



Stryker Is the Current Force

Stryker Brigades: Integral to the Current Force

The Stryker Brigade isn't primarily about new vehicles; it's about a new way of organizing a brigade. It's about links that allow commanders to see and share and understand information about the battlespace. They can acquire instantaneously a level of awareness that formerly would have been impossible at that level of warfighting. . . . When the back of that vehicle opens up and the troops come out, their situational awareness will be better than any other group of troops that are delivered to a combat situation.

*General Richard B. Myers, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
34th Annual IFPA-Fletcher Conference on National Security and Policy, 3 December 2003*

In 1999, the Army endeavored to form a new, networked brigade that would use onboard computer networks, aviation, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and a new vehicle to fight with unprecedented speed and awareness.

This vision became a fully-formed reality in only four short years—the Stryker vehicle and Stryker Brigade Combat Teams (SBCTs) are in operations now in Iraq. Two SBCTs have undergone extensive training and exercises at the National Training Center (Fort Irwin, California) and the Joint Readiness Training Center (Fort Polk, Louisiana). The first—3d Brigade, 2d Infantry Division—reached initial operational capability in May 2003.

The SBCTs are designed to move more swiftly than heavy units while providing more combat power than light units. Enhanced mobility, increased situational awareness, combined-arms integration down to the company level and the ability to operate jointly—with other services as well as with multinational forces and government agencies—set the Stryker Brigades apart.



Dennis Steele, ARMY magazine

Digital command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR) networks allow SBCT Soldiers to see, share and understand battlefield information more quickly and decisively. The unique design offers myriad capabilities to be integrated into one unit; assets such as armor or artillery can be expanded or contracted as needed. From lower-intensity conflicts to major theater war, the Stryker Brigades are capable across the full operational spectrum.

The Soldier remains the central component to the Stryker Brigade: Each brigade will now have approximately 1,400 infantrymen and approximately 250 scouts as part of its team of more than 3,800 Soldiers. Other components include a mobile gun platoon, mortar platoon, forward observers, snipers and three infantry line platoons. Each brigade has three infantry battalions, a cavalry battalion with reconnaissance, surveillance and target acquisition skills, and an artillery battalion with M198 155mm howitzers and counterfire radars.



Dennis Steele, ARMY magazine

Stryker Brigades (continued)

A support battalion and military intelligence, engineer, signal and antitank companies round out the teams. The SBCTs now have Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below (FBCB2, a hardware/software system that links satellites, sensors, communication devices, vehicles, aircraft and weapons in a digital network), Shadow UAVs, field repair systems, snipers and javelin missile capabilities. Designed to employ a smaller force to cover large areas of operation as well as to swiftly deliver and dismount Soldiers, the Stryker Brigades swiftly cover extended distances while being well suited to current conflicts that require urban, dismounted operations and interaction with local populations.

The platform for the brigade is the Stryker vehicle; each SBCT will have approximately 300. Fast, quiet and light, the Stryker offers ten different configurations, reducing spare-parts and training costs. It can travel more than 300 miles on one tank of gas; its speed can top 60 miles per hour, and its armor withstands 14.5mm heavy machine-gun fire. When the Stryker is equipped with slat armor, only the Abrams tank offers more protection. Its speed and maneuverability give it the advantage in dense, urban areas where a tank would not be as maneuverable.

The first Stryker Brigade—3d Brigade, 2d Infantry Division—deployed in late 2003 as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq's Sunni Triangle. In January 2004 it moved to replace the 101st Airborne Division in northern Iraq. In its first tests on the battlefield, the first Stryker Brigade has performed just as it was designed, swiftly delivering Soldiers into Samarra with the 4th Infantry Division and conducting patrols and raids to capture weapons



Dennis Steele, ARMY magazine

caches and insurgent leaders. One Stryker ran over an improvised explosive device (IED); the only injury was the driver's broken ankle.

The 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, Fort Lewis, Washington—Stryker Brigade #2—will reach initial operational capability between March and May 2004 and will rotate into Iraq later this year. The 172d Infantry Brigade (Forts Wainwright and Richardson, Alaska) will be operational in 2005, followed by the 2d Cavalry Regiment (Fort Polk, Louisiana), which has aviation and reconnaissance assets that will be deployed with it in 2006; 2d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division (Schofield Barracks, Hawaii) in 2007; and 56th Brigade, 28th Infantry Division, Pennsylvania National Guard, in 2008–2010.

I think the investment in Stryker is going to prove itself very well over time.

*General Peter J. Schoomaker
Chief of Staff, Army
ILW Breakfast, 8 January 2004*

The Road Ahead

The Secretary of Defense approved funding for the fifth and sixth SBCTs in December 2003. The last two brigades will come on line with a variety of enhancements that, depending on performance, may be retrofitted to the other four brigades:

- Comanche helicopters;
- aviation squadrons;
- 155mm lightweight howitzers;
- joint tactical radio system (JTRS) and wide area network single shelter switch/base band nodes (WAN SSS/BBN) to increase communications mobility and interoperability with sister and allied services.

Stryker Brigades are networked and can bring enhanced joint and expeditionary capabilities to the fight. Stryker Brigades see more of the battlespace from the ground than any other unit in theater. Soldiers communicate with commanders and one another via e-mail; they see adversaries' and fellow Soldiers' locations relative to their own in near real-time, with the help of FBCB2. The Stryker is bringing the fight to the enemy today and is relevant to the Army's way ahead.

The Stryker is in Iraq today, strategically agile and capable across the full spectrum of operations.