: Partially Concur. The Department considers Individual Ready Reserve wartime requirements in allocating its limited training funds. Officer and non-commissioned officer professional development training required for promotion and retention, support of Active component/Reserve component unit training, and support of legally mandated programs, all support Individual Ready Reserve training for wartime requirements.

Individual Ready Reserve training, in conjunction with support to Army staff, exercises, site support for the Active component and Reserve component training, accounted for the bulk of the \$14 million. Professional development education does focus on wartime requirements because it is training designed to enhance Individual Ready Reserve members' mobilization readiness. The Department agrees, however, that prioritization of professional development education is required.

FINDING F: The Army Lacks Information On Refresher Training Needs And Has Not Adequately Defined Training Priorities. The GAO observed that, in the FY 1990 Defense Guidance, the DoD directed the Services to (1) determine Individual Ready Reserve skill decay and the most appropriate timing of refresher training and (2) begin refresher training no later than FY 1988. The GAO found, however, that over the last three fiscal years, the Army has made little progress in making the required determinations. The GAO concluded that the Army currently still does not know (1) which skills require refresher training or (2) the required frequency of refresher training. The GAO further concluded that the Army, therefore, cannot focus refresher training on those skills most in need of it.

The GAO also pointed out that, in FY 1987, the Army contracted for a study of the task retention and refresher training, requirements of the Individual Ready Reserve. The GAO observed that study has experienced serious methodological problems--which have made its results highly questionable. The GAO noted, however, that despite these problems, the Army continues to support data collection for the study.

The GAO also found that, although the headquarters Office of the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans developed a model for prioritizing training of Individual Ready Reserve members needed in the earliest days of mobilization, it is not being used to determine which soldiers to train. According to the GAO, Army Reserve Personnel Center officials attribute this to a lack of guidance on how to apply the priorities to training decisions.

DoD Response: Concur. Although there are identifiable skill retention factors for military occupational skills, skill retention is also dependent on the capability, experience, and vocation of the individual. Many civilian occupation skills parallel military skills. Individual Ready Reserve members in such occupations should require only limited military unique refresher training when they report to their unit. The Department recognizes that measuring skill retention is an imprecise and complicated activity. It is expensive and doesn't always result in standard factors which can be translated into training time and dollars. The Department continues to support the policies outlined in the Defense Guidance. Training priorities must support the national strategy which, of necessity, puts greater emphasis on training the Active and Selected Reserve components. Individual Ready Reserve training should be focused on sustaining the Individual Ready Reserve leadership pool and on critical skills needed for wartime. The Office of the Secretary of Defense will continue to work with the Army, within the framework of the Joint Task Group, to determine the appropriate methodology and strategy for solving the refresher training problem.

* * * * *

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of the Army assess the risk associated with depending on the Individual Ready Reserve to fill early mobilization requirements.

DoD Response: Concur. The Department of Defense has determined that there are no viable alternatives to use of the Individual Ready Reserve to meet wartime requirements. Except for retirees and a small Standby Reserve, the Individual Ready Reserve is the only trained manpower pool available. The Department, the Administration and the Congress cooperated in the recent extension of the military service obligation from 6 years to 8 years, specifically for the purpose of increasing the size of the Individual Ready Reserve to provide a larger pretrained manpower pool. The Office of the Secretary of Defense will work with the Army to refine the process for assessment of the risks associated with dependency on the Individual Ready Reserve when making decisions on how best to meet potential wartime manpower requirements, which assessment is expected to be completed by the end of FY 1990.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of the Army decide whether the benefits realized from the Individual Ready Reserve training program warrant its continuation.

DoD Response: Concur. Training is being conducted based on priorities, available funding, and personnel resources. Some "Individual Ready Reserve" training, such as officer basic courses, must be accomplished to meet statutory requirements. Individual Ready Reserve members volunteer to support exercises, operational training requirements, and annual training, while others volunteer for individual refresher training with active component units, all of which enhances total Army readiness. The recommendation is moot, however. It is the DoD position that the benefits of sustaining the Individual Ready Reserve critical skills, including leadership skills, derived from the current program, are sufficient to warrant continuation of the training program.

RECOMMENDATION 3: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of the Army terminate data collection under the current Army skill degradation study.

DoD Response: Concur. The data collection portion of the skill degradation study has been completed. The Army is now only awaiting the compilation of the study results, which is expected to be completed by March 31, 1990.

RECOMMENDATION 4: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of the Army make more effective use of mobilization training funds by establishing overall guidance and controls directed towards ensuring that available training funds are focused on mobilization requirements with special emphasis on those Individual Ready Reserve members needed in the first 30 days of mobilization.

See comment 2.

DoD Response: Concur. The Office of the Secretary of Defense will work with the Army to develop better methods of focusing the available training funds on refresher training for Individual Ready Reserve members needed in the first 30 days of mobilization. The DoD Joint Task Group on Army Manpower Mobilization/Training is developing this guidance. The anticipated completion is the end of FY 1990.

RECOMMENDATION 5: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of the Army make more effective use of mobilization training funds by determining the content and frequency of refresher training required.

DoD Response: Concur. The Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Army are working jointly to achieve this goal through development of a policy statement on the training of the Individual Ready Reserve, to be followed by publication of a DoD Directive. This is one of the tasks of the DoD Joint Task Group on Army Manpower Mobilization/Training and is expected to be completed by the end of FY 1990.

The following are GAO's comments on the Department of Defense's letter dated December 7, 1989.

GAO Comments

1. We have revised the report to recognize the Army's system to provide post-mobilization training to Individual Ready Reservists.
2. We have deleted this proposal from the report because DOD said that data collection for the study had been completed.

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