



The IBCT: A Combat Force for Today, A Proving Ground for Tomorrow

ISSUE 5: The Interim Brigade Combat Teams in Army Transformation

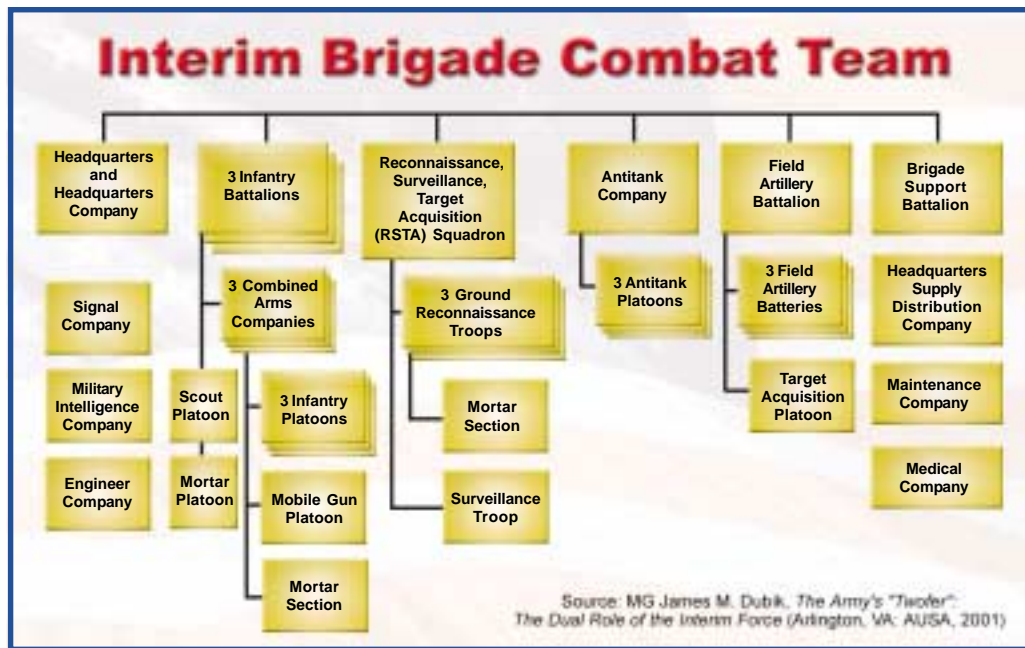
Why the Interim Brigade Combat Team?

The Interim Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) serves two primary roles. In the near term, it satisfies present-day strategic requirements. Our current light units can rapidly deploy but lack staying power and firepower. Our current heavy forces are extremely lethal and survivable, but slow to deploy. While these forces are well-adapted for some contingencies, others require a force that is both deployable and survivable while remaining sufficiently lethal. The IBCT is a medium-weight force that will bridge this capability gap until the Objective Force is a reality. It is tailored to serve as the land combat element in a joint task force, and will meet a number of increasingly necessary contingencies, from peacekeeping operations and low-intensity conflicts to high-intensity conflicts when properly augmented.



In the far term, the IBCT will serve as a proving ground for developing the doctrine, tactics and techniques of the Objective Force. The IBCT will also train junior officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs)— tomorrow’s battalion commanders and command sergeants major—in a style of deploying, fighting and sustaining that in many ways resembles the Objective Force of the future.

Structure of the IBCT



At the core of the IBCT are three infantry battalions, but it also incorporates a variety of units not normally part of a traditional Army brigade: military intelligence, signal and medical companies all form organic parts of the IBCT. The IBCT also incorporates an entirely new unit, the Reconnaissance, Surveillance, Target Acquisition (RSTA) squadron, which uses ground reconnaissance troops, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), electronic warfare assets, radar and ground sensors to collect intelligence and provide precision-strike capabilities.

Location

The first two IBCTs are currently being organized at Fort Lewis, Washington. Four more brigades will shortly begin the transformation process at Forts Richardson and Wainwright in Alaska; Schofield Barracks, Hawaii; Fort Polk, Louisiana; and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania (56th Brigade, 28th Infantry Division [Mechanized], an Army National Guard unit). The 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review recommends an IBCT be stationed in Europe by 2007.



The IBCT (continued)

Timetable

The transformation to the IBCT design is expected to take a little more than a year for an active component brigade, longer for a reserve component brigade. The cost of transformation is more than \$1 billion per brigade combat team. The first of the brigades with the Interim Armored Vehicle (IAV) will be fully operational in 2003.

Equipment and Capabilities

In order to create the IBCTs quickly and cheaply, the Army will outfit them with off-the-shelf equipment with enhanced technology.

The primary combat platform of the IBCT is the Interim Armored Vehicle, a modified and improved version of the eight-wheeled Light Armored Vehicle (LAV-III). The IAV can travel up to 60 mph, has a 330-mile cruising range and is equipped with armor able to withstand 14.5mm heavy machine gun fire and artillery fragments. Most important, the IAV is designed to be deployed by C-130, the Air Force's primary intratheater cargo aircraft, capable of landing on short, rough airstrips, or the C-17 in its intratheater role. The IBCT will employ two primary variations of the IAV: an infantry carrier in nine configurations and a mobile gun system (MGS). Using one platform to fill this variety of roles creates a commonality of equipment that will significantly reduce the logistical footprint of the IBCT.

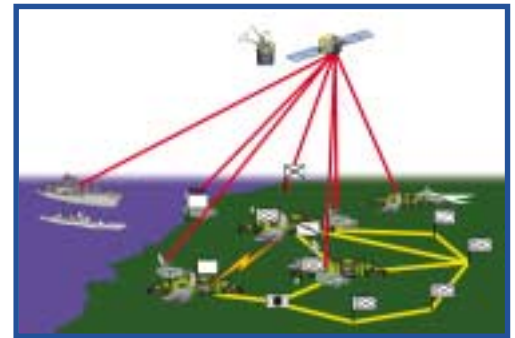
IAV CONFIGURATIONS
Infantry Carrier Vehicle

- Mortar Carrier
- Antitank Guided Missile Vehicle
- Reconnaissance Vehicle
- Fire Support Vehicle
- Engineer Support Vehicle
- Commander's Vehicle
- Medical Evacuation Vehicle
- Nuclear - Biological - Chemical (NBC) Reconnaissance

Mobile Gun System



In addition to a lighter, more mobile weapon platform, the IBCT will also be equipped with a variety of recently developed communications and intelligence technologies—such as UAVs and a tactical internet—that will provide the information dominance it needs to carry out its mission at all points on the spectrum of operations. A combination of advanced sensors and a robust, redundant, reliable, internetted information network will allow the IBCT to see first, understand first and act decisively. These highly developed data networks



Tactical Internet with "Reachback" Capabilities

will connect combat units with support units and with one another. They will also allow the IBCT to "reach back" to the United States or other U.S. forces in the area (such as U.S. Navy or U.S. Air Force units) for long-range fires, up-to-date intelligence, and logistics support.

IBCT—Bridge to the Objective Force

The ultimate goal of Army Transformation is the Objective Force, a fully networked, rapidly deployable combat force with the lethality and survivability of current forces, but with reduced logistic footprint and improved sustainability. The centerpiece of the Objective Force is the Future Combat System (FCS), a networked system of vehicles, weapon platforms and sensors that will look significantly different from today's M1 Abrams tanks and M2 Bradley infantry fighting vehicles. Although the FCS does not yet exist, developing doctrine and training methodologies for the FCS can begin today. Like the Objective Force, the IBCT capitalizes on information dominance to defeat the enemy and survive on the battlefield. Junior leaders of today trained in the IBCT's methods of deploying, fighting and sustaining will be well positioned to lead the Objective Force when the FCS comes on line. In addition, creating, training and leading the IBCTs will teach the Army how to create and fight the Objective Force. In the words of Army Secretary Thomas E. White, "We can use these interim brigades to support experimentation and testing as we transform the Army to our Objective Force, the ultimate goal of our Transformation."

