



THE ARMY'S LOUISIANA MANEUVERS AND FORCE XXI

The mission of the Louisiana Maneuvers (LAM) Task Force is crucial: to redesign, equip and structure the Army for the 21st century. LAM is dedicated to changing the Army by harnessing the power of computers to the soldier's advantage in future combat.

The task force draws its name from a series of exercises conducted by then Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall before the United States entered World War II. The purpose of the first Louisiana Maneuvers was to see how well American soldiers might perform in combat against enemies who had both heavy armor and attack aircraft.

When LAM was formed in 1992, it was similar to a think tank, looking at the future and projecting the Army into that future. Working under specific guidance from the Army chief of staff and the service's other four-star generals as a "board of directors," LAM is now focused on helping to design Force XXI — the Army's new way of organizing itself to meet likely challenges in the next decade. While no one yet knows what Force XXI will look like, it is almost certain that traditional definitions of brigade, division and corps will change.

The goal is to be able to win quickly and decisively on future battlefields with minimal casualties. To accomplish this goal, the Louisiana Maneuvers Task Force is working with the doctrinal premise which says that the days of hierarchical command and rigid battlespace

are over. Because battle commands are already linked through computers and communications networks, and will be more so in the future, battlespace will be highly fluid.

The combined air-ground operations of coalition forces during the Persian Gulf War in 1991 show how rapidly conditions on the modern battlefield can change, and how effectively computers and communications networks have functioned. The coalition's advantage in the use of these effective networks led to a quick and decisive victory.

To rest on past success, however, is to court future disaster. This is one of the driving reasons given by Army Chief of Staff Gen. Gordon R. Sullivan for creating the Louisiana Maneuvers Task Force and developing Force XXI.

The Army hopes to make all major decisions on Force XXI by the turn of the century, including how it will be structured, manned and equipped. A series of exercises and experiments will be conducted in the next few years to measure the speed and skill of existing units in performing combat tasks. In addition, an Experimental Force, largely based at Fort Hood, Texas, will use advanced computers and communications equipment in the testing. These experiments and exercises will use combinations of field training, virtual reality and simulation.

more ...

DEFENSE REPORT is published by the Association of the United States Army's Institute of Land Warfare. The series is designed to provide information on topics that will stimulate professional discussion and further public understanding of the Army's role in national defense. Questions regarding the **DEFENSE REPORT** should be directed to: AUSA, Institute of Land Warfare (Attn: **DEFENSE REPORT**), 2425 Wilson Blvd. Arlington, VA 22201.

Exercise Atlantic Resolve, conducted last fall in Europe, replaced the Reforger exercises of the Cold War. Atlantic Resolve demonstrated how the Army effectively combined and used field training, virtual reality and simulation in a synthetic joint theater of war involving the Navy and Air Force and soldiers on the ground. There will be many other similar exercises and experiments in the next five years as the Army develops Force XXI.

To be successful on future battlefields, the Army's Force XXI must be able to:

- ***win the information war*** — know what an enemy is going to do while hiding what your force is going to do;
- ***conduct precision strike*** — employ the full range of aviation, missiles and artillery against an enemy to win the land war;
- ***project and sustain the force*** — take soldiers from the United States to wherever on the globe they need to be, and keep them fully supplied during their mission;

- ***protect the force*** — be prepared to destroy an enemy's command and control, warfighting and warmaking capabilities;
- ***dominate the maneuver battle*** — exploit the speed of U.S. land forces, aircraft and missiles in combat.

It is up to LAM to carry out the campaign plan for the chief of staff by examining battle command, battlespace, depth and simultaneous attack, early entry and combat support.

The Army must have the training, quality manpower and equipment resources needed to meet the challenges of the 21st century. There must be adequate funding in the annual defense budget to ensure that the Army is sufficiently resourced to achieve the goals of the Louisiana Maneuvers Task Force and Force XXI.

The Louisiana Maneuvers Task Force is critical to Force XXI as America's Army prepares for warfare in the next century.

###