



The Army's New Heavy Division Design

The Army's New Heavy Division will be more lethal than the present combat force even though it will have fewer soldiers and armored vehicles. The new design will give the Army a heavy combat division that is strategically deployable, agile and flexible. The Army's announcement of the new design follows almost four years of analysis and experimentation involving thousands of soldiers and civilians from the Army's major commands and a number of civilian contractors who partnered with the Army.

The current heavy division has served the Army since 1984. It was designed to win in a major contingency against Warsaw Pact forces. However, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact, the current 18,000-man heavy division has had to adapt to a wider range of varied and unpredictable threats. The New Heavy Division design will better meet these threats because it is more tailorable and adaptable to a variety of contingencies anywhere in the world.

The new design emerged from an earlier interim experimental division selected in 1996. The 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized) at Fort Hood, Texas, was selected as the "Force XXI Experimental Force." Its 1st Brigade was reconfigured in the interim division organization and outfitted with new weapon systems, digital communications and doctrine. In the Task Force Advanced Warfighting Experiment (AWE) in March 1997 at the National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin, California, the brigade was successful against the NTC's formidable opposing force. That success was attributed, in part, to increased access to battlefield information provided by digital communications. A version of the New Heavy Division design, called the

Conservative Heavy Division, was tested through simulation at the Division AWE at Fort Hood in November 1997.

The most significant design change is the command and control apparatus in the new division involving a near paperless operation passing information back and forth via computer-based communications. Information exchange will be built on a digital communications framework that will allow the new division to cover about three times the battlefield area of today's division. The framework includes an intranet information system allowing leaders to see where friendly units are and send up-to-the-minute data on enemy locations. The object is to give soldiers "situational awareness," or the ability to know where they are, where their buddies are and where the enemy is at all times.

Information will be distributed over a digital communications framework. Speed of communications will allow commanders to move faster and direct their weapon fires more efficiently than before. Situational awareness will be obtained through links with satellites and the Joint Surveillance Tactical Acquisition Radar System (Joint STARS) aircraft, as well as Army sources. To enhance further the combat commander's information capabilities, a reconnaissance troop, mounted in armored "Humvees" with devices for ground intelligence collection, has been added to each of the division's three brigades.

The New Heavy Division will be comprised of 15,302 active duty soldiers. There will be 417 reserve component soldiers integrated into the division when it is deployed. Today's Army of Excellence division has about 18,000

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soldiers. The 4th Infantry Division at Fort Hood, will be reorganized and equipped under the new design.

The new division will have three maneuver brigades — one armored and two mechanized infantry. The armored brigade will have two armored battalions and one mechanized battalion; mechanized brigades will have two mechanized battalions and one armored battalion. A battalion will have three companies. Each armored battalion will be equipped with 45 M1A2 Abrams tanks; mechanized battalions will have 45 M2A3 Bradley Fighting Vehicles. Both systems are due for delivery in fiscal year 2000. Today's battalions have 58 M1A1 Abrams and 58 M2A2 Bradleys respectively.

The division will have two Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) batteries with 18 launchers rather than the present one battery of nine launchers. Artillery battalions will be equipped with 18 Paladin howitzers, down from the present 24 howitzers; the Paladins will be replaced by the Crusader advanced artillery system when available.

The division to be fielded in 2000 will not have all the systems with onboard digital communications capability. However, the organization should be fully equipped by 2010. At that time, aviation attack and aviation support battalions will have 15 AH-64 Apache Longbow helicopters, 33 RAH-66 Comanches and 24 UH-60 Black Hawks.

The ability of maneuver commanders to cover greater distances on the battlefield than ever before presents a challenge to combat service support (CSS) forces. This requires a change to logistics concepts so that supplies can keep up with maneuver commanders and allow them to maintain their momentum. The first objective was to allow the maneuver battalion commander to focus on the warfight and not be distracted by the combat service support responsibilities.

Under the new concept, supplies will be moved in a pipeline from the manufacturer to the theater port and then "right up to the foxhole where it really counts." That is a change from supply-based support to a distribution-based system. Control of combat service support is moved from the maneuver battalion commander to the CSS chain of command. The armor and mechanized brigades each have a forward support battalion (FSB) to provide logistical support; each

maneuver battalion has a forward support company carrying out a similar mission.

Because of situational awareness, the FSB commander in support of the maneuver brigade is able to anticipate the requirements of the supported commander and begin pulling CSS capabilities through the logistics pipeline. Even before the brigade commander realizes he needs it, the logistician should have already anticipated the requirement. The same thing is repeated down at the maneuver battalion level with the relationship between the forward support company commander and the maneuver battalion commander. A forward support company will have maintenance as well as supply capabilities.

There are several "enablers" that make the CSS concept work. One is the CSS Control System, part of the division's Army Tactical Command and Control System (ATCCS), which provides a common picture to all commanders in the division. Another is the Mobility Tracking System (MTS). MTS provides an ability to see logistics capability as it moves through the logistics pipeline, giving the division leadership the capability to move supplies to units in greatest need. Still in the development stage is a Forward Repair System, Heavy (FRSH) vehicle, with a crane capable of lifting an engine from a tank. Presence of the FRSH should eliminate the current tendency to use the M-88 recovery vehicle for lift and allow it to be used for its primary mission — recovery.

The most basic enabler will be the "multicapable" mechanic, i.e., a mechanic who can do both organization and direct support-level repairs on combat systems. The multicapable mechanic has a broader range of skills and is capable of completing direct support repairs forward on the battlefield.

After the 4th Infantry Division is digitized and reorganized, it will continue to have a developmental mission. In 2003, its sister unit, the 1st Cavalry Division, will also be digitized. A year later, III Corps, both divisions' parent command, will have digitized command and control systems.

The Army's march to Army XXI is a multiyear process leading to a lethal combat force to fight and win the nation's wars. However, the path to Army XXI will be dependent on consistent funding and congressional support.