

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

SYNCHRONIZING ARMY NATIONAL GUARD READINESS WITH ARFORGEN

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ABSTRACT

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Reliance on the Army National Guard (ARNG) has increased significantly since 9/11. The Army has been very clear that it can not sustain our current Nation's defense and security obligations without the ARNG and Reserve. Unfortunately, it is apparent that our nation is involved in a long war with an escalating demand for greater Homeland Defense/Homeland Security (HLD/HLS) requirements. The ARNG has transitioned from a strategic reserve to a fully functional operational force to meet this changing environment. In addition the Army has developed the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) model as a way to generate trained and ready forces from all three Army components on a rotational basis across a 6-year planning horizon. The ARNG ARFORGEN model will provide a way to resource and prepare units to conduct their wartime missions as well as provide a rotational deployment schedule for units. The purpose of this paper is to examine the ARNG ARFORGEN model and make recommendations which when synchronized with the ARFORGEN model strengthens the ARNG's ability to meet its demanding dual role mission and 21st Century challenges. Meeting these challenges will require synchronizing incentives, programs, and policies across the spectrum of manning, training, equipping, family readiness, and employer support.

SYNCHRONIZING ARMY NATIONAL GUARD READINESS WITH ARFORGEN

Any way you cut it, the National Guard is absolutely essential to our Nation's defense. We cannot fight our wars abroad, we cannot secure the country at home, and we cannot respond to large-scale emergencies without the Guard.

—Senator Patrick Leahy

Few would argue that the Nation's Army National Guard (ARNG) has transitioned from a strategic reserve force to a fully operational force. This transition to a fully operational force has taken place virtually overnight in response to US National Security Policy which has placed a tremendous demand on the need for US ground forces around the globe. This reliance on the ARNG has been further accelerated by events of the recent past. Some of these events include the creation of the Department of Homeland Defense and the need for security forces inside the boundaries of the United States, and large-scale emergencies like the one experienced in Hurricane Katrina. The likelihood that the ARNG will revert back to its pre 9/11 status as a strategic reserve is unimaginable in the foreseeable future. General Schoomaker, Army Chief of Staff, recently said before a congressional commission, "The Army is incapable of generating and sustaining the required forces to wage the global war on terror ...without active, Guard, and reserve [components] surging together."¹ The Army has developed and began to implement a force generation model intended to generate forces from all three Army components at one time to meet deployment and contingency requirements. The Army Force Generation model (ARFORGEN) is an event based, three phase model designed to deploy US Army units once every three years, US Army Reserve (USAR) units once every five years, and ARNG units once every six years for the ARNG. This paradigm shift from an active duty force with a strategic reserve to a rotational, fully operational total force offers both unique opportunities and challenges in sustaining the ARNG's abilities to meet both its federal and state missions. ARFORGEN transforms the ARNG from a tiered resourced force designed to fight the big war, to a life cycle resourced force ready to be fully integrated in the long war on terrorism and face the 21st Century threats to the US homeland. The purpose of this paper is to examine the ARNG ARFORGEN model and make recommendations which when synchronized with the life cycle of the ARFORGEN model strengthens the ARNG's ability to meet its' demanding dual role mission.

The environment which seemed relatively stable during the Cold War for the ARNG has changed, and continues to change at an accelerating pace. The ARNG has always been a dual mission force. It is the only military force in our nation required to answer the call of the

President of the United States in times of war and be responsible to the nation's state governors in times of state emergencies. The environment has changed so abruptly with the US at war and a very viable threat to homeland security, that the ARNG has found itself fully engaged in supporting the GWOT, providing security forces in support of the Department of Homeland Security, and responding to the needs of its state governors during security threats or natural disasters. If this wasn't enough the ARNG, like the active Army, is also transforming its forces into a modular force. The nation's reliance on the ARNG is at the highest point in its 370 year history.

The ARNG has not witnessed this level of demand for forces since World War II. Heavy reliance on the ARNG began with the Gulf War in 1990 and continued with operations in Kosovo and Bosnia during the 1990's. After 9/11, "at its peak in 2004 – 2005 the [ARNG] provided about 40 percent of the Army deployed overseas on the ground, fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan."² Since the creation of the total force concept in the early 1970's, the active component's (AC) ability to fight a large or prolonged war has been significantly reduced. The total force concept by design placed a significant amount of combat, combat support, and combat service support in the ARNG and USAR. The purpose of the total force concept was to save defense dollars while retaining combat force structure. The ARNG contains 44 percent of the brigade combat teams and 32 percent overall of the total Army force. Given the total force concept and the ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the reliance on the ARNG is likely to increase until troop levels in these countries begin to be drawn down. The ability to provide trained, ready, and cohesive ARNG forces to support the Army and the nation's governors can be greatly enhanced by ARFORGEN when fully implemented and synchronized with manning, training, equipping, family readiness, and employer support.

ARFORGEN provides the framework from which the ARNG can provide predictability to its soldiers, their families and employers, and allocate resources to units based on their readiness levels and their position in the ARFORGEN cycle. Lieutenant General Clyde A. Vaughn, Director of the Army National Guard, in a recent talk before the students and faculty at the US Army War College, stated ARFORGEN will be a great tool for the ARNG.

What is ARFORGEN?

The Army Campaign Plan, Change 4, Annex F, is the Army's ARFORGEN implementation plan. This plan defines ARFORGEN under its concept of operations.

ARFORGEN is the structured progression of increased unit readiness over time, resulting in recurring periods of availability of trained, ready, and cohesive units prepared for operational deployment in support of civil authorities and combatant

commander requirements. Operational requirements drive ARFORGEN which supports the prioritization and synchronization of institutional functions to generate capabilities on a sustained, cyclic basis. The Army gains a holistic view of the Army global force requirements and global force availability across six year planning horizons. The Army focuses units against future missions as early as possible in the ARFORGEN process and task organize[s] modular expeditionary forces tailored to the Joint mission requirements.... Army units flow smoothly through the reset/retrain, ready, and available force pools [referred to earlier as phases] to meet operational requirements with increased predictability....³ (See Figure 1)

ARNG units enter the ARFORGEN model in the reset/train pool after having returned from a long deployment or having completed a one year period in the available pool. Units in the force pool may also have just stood up as a new unit or due to readiness have been unable to meet the training validation requirements to move to the ready pool. Units remain in the reset/train pool for one to four years depending on numerous factors before moving into the second force pool, the ready pool.

ARNG units will normally be in the ready pool for one year. Units focus their training on known deployment mission requirements or their Mission Essential Task List (METL). Units in this force pool can be deployed to meet surge requirements of a regional combatant commander (RCC). Units move to the available pool, the third force pool upon being validated as trained in company level collective tasks and staff proficiency.

ARNG units in the available pool either deploy to meet RCC's requirements or continue to train until sourced for a surge requirement. Units remain in this force pool until redeployed or for one year for units which did not deploy. Once released from the available pool, units start the life cycle of ARFORGEN by returning to the reset/train pool. ARFORGEN is more than a training model. Units receive resources for training, manning, and equipping, as well as training and readiness oversight (TRO) based on the force pool they're in, resulting in equal resources to all units over time.

Units move through the ARFORGEN model designated as one of three expeditionary forces. Units tagged as Deployment Expeditionary Force (DEF) are sourced against a future requirement and are task organized with other units to support that future operation. Units tagged as Ready Expeditionary Force (REP) are not sourced for a specific requirement through the reset/train and ready pools. Once in the available pool, units are tagged as a Contingency Expeditionary Force (CEP) and are task organized to meet contingency requirements. CEP units if not required by a RCC or civil authority, may not deploy in which case they would enter the reset/train pool after one year in the available pool.⁴

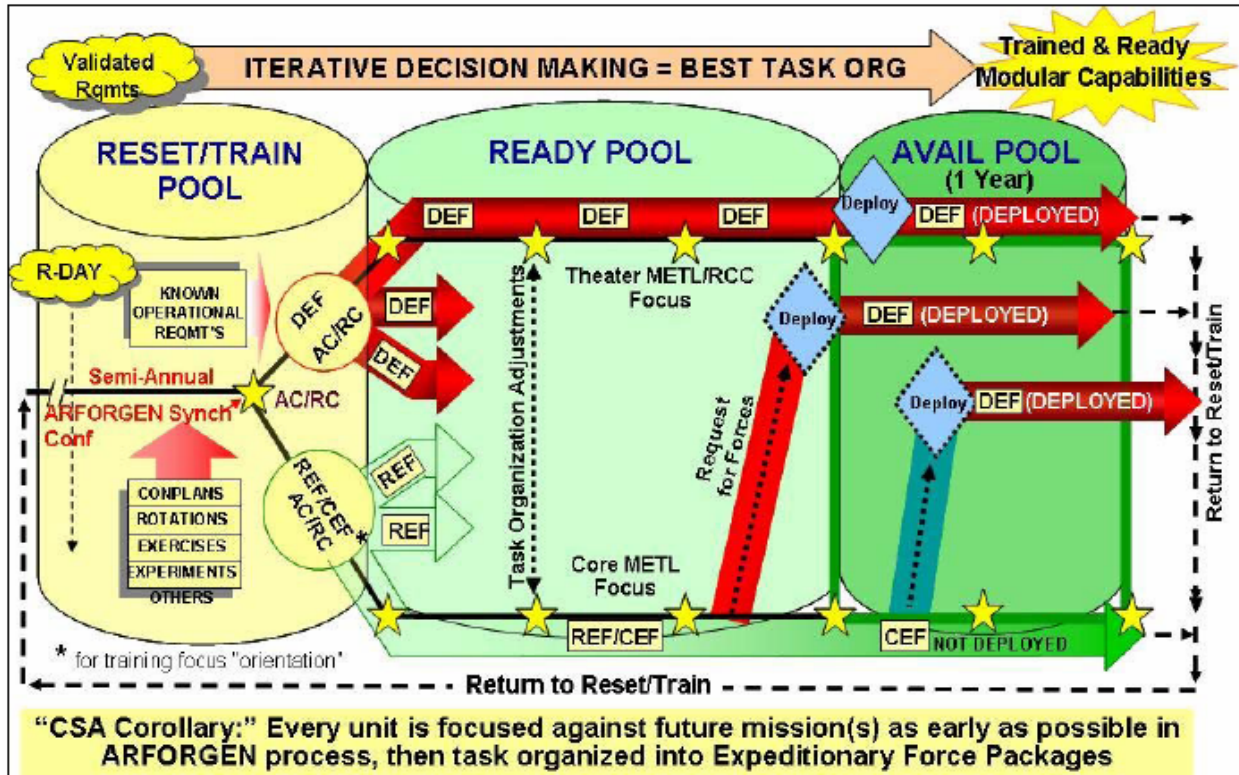


Figure 1: Army Force Generation Model

Successful implementation of ARFORGEN across all three Army components will result in “a sustained, more predictable posture to generate trained and ready modular forces tailored to Joint mission requirements while preserving the capability to defend the homeland, provide Defense Support to Civil Authorities, deter conflict in critical regions, surge to conduct major combat operations, and preserve the quality of the All Volunteer Force in persistent conflict.”⁵ ARFORGEN, when synchronized across the global force, assures the RCCs have the forces they need and allows the ARNG to ensure each state governor has adequate access to forces should a state emergency arise. ARFORGEN in and of itself is a holistic approach to managing progressive unit readiness over time ensuring units are mission ready and mission equipped when the Army needs them. ARFORGEN can also be looked at as a deployment schedule.

Synchronizing Readiness with ARFORGEN

ARFORGEN provides predictability for when a unit is likely to deploy. When a unit enters the available pool it has been validated as trained and ready to deploy to conduct its mission. As discussed earlier, the ARNG in addition to having transitioned to an operational force has also become a rotational force in the long war. Being a rotational force is a much greater paradigm shift than becoming an operational force and will most likely be the ARNG's toughest

challenge. This is not say the ARNG can't prevail and overcome this challenge, it is however one that must be seriously thought through and the risks assessed and mitigated. The creator of this concept believes that all ready and relevant ARNG units successfully comprise five essential traits. These traits include; being fully manned, trained and externally validated to perform their wartime mission, equipped to conduct their wartime mission, maintain the support of family members, and have the support of employers and the community. The ability of the ARNG to synchronize these traits with the life cycle of ARFORGEN is paramount to maintaining a ready and relevant ARNG now and into the future.

The life cycle of ARFORGEN and its three force pools is a significant paradigm shift from the tiered resource allocations which the ARNG has operated under for many years. ARNG units will be required to maintain a minimum level of readiness and progress incrementally to the available pool. Improved readiness over the life cycle will require synchronizing unit manning incentives and initiatives, training validations, and equipping, while garnering family and employer support for one year long, and possibly more frequent, deployments. The following discussion will focus on providing recommendations towards that end. Although each of these essential traits is discussed separately, each one is related and dependent on the other. When one of the essential traits is lacking it negatively affects the synergy of the whole and negatively reduces a unit's readiness.

Manning

ARNG recruiting and retention goals were achieved in FY2006 for the first time in years.⁶ The Guard Recruiting Assistance Program (G-RAP), significant increases in full-time recruiters, incentives and enlistment bonuses are fueling this upward trend.⁷ Evidence for this success indicates it is likely the ARNG can continue to achieve these strong recruiting and retention goals provided funding remains to support these programs and bonuses. Significant to these strong recruiting and retention numbers is the fact that soldiers enlisting or reenlisting today are fully aware they are likely to deploy sometime during their enlistment. Although this is good news, very few units in the ARNG have been mobilized for a second rotation in the GWOT. It is likely that a second rotation in less than six years will have an adverse impact on recruiting and retention. This impact will most likely come from families and employers which will be discussed later. A matter of immediate concern is officer procurement.

Officer procurement and retention below the grade of Captain is a significant readiness issue. As of March 2006, the ARNG was 26 percent below authorized manning in junior officers, Captain and below.⁸ A lack of incentives commonly found for enlisted recruits and

retention has been absent for recruiting and retaining junior officers. In addition, our officer procurement objectives do not counter the *modus vivendi* which tends to keep promising young leaders from seeking a commission. Recent changes and incentives have been implemented to improve officer procurement, however much more needs to be done to ensure units have qualified junior leaders prior to entering the available pool. The key to improving officer procurement is identifying the recruit as a promising leader and entering the person into a commissioning program at the time of enlistment. Today's ARNG soldier has two basic options to choose from when considering a commission, Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) or Officer Candidate School (OCS). The three OCS options available to ARNG soldiers require the soldier have 60 college semester hours completed prior to acceptance into the program and 90 semester hours to receive a commission. By this time a typical soldier is two to three years into his initial enlistment, he is attending college and focused on a civilian career after completing college. Commissioning for ROTC Cadets is contingent on receiving a 4 year college degree. A program specifically designed with incentives which develop the leader through his college years culminating in a qualified leader at the time of his college graduation would be mutually beneficial for the officer and the ARNG.

An improved approach would be to enlist the soldier immediately into a program designed to commission the soldier and allow him to complete his college degree and Officer Basic Course culminating before college graduation. The current ARNG ROTC Simultaneous Membership Program (SMP) is an existing program which with few minor changes could provide this result. Currently ARNG soldiers who have completed basic training can enter Senior ROTC while maintaining their membership in the ARNG and complete the ROTC training in two years. Commissioning under this program is received at the time the soldier graduates. Under this concept the soldier could enter Senior ROTC or any of the OCS programs as early as his freshman year in college allowing him to be commissioned as early as the end of his sophomore year. During the pre-commissioning phase the soldier would be mentored by unit leaders during his weekend and annual training periods while assigned to an ARNG unit. Upon commissioning the officer would schedule a time to complete his OBC within a year. The newly commissioned officer would then take a semester off or, if possible, attend his OBC during the summer before beginning the fall semester.

The bottom line is the unit now has a qualified officer who has been mentored and is deployable with his unit should they be called upon when entering the available pool. The benefits of such a program condense the time required by the soldier to receive a commission and allow the soldier to be qualified prior to graduating college. Consequently, the soldier is

able to enter the civilian work force along with his graduating class instead of completing OBC prior to entering the work force or worse, have to leave a new job within a year to complete OBC. The added value to the ARNG unit is when incentives are applied to these programs that benefit the unit in their ARFORGEN life cycle. Incentives are offered to soldiers who sign a contract while the unit is in the Reset/Train Pool obligating them to complete their commissioning program and OBC prior to the unit entering the available pool, thus ensuring the unit has the qualified leadership it needs when required to deploy. The same type of incentive is also needed for new enlistments and for key personnel the unit must reenlist to maintain qualified leaders through the available pool year.

Enlistment and reenlist bonuses have played a significant role in meeting recent strength goals. It is very apparent this must continue. But to truly benefit units, it must be tied to a units ARFORGEN life cycle to ensure a unit is at 100% strength and each soldier is qualified when the unit enters the available pool. The ARNG annual attrition rate is 19.5 %.⁹ Given this level of attrition, an ARNG unit could easily turn over as much as 80% of its personnel from the time it enters the Reset/Train Pool until it enters the available pool. This simply becomes unacceptable given the data which suggest successful units require cohesion, trust in unit leaders, and confidence in their ability to conduct their wartime mission. Incentives and bonuses must be tied to the ARFORGEN life cycle of units to minimize attrition leading up to the available pool and to ensure units have qualified and experience leaders ready to lead the unit in its wartime mission.

Training

The *Draft ARNG Training Strategy* is a very detailed training plan to ensure units flow through the ARFORGEN model in a timely manner and achieve the readiness levels required for mobilization. It does include units being validated at different levels of proficiency, i.e., company and staff level. However, it still suggests a lengthy post-mobilization training and validation process. The training objectives over the ARFORGEN life cycle must eliminate the need for post-mobilization training. Evidence from surveys conducted from returning deployed soldiers and family members indicate a strong desire for shorter durations of mobilization from their home stations.¹⁰ Current mobilizations have been averaging 14 to 16 months with some as long as 18 months. Recent guidance by Secretary of Defense Gates calls for reserve mobilizations to be limited to 12 months on active duty.¹¹ By eliminating the need for post-mobilization training three very important objectives are achieved. One, the soldier can maximize the time at home station while processing for active duty. Second, the time a unit

spends in theater performing its' wartime mission can be maximized. Third, the soldier spends less time away from family and his employer.

Soldiers and their families have indicated in surveys of deployed soldiers the desire to shorten the duration they are on active duty away from home. Training and validating soldiers and their units prior to activating them for a 12 month mission eliminates the need for the unit to move to a mobilization station weeks or months in advance of deploying to an Area of Operations. The soldier is then able to remain at home with his family while he in-processes to active duty. The Army benefits greatly by maximizing the time a unit is in theater and increasing the dwell time between rotations for all Army forces. To accomplish these training objectives units must be validated continually over the ARFORGEN life cycle. Additional training days are authorized ARNG units in the forth and fifth year of the ARFORGEN life cycle.¹² These additional training days allow for the validation of unit readiness to conduct its wartime mission.

A principle of ARFORGEN is to identify very early on where a unit will be task organized and for what mission. If the unit is not designated for a specific mission it still must be capable of performing its METL to Army standards. In either case, additional training days should allow for a robust training plan tailored to its specific mission or METL and to be validated for that mission prior to mobilization. Adjutant Generals for each State's National Guard have been given the responsibility of validating units for certain tasks.¹³ First Army Training Support Brigades will most likely be called upon to validate units and staffs beyond the Adjutant General's responsibility.¹⁴ Regardless of who does the validation, a validation in stride concept should be developed which continually validates the unit as it progresses through the ARFORGEN life cycle culminating with a fully validated unit when it is scheduled to enter the available pool.

To accomplish this objective, units will need to develop 5 year training plans which clearly state the desired end state and incrementally work towards that end. Weaved into this 5 year plan will be evaluations which validate the units ability to meet Army standards for the level being validated, i.e., squad, platoon, company, etc. ARNG units must be resourced with the appropriate level of funding to conduct evaluations in a realistic environment designed to emulate the conditions they are mostly likely to experience in theater. The goal of the 5 year training plan must be to validate the unit to conduct its wartime mission without additional post-mobilization training. Developing a units 5 year plan will require a collaborative effort between the unit, its higher headquarters, its state's Joint Forces Headquarters, and the First Army unit responsible for the unit's Training Readiness Oversight (TRO).

Equipping

LTG Blum, Chief, National Guard Bureau has stated recently that the ARNG's 34 Combat Brigades are not combat ready due to significant equipment shortfalls.¹⁵ He also stated in his 2007 Posture Statement that, "[t]he Guard currently has less than 35 percent of the equipment it requires to perform its wartime mission. We gratefully acknowledge the \$900 million down-payment Congress made on resourcing our needs as an operational force for HLD/HLS and the overseas warfight, and recognize the full cost of restoring readiness will require continuing long-term Congressional attention."¹⁶ Recent history has not been kind to the Army and the Marines who have continually carried the overwhelming burden of our country's conflicts. The ARNG by design has also been significantly underfunded to meet today's high demand for ground forces. Retired MG Robert H. Scales in a recent article stated, "There simply is no way to sugar-coat the fact that a prosperous and empathetic nation like mine has willingly allowed one of its most essential institutions to come close to death on three occasions. Why? One reason is that my Army has been underfunded for more than half a century."¹⁷

It's the author's believe that equipping the ARNG is the linchpin to ensuring a unit progresses through the ARFORGEN life cycle successfully to meets it's wartime mission. Failure to equip a unit with its authorized equipment early in the ARFORGEN life cycle significantly reduces the units' readiness in training. It could also require a unit spend a lengthy post-mobilization training period prior to deployment in order to effectively train on new equipment. This has been a recent problem for ARNG units deploying in support of OIF/OEF. Several units have seen new equipment at the mobilization station for the first time, requiring extensive new equipment training from the individual to collative levels before validating their ability to effectively use this new equipment to conduct their wartime mission. Another significant problem has been the practice of leaving a unit's equipment in theater when redeploying. This practice has significantly reduced the unit's ability to train and respond to homeland defense and natural emergencies upon their redeployment. Given the current policy of reducing deployments to one year and the desire to minimize the time spent at the mobilization station prior to deploying, equipping units early in the ARFORGEN life cycle is critical.

The predominant responsibility for adequately and timely equipping our ARNG lies with congress. The Army, National Guard Bureau, and each state's JFHQs are fully capable of getting the equipment needed to the individual units once it has been procured. Congress and the Army have committed 29 billion dollars over the next five years to reset and procure the needed equipment for the ARNG to conduct its wartime and HLD/HLS missions. Continued

analysis must be done during this time to ensure the projected funding remains adequate to fulfill the ARNG requirements. The need for additional funds is likely to rise, as will pressures to divert funding to other requirements. The leadership of the ARNG must continue to engage congress and the Army to ensure funding remains in place to eliminate current shortfalls as quickly as possible. Furthermore, identifying ARNG units first to deploy in this next rotation of deployments and equipping them early in the ARFORGEN life cycle will be critical to the units' readiness and effectiveness in conducting its dual role missions.

Family Readiness

“The Defense Management Data Center has reported a 13-point decline (from 72 percent to 59 percent) in spousal support for participation in the Reserve Component from September 2003 to November 2004. Declines in spousal support were seen in all reserve components and pay-grades.”¹⁸ Spouses indicated frequent or long mobilizations as being their primary concern.¹⁹ ARFORGEN provides predictability for when a soldier is most likely to be called to active duty providing soldiers and their families the opportunity to plan well in advance for their soldier's absence from home. Spousal support, however, is unlikely to be won over without compensation in the form of benefits adequate to requite the sacrifices they incur when their soldier is away training or on a long deployment. Once a soldier has been deployed, easy access to family support services is essential to maintain the family's support for their soldier's service in the ARNG.

The increased reliance on the ARNG as an operational force brings with it a requirement to more adequately compensate soldiers and their families. During the years the ARNG was a strategic reserve, soldiers typically served one weekend a month and a 15-day annual training period each year. Soldiers and families understood this level of commitment and that their soldiers would only be called upon when needed to fight the big war. The transition to a rotational and operational force has drastically changed the level of commitment now required of the ARNG soldier and his family. With the implementation of ARFORGEN and the nation's increasing demand on the ARNG, improvements in benefits more in line with the active duty soldier are justified. Exactly what those benefits should be is debatable.

Efforts by the Congress and by the Department of Defense to respond in a timely manner to the evolving needs of the operational reserve have been hampered by the lack of reliable research and consistent data upon which to base legislative initiatives and policies.²⁰

Time is of the essence to ensure the commitment of soldiers and their families to serve in this operational force is maintained. The Department of Defense (DOD) should fund the needed

surveys and research to determine which benefits are the most effective for the dollars expended.²¹

Unlike active duty soldiers who deploy from Army installations with well established family support services, ARNG soldiers deploy from communities all over the US, often large distances from Army installations. Development of regional family support centers in each state has been critical to provide services to families with deployed soldiers. Family support centers established regionally in each state are not service specific. Each state, in addition to having a population of National Guard soldiers and airmen, is home to hundreds more reservists from all military services. Congress and the DOD need to increase and consistently fund family assistance programs which ensure families have easy access to family support services commensurate with those available on active duty installations.²² Thomas F. Hall, Assistant Defense Secretary for Reserve Affairs, recently stated, "Families always play a very key role in the careers and lives of our young men and women who serve... Without a family that is satisfied, ... more than likely service is not possible. The family has to be on board."²³

ARNG units must also develop and maintain a family support group (FSG). An FSG is critical to providing a support network for unit families when soldiers deploy. In addition, an active FSG, during the time a unit spends in the Reset/Train Pool and the Ready Pool, provides a vehicle for the unit to keep families informed on several issues while building cohesion. Unit leaders need to ensure family members are informed on numerous issues which may affect them during a member's deployment. Continuous communication between unit leaders, FSG, and family members strengthens relationships and builds trust which ultimately leads to soldiers being focused on the mission when they deploy knowing there is a strong FSG program in place taking care of their family's needs. The FSG is supported by a regional family support center during all phases of the ARFORGEN cycle. Reversing this declining trend of spousal support for soldiers is critical to maintaining the ARNG as an operational force for the long term.

Employer Support

Thomas F. Hall, in testimony before a congress subcommittee, stated, "As you already know, the stress on the force has increased, and we are continuing to closely monitor the impact of that stress on our Guard and Reserve members, on their families and their employers."²⁴ Consensus among DOD and National Guard Bureau officials is that employer support of their Guard and Reserve employees remains very strong. However, there is growing concern that continued reliance on reserve forces may began to erode this support. The problem is that DOD has just recently begun to look at how this increased reliance on the Guard

and Reserve is impacting employers. DOD Directive 1250.1, dated 13 April 2004, continues the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (NCESGR) as a DOD operational committee. Its purpose is to promote private and public understanding of the National Guard and Reserve to gain employer and community support. NCESGR serves to encourage citizen participation in the Guard and Reserve and develop employer relations initiatives which promote employee participation in the Reserve components. To ensure the Nation's employers continue to support their citizen soldiers, DOD and NCESGR must stay ahead of any eroding support by identifying issues before they become unmanageable. Glen A. Gotz, a fellow with the Institute for Defense Analysis, made the following recommendation in his paper entitled, *Strengthening Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve*:

DOD should determine the magnitude of costs that reserve call-ups impose on the various types of employers.... Reimbursing employers for at least some costs incurred might increase employer support of reserve call-ups.... The amounts paid might be determined by formula,... And the payments might be direct or by tax credit...²⁵

Gotz makes an excellent recommendation here, that employers, especially small business owners, regardless of being patriotic, have a responsibility to their business and its other employees. The loss of a key of employee in a small business can be harmful financially when the employee is called to duty for an extended period of time.

Robert M. Gates, Secretary of Defense has recently announced changes to department policy which should help in this area of employer support.²⁶ First he has directed that involuntary mobilization of the Reserve forces will be for a maximum of one year at any one time. Second, he has also directed that the planning objective of ARFORGEN of mobilizing Guard and Reserve forces once every five years remain. These two policies will provide predictability for employers allowing them to plan much better knowing when, how long, and for how often they will be without their citizen soldier.

Employer support is also a commander and citizen soldier responsibility. The increasing demand on ARNG soldiers for training and deployments requires service members and their chain of command work aggressively at keeping employers informed. Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) is an agency which has numerous tools available to assist commanders and citizen soldiers in gaining and maintaining employer support.

Conclusion

Reliance on the ARNG has increased significantly since 9/11. The US Army has been very clear that it can not sustain the current defense and security obligations without the ARNG

and the Reserve. Unfortunately it is apparent that the nation is involved in a long war with an escalating demand for greater HLD/HLS requirements. The ARNG has transitioned from a strategic reserve to a fully functional operational force to meet this changing environment. In addition, the Army has developed the ARFORGEN model as a way to generate trained and ready forces from all three Army components on a rotational basis across a 6 year planning horizon. The ARNG ARFORGEN model provides, a way to resource and prepare units to conduct their wartime mission, a rotational deployment schedule for units, and predictability for soldiers, their families, and employers. It also offers challenges not yet experienced by this force.

Meeting these challenges will require synchronizing incentives, programs, and policies across the spectrum of manning, training, equipping, family readiness, and employer support. Each of these traits, working in concert, must be sustained at the highest levels of readiness to ensure a ready, reliable, and relevant operational force. Congressional funding is crucial in the amounts and timing required to implement and sustain an operational ARNG within the ARFORGEN model. In addition to funding, congress and DOD must research the effects this increased demand on the ARNG is having on soldiers' families and their employers. Clearly new benefits which resonate with families and employers and requite the sacrifices they incur in support of their citizen soldier must be determined and put in place before their support begins to wane. Without family and employer support retaining the soldier is unlikely. The US is more dependent on the total force then at any other time in history. Implementing the recommendations provided throughout this paper will strengthen the ARNG's ability to meet its current and future missions.

Endnotes

¹ "Army Wants More Troops," Military Officers Association of America website site, available from http://www.moaa.org/lac/lac_issues_list/lac_update/lac_update_061215.htm#issue1; Internet; accessed 16 December 2006.

² H. Steven Blum, "The National Guard Transforming to an Operational Force," *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 43, (4th Quarter 2006): 15.

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