

COMMANDER'S HATCH

The New Heavy Division

It's more deployable and just as deadly

by MG George H. Harmeyer, Commanding General, U.S. Army Armor Center

Developing and reorganizing an Army division into a new design is historically a difficult task. We have just completed an effort encompassing several years and involving literally hundreds of people — the redesign of the heavy division. This task was undertaken methodically and deliberately. It was supported by constructive, virtual, and live analysis, as well as the reasoned military judgment of each branch proponent in the Army. As Chief of Armor, I was personally involved throughout the process, as was my predecessor. On balance, the redesigned division is the best of the several alternatives examined. As you are no doubt aware, we have become a power projection Army with global demands and responsibilities. This redesign embodies that change and postures the Army, and the Armored Force, to move forward into the next century. We will now focus our energies on fielding, training and testing the new division. This "Commander's Hatch" will review some of the reasons for the new design and discuss several of the more significant aspects of the new Force XXI heavy division.

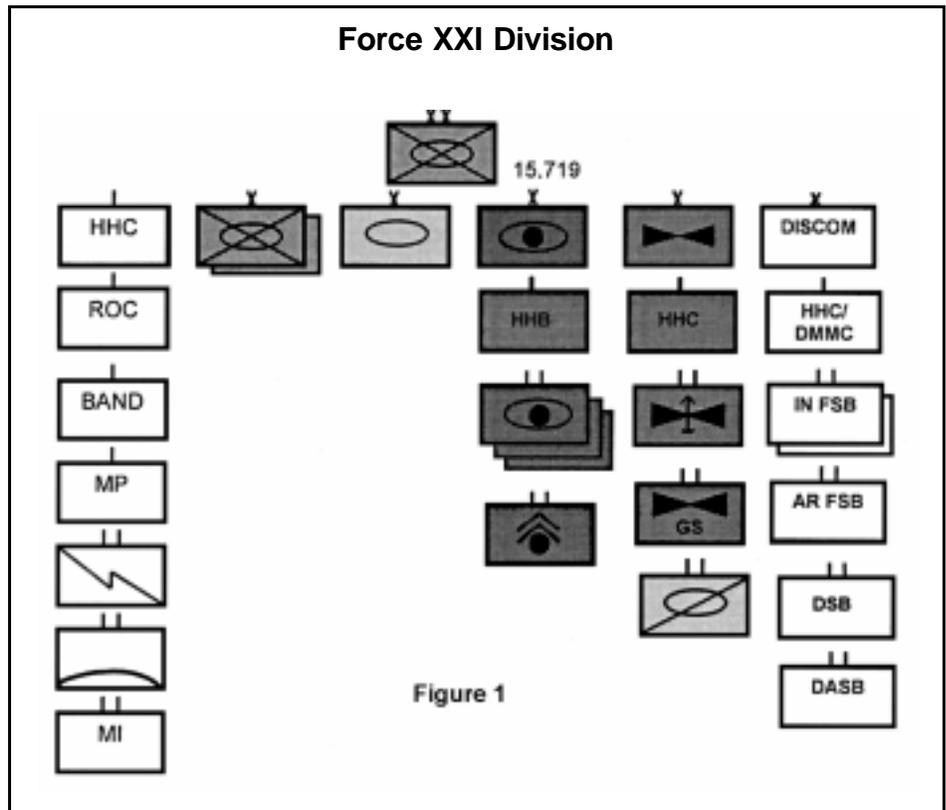
First, the requirement to deploy a heavy division faster was a central piece of the new design. The ability to deploy has historically competed with the tactical capability of the unit. That is, if a force is easily deployed, then it generally lacks tactical mobility, survivability, and lethality. This has been at the heart of the enduring debate concerning the capabilities of heavy and light forces. Our task in redesigning the division was to retain as much capability as possible, but in a smaller package. The obvious comparison that tends to be drawn is in relative combat capability to the Army of Excellence division. One of the great truisms has been that "more is better." But we have reached the point in our mission set where more is not necessarily better it is just more, and strains our available resources. "Better is better," therefore the objective we pursued was to provide a more readily deployable force with the combat power needed to successfully execute the mission, while sustaining minimum losses. Our research shows we have accomplished this. The Force XXI heavy division will retain its capability and be 10% more deployable

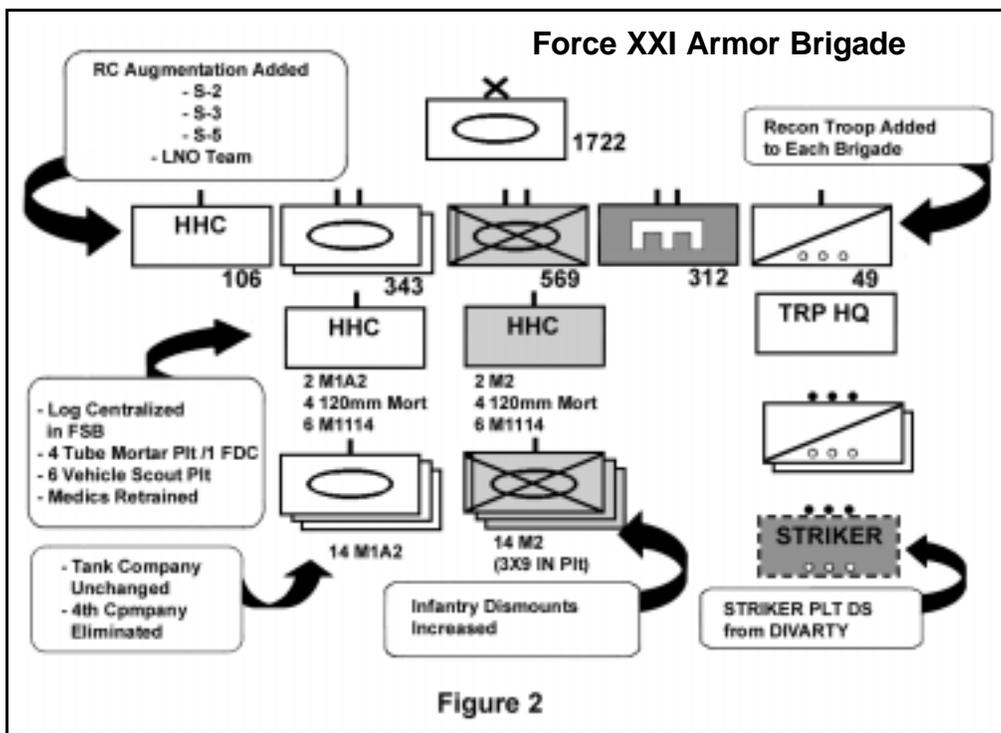
by air and 14% more deployable by sea than our current Army of Excellence Division. For the foreseeable future, there is no expectation that we will fight massed armored forces to the extent anticipated during the Cold War. Therefore, the combat power of the division is sized to successfully defeat projected threat opponents both in war and in peace support operations.

Second, we are now in a class all unto ourselves in terms of capability. No other army in the world can approach the degree of battlefield awareness we are achieving through digitization. This capability enables us to reduce uncertainty about enemy and friendly forces, the terrain, and the battlefield in general to the point where knowledge becomes a substantial force multiplier. This means that each tank present on the battlefield is postured to make a contribution to the mission, and fewer assets are wasted or underutilized by being in the wrong place at

the wrong time. This capability enables the Force XXI heavy division to dominate the battlespace, control the tempo of the battlefield, and operate with unmatched agility. Coupled with new systems like the M1A2 SEP tank, M2A3 Bradley, Comanche, and Crusader makes this smaller force equal to, or perhaps greater, in terms of lethality and survivability.

Third, we needed to make the division smaller because it no longer fit with the projected strategic environment. Since the end of the Cold War, the Army has eliminated six active divisions as part of the overall drawdown of the Department of Defense. At the same time, the number of missions assigned and regions where our Army is deployed have increased. The Army is strained in meeting all of these requirements. Many units, as recently pointed out in a General Accounting Office report, are manned at a marginal level. The choice was clear — reduce the size of the division or reduce the number





brigade comes in at 1,948. Besides the engineer battalion, a reconnaissance troop has been added to each brigade. Changes in the brigade staff include the addition of an S-5 and a brigade surgeon, two retrans teams, additional liaison teams, and staff augmentation in the S-2 and S-3 sections. These enhancements will be formed in the reserve component. This organization provides a more capable, flexible brigade headquarters for continuous and dispersed operations. The reconnaissance troop adds a key capability to the brigade that has been lacking for some time. The brigade commander now has a dedicated reconnaissance asset to satisfy his requirements for battlefield intelligence that will aid him in his fight for information dominance. The troop is composed of two 6-vehicle platoons, plus a troop headquarters section. A dedicated HMMWV is provided for troop operations. The ability of the

of divisions fielded. Attempting to maintain the size of a division built to oppose a Soviet-type threat was an untenable position for the Army.

With this as a backdrop, let me now briefly describe the changes in the heavy division. I will focus on those which directly impact Armor units, but will also outline some which are of significant interest.

Figure 1 shows the major commands within the division. Most of the brigade-size organizations found in the Army of Excellence Division are still present. A notable exception is the absence of the engineer brigade. Since the engineer battalions normally function under control of the maneuver brigade, they are now attached. The engineer brigade headquarters is thus eliminated and the division engineer staff increased to handle division-level engineer planning. The division chemical company also is gone. The NBC reconnaissance platoon is retained, but relocated to the division cavalry squadron. Area smoke and decontamination functions are moved to corps. The division cavalry squadron remains under the aviation brigade. A new addition to the division is the rear operations company. This unit provides an organic capability to plan and coordinate operations in the division rear area. Other notable changes resulted in increasing the MLRS battery to a full battalion, and adding a second and third lift company in the aviation brigade that will be formed in the reserve component. Overall TOE strength

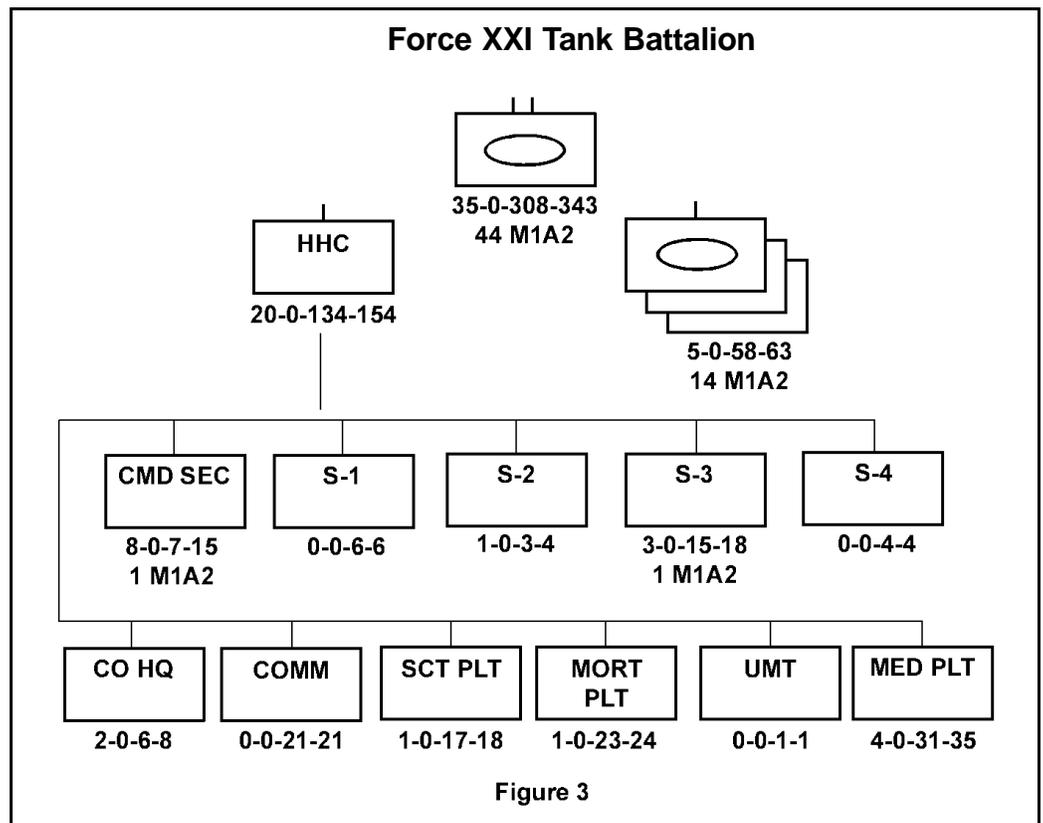
of the mechanized infantry division is reduced from 18,069 to 15,719, of which 417 is structured in the reserve component. This reduction also encompasses eliminating some Compo 4 (unresourced) units, such as the second attack helicopter battalion and the antiarmor company in the mech infantry battalion, which were required but not resourced.

Figure 2 shows the new armored brigade at a strength of 1,722; the mech infantry

recon troop to significantly contribute to the brigade fight was demonstrated clearly during the brigade and division advanced warfighting experiments, as well as in TRADOC Analysis Center (TRAC) evaluation.

The tank battalion, shown in Figure 3, has a strength of 343. This decrease in required strength is achieved through sev-

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eral means. The battalion is composed of three companies, for a total of 44 tanks. Four companies with three tanks in each platoon, and three companies with four tanks in each platoon were the two competing options. The Armor and Infantry Centers participated in a thorough analysis in conjunction with TRAC and supported by personnel from the National Training Center. The three-tank platoon was found to be currently too fragile within the context of the larger organization and doctrine. Retaining a fourth company with three tanks in each platoon provided only an illusion of greater maneuver flexibility. This smaller, three-company battalion, equipped with near-real-time common situational awareness, is more agile, lethal and capable of precision maneuver.

A reduction in battalion size was also achieved by removing most CSS assets and centralizing them in a forward support company organic to each forward support battalion. New CSS doctrine and organizations will reduce the unit's footprint and provide a greater tooth-to-tail ratio. This enhanced logistics should produce efficiencies not possible through the current system of decentralized logistics operations.

The tank/mech battalions and brigade recon troop scout platoons were standardized at six vehicles per platoon. For the near term, these vehicles will continue to be HMMWVs and will be equipped with the Long Range Advanced Scout Surveillance System (LRAS3) beginning in 2001, and M3s in division and regimental cavalry.

Two other changes are important to the mounted community. The mortar platoon is reduced to four mortars and one FDC, vice the current six tubes and two FDCs. Complete elimination of this capability was deemed not prudent. Finally, the Mechanized Infantry Platoon is reorganized to three squads of nine riflemen each to address a recurring problem apparent from numerous NTC rotations and training exercises.

These are the major changes made in the heavy division. The Force XXI Division TOE is planned for first implementation [4th Infantry Division (M)] in FY 2000. A good deal of work is yet to be done in preparing doctrinal changes and restructuring school-house POIs. We must now get on with it. The esprit and dedication of tankers and cavalymen in the Armored Force will make the Army's transition to the Force XXI Division a success.