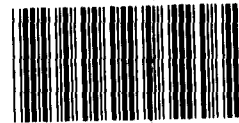


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NATIONAL GUARD

Peacetime Training Did Not Adequately Prepare Combat Brigades for Gulf War



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

**National Security and
International Affairs Division**

B-244872

September 24, 1991

The Honorable Michael P. W. Stone
The Secretary of the Army

Dear Mr. Secretary:

This report discusses the training and preparedness of the three Army National Guard roundout brigades that were activated during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. We made this review primarily to determine whether the brigades had been adequately trained during peacetime to do their wartime jobs.

The report contains recommendations to you to take a number of specific actions to improve (1) peacetime training, (2) the reliability of training evaluations, and (3) reservists' medical condition.

As you know, 31 U.S.C. 720 requires the head of a federal agency to submit a written statement on actions taken on our recommendations to the House Committee on Government Operations and the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs no later than 60 days after the date of this report. A written statement must also be submitted to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations with an agency's first request for appropriations made more than 60 days after the date of this report.

We are sending copies of this report to the Chairmen of the above Committees and of the House and Senate Committees on Armed Services; the Secretary of Defense; and the Director, Office of Management and Budget.

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

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard Davis".

Richard Davis
Director, Army Issues

Executive Summary

Purpose

Since 1973 the Army has increasingly relied on its reserve forces to complement its active forces. In fact, the Army has structured some of its divisions with both active Army brigades and National Guard "roundout" brigades. During Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm¹ thousands of Army reservists and National Guard members were sent to the Persian Gulf area to perform both combat and support missions. However, none of the three National Guard roundout maneuver (armor and infantry) brigades that were activated for the crisis were deployed. Instead of deploying these brigades with their assigned divisions, the Army substituted other active Army brigades.

GAO reviewed the training and preparedness of these three brigades to determine whether (1) they had been adequately trained during peacetime to do their wartime jobs, (2) the Army's experience with the three brigades revealed any significant weaknesses in the National Guard's peacetime administrative practices for supply and personnel management, (3) the Army's peacetime screening of reservists had adequately assessed the medical condition of the personnel in the brigades, and (4) peacetime training evaluations were useful in developing post-mobilization training plans.

Background

Two active Army divisions, although structured to be rounded out by National Guard brigades, deployed to the Persian Gulf in August and September 1990 with other active Army brigades assigned to them instead. In November and December 1990, the Secretary of Defense activated three National Guard roundout brigades. Although these brigades, each consisting of about 4,000 soldiers, were never deployed, they underwent individual and crew training at their mobilization stations, and two of the brigades completed extensive training at the Army's National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California.

In light of the experience gained from the post-mobilization training of the three brigades, the Army is deliberating the future role of its reserve roundout units. Army officials have testified that, although roundout brigades were intended to participate in contingency conflicts, the envisioned conflicts were not of the essentially no-notice nature of Desert Storm. Officials further stated that reserve roundout units, given an adequate level of pre-mobilization readiness and post-mobilization training time, could be assigned the role of early reinforcement units, since these later forces can take longer to deploy.

¹Hereafter referred to as "Desert Storm."

Results in Brief

The Army has not adequately prepared its National Guard roundout brigades to be fully ready to deploy quickly. When the three brigades were activated, many soldiers were not completely trained to do their jobs; many noncommissioned officers were not adequately trained in leadership skills; and Guard members had difficulty adjusting to the active Army's administrative systems for supply and personnel management, which are different from those the National Guard uses in peacetime. Also, when activated, many soldiers had serious medical or dental conditions that would have delayed or prevented their deployment.

The activation of the three roundout brigades also revealed that the post-mobilization training plans prepared by the three brigades during peacetime had underestimated the training that would be necessary for them to be fully combat ready. The plans were based on peacetime evaluation reports that Army officials believed overstated the brigades' proficiency and training readiness. After the brigades were activated, active Army trainers developed substantially revised training plans calling for over three times the number of training days estimated in readiness reports and requiring the support of almost 9,000 active Army trainers and other personnel.

Principal Findings

Peacetime Training Had Not Adequately Prepared the Brigades for Combat

Large numbers of soldiers in the three National Guard brigades had not been completely trained during peacetime to do their assigned jobs. After they were activated, nearly 600 soldiers (or about 8 percent) in two of the brigades had to attend formal schooling in over 42 different military occupational specialties. The fact that some soldiers were not trained created particularly severe problems in certain jobs. For example, because some turret mechanics were untrained, armored vehicles were frequently out of service, creating one of the more significant problems that units encountered during their training at the National Training Center.

The lack of realistic peacetime training had a particularly adverse effect on crew-level skills in the roundout brigades. For instance, all three brigades had difficulty achieving gunnery skills that would allow them to meet Army standards. One reason for the gunnery problems was that some Guard units had used an outdated firing range on a recurring

basis, thereby allowing crews to become familiar with fixed target locations and distances. As a result, crews got little practice in the skills needed to locate and engage targets.

Many noncommissioned officers in the roundout brigades lacked the leadership skills and job knowledge to train their soldiers. For example, in one brigade, leadership deficiencies identified by active Army trainers included a lack of initiative, a lack of basic soldiering skills, and a "so what" attitude. At another brigade, Army trainers judged the non-commissioned officers to lack tactical and technical competence. Because of these shortcomings, formal schools were established to provide the required leadership training.

National Guard's Different Administrative Systems Caused a Difficult Transition to War

In peacetime, the National Guard uses administrative systems that are not compatible with active Army systems to manage personnel and supply operations. Upon mobilization, the brigades had to make a transition to the active Army's systems, which soldiers had not been trained to use. Consequently, the ability of the brigades to mobilize efficiently and to train effectively was downgraded. For example, in one brigade supply personnel were so unfamiliar with how to order parts that they ordered older M-60 tank parts for the brigade's newer M-1 tanks.

Inadequate Peacetime Medical Screening Practices

When the three roundout National Guard brigades reported to their mobilization stations during Operation Desert Storm, the Army found that more than 4,000 (or about 33 percent) of them had either dental conditions or incomplete dental records that under Army regulations prevented them from being deployable. Others, most of whom were over age 40, suffered from medical conditions such as ulcers and chronic asthma that likewise made them nondeployable. There is no provision for the Army to provide dental examinations and treatment to reservists during peacetime. And unlike the active Army, the National Guard's medical examination cycle does not ensure that a medical examination is given regularly to soldiers once they reach age 40.

Post-Mobilization Training Plans Were Based on Unreliable Information

When the brigades mobilized, brigade commanders were reporting estimates that up to 40 days of post-mobilization training would be needed to be fully combat ready. However, on the basis of their independent assessment of the brigades' proficiency, officials responsible for the post-mobilization training of the three brigades developed training plans

calling for over three times the number of days that the readiness reports stated were needed.

In February 1991, GAO reported that the Army's independent assessments of proficiency demonstrated during National Guard units' 2-week annual training periods did not provide reliable or useful information to higher commands on the units' proficiency. Also, GAO questioned the validity of National Guard training readiness reports. GAO made several recommendations to improve the National Guard's training evaluations; however, the Department of Defense said that the Army already had adequate evaluation policies and procedures in place.

Army policy required active Army officials to validate the combat readiness of the roundout brigades before they could be deployed to the Gulf. However, the Army made a validation decision on the combat readiness of only one of the three brigades, even though a second brigade had completed its post-mobilization training before all three brigades were inactivated. The 90 days or so of training required to validate the readiness of one brigade may not be a reliable indicator of the time that units will need for future mobilizations because (1) the Army did not specify the criteria to be used in its validation decision and (2) the tremendous amount of active Army resources used to support the brigade's training may not be available in a future crisis.

Recommendations

GAO recommends that the Secretary of the Army (1) revise National Guard medical screening policies and procedures to provide screening of roundout brigade personnel at age 40 and (2) explore alternatives to identify and correct the serious dental ailments of roundout brigade personnel.

GAO also recommends that the Secretary of the Army take a number of specific actions to improve peacetime training (see ch. 2) and training evaluations and combat readiness validations (see ch. 3).

Agency Comments

The Department of Defense generally concurred with GAO's recommendations and stated that (1) it is working with the Army and the National Guard to change medical screening regulations, (2) it is studying proposals to correct the serious dental conditions of all reserve personnel, and (3) the Army is developing validation procedures for future mobilizations.

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Abbreviations

DOD	Department of Defense
GAO	General Accounting Office
MATES	Mobilization and Training Equipment Sites
MOS	military occupational specialty
NCO	noncommissioned officer
NTC	National Training Center
RCAS	Reserve Component Automation System
SIDPERS	Standard Installation/Division Personnel System
TACCS	Tactical Army Combat Service Support Computer System
ULLS	Unit Level Logistics System

Introduction

Since adoption of the Total Force Policy in 1973, the Congress has appropriated billions of dollars to train and equip reservists, many of whom have been assigned missions that require deployment in less than 30 days after mobilization.¹ The effect of assigning early deployment missions to reserve components was described by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs in testimony before the Congress in March 1988:

“Under the Total Force Policy, we are increasingly basing the national security interests of our nation on our ability to rapidly mobilize, deploy, and employ combat ready reserve component units and members anywhere in the world. Today, many of our military contingency plans simply cannot be executed effectively without committing National Guard and Reserve Forces in the same time frame as our Active Forces.”

Consistent with the Secretary’s testimony, about 147,000 Army reservists were called to active duty under Operation Desert Storm. More than 74,000 of these reservists were sent to the Persian Gulf area to perform both combat (for example, field artillery) and support missions, and the remainder served in support capacities in the United States and in Europe.

Relationship Between Reserve and Active Components

The Army’s decision to increasingly rely on its reserves has been largely driven by a cap on active end strength, self-imposed in the early 1980s to contain personnel costs while satisfying equipment and modernization needs. The size of the reserve components in the Army has progressed to the point that they now exceed that of the active force. The Army National Guard provides significant combat capability, while the Army Reserve contains much of the Army’s combat-support and combat service-support capability. These two reserve entities provide about half of the combat and two-thirds of the Army’s support capabilities.

Roundout Brigades

Some active Army combat divisions are organized with fewer active brigades than the number called for by the Army’s divisional structure and are “rounded out,” or filled, by reserve brigades. Of the Army’s 18 active divisions, 6 are rounded out by National Guard brigades. These roundout brigades, which generally include about 4,000 soldiers, are

¹Under this policy active and reserve forces are considered a homogenous whole. Moreover, reserve forces are expected to be the initial and primary source of augmenting the active forces in any emergency requiring a rapid and substantial expansion of active forces under mobilization authority.

expected to deploy shortly after the active Army units. The roundout brigade is not a distinct segment of the division. Rather, it supplements all of the division's elements. Therefore, proficiency of roundout units and of their individual soldiers is critical to the overall readiness of the divisions they serve.

Training for Reservists Called to Active Duty

Two active Army divisions—the 24th Infantry Division and the 1st Cavalry Division—were deployed to the Persian Gulf on essentially a no-notice basis in August and September 1990. Although they were to be supplemented by National Guard roundout maneuver (armor and infantry) brigades, other active Army brigades were assigned to round them out instead. It was not until November and December 1990 that the Secretary of Defense activated three National Guard roundout brigades—the 48th Infantry Brigade, the 155th Armor Brigade, and the 256th Infantry Brigade. According to the Commander-in-Chief of the Army's Forces Command, the call-up was delayed because a public law limits active duty for reservists to a maximum of 180 days (90 days plus a 90-day extension).² Subsequently, legislation was obtained to lift the 180-day restriction for combat units.

The 48th is the roundout brigade for the 24th Infantry Division, whereas the 155th rounds out the 1st Cavalry Division. Since both of these divisions had been deployed to the Gulf, the task of providing post-mobilization training to the 48th and 155th was assigned to other Army organizations. The 256th trained with its parent division, the 5th Infantry Division, which it had been affiliated with for more than a decade, at Fort Polk, Louisiana. Table 1.1 lists the roundout brigades and the Army organizations that were assigned responsibility for their post-mobilization training.

Table 1.1: Army Units That Trained the Roundout Brigades

Roundout brigade	Division rounded out	Active Army unit responsible for training
48th Infantry	24th Infantry	Second Army
155th Armor	1st Cavalry	4th Infantry Division/III Corps
256th Infantry	5th Infantry	5th Infantry Division/III Corps

After mobilization, the brigades trained at various locations, including Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Stewart, Georgia; and Fort Polk, Louisiana. The 48th and the 155th Brigades also trained at the Army's National

²10 U.S.C. 673b (1988).

Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin, California. Soldiers received training on an individual basis as well as at the squad, platoon, company, battalion, and brigade levels. Individual soldier training focused on tasks critical to effective job performance and to battlefield survival. For example, infantrymen were trained to engage targets with individual weapons and to install antipersonnel mines. Unit, or collective, training took the form of field exercises at squad through battalion levels. For example, infantry squads were trained to attack defended trench-line complexes.

While at the mobilization stations and during the train-up period, the brigades transferred, or "cross-leveled," personnel and equipment to balance the resources available among units. In addition, brigade personnel were given medical and dental examinations to ensure that they were fit for training and deployment.

The Army did not deploy any of the three roundout brigades to the Persian Gulf. In light of Operation Desert Storm and the experience gained from the post-mobilization training for the three brigades, the Army is deliberating the future role of its reserve roundout units. Army officials have testified that, although roundout brigades were intended to participate in contingency conflicts, the envisioned conflicts were not of the no-notice nature of Desert Storm. Officials further stated that reserve roundout units, given an adequate level of pre-mobilization readiness and post-mobilization training time, could be assigned the role of early reinforcement units, since these later forces can take longer to deploy.

According to the Department of Defense, roundout brigades were never intended to be a part of a "rapid deployment" force (forces that would depart on the first day of a crisis). Instead, these brigades should be expected to be a part of early reinforcing forces (forces that would depart for a crisis between 30 and 90 days after its commencement).

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

We reviewed the training and preparedness of the three roundout brigades to determine whether (1) they had been adequately trained during peacetime to do their wartime jobs, (2) the Army's experience with the three brigades revealed any significant weaknesses in the National Guard's peacetime administrative practices for supply and personnel management, (3) the Army's peacetime screening of reservists had adequately assessed the medical condition of the personnel in the brigades, and (4) peacetime training evaluations were useful in developing post-mobilization training plans. We observed the conditions under which the

units had trained after mobilization, discussed the training with unit officials, attended staff and logistics briefings, observed after-action reviews, and reviewed or discussed external evaluation reports.

We visited all three brigades at their post-mobilization training sites to observe their training; we also visited the 48th Infantry Brigade during its NTC training. At each location, we discussed with brigade commanders and other key leaders in the training process (1) the integration of individual and collective skills and (2) the systems used to evaluate training.

To develop our assessment, we obtained information from the Department of the Army Inspector General's Office and relied extensively on the personnel and gunnery data that it had collected. This office had been tasked by the Army Chief of Staff to assess the efficiency of the mobilization and deployment of selected National Guard units. The findings and recommendations of the Inspector General's report, which was issued in July 1991, are consistent with those presented in this report. We also relied on expert knowledge of Second Army, III Corps, and NTC officials and their assessments of the three brigades' initial proficiency and progress made during post-mobilization training.

To gain insights on the Army's policies and procedures for training the National Guard roundout brigades, we interviewed officials at the following headquarters offices: the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Washington, D.C.; the Department of the Army, Washington, D.C.; the National Guard Bureau, Washington, D.C.; Forces Command Headquarters, Fort McPherson, Georgia; and Second U.S. Army, Fort Gillem, Georgia.

We conducted our review from December 1990 to June 1991 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Peacetime Training and Administrative Practices Did Not Adequately Prepare the Brigades for Combat

The Army has not adequately prepared its National Guard roundout brigades to be fully ready to deploy quickly. For example, many soldiers were not completely trained to do their jobs; many noncommissioned officers (NCO) were not adequately trained in leadership skills; and gunnery skills were less proficient than reported. In addition, the activation of the brigades revealed a number of significant weaknesses in the National Guard's administrative practices. For instance, Guard members had difficulty adjusting to the active Army's supply and personnel systems, which are different from those that the National Guard uses in peacetime.

The Army's peacetime medical screening program for the National Guard had not identified dental and other medical ailments that would have adversely affected the ability of many Guard members to deploy early. Only upon mobilization did the Army find that over 4,000 (or one-third) of the Guard members in these three brigades had dental conditions that caused them to be nondeployable, while others suffered from medical conditions such as ulcers and chronic asthma that likewise made them nondeployable.

Some Soldiers and Crews Were Not Completely Trained

Individual and small-unit level skills training is the centerpiece of a unit's training plan because the success of the unit's mission depends on well-trained individual soldiers, crews, and squads. We found, however, that many soldiers in the roundout brigades had not been completely trained to perform their assigned jobs and many lacked proficiency in battlefield survival skills. This condition was caused by peacetime training programs that make it difficult to qualify soldiers in new jobs and do not ensure realistic training. In addition, NCOs, who are primarily responsible for providing training, lacked needed leadership and job skills.

Difficulty Qualifying Soldiers in New Jobs

Significant numbers of soldiers belonging to the three roundout brigades had not been completely trained in their assigned jobs. The number of soldiers who had not completed training ranged from 673 (15 percent) in the 155th Armor Brigade to 834 (19 percent) in the 48th Infantry Brigade. In two of the brigades, nearly 600 soldiers had to attend formal schooling to become qualified in 42 different military occupational specialties (MOS), including positions such as Bradley Fighting Vehicle turret repairer, infantryman, M-1 armor crewman, and petroleum supply specialist.

The fact that some soldiers were untrained created particularly severe problems in certain jobs. For example, because some turret mechanics were untrained, armored vehicles were frequently out of service, creating one of the more significant problems units encountered during their training at the NTC.

Most Guard members who were required to attend formal schooling following mobilization were persons with previous military experience whose former MOS skills were not the same as those needed by the unit. Each year, about one quarter of the soldiers enlisted in the Army National Guard are prior-service personnel who require retraining. Unless the soldiers attend an active Army or reserve forces school, the unit must assume responsibility for retraining them in a new MOS. Most soldiers do not attend further school training on active duty because of civilian job commitments. Reserve forces schools generally require one or more annual training periods and several weekends to complete MOS training. Many soldiers and commanders are reluctant to enter into such lengthy commitments.

Mission changes and the introduction of new equipment can also create a retraining problem for units. For example, when the 256th Infantry Brigade received the Bradley Fighting Vehicle in March 1990, 824 soldiers had to receive training to prepare them for a new MOS (11M, Bradley infantryman). In addition, unit mechanics had to be trained to repair the new equipment.

Maintenance Problems Plagued Performance

Difficulty in maintaining tracked vehicles (tanks and Bradleys) plagued the performance of the two roundout brigades that trained at the NTC. For example, in one of the brigades that we observed, the average operational readiness rate for these vehicles was about 50 percent, in comparison to 85- to 90-percent rates for active Army units who train there. This lower rate is a systemic problem in the National Guard, caused by a maintenance system that relies primarily on civilians to maintain vehicles during peacetime.

During peacetime, most tracked vehicles belonging to the Guard are stored at centralized Mobilization and Training Equipment Sites (MATES) and maintained by civilian employees of the state. This system allows the Guard to maintain its equipment in a ready status but denies unit mechanics an opportunity to fully learn their jobs and crews to have a full understanding of their maintenance responsibilities. As a result, when the roundout brigades were mobilized and equipment maintenance

became the responsibility of the units, as it is in the active Army, many mechanics and crews did not know how to diagnose equipment problems or repair the vehicles in a timely manner. For example, during several of the simulated battles at the NTC, the 48th Infantry Brigade was hindered because unit mechanics could not diagnose problems or repair the units' tanks and fighting vehicles. During one battle that we observed, the brigade had more vehicles disabled in its support area due to mechanical problems than it had to use against the opposing enemy force. During another battle, we observed that only one of the brigade's six scout vehicles was operational. The 155th Infantry Brigade also experienced significant maintenance problems during exercises at the NTC. During the last week of its training period, this brigade lost nearly half of its vehicles to maintenance problems.

Unrealistic Training

During a unit's annual 2-week training period, small-unit collective skills are exercised (primarily in the form of platoon- and company-level maneuvers). We have found, however, that these exercises generally lack realism and training evaluations are not focused on mission-essential tasks.¹

Army doctrine requires units to train as they intend to fight. In describing this essential principle, Field Manual 25-100 states that leaders must demand realism in training. For example, they are required to integrate realistic conditions, such as smoke, noise, simulated nuclear-biological-chemical warfare, battlefield debris, loss of key leaders, and maneuvering as a combined arms team. However, in fact, reserve component units often do not train under realistic conditions. In February 1991 we reported that training at the units we visited had four major deficiencies. This training

- lacked challenging, realistic training missions (including night missions and missions involving an opposing force, the use of smoke, and the loss of key leaders);
- failed to integrate combat arms, combat-support, and combat service-support elements;
- was sometimes canceled because of inadequate support by host installations; and
- was often conducted with shortages of authorized equipment.

¹Army Training: Evaluations of Units' Proficiency Are Not Always Reliable (GAO/NSIAD 91-72, Feb. 15, 1991) and Army Training: Management Initiatives Needed to Enhance Reservists' Training (GAO/NSIAD-89-140, June 30, 1989).

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Brigades for Combat

The effect of these deficiencies on the units' ability to conduct realistic training in some tasks was substantial. For example, neither of the two infantry battalions we visited during our prior work conducted tactical training at night, and another battalion could not conduct realistic training in defensive tasks since no opposing force was available. Accordingly, we concluded that realistic training should rank high among the Army's priorities and recommended that the Secretary of the Army ensure that more realistic training was provided to National Guard units during annual training periods. In response to our recommendations, the Army published regulations directing unit commanders to conduct training under realistic battlefield conditions.

The impact of unrealistic peacetime training practices was demonstrated in the preparedness of the roundout brigades for Operation Desert Storm, particularly with respect to crew-level skills. For example, one brigade whose gunnery skills were judged to be marginal prior to mobilization training was later assessed to be "worse than anticipated." Moreover, all three brigades had difficulty achieving gunnery skills that would allow them to meet Army standards. Accordingly, the training period for all three brigades was extended to enable crews to achieve gunnery proficiency. In addition, while all crews from the 155th and 256th Brigades qualified on table VIII, Army trainers judged that the amount of time it took to qualify them was excessive.² For example, while an active Army battalion normally requires a week to qualify all its crews on table VIII, the two armored battalions in the 155th required 17 and 24 days. According to Army Inspector General officials, many Guard crews required as many as eight attempts to qualify, while active Army crews normally qualify in one or two attempts. Gunnery results for the brigades are shown in table 2.1.

²Twelve gunnery tables are structured to develop and test crew proficiency in a progressive manner. For example, table I requires individual crews to engage stationary targets with a stationary tank or fighting vehicle. Table VIII requires individual crews to demonstrate proficiency against single, multiple, and simultaneous targets while stationary and moving. Table XII requires entire platoons to engage stationary and moving targets while maneuvering. Army regulations do not prescribe the number of crews per unit who must qualify on each table. However, Army training doctrine expects commanders to ensure that all crews are qualified.

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Table 2.1: Gunnery Results for the Roundout Brigades

Numbers in Percentages		
Brigade	Gunnery table VIII	
	Bradley crews qualified	Tank crews qualified
48th Infantry		
Fort Benning	45	^a
Fort Stewart	^a	14
NTC	9	35
Total	54	49
155th Armor		
Fort Hood	100	100
256th Infantry		
Fort Hood	100	100
	Gunnery table XII	
	Bradley platoons qualified	Tank platoons qualified
48th Infantry	^a	^a
155th Armor	100	8
256th Infantry	100	100

^aNot applicable. The 48th Infantry Brigade's crews were required to qualify only on table VIII. However, the NTC integrated live fire into its training exercises at all levels, from crew to battalion.

The gunnery problems experienced by the brigades resulted from peacetime training practices that (1) provide only one opportunity every 2 years for crews to demonstrate live-fire qualifications; (2) do not hold crews accountable for meeting Army firing-time standards; (3) used an outdated firing range repeatedly for one of the brigades, thereby allowing crews to become familiar with fixed target locations and distances; and (4) allow master gunners to boresight³ all tanks, rather than requiring tank crews to learn these procedures. In addition, some units did not have the required number of master gunners—the key gunnery trainers. While realistic training has not yet been achieved, it is probably too soon to expect full implementation of the Army's recently promulgated regulations.

Many NCOs Were Not Trained in Leadership Skills

According to Army Field Manual 25-100, which delineates the Army's standard doctrine for training, NCOs are responsible for training soldiers, squads, and crews. Many NCOs in the roundout brigades, however, lacked the leadership skills and knowledge to fulfill these responsibilities.

³"Boresighting" is the alignment of a weapon's barrel with its sights.

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The active Army personnel responsible for training the roundout brigades identified severe weaknesses in the basic leadership skills of NCOs in each of the three brigades. For example, in one brigade, the identified shortcomings included a lack of initiative, of discipline, of proficiency in basic soldiering skills, and a “so what” attitude. At another brigade, the active Army trainers concluded that NCOs at all ranks lacked tactical and technical competence. Consequently, III Corps established schools to provide the needed leadership training for NCOs in the 155th and 256th Brigades.

The Second Army did not set up a similar program for the 48th Brigade until shortly before the unit was released from active duty, although NCOs’ shortcomings were identified during the training period. For example, Army officials told us that 48th Brigade maintenance NCOs had developed a standard workday mentality and lacked the discipline and leadership skills required to work the extra hours necessary to keep up with the work load of inoperable vehicles. This practice, which was not corrected during the training period, significantly increased the “out-of-service” rate, which was frequently about 50 percent for brigade vehicles. In addition, because NCOs also lacked the skills needed to diagnose mechanical problems with the vehicles, they could not effectively supervise and train their subordinate soldiers. For example, the NTC often returned vehicle engines and generators to the brigade because the mechanics had improperly diagnosed engine or generator failures and removed perfectly good working parts for replacement.

A primary reason for the NCOs’ problems in the National Guard is that leadership courses tailored for the reserve components’ 39-day training year have only been in existence since 1988. Moreover, there is no requirement for NCOs to complete leadership training before promotion to sergeant. The NCOs’ leadership problem was exacerbated by a National Guard policy that authorized during Desert Storm immediate promotions upon unit mobilization for soldiers occupying a position graded higher than their current rank. Several hundred soldiers in one brigade, for example, were promoted immediately upon mobilization to the NCO ranks with leadership training deferred for not more than 1 year following the soldiers’ release from active duty.

Some Commissioned Officers Were Not Proficient in Leadership and Synchronization Skills

Active Army assessments of the National Guard officers' proficiency stated that there were leadership deficiencies throughout all ranks. More specifically, the assessments indicated problems in (1) tactical and technical competence, (2) the understanding and setting of standards, and (3) the enforcing of discipline. Army trainers noted that, even though the entire officer staffs of the three roundout brigades attended the Tactical Commanders Development Course shortly after mobilization, the staffs continued to display tactical and technical weaknesses when they returned to their units.

One of the key functions of the NTC is to challenge brigade and battalion staffs in a realistic wartime environment. Successful commanders must be able to synchronize all resources and operating systems to maximize available combat capability. These officers must thoroughly understand Army doctrine and system capabilities and be able to make rapid decisions under the stress of battle. According to the Department of Defense (DOD), the synchronization of large maneuver units is the most difficult doctrinal and leadership task in the Army.

According to NTC officials, during the 48th Brigade's force-on-force engagement with the opposition at the NTC, the staffs' proficiency improved significantly. However, Army trainers identified a number of serious systemic and recurring weaknesses, including

- the failure to identify key and decisive terrain during battles;
- the failure to collect adequate intelligence information for planning battles;
- the inability to effectively integrate direct and indirect fire;
- the tendency to use assets in a "piecemeal" fashion rather than to locate, fix, and then amass the assets to destroy the enemy; and
- the failure to adequately plan and emplace obstacle systems.

Peacetime Administrative Practices Hampered Mobilization and Training

In peacetime, the National Guard uses administrative systems that are not compatible with active Army systems for personnel management and supply operations.⁴ Upon mobilization, the roundout brigades had to transition to the active Army's systems, which soldiers had not been trained to use. Consequently, the ability of the roundout brigades to mobilize efficiently and train effectively was degraded.

⁴We plan to examine in a future report the rationale for maintaining separate National Guard systems.

Incompatible Personnel Systems

The Army National Guard uses various personnel systems that are incompatible with the active Army's automated Standard Installation/Division Personnel System (SIDPERS). The Guard's version of the Army's automated system—SIDPERS-Army National Guard—is primarily a manual system in which personnel data maintained for mobilization can often be 60 to 120 days old. To transition to the active Army's SIDPERS, the three roundout brigades used a field automated data-entry system called Tactical Army Combat Service Support Computer System (TACCS). Not only did the National Guard's SIDPERS not interface with the active Army's SIDPERS, but National Guard soldiers had not been trained in the use of TACCS. Only the 155th Brigade fully used TACCS during mobilization; however, it had problems using this system due to a lack of training before mobilization. The 48th Brigade started using TACCS only near the end of its training at the NTC.

The lack of training on SIDPERS prior to mobilization significantly affected each brigade's training after mobilization. In all the brigades, for example, the cross-leveling of personnel was hampered because they had outdated and incomplete personnel information. Crews and squads could not be fully cross-leveled to maximize the effectiveness of organizations and equipment.

Incompatible Supply Systems

During peacetime, National Guard units obtain needed parts and supplies through supply systems that are operated by the Guard and are different from the active Army's system. Unit supply personnel requisition items from the Guard system rather than through the active Army's Unit Level Logistics System (ULLS). Because supply personnel had not been adequately trained on the ULLS, the roundout brigades experienced significant difficulty obtaining repair parts needed for vehicles during post-mobilization training. For example, in the 48th Brigade, supply personnel were so unfamiliar with how to order parts that they ordered older M-60 tank parts for the brigade's newer M-1 tanks.

The Army has not equipped National Guard units with the computers needed for unit personnel to train on ULLS because of a provision in the Fiscal Year 1988 Department of Defense Appropriations Act. This act prohibits the use of federal funds to purchase computers for the National Guard until a contract for the Reserve Component Automation System (RCAS), discussed below, has been awarded.⁵ Because of this provision and in light of the roundout brigades' need to use the Army's

⁵A contract for RCAS had not been awarded as of August 1991.

standard supply system once it is activated, the Army provided the ULLS computers and software to the brigades after their mobilization. However, now that the units have demobilized, National Guard supply procedures are back in effect, and supply personnel are faced with the task of relearning the Guard systems while at the same time maintaining knowledge of the ULLS.

Efforts to Develop Compatible Systems

Efforts to develop an automated system to support mobilization have been under way since the late 1970s. Along the way the Army has encountered several problems in canceling one system and replacing another. In 1988, Congress authorized the Chief of the National Guard Bureau to develop a new automated information system, RCAS, provided that certain statutory conditions were met.⁶

The RCAS is designed to interface with and exchange data among most active and reserve component automation systems, such as those dealing with personnel, supply, and training. This system will be used by reservists during peacetime to support pre-mobilization preparedness. It will be used by reserve components until soldiers reach mobilization stations. At those stations, RCAS is designed to interface with active component systems to provide units a smooth transition. Even so, reservists will not be proficient in operating active Army systems unless they are given peacetime training, and the fielding of RCAS is not scheduled to take place until fiscal years 1992 through 1996.

Inadequate Peacetime Medical Screening Practices

The physical fitness of individual soldiers is critical to their ability to carry out assigned jobs and to survive on the battlefield. However, we found that many National Guardsmen had dental and medical ailments that would have adversely affected their ability to deploy rapidly.

Dental Ailments

The ability of each of the three brigades to quickly deploy would have been seriously hampered because many soldiers had severe dental ailments. About a third of the soldiers in each brigade were classified as nondeployable, either because of their dental condition or because of problems with their dental records.

⁶Section 8115(c), Public Law 100-202, 101 Stat. 1329-82.

There is no provision for the Army to provide routine dental treatment to National Guard soldiers during peacetime. Similarly, there is no requirement for the soldiers to maintain healthy teeth as a condition of continued participation in the unit. However, National Guard soldiers are required to have full mouth X-rays taken during peacetime. These X-rays are maintained to aid in the identification of soldiers killed in the line of duty.

Under Army regulation, dental conditions in categories III and IV must be corrected before soldiers are considered deployable. Category III covers soldiers who require dental treatment to correct a condition that will likely cause a dental emergency in the next 12 months. However, category III conditions can be waived by the first general officer in the soldier's chain-of-command in order to deploy the soldier. Category IV covers soldiers who (1) have incomplete records, (2) require an examination, or (3) require confirmation that a duplicate full mouth X-ray is on file. There is no provision to waive category IV conditions. Table 2.2 shows the numbers of soldiers placed in categories III and IV on the basis of examinations made at the mobilization stations for each of the brigades.

Table 2.2: Soldiers in Dental Categories III and IV

Category	48th Brigade		155th Brigade		256th Brigade	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Category III	a	a	1,200	26	661	15
Category IV	a	a	250	5	739	16
Total	1,500	35	1,450	31	1,400	31

^aThe 48th Brigade did not maintain records by dental category.

Medical Ailments

The deployment capability of each of the three brigades was also adversely affected by the number of soldiers found to have serious medical ailments. For the most part, the more serious medical problems were experienced by soldiers aged 40 or over.

Medical screenings conducted at the mobilization stations identified numerous problems that impaired soldiers' ability to deploy, including ulcers, chronic asthma, spinal arthritis, hepatitis, seizures, and diabetes. We did not determine the total number of medical problems identified because the brigades did not maintain summary data. However, we noted that the 48th Brigade had found that over 250 soldiers had medical conditions serious enough to warrant sending them from the NTC back to Fort Stewart, Georgia, for treatment. Some of these conditions

occurred subsequent to the Brigade's activation; however, we were unable to determine the exact number.

Both the active Army and the Army National Guard require periodic physical examinations, with more comprehensive examinations given to soldiers aged 40 and over. The Army National Guard requires that each soldier have a physical examination every 4 years. However, unlike the active Army, the Guard does not ensure that an examination is given when soldiers reach age 40. Accordingly, mobilization procedures call for a special, in-depth physical examination for Guard members who have turned 40 since their last physical. The 155th Brigade identified 750 (or 15 percent) and the 256th Brigade identified 600 (or 13 percent) of their soldiers who required medical screenings upon mobilization.

The nondeployable status of some Guard members and the treatment of other members' dental and medical conditions during the post-mobilization period not only adversely affected their availability to train but it also would have adversely affected the ability of members to deploy rapidly.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Army's peacetime training and administrative practices for its National Guard roundout brigades do not prepare these forces to be fully ready to deploy quickly. In preparing for Operation Desert Storm, the Army found that the three brigades lacked the skills, administrative processes for personnel management and supply operations, and physical screening procedures to prepare them to perform their wartime functions. We therefore recommend that the Secretary of the Army take the following actions:

- Ensure that peacetime training is provided to roundout brigade personnel responsible for operating active Army personnel and supply systems and for maintaining tracked vehicles upon mobilization.
- Revise National Guard medical screening policies and procedures to provide screenings of roundout brigade personnel at age 40.
- Explore alternatives to identify and correct the serious dental ailments of roundout brigade personnel. Options could include (1) requiring periodic dental examinations and treatment as a condition of continued membership in the unit or (2) providing financial assistance to the member for dental care.

Agency Comments

DOD generally concurred with all of our recommendations and stated that it

- is committed to resolving incompatibilities that exist between active and reserve personnel, supply, and maintenance systems;
- is working with the Army and the National Guard to change medical screening regulations; and
- is reviewing proposals to correct the serious dental conditions of all reserve personnel.

The full text of DOD's comments is reproduced in appendix I, along with annotated evaluations of the specific statements.

Peacetime Evaluation and Reporting Practices Were Not Effective Tools for Planning Mobilization and Training

The post-mobilization training plans developed by each of the three brigades during peacetime were based on unreliable proficiency and combat readiness ratings. Therefore, active Army trainers had to develop ad hoc post-mobilization training plans that called for far more training days than envisioned by each of the three roundout brigade commanders. The Army's redetermination of how much post-mobilization training the brigades needed to become deployable sheds little light on how much post-mobilization training roundout brigades will need in the future. First, the Army did not specify the criteria it used in making its judgment. Second, it took a tremendous commitment of resources—over 4,000 active Army soldiers—to support the training for the one brigade it validated as combat ready. This level of resources may not always be available.

Post-Mobilization Training Plans Were Based on Unreliable Information

The post-mobilization training plans prepared by the three brigades during peacetime had underestimated the training that would be necessary for them to become fully combat ready. The plans were based on peacetime evaluation reports that Army officials told us overstated the brigades' proficiency and training readiness.

Training for National Guard units is evaluated by active Army observers using the Army Forces Command 1-R Report, prepared during the units' annual 2-week training period. In addition, Army Regulation 220-1 directs commanders who assess unit training readiness to also consider such factors as leader qualifications, weapons proficiency, and the availability of equipment for training. The assessed proficiency, which is reported as a "C" rating ranging from C-1 to C-5, represents the commander's estimate of the number of days the unit needs to be fully trained in all mission-essential tasks.

At the time of the roundout brigades' mobilization, their post-mobilization training plans were based on unit status, or combat readiness, reports and 1-R reports. One of the brigades was reporting a C-2 level of training readiness, meaning that the commander estimated that the unit needed 28 days to become fully trained. The other brigades were reporting a C-3 status, with the commanders estimating that the units needed 40 training days to become fully trained. Two weeks after mobilization the commander of the brigade reporting a C-2 status revised his assessment to C-3, while the commanders reporting a C-3 status revised their assessments to C-2 and C-5. The C-5 assessment meant that the unit was not able to execute its wartime mission because it was undergoing a change of equipment.

Second Army and III Corps officials were even skeptical of the accuracy of the brigades' revised reported readiness. Key officials involved in the training of the three roundout brigades believed that the unit status reports and 1-R reports fell far short of capturing the true status of the brigades' combat proficiency. As a result, the Second Army and III Corps conducted independent proficiency assessments. These assessments drew heavily on the results of NTC exercises conducted by one battalion of the 155th Brigade in May 1990 and by the 48th Brigade in July 1990.

In February 1991 we reported that evaluations of Army National Guard units' annual training did not provide reliable or useful information to higher commands.¹ We found that the evaluations were based on training often conducted under unrealistic conditions and were not focused on mission-essential tasks. Moreover, the evaluations were based on limited observations and provided conflicting information. Since the 1-R evaluation may be the only information that is external to the unit and available to commanders to complete training readiness reports, we concluded that these reports were not likely to be valid either. We recommended several improvements to the Army's evaluations of National Guard training, including (1) ensuring that National Guard units receive more realistic training during their annual training periods and (2) requiring National Guard units' higher commands or the commands they will be assigned to in wartime to review the 1-R evaluations for adequacy and completeness. In response to our recommendations, the Department of Defense said that the Army already had adequate evaluation policies and procedures in place. We did not agree with the Department's position since our work clearly showed that these policies and procedures were not being properly implemented.

Revised Plans Required Substantially More Training Days

On the basis of their independent assessments of existing training plans and of the brigades' proficiency, the Second Army and III Corps substantially revised the training plans, calling for between 91 and 135 days of training—over three times the number of days that the original readiness reports stated were needed.

For the 48th Brigade, the Second Army developed a 91-day training plan built on the following assumptions: (1) noncommissioned and commissioned officers needed leadership and tactical skills training; (2) soldiers

¹Army Training: Evaluations of Units' Proficiency Are Not Always Reliable (GAO/NSIAD-91-72, Feb. 15, 1991).

needed extensive training even in the most basic tasks; and (3) crew skills needed improvement. Accordingly, the training plan consisted of battle staff training for brigade and battalion staffs at the Army's Combined Arms Center (at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas); instruction in basic soldiering skills, such as marksmanship, grenade-throwing, and first aid; and crew-level training to improve the proficiency of M-1 tank and Bradley Fighting Vehicle crew members. The training plan did not include leadership skill training for NCOs.

Assumptions about the proficiency of the 155th and 256th Brigades differed greatly from assumptions about the proficiency of the 48th Brigade. On the basis of its assessment of proficiency, III Corps developed a 106-day training plan for the 155th Brigade and a 135-day plan for the 256th. The plan for the 256th scheduled new-equipment training time for Bradley crews, since this equipment had only been received in March 1990 and it was still relatively new to the unit. Both plans assumed that (1) NCOs and commissioned officers possessed leadership skills, (2) soldiers could perform basic tasks, and (3) crew-level skills were generally adequate. Accordingly, the training plans were based on a model used by III Corps to prepare its active brigades for the NTC. The plans consisted of maneuver training at the squad, platoon, company, battalion, and brigade task force levels and training in gunnery and maintenance. In addition, brigade and battalion staffs were sent to the Army's Combined Arms Center for battle staff training, and an NCO academy was established at Fort Hood for NCOs needing additional leadership training.

Training plans for the three brigades also included rotations to the Army's NTC, which provides the most realistic environment available for unit training during peacetime and the most comprehensive, objective evaluation of unit proficiency. The NTC requires units to conduct offensive and defensive operations over 11 to 14 days in an environment very similar to that of actual warfare—an opportunity not provided at home stations and not generally available to entire National Guard brigades. At the NTC, training consisted of live-fire exercises and engagements with an opposing force of 2,800 personnel who simulated an Iraqi regiment using Iraqi tactics and U.S. vehicles modified to look like their Iraqi counterparts. The 48th Brigade participated in a 12-day rotation at this training center, with each battalion conducting several days of force-on-force engagements with the NTC's opposition force and live-fire exercises. The 155th Brigade also trained at the NTC; however, the 256th Brigade received orders to deactivate prior to its scheduled rotation to the training center.

Significant Resources Were Needed to Train Units

Developing individual, crew, and unit proficiency in the roundout brigades required an extraordinary commitment of active Army personnel and resources. Nearly 9,000 active Army personnel were assigned to train soldiers in the roundout brigades (see table 3.1). While the Army did not centrally capture the cost of providing post-mobilization training to the roundout brigades, various Army officials estimated the cost at tens of millions of dollars.

**Table 3.1: Active Army Personnel
 Committed to Roundout Brigades'
 Training**

Roundout brigade	Unit responsible for training	Number of trainers assigned
155th Armor	4th Infantry Division	1,800
256th Infantry	5th Infantry Division	2,800
48th Infantry	Second Army	4,370 ^a
Total		8,970^b

^aAlthough the Second Army was responsible for this brigade's training, the Training and Doctrine Command provided about 270 trainers for mobile training teams, and the NTC devoted all of its 4,100 military personnel for a 2-month period. NTC personnel also trained the 155th Brigade.

^bThis figure understates the number of personnel who trained the three brigades. For example, because accurate numbers were not available, the total excludes the staff at Fort Benning, Georgia, who trained the 48th Brigade's Bradley crews.

Senior Army officials believed that, because of the large number of active Army soldiers and leaders committed to training the roundout brigades, the readiness and operations of the two active divisions were significantly affected. For example, training in the 4th Infantry Division was reduced to the individual soldier level because the majority of the NCOs and officers were involved in training the roundout brigades at Fort Hood. In addition, elements of the division had to cancel NTC training and postpone their transition to the M-1 tank and Bradley Fighting Vehicle.

Validation Criteria Were Not Specified

Army policy required active Army officials to validate the combat effectiveness and deployment readiness of reserve component units before their deployment to the Gulf. However, the Army had no tested criteria to determine the proficiency that roundout brigades would need to demonstrate prior to their deployment. Without a formal validation process, the Commander-in-Chief of Army Forces Command decided to make a validation judgment for each brigade based on firsthand observations and input from trainers and senior staff from all organizations involved in the training program—III Corps, the Second Army, the 4th Infantry Division, the 5th Infantry Division, and the NTC. Validation criteria, however, were not specified.

Only one of the brigades, the 48th Infantry, was validated as being ready for deployment. This unit was validated as combat ready 90 days after it was mobilized. A validation decision was not made for either the 155th Infantry or the 256th Armor Brigades, even though the 155th completed all planned training, including NTC training exercises, before its demobilization.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The post-mobilization training plans developed by the three roundout brigades during peacetime were not useful to active Army trainers because they were based on unreliable proficiency and combat-readiness ratings. Also, there are unanswered questions regarding the factors to be considered in validating the combat readiness of roundout brigades. We believe that implementation of the recommendations made in our February 1991 report would go a long way towards improving the reliability of Army National Guard training evaluations and provide a more accurate basis for developing post-mobilization training plans. The results of Operation Desert Storm have highlighted the importance of these recommendations. Therefore, we recommend that the Secretary of the Army take the following actions:

- Reassess the Department of Defense's position on the training readiness evaluation recommendations made in our February 1991 report to ensure that training readiness reports are accurate indicators of readiness.
- Develop and issue criteria to be used to validate the combat readiness of reserve roundout brigades in future mobilizations.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

Concerning our first recommendation, DOD said that it did not agree with our prior recommendation to develop separate systems to evaluate the readiness of active and reserve components. DOD apparently misinterpreted the reference to our prior recommendations regarding National Guard training readiness evaluations. Our prior report made three recommendations, which DOD rejected, to improve the reliability of Army Forces Command 1-R evaluations of National Guard units' annual training. Since this report may be the only information that is external to the unit and available to commanders to complete training readiness reports, we continue to believe that adoption of our recommendations would improve the usefulness of readiness reports as well.

DOD agreed with our second recommendation and said that the Army was developing validation procedures for future mobilizations. Proposed

**Chapter 3
Peacetime Evaluation and Reporting
Practices Were Not Effective Tools for
Planning Mobilization and Training**

procedures include a requirement that active Army division commanders become more involved in roundout brigade training plans and mission-essential task list development. We believe that these features of the proposal are key to improving National Guard peacetime training, and we encourage their adoption.

Additional annotated evaluations of DOD's comments are presented in appendix I.

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

SEP 3 1991

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 Department of Defense (DoD) response to the General Accounting Office (GAO) revised draft report entitled-- "ARMY TRAINING: Peacetime Practices Did Not Adequately Prepare National Guard Brigades For War," dated August 19, 1991 (GAO Code 393431/OSD Case 8769). The Department of Defense concurs or partially concurs with the GAO findings and recommendations.

Any analysis of the peacetime training of units of the Army's Reserve components must be studied in the context of two fundamental points. First, the Gulf War involved the first involuntary call up of National Guard and Reserve forces since the nation adopted an All Volunteer Force in the early 1970s, and the largest mobilization and deployment of Reserve component forces in the post-World War II period. Second, while DoD is already addressing certain matters that need attention for future mobilizations, the call to active duty of Reservists in Operations DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM and the performance of those Reservists was a major success. In his Interim Report to the Congress on the Conduct of the Persian Gulf Conflict, the Secretary of Defense stated that what DoD accomplished "simply could not have been done without the skilled contributions of the thousands of Reservists and National Guard personnel..."

Since the GAO report focuses on the three Roundout Brigades, it is important to recognize that 297 Army National Guard units, with 37,848 soldiers deployed to Southwest Asia and were successful in deploying 60 Army National Guard Colonel/Lieutenant Colonel level commands, including two Field Artillery Brigades, nine groups, twelve hospitals, thirty battalions, and seven Rear Area Operations Centers. The mean average time from the day Federalized until they deployed to Southwest Asia was 31 days for the brigades/groups and 33 days for the battalions. It is the Department's view that the impact of the difficulties cited by the GAO in mobilizing and deploying the Army National Guard Roundout Brigades were generally overstated.

The GAO identified several areas where improvement is needed in the training and mobilization capability of large, Reserve

See comment 1.

component, ground combat maneuver units. Similar shortfalls have been identified by an internal assessment conducted by the Department of the Army. Most of the areas currently are being addressed by the Army Roundout Brigade Task Force, and corrective action in some areas is already being taken.

See comment 2.

On some points, however, the report has the potential to create confusion. For example, the GAO found that the Army had not trained its National Guard Roundout Brigades "to be fully ready to deploy quickly." It further stated that Roundout Brigades are "expected to deploy shortly" after Active Army units. Forces are generally characterized as "rapid deploying," "early reinforcing," and "follow-on reinforcing." Rapid deployment forces must depart on the first day of a crisis in order to seize and protect airfields and seaports for follow-on forces. Early reinforcing forces would depart for the scene of a crisis between 30 and 90 days after its commencement to stabilize the situation. Sustaining or follow-on reinforcing forces would be required to restore lost terrain and/or defeat enemy forces. It is important to understand that the Roundout brigades were never intended to be part of a "rapid deployment" force. Stating the Brigades were expected to deploy "quickly" or "shortly" gives the impression that they were intended for "rapid deployment"--when that was never the case.

The Roundout Brigades can and should be expected to be a part of early reinforcing forces. It always had been envisioned that large, Reserve component, ground combat maneuver units would require postmobilization training before they were committed to armed conflicts of the nature that took place in Kuwait and Iraq. In addition, when the President authorized the activation of Reservists on August 22, 1990, limitations of the law made a call-up of such large combat units impractical--because the law then restricted activations of Reservists to an initial period of 90 days, with one extended period of 90 days. Under those time constraints the units could not have been retained in theater as long as necessary (i.e., they would first have had to undergo the planned post call-up training and then have their considerable equipment shipped to the war zone, which would have used up a good part of the then allowed 180 day activation period). Also, in response to the President's direction to the Department of Defense to minimize casualties even if that objective required a prolongation of the conflict, the Secretary of Defense also made it clear that no military unit, Active or Reserve, would be sent into combat until it was needed and ready.

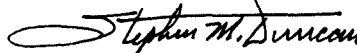
On November 5, 1990, the Congress amended Section 673b of Title 10 of the U.S. Code to permit activation of Reserve combat units for Operation DESERT SHIELD for as long as 360 days. Three days later, the Secretary of Defense announced that the three Army National Guard Roundout Brigades would be activated. Subsequent to that activation, they received excellent training and, when the temporary cease fire took place, they had either been certified or were about to be certified as ready for combat in the Gulf War.

Appendix I
Comments From the Department of Defense

3

The DoD comments on each finding and recommendation are provided in the enclosure. More detailed information will be available to respond to the recommendations when the DoD provides its comments on the final report. The Department appreciates both the opportunity to comment on the draft and inclusion of the DoD response in the final report.

Sincerely,



Stephen M. Duncan

Enclosure
As stated

GAO REVISED DRAFT REPORT -- DATED AUGUST 19, 1991
(GAO CODE 393431) OSD CASE 8769

"ARMY TRAINING: PEACETIME PRACTICES DID NOT ADEQUATELY
PREPARE NATIONAL GUARD BRIGADES FOR WAR"

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMENTS

* * * * *

FINDINGS

- o **FINDING A: Relation Between Reserve and Active Components.**
The GAO observed that, under the Total Force Policy, the Army has relied increasingly upon the Reserve components for growth in its force structure. The GAO further observed that, as a result, the size of the Reserve components now exceeds that of the active force. The GAO explained that the Army National Guard provides significant combat capability, while the Army Reserve contains much of the Army combat support and combat service support capability--and together they provide about half of the combat and two-thirds of the Army support capabilities. The GAO noted that the Army decision to rely increasingly on the Reserve components is driven by a cap on active end-strength, self-imposed in the early 1980s to contain personnel costs while providing for equipment and modernization needs.

The GAO explained that some Active Army combat divisions are organized with fewer active brigades than the number called for by the Army divisional structure and are "rounded out" (or filled) by Reserve brigades--noting that, of the 18 Active Army divisions, six are rounded out by National Guard brigades. The GAO reported that the Roundout Brigades, which include about 4,000 soldiers, are expected to deploy shortly after the Active Army units. According to the GAO, since a significant proportion of the division combat and support capability lies within the roundout elements, the proficiency of roundout units and of their individual soldiers is critical to the overall readiness of the divisions they serve. (pp. 10-13/GAO Draft Report)

DOD RESPONSE: Concur. It should be noted, however, that the Army decisions (since 1972) to rely increasingly on its Reserve components have been driven by several factors, only one of which has been the caps placed on Active end strength

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Now on pp. 8-9.

in order to provide resources for other needs. The increased reliance on the Reserve components also results from the two principal tenets of the Total Force Policy, as follows:

- reliance on Reserve forces as the primary augmentation for the active force; and
- the integrated use of all forces that are available--active, Reserve, civilian, and allied.

The objective of the Total Force Policy has been to maintain as small an active peacetime force as national security policy, military strategy, and overseas commitments permit, and to integrate the capabilities and strengths of active and Reserve forces in a cost-effective manner.

- o **FINDING B: Training for Reservists Called to Active Duty.** The GAO reported that the 24th Infantry Division and the 1st Cavalry Division were deployed to the Persian Gulf on essentially a no-notice basis in August and September 1990. The GAO reported that, although the Divisions were to be supplemented by National Guard Roundout Brigades, other Active Army brigades were assigned to round the Divisions out. The GAO explained it was not until mid-November 1990, that the Secretary of Defense activated the three National Guard Roundout Brigades. According to the GAO, the delay was caused by a public law that limited active duty for reservists to a maximum of 180 days. The GAO noted that the 48th Infantry is the roundout brigade for the 24th Infantry Division, the 155th Armor Brigade rounds out the 1st Cavalry Division, and the 256th Infantry Brigade joined the Active Army 5th Infantry Division, with which it had been affiliated for more than a decade.

The GAO reported that, after mobilization, the brigades trained at various locations. The GAO explained that soldiers received training on an individual basis, as well as at the squad, platoon, company, battalion, and brigade levels--with individual soldier training focusing on tasks that are critical to effective job performance and to battlefield survival. The GAO further reported that unit level or collective training took the form of field exercises at squad through battalion levels. The GAO also reported that, while at the mobilization stations and during the train-up period, the brigades conducted personnel and equipment transfers (known as cross-leveling) to balance the resources available among units.

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Now on pp. 9-10.

See comment 3.

The GAO reported that the Army did not deploy any of the three brigades to the Persian Gulf. The GAO observed that, in light of Operation Desert Storm and the experience gained from the postmobilization training for the three brigades, the Army is deliberating the future role of its Reserve roundout units. According to the GAO, Army officials have testified that, although it was planned that Roundout Brigades would participate in contingency conflicts, the envisioned conflicts were not of the no notice nature of Operation DESERT STORM and maintained that Reserve roundout units, given an adequate level of premobilization readiness and postmobilization training time, could be assigned the role of early reinforcement units, since those forces can take longer to deploy. (pp. 13-15/GAO Draft Report)

DOD RESPONSE: Concur. Military forces, regardless of component, were mobilized and deployed to Southwest Asia only to the extent they were needed and ready. A definite requirement for Army National Guard combat maneuver forces was not identified until after a decision was made by the National Command Authority on November 8, 1990 to field a force capable of offensive operations. At that point the Secretary of Defense authorized the callup of additional selected Reserve forces, including Army combat units. Three Army Roundout Brigades were alerted for mobilization in early November; the 48th Infantry Brigade and the 256th Infantry Brigade were activated on November 30, and the 155th Armor Brigade was activated on December 7, 1990.

It was always envisioned that Reserve forces would be provided some post mobilization training. In any callup situation, the extent of that training would depend on the time available and the missions assigned, as well as the state of training upon mobilization. The complexities of assigned missions generally require more extensive training for maneuver units and, in general, the larger the combat formation activated, the more training time required. Given those factors, a postmobilization training plan was prepared for the three Roundout Brigades that included training at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California.

The Department emphasizes that all forces, both Active and Reserve, used available time to train. In the Department of Defense report to the Congress, The Conduct of the Persian Gulf Conflict, the Department provided the following summary concerning the training of all Services and components in theater:

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"Finally, it should be remembered that continuous training was carried out by all units throughout the operations. Exercises, drills and rehearsals were conducted regularly by forces in the Kuwait Theater of Operations (KTO) in order to keep skill levels high and increase force proficiency. That training also helped U.S. forces--both Active and Reserve--to hold their edge in the long build-up period prior to hostilities."

- o **FINDING C: Some Soldiers and Crews Were Not Trained.**
The GAO found that many soldiers in the Roundout Brigades had not been completely trained to do their assigned jobs--many noncommissioned officers were not trained in leadership skills adequately and gunnery skills were less proficient than reported.

- **Difficulty Qualifying Soldiers in New Jobs--**The GAO reported that 673 soldiers in the 155th brigade and 834 in the 48th brigade were not completely trained--with nearly 600 soldiers having to attend formal schooling to become qualified in 42 different military occupational specialties, including positions such as BRADLEY fighting vehicle turret repairer, infantryman, M-1 armor crewman, and petroleum supply specialist. The GAO observed that soldiers were untrained which created particularly severe problems in certain jobs--for example, untrained turret mechanics increased the "out of service" time for armor vehicles.

The GAO also noted that, each year, about one quarter of the soldiers enlisted in the Army National Guard are prior-service personnel, and half of those soldiers require retraining. The GAO found that unless the soldiers attend an Active Army or Reserve forces school, the unit must assume responsibility for retraining. In addition, the GAO found that most soldiers do not attend further school training on active duty because of civilian job commitments. The GAO also found that mission changes and the introduction of new equipment can create retraining problems for units.

- **Maintenance Problems Plagued Performance--**The GAO reported that difficulty in maintaining tracked vehicles (tanks and BRADLEYS) plagued the performance of the two Roundout Brigades trained at the

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National Training Center. The GAO concluded the problem was due to the peacetime maintenance system that primarily relies on civilians to maintain the vehicles. The GAO explained that, during peacetime, most tracked vehicles belonging to the Guard are stored at centralized Mobilization and Training Equipment Sites and maintained by state civilian employees--which allows the Guard to maintain its equipment in a ready status, but denies unit mechanics an opportunity to learn their jobs fully and crews to have a full understanding of their maintenance responsibilities. The GAO concluded that, as a result, when the Roundout Brigades were mobilized and equipment maintenance became the responsibility of the units, many mechanics did not know how to diagnose equipment problems or repair the vehicles in a timely manner.

- Unrealistic Training--The GAO reported that during a unit's annual 2-week training period, small-unit collective skills (primarily in the form of platoon and company-level maneuvers) are exercised. The GAO previously had concluded that the exercises generally lacked realism and training evaluations were not focused on mission essential tasks.^{1/}

The GAO reported that the impact of unrealistic peacetime training practices was demonstrated in the preparedness of the Roundout Brigades for Operation DESERT STORM, particularly with respect to crew-level skills. The GAO provided an example of one brigade, whose gunnery skills were judged to be marginal prior to mobilization training--but were later assessed to be "worse than anticipated." According to the GAO, all three brigades had difficulty achieving gunnery skills that would allow them to meet Army standards. The GAO attributed the gunnery problems experienced by the brigades to peacetime training practices that (1) provide only one opportunity every 2 years for crews to conduct live fire, (2) do not require crews

^{1/} GAO/NSIAD-91-72, "ARMY TRAINING: Evaluations of Units' Proficiency Are Not Always Reliable," Dated February 15, 1991 (OSD Case 8544)

GAO/NSIAD-89-140, "ARMY TRAINING: Management Initiatives Needed To Enhance Reservists' Training," Dated June 30, 1989 (OSD Case 7904).

to meet Active Army firing-time standards, (3) use outdated firing ranges repeatedly, thereby allowing crews to become familiar with fixed target locations and distances, and (4) allow master gunners to bore-sight all tanks, rather than requiring tank crews to learn those procedures. The GAO also noted that some units did not have the required number of master gunners--the key gunnery trainers. The GAO commented that, while it is clear realistic training has not yet been achieved--it is probably too soon to expect full implementation of the regulations recently promulgated as a result of the prior GAO report.

- Many Noncommissioned Officers Were Not Trained in Leadership Skills--The GAO also found that many non-commissioned officers in the Roundout Brigades lacked the leadership skills and knowledge to fulfill their training responsibilities. The GAO reported that the Active Army personnel responsible for training the Roundout Brigades identified severe weaknesses in the basic leadership skills of noncommissioned officers in each of the three brigades. According to the GAO, in one brigade, the identified shortcomings included a lack of initiative, the lack of discipline, the lack of proficiency in basic soldier skills, and a "so what" attitude; while at another brigade, the noncommissioned officers at all ranks lacked tactical and technical competence. The GAO further reported that noncommissioned officers lacked the skills needed to diagnose mechanical problems on the vehicles and, therefore, could not supervise and train their subordinate soldiers effectively.

The GAO concluded that a primary reason for the non-commissioned officers problems in the National Guard is that leadership courses tailored for the Reserve components and their 39-day training year have only been available since 1988--and, although courses are now available, attendance is not mandatory for advancement. The GAO further concluded that the noncommissioned officer leadership problem was exacerbated by a National Guard policy that authorized immediate promotions upon unit mobilization for soldiers occupying a position graded higher than their current rank. The GAO acknowledged, however, that the National Guard is planning to revise its promotion policy for non-commissioned officers, making completion of leadership training a prerequisite for promotion. (pp. 4-5, pp. 17-25/GAO Draft Report)

Now on pp. 3-4 and 12-17.

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DOD RESPONSE: Partially concur. The Department agrees that, as might be expected, there were some training shortfalls. However, some of the specific information is not correct.

See comment 4.

The tank gunnery practices mentioned by the GAO, and which are suggested as the cause for additional gunnery training, are incorrect. First, Army regulations require National Guard combat maneuver units to conduct live fire every year. In tank units, specifically, qualification is required every second year; while sustainment firing is conducted in the off year. Second, qualification standards are identical for both Active and Reserve forces. Finally, the ranges used by the Roundout Brigades are located at Fort Stewart, Georgia (48th Brigade), Camp Shelby, Mississippi and Fort Hood, Texas (155th Brigade), and Fort Polk, Louisiana (256th Brigade). The Active component installations (Stewart, Hood, and Polk) all have Multi-Purpose Range Complexes-Heavy with Remote Target Systems computerized targetry, state-of-the-art ranges. Only the range at Camp Shelby fits the description described in the GAO report.

See comment 5.

The GAO also incorrectly states that there is no requirement for noncommissioned officers to complete leadership training before promotion. Since February 29, 1984, the Primary Leader Development Course has been a requirement for promotion to the rank of Staff Sergeant and phase I (Common Leader Training) of the Basic and Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course have been requirements for promotion to Sergeant First Class and Master Sergeant. Reconfiguration of Phase II (Military Occupational Specialty - specific) for Basic and Advanced noncommissioned officer courses was not complete and the courses were not available until 1990. The phases are now available for both courses and will be required for promotion effective October 1, 1991.

Further, the 1989 Noncommissioned Officer Leader Development Action Plan recommended that both the Active and Reserve components realign the rank of the students attending required Noncommissioned Officer Education system courses. For all Reserve component soldiers, effective October 1, 1991, the appropriate rank for students is: Corporal or Specialist for Primary Leadership Development Course, Sergeant for the Basis Noncommissioned officer Courses. For promotion consideration, that realignment will be effective on October 1, 1992.

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See comment 6.

It is the DoD view that the reported "attitude" problems were isolated and reflected only one unit at one point in time. After action reports from the 48th brigade performance at the National Training Center confirm the high degree of Noncommissioned Officer discipline and leadership. Statements by Active trainers concerning the three brigades and personal observations at training sites by official DoD visitors, indicated that the soldiers of all three brigades were generally highly motivated, aggressive, and intelligent. In the final analysis, the enlisted leadership skills found in the Roundout Brigades were no different than those of soldiers in other Reserve units, who deployed and performed admirably in Operation DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM.

- o **FINDING D: Some Commissioned Officers Were Not Proficient in Leadership and Synchronization Skills.** The GAO found that Active Army assessments of National Guard officer proficiency indicated that there were leadership deficiencies throughout all ranks. The GAO observed that there were problems in (1) tactical and technical competence, (2) understanding and setting standards, and (3) enforcing discipline. The GAO found that, even though the entire staffs of the three Roundout Brigades attended the Tactical Commanders Development Course shortly after mobilization, Army trainers noted that the staffs continued to display tactical and technical weaknesses when they returned to their units.

The GAO noted that one of the key functions of the National Training Center is to challenge brigade and battalion staffs in a realistic wartime environment. The GAO further noted that successful commanders (1) must be able to synchronize all resources and operating systems to maximize available combat capability, (2) must have a thorough understanding of Army doctrine and system capabilities, and (3) must be able to make rapid decisions under the stress of battle. The GAO reported that during the 48th Brigade's force-on-force engagement with the opposition at the National Training Center, the staff proficiency improved significantly; however, Army trainers identified a number of serious systemic and recurring weaknesses, including the following:

- failure to identify key and decisive terrain during battles;
- failure to collect adequate intelligence information for planning battles;

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Now on p. 18.

See comment 7.

- inability to integrate direct fire and indirect fire effectively;
- tendency to use assets in a "piecemeal" fashion rather than to locate, fix, and destroy the enemy; and
- failure to plan adequately and emplace obstacle systems. (pp. 25-26/GAO Draft Report)

DOD RESPONSE: Concur. Clearly, there are some commissioned officers who were not fully trained in leadership and synchronization skills. It should be emphasized, however that synchronization of large, ground combat, maneuver units is the most difficult doctrinal and leadership task in the Army. All brigades needed training in that area. The tactical deficiencies cited by the GAO during National Training Center force-on-force engagements are not confined to Reserve components. They are complex and difficult to master, even for Active component officers with far greater time to train. Perfection is seldom, if ever, achieved. Even so, Army trainers noted a significant improvement in the staff procedures of the Brigades and in subordinate units after completion of the Tactical Commanders Development Course and during National Training Center training.

At the conclusion of training at the National Training Center, the 48th Brigade was validated by the Commander in Chief, U.S. Forces Command. Moreover, the Brigades achieved validation by maneuvering four battalions--plus all supporting combat support and combat service support units--a feat no other unit, Active or Reserve, has been asked to perform.

- o **FINDING E: Peacetime Administrative Practices Hampered Mobilization And Training.** The GAO reported that, in peacetime, the National Guard uses state systems for personnel management, supply, and maintenance; however, upon mobilization, the Roundout Brigades had to transition to the Active Army systems--systems which the soldiers had not been trained to use. The GAO concluded that, as a result, the ability of the Roundout Brigades to mobilize efficiently and train effectively was degraded.
- **Incompatible Personnel Systems**--The GAO reported the Army National Guard uses various personnel systems that are incompatible with the automated Standard Installation/Division Personnel System

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used by the Active Army. The GAO reported that, to transition to the Active Army Standard Installation/Division Personnel System, the three Roundout Brigades used a field automated data-entry system called Tactical Army Combat Service Support Computer System. According to the GAO, not only did the National Guard Standard Installation/Division Personnel System not interface with the Active Army System, but National Guard soldiers had not been trained in the use of the Tactical Army Combat Service Support Computer System. The GAO concluded that the lack of training on the Standard Installation/Division Personnel System prior to mobilization significantly affected the training of each brigade after mobilization. According to the GAO, crews and squads could not be cross-leveled fully to maximize the effectiveness of organizations and equipment.

- Incompatible Supply Systems--The GAO further found that, during peacetime, National Guard units obtain needed parts and supplies through supply systems operated by the states, which differ from the Active Army system. The GAO explained that unit supply personnel requisition items from the state system according to state procedures rather than the Active Army Unit Level Logistics System. The GAO concluded that, because supply personnel had not been adequately trained on the Active Army system, the roundout brigades experienced significant difficulty obtaining repair parts needed for vehicles during post-mobilization training.

The GAO reported that the Army has not equipped National Guard units with the computers needed for unit personnel to train on the Unit Level Logistics System because of a provision in the FY 1988 Department of Defense Appropriation Act, which prohibits the use of Federal funds to purchase computers for the National Guard until the Reserve Component Automation System has been developed. The GAO explained that, because of the Appropriation Act provision and in light of the need of the Roundout Brigades to use the Army standard supply system once activated, the Army provided the Unit Level Logistics System computers and software to the brigades after the mobilization. The GAO noted, however, that since the units have now been demobilized, the state supply procedures are back in effect. The GAO observed that supply personnel are, therefore, faced with the

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task of not only relearning the state systems--but, at the same time, maintaining knowledge of the Unit Level Logistics System.

- Efforts to Develop Compatible Systems--The GAO reported that efforts to develop an automated system to support mobilization have been underway since the 1970s. According to the GAO, in 1988 the House Appropriations Committee directed the Chief of the National Guard Bureau to develop a new automated information system--the Reserve Component Automation System. The GAO noted that the system objective is to interface and exchange data in most active and Reserve component automation systems, such as personnel, supply, and training. The GAO explained that the system will be used by reservists during peacetime to support premobilization preparedness and will provide direct support to Reserve component units until soldiers reach mobilization stations. The GAO further explained that, at the mobilization stations, the System is designed to interface with active component systems to provide units a smooth transition. The GAO concluded, however, that reservists will not be proficient in operating Active Army systems unless they are given peacetime training. The GAO noted that fielding of the Reserve Component Automation System is not scheduled to take place until FY 1992 through FY 1996. (p. 5, pp. 26-28/GAO Draft Report)

Now on pp. 4 and 18-20.

DOD RESPONSE: Partially concur. The Army National Guard personnel, supply, and maintenance systems are Federal (not state) programs--approved and funded by the Department of the Army, through National Guard Bureau. The National Guard uses approved Federal (not state) systems for managing Army National Guard operations.

The Army recognizes that there are incompatibility problems between and among personnel, supply, and maintenance automated systems operated by Active and Reserve components. There are several initiatives underway by Army Task Forces to resolve each area of concern.

Although it is true that the systems operated by the Active component and the Reserve components were not compatible and may have hampered some of the reporting requirements, the consequence of the shortfalls were not nearly as great as implied in the GAO report. Moreover, although the current report focuses on the three National Guard Roundout Brigades, it is important to remember that

See comment 8.

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297 Army National Guard units were mobilized and deployed to the Persian Gulf with the same systems as the Roundout Brigades. The deployed units were able to sustain effective personnel, supply, and maintenance operations despite the cited difficulties.

- o **FINDING F: Inadequate Peacetime Medical Screening Practices.** The GAO found that the ability of each of the three brigades to deploy quickly would have been hampered significantly because many soldiers had severe dental ailments. The GAO reported that about a third of the soldiers in each brigade were classified as nondeployable--either because of their dental condition or because of problems with their dental records. The GAO noted that there is no provision for the Army to provide routine dental treatment to National Guard soldiers during peacetime and there is no requirement for the soldiers to maintain healthy teeth as a condition for continued participation in the unit. The GAO noted, however, that during peacetime, National Guard soldiers are required to have annual panoramic X-rays taken, which are maintained to aid in the identification of soldiers killed in the line of duty.

The GAO reported that the capability of each of the three brigades also was adversely affected by the large number of soldiers found to have serious medical ailments. According to the GAO, medical screenings conducted at the mobilization stations identified numerous problems impairing the ability of the soldiers to deploy--including ulcers, chronic asthma, blindness, spinal arthritis, hepatitis, seizures, and diabetes. The GAO did not determine the total number of medical problems identified because the brigades did not maintain summary data. The GAO explained that the most serious medical problems were related to soldiers age 40 or over. The GAO reported that both the Active Army and the Army National Guard require periodic physical examinations, with more comprehensive examinations given to soldiers age 40 and over. The GAO observed that, while the Army National Guard requires a physical examination every 4 years, unlike the Active Army, the Guard does not ensure that an examination is given when soldiers reach age 40. According to the GAO, the 155th and 256th Brigades identified 750 and 600 of their soldiers (respectively) that required medical screening upon mobilization. (p. 5, pp. 29-31/GAO Draft Report)

DOD RESPONSE: Concur. It is true that post mobilization medical dental screening revealed a larger number of potentially medically non-deployable soldiers than was

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Now on pp. 4 and 20-22.

anticipated. The majority of conditions found were, however waivable. The first General Officer in the chain of command can waive Class III dental requirements, by far the largest dental problem--and the Department of the Army had waived the requirement for an over-40 physical examination. Given time available to prepare for Operation DESERT STORM, neither of those waivers were applied to the National Guard Brigades. By February 15, 1991, most of the identified medical and dental program in the Brigades had been resolved.

It is important to keep the medical/dental issue in perspective. Only 6 percent of the 62,411 Army National Guard soldiers activated and assigned to units eligible for deployment under U.S.C. 673b were non-deployable for all reasons combined. Ultimately, only two soldiers were not deployed because of dental problems.

- o **FINDING G: Post-Mobilization Training Plans Were Based on Unreliable Information.** The GAO found that, at the time the roundout combat brigades were mobilized, the existing postmobilization training plans were based on unit status, or combat readiness reports and 1-R reports. The GAO noted that one of the brigades was reporting a C-2 level of training readiness--the commander estimated that 28 training days were needed to be trained fully. The GAO further noted that the other brigades were reporting a C-3 status, with the commanders estimating that 40 training days were required to be trained. According to the GAO, two weeks after mobilization the commander of the brigade reporting C-2 revised his assessment to C-3, while the commanders reporting C-3 revised their assessments to C-2 and C-5. The GAO observed that the C-5 assessment meant that the unit was not capable of executing its wartime mission because it was undergoing a force-directed change of equipment.

The GAO found that the Second Army and III Corps officials were skeptical of the accuracy of the reported readiness of the brigades. According to the GAO, key officials involved in the training of the three Roundout Brigades indicated that the unit status reports and 1-R reports fell short of capturing the true status of the brigades' combat proficiency; therefore, the Second Army and III Corps conducted independent proficiency assessments. The GAO explained that those assessments drew heavily from National Training Center exercise results conducted by one battalion of the 155th Brigade and the 48th Brigade in May and July 1990, respectively.

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Appendix I
Comments From the Department of Defense

Now on pp. 4-5 and 24-25.

The GAO again referenced its February 1991 report (see Finding C), in which the evaluations of Army National Guard units annual training were found not to provide reliable or useful information to higher commands. The GAO had concluded that the evaluations were based on training often conducted under unrealistic conditions and were not focused on mission-essential tasks. Moreover, the GAO had contended that the evaluations were based on limited observations and provided conflicting information. The GAO also had concluded that, since the 1-R evaluation may be the only information external to the unit available to commanders to complete training readiness reports--those reports are also not likely to be valid. In the prior report the GAO had recommended several improvements to the Army evaluations of National Guard training--including (1) ensuring that National Guard units receive more realistic training during their annual training periods and (2) requiring that National Guard unit higher commands or the commands they will be assigned to in wartime review the 1-R evaluations for adequacy and completeness. The GAO explained the DoD had maintained that adequate evaluation policies and procedures were already in place. The GAO concluded however, the current findings show that the policies and procedures were not, in fact, being implemented properly. (pp. 6-7, pp. 32-34/GAO Draft Report)

DOD RESPONSE: Concur. While the National Guard Brigades complied with the requirements of the present status reporting system, Operation DESERT STORM corroborated shortcomings previously identified by the Department in the measurement of training status. Army-wide changes in personnel and equipment reporting methods, already planned prior to August 1990, were deferred during Southwest Asia operations, but are now scheduled for implementation in October 1991. Reexaminations in other areas currently are being conducted.

In addition, although deficiencies in reported pre-mobilization readiness and training status of the National Guard brigades increased resource and time requirements beyond expectations, far greater requirements resulted from the additional post mobilization training required of the Roundout Brigades. Additional training, specifically maneuver and live fire training to the very demanding challenges of combined operations. Even while the National Guard brigades were conducting their training at Fort Irwin, Active divisions and brigades were conducting similar advanced training in theater.

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o **FINDING H: Revised Plans Required Substantially More Training Days.** The GAO reported that, based on independent assessments of existing training plans and the proficiency of the brigades, the Second Army and III Corps substantially revised the training plans, calling for between 91 and 135 days of training--which is over three times the number of days that the readiness reports stated were needed.

- **The 48th Brigade**--The GAO reported that the Second Army developed a 91-day training plan which assumed the following:
 - noncommissioned and commissioned officers needed leadership and tactical skills training;
 - soldiers needed extensive training even in the most basic tasks; and
 - crew skills needed improvement.

The GAO explained that the training plan consisted of battle staff training for brigade and battalion staffs at the Army Combined Arms Center; instruction in basic soldiering skills, such as marksmanship, grenade-throwing, and first aid; and crew-level training to improve the proficiency of M-1 tank and Bradley fighting vehicle crew members. The GAO found, however, that the training plan did not provide leadership skill training for noncommissioned officers.

- **The 155th and 256th Brigades**--According to the GAO, based on the III Corps assessment of proficiency, a 106-day training plan was developed for the 155th Brigade, while a 135-day plan was developed for the 256th Brigade. The GAO explained that the plan for the 256th provided new-equipment training time for BRADLEY crews, since that equipment had only been received in March 1990 and was still relatively new to the unit. The GAO noted that both plans assumed that (1) noncommissioned and commissioned officers possessed leadership skills, (2) soldiers could perform basic tasks, and (3) crew-level skills were generally adequate. The GAO commented that the plans consisted of maneuver training at the squad, platoon, company, battalion, and brigade task force levels; and training in gunnery and maintenance. In addition, the GAO noted that brigade and battalion staffs were sent to the Army Combined Arms Center for battle

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Now on pp. 5 and 25-26.

staff training, and a noncommissioned officer academy was established for those needing additional leadership training. (pp. 6-7, pp. 34-36/ GAO Draft Report)

DOD RESPONSE: Concur. Because of the policy guidance to minimize casualties and to refrain from sending any unit into combat until it was needed and ready, it was reasonable for the Army to send large, Active, ground combat maneuver (e.g., mechanized infantry, armor) units into action prior to employing Reserve combat forces. That decision allowed the National Guard combat maneuver units additional time to train on new tasks specifically geared to fighting in the desert. The U.S. Forces Command prescriptive training program, therefore, did add substantially more training days than planned for by the Roundout Battalion and Brigade commanders--primarily because of the inclusion of maneuver and live fire training at the National Training Center. Rotations were sequential rather than concurrent because the National Training Center can handle only one brigade at a time, thus further increasing the total time required.

Moreover, the Army Forces Command developed a dynamic training program, which was adjusted based on the evolving situation in the Persian Gulf. That process allowed more time for the brigades to master combat skills. On March 8, 1991, the Commander in Chief, Forces Command, testified before the Congress, as follows:

"[T]he situation in the Persian Gulf appeared to require an earlier availability of these units. Thus, we developed a 70-day training program focused on enhancing leadership, combined arms integration and maintenance readiness. As the situation evolved in the Gulf, it became apparent that more time was available. We took that time and further mastered the 48th Brigades's combat skills. They are now validated as combat ready against an Iraqi threat. They achieved that proficiency much faster than I originally anticipated."

- o **FINDING I: Significant Resources Were Needed To Train Units.** The GAO reported that to develop individual, crew, and unit proficiency in the Roundout Brigades required an extraordinary commitment of personnel and resources on the part of the Active Army. According to the GAO, nearly 9,000 Active Army personnel were assigned to train soldiers in the Roundout Brigades. The GAO found that the Army did

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not capture the cost centrally to provide postmobilization training to the Roundout Brigades; however, cost estimates provided by various Army officials were in the tens of millions of dollars. The GAO concluded that the large number of Active Army soldiers and leaders committed to train the Roundout Brigades also significantly affected the readiness and operations of the two active divisions involved. The GAO found that training in the 4th Infantry Division was reduced to the individual soldier level because the majority of the noncommissioned officers and officers were involved in training the Roundout Brigades. The GAO also found that, in addition, elements of the division had to cancel National Training Center training and postpone transition to the M1 tank and BRADLEY fighting vehicle. (pp. 6-7, pp. 36-37/GAO Draft Report)

Now on pp. 5 and 27.

DOD RESPONSE: Partially concur. It is true that significant resources were used in the validation process for the Roundout Brigades; however, a large part of the trainers involved (over 4,100 soldiers were assigned to the National Training Center. Those 4,100 soldiers were assigned to the Center specifically to assist units in honing their combat skills. Since rotational training at the National Training Center was halted for Active units during the Persian Gulf conflict, it became cost-effective to assign them the tasks of fine tuning the Reserve Roundout Brigades.

See comment 9.

The Department disagrees, however, that the support provided by the 4th Infantry Division inhibited their training. The postponement of transition to the Bradley for the 4th Infantry Division was due as much to Operation DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM as to the training of the roundout units. The 4th Infantry Division conducted its planned National Training Center rotation in early November 1990, and was equipped with the M1 tank prior to the start of Operation DESERT SHIELD. Transition to the Bradley was not scheduled for FY 1991. Bradley fielding plans indicate the 4th Infantry Division will receive the Bradleys in the second and third quarters of FY 1992 with New Equipment Training beginning in April 1992.

- o **FINDING J: Validation Criteria Were Not Specified.** The GAO reported that Army policy required Active Army officials to validate the combat effectiveness and deployment readiness of Reserve component units before their deployment to the Gulf. According to the GAO, the Army had no tested criteria to determine the proficiency that Roundout Brigades would need to demonstrate prior to their deployment. The GAO

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noted that in the absence of a formal validation process, the Commander-in-Chief, Army Forces Command, decided to make a validation judgment for each brigade based on first hand observations and input from trainers and senior staff from all organizations involved in the training program--the III Corps, the Second Army, the 4th Infantry Division, the 5th Armor Division, and the National Training Center--but validation criteria was not specified.

The GAO reported that only one of the brigades--the 48th Infantry--was validated as being ready for deployment. According to the GAO, that unit was validated as combat ready on the day the Gulf War ended--90 days after it was mobilized. The GAO explained that a validation decision was not made for either the 155th Infantry or the 256th Armor brigades, even though the 155th completed all the planned training (including National Training Center training exercises) before its demobilization. (pp. 6-7, pp. 37-38/GAO Draft Report)

Now on pp. 5 and 27-28.

DOD RESPONSE: Concur. The Army currently is developing validation procedures for future mobilizations. The proposed procedures will require the Active Division Commander to become more involved in roundout training plans and Mission Essential Task List development. The training plan for both premobilization and post mobilization, which will require proficiency in Mission Essential tasks, will be the validation criteria. Successful execution of the plan will result in validation by the Corps Commander of the parent division.

* * * * *

RECOMMENDATIONS

- o **RECOMMENDATION 1:** The GAO recommended that the Secretary of the Army ensure that peacetime training is provided to roundout brigade personnel responsible for operating Active Army personnel, and supply systems, and for maintaining tracked vehicles upon mobilization. (p. 31/GAO Draft Report)

Now on p. 22.

DOD RESPONSE: Concur. The Department is committed to resolving incompatibilities that exist between and among Active and Reserve personnel, supply, and maintenance systems. That necessitates equipment fielding and software development, as well as training, and will require resources and time. (The DoD will provide more detailed information in its response to the final report.)

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Now on p. 22.

- **RECOMMENDATION 2:** The GAO recommended that the Secretary of the Army revise National Guard medical screening policies and procedures to provide screenings of roundout brigade personnel at age 40. (p. 31/GAO Draft Report)

DOD RESPONSE: Concur. The Department currently is working with the Army and the National Guard Bureau regarding proposals to change regulations so that medical screenings will be initiated at the first examination after the 36th birthday or to require physicals as five-year multiples of an individuals birthday. (The DoD will provide more detailed information in response to the final report.)

Now on p. 22.

- **RECOMMENDATION 3:** The GAO recommended that the Secretary of the Army explore alternatives to identify and correct serious dental conditions of roundout brigade personnel. (The GAO noted that this could include (1) requiring periodic dental examinations and treatment as a condition of continued membership in the unit or (2) providing financial assistance for dental care.) (p. 31/GAO Draft Report)

DOD RESPONSE: Partially concur. The Department is committed to the identification and correction of Class III dental conditions for all Selected Reserve soldiers--not just to those in the Roundout Brigades. Proposals and options to correct such conditions are currently being reviewed on a cost/benefit basis, since most of the conditions are waiverable. (The DoD will provide more detailed information in its response to the final report.)

Now on p. 28.

- **RECOMMENDATION 4:** The GAO recommended that the Secretary of the Army reassess the Department of Defense position on the training readiness evaluation recommendations made in the GAO February 1991 report to ensure that training readiness reports are an accurate readiness indicator. (p. 38/GAO Draft Report)

DOD RESPONSE: Partially concur. In its response to the previous report, the Department of Defense nonconcurred with the recommendations to develop separate systems for evaluating readiness of Active and Reserve components. As stated at that time, however, the Department initiated a study to examine the reporting of unit training status. The study recommendations are currently under review. Implementation of revised reporting procedures is contingent

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on developing techniques that do not increase the already excessive administrative workload of the unit commander. (The DoD will provide more detailed information in its response to the final report.)

- **RECOMMENDATION 5:** The GAO recommended that the Secretary of the Army develop and issue criteria to be used to validate the combat readiness of Reserve Roundout Brigades in future mobilizations. (p. 39/GAO Draft Report)

DOD RESPONSE: Concur. The Army currently is developing validation procedures for future mobilizations. The proposed procedures will require the Active Division Commander to become more involved in roundout training plans and Mission Essential Task List development. The training plan for both premobilization and post mobilization, which will require proficiency in Mission Essential tasks, will be the validation criteria. Successful execution of the plan will result in validation by the Corps Commander of the parent division. (The DoD will provide more detailed information in its response to the final report.)

Now on p. 28.

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The following are GAO's comments on the Department of Defense's letter dated September 3, 1991.

GAO Comments

1. The Department's rationale for this conclusion is flawed. First, our report discusses the training of the three brigades, not their mobilization or deployment (we have separate assignments covering mobilization issues for units activated for Desert Storm). Second, field artillery brigades and combat-support and combat service-support units are so unlike combat maneuver brigades that it is not valid to compare them.
2. We have modified the report to incorporate DOD's expectation of the time during which roundout brigades should be expected to deploy to a crisis scene. We believe that our use of the terms "quickly" and "shortly" is consistent with DOD's expectation.
3. We revised the report to reflect the dates that the brigades were activated.
4. We revised the report to recognize that gunnery standards are the same for both active and reserve components and that only one of the firing ranges used by the brigades is outdated.
5. We agree that completion of leadership training is a prerequisite for promotion to certain NCO ranks. However, it is not a requirement for promotion to sergeant. We have revised the report accordingly.
6. Our work shows that the Department's belief that NCO leadership problems were isolated is not well-founded. In fact, as stated in our report, the problems were so pervasive that III Corps found it necessary to establish schools to provide the needed leadership training for NCOs in the two brigades that it trained. Moreover, we observed the 48th Brigade during the last week of its NTC training and did not note a marked change in the leadership skills of brigade maintenance NCOs.
7. We agree that the synchronization of large maneuver units is complex and difficult to master. We have modified our report to reflect this point.
8. DOD did not indicate the size of these units or the nature of the missions that they conducted. These factors could have a significant impact on the volume and complexity of personnel and supply operations.

Moreover, we did not verify DOD's contention regarding the units' effectiveness.

9. The 4th Infantry Division already had some of its new equipment prior to Desert Storm and had begun crew training. As a result of its responsibility to train the roundout brigades, training in the division was reduced to the individual soldier level.

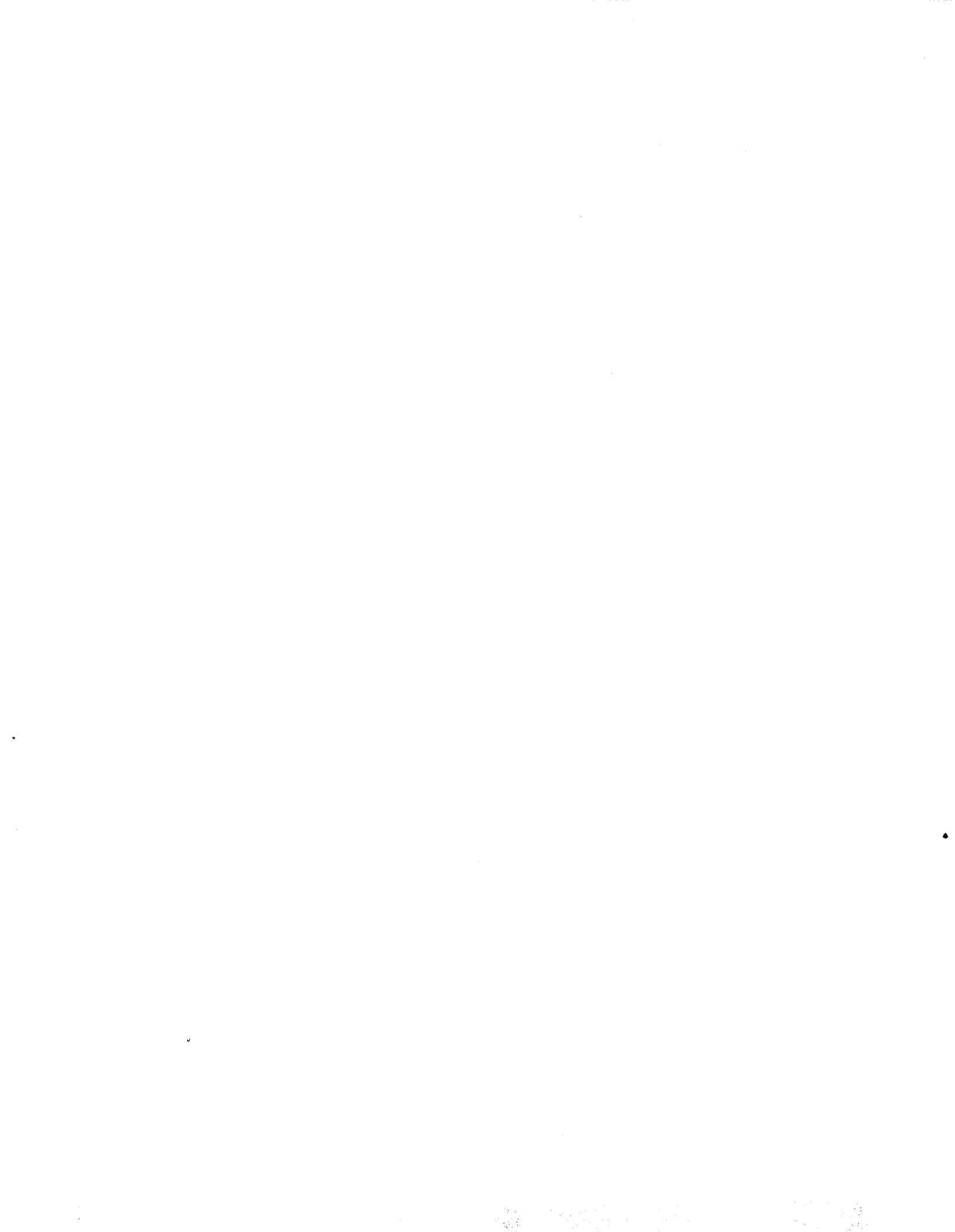
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