6

We haven't got the money, so we've got to think.[1]

Force Structure

Introduction

6.1   From reviewing the background of the Army in Chapter 2 it was clear that force structure 'hollowness' has been a persistent feature of the Army organisation. Hollowness is the maintenance of organisations that are insufficiently resourced to be operationally useful. This problem persists in the Army. It consumes resources while not delivering capability in meaningful time frames. It has created the paradox that the Army can actually increase useable capability by reducing its organisational size.

6.2   The hollowness of the Army's force structure is a significant theme within this Chapter. This Chapter will examine the suitability of the Army's current force structure. It will examine what is needed of that structure to satisfy the capability requirements demanded of it. It will do this by:

- Describing the existing force structure

- Considering the evidence received on the force structure

- Concluding with the implications arising from the evidence.

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1   Attributed to Ernest Rutherford, quoted in Partington, A, (Ed). *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* New Edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1994, p. 265.

The Existing Force Structure

Introduction

6.3   A detailed description of the Army's existing organisation is at
        Appendix E. The distribution of Army's units within this force structure
        is provided at Appendix F. In broad terms the Army is structured around
        three components. These are Army Headquarters, and two subordinate
        commands, Land Command and Training Command. A third
        subordinate command, Logistics Command, was subsumed within the
        Support Command-Australia on the recommendation of the Defence
        Efficiency Review.[2]

6.4   The Army organisation is focused on the tasks of force generation and
        sustainment. Army Headquarters provides direction and resources.
        Training Command inducts recruits into the Army and provides
        individual skills training. Land Command takes trained individuals and
        collectively trains them into cohesive units and brigades.

6.5   When an operation, such as East Timor occurs, units and formations are
        given to a joint commander. In some cases the commander and
        supporting headquarters may be a Land Command element. In East
        Timor this was the case with the Deployable Joint Force Headquarters. In
        other cases the tactical commander might come from a joint headquarters,
        such as Northern Command in Darwin.

Description

Army Headquarters

6.6   Army Headquarters supports the Chief of Army who is a defence group
        manager. The Chief of Army is responsible for the preparation of forces
        for land operations, the efficient and effective strategic management of the
        Group and the future development of the Army.[3] A headquarters
        consisting of three general directorates, six agencies and a number of
        supporting advisers and minor directorates supports him. Total staffing

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2   Department of Defence: *Future Directions for the Management of Australia's Defence*, Report of the
    Defence Efficiency Review, Department of Defence, Canberra, 1997. See Recommendation 35,
    Annex E, Page 6.
3   Derived from the Defence Annual Report 1998–1999, AGPS, Canberra.

of the headquarters is approximately 90 military and 40 civilian personnel.[4]

6.7   The Chief of the Army's central role is the preparation and development of the Army, not operational command. His subordinate commanders, when answering to him, are predominantly concerned with the preparation and training of the Army.[5]

Land Command – Army

6.8   Land Command contains the majority of the Defence Forces ground combat troops. This includes combat support[6] and combat service support[7] troops. It consists of four subordinate formations whose headquarters are depicted in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1   Subordinate Headquarters within Land Command
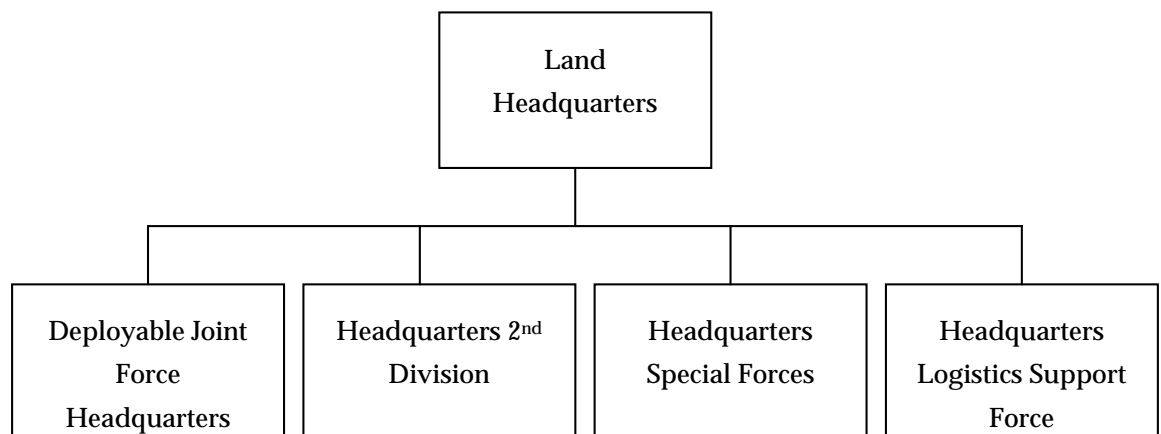
Source   Derived from Appendix E and F.

Subordinate Elements of the Deployable Joint Force Headquarters (DJFHQ)

6.9   The DJFHQ, based in Brisbane, is a field deployable joint headquarters derived from Headquarters 1st Division. It formed the basis for the

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4   Army Monthly Liability and Strength Statement as at April 2000, Annex A, Page 1, Department of Defence, Submission 73.

5   For a further description of the interaction of the Army in other Defence processes see Department of Defence, Submission 73, pp. 1076-1080.

6   Combat support refers to elements giving direct support to combat forces – such as field engineering.

7   Combat service support refers to elements that provide logistical support – such as medical, supply and transport services.

INTERFET Headquarters deployed in East Timor in late 1999 and early 2000. When in Australia it has command responsibility for four brigades. These are:

- 1 Brigade – a mechanised brigade, predominantly staffed by ARA at approximately 70 per cent of operational strength[8] and based in Darwin;

- 3 Brigade – a light infantry brigade, predominantly staffed by ARA at approximately 85 per cent of operational strength and based in Townsville;

- 7 Brigade – a motorised brigade, staffed by ARA and GRes at approximately 73 per cent of operational strength and based in Brisbane; and

- 11 Brigade – a light infantry brigade, predominantly staffed by GRes at approximately 30 per cent of operational strength with elements located in north and central Queensland

6.10   Australian Regular Army (ARA) personnel predominantly staff 1 and 3 Brigades. At the time of the inquiry these two brigades represented the bulk of the Army's ready deployment force (RDF). Staffing within the brigades was maintained at close to operational levels.

6.11   7 Brigade is an integrated ARA and General Reserve (GRes) brigade. In May 2000 it provided a rotation battalion group based on 6 Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment (6RAR), for service in East Timor.[9] Approximately 300 of the personnel within the deployed battalion group were GRes personnel on voluntary full-time service.[10]

6.12   The brigades under the DJFHQ do not appear to share a common operational objective or task. Their organization appears to be for administrative convenience. We felt that this arrangement required explanation.

Subordinate Elements of Headquarters 2nd Division

6.13   Headquarters 2nd Division has five subordinate brigades. All the brigades are light infantry brigades staffed predominantly by reservists. The brigades are:

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8   Derived from Army Strength Summary April 2000, Department of Defence, Submission 73.
9   Brigadier P McIntosh, Transcript, p. 252.
10   Senate Hansard, Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade, 3 May 2000, p. 3.

- 4 Brigade – based in Melbourne, staffed at approximately 40 per cent of operational strength with subordinate elements drawn from across the state of Victoria;

- 5 Brigade – based in Sydney, staffed at approximately 30 per cent of operational strength with subordinate elements drawn largely from the Sydney and southern NSW area;

- 8 Brigade – based in Newcastle, staffed at approximately 32 per cent of operational strength with subordinate elements drawn largely from the Newcastle and central NSW region;

- 9 Brigade – based in Adelaide, staffed at approximately 35 per cent of operational strength with subordinate elements drawn from South Australia and Tasmania; and

- 13 Brigade – based in Perth, staffed at approximately 30 per cent of operational strength with subordinate elements drawn from Western Australia.

6.14   The brigades of the 2nd Division are earmarked for protective tasks in defence of Australia.[11] On average their staffing has been well below 50 per cent of their operational staffing level.[12] This staffing figure does not represent the trained staffing level ready for deployment. 4 Brigade has had enhanced staffing as a consequence of the Restructuring the Army Trials. 4 Brigade was used as a test bed for a scheme to revitalise the Reserves. This trial provided increased ARA staffing and resources to 4 Brigade to determine how the performance of reserve formations could be improved.[13] The success of these efforts points to the potential to replicate the scheme in other areas of the Reserve.

6.15   The parlous state of these Reserve formations represented the single greatest concern for our committee during its inquiry into the Army. We fully supported the arguments put to us by the Defence Reserves Association with respect to these organizations.[14] We believed Reservists should be able to serve in fully staffed and properly equipped organizations that could deploy on operations as formed units. The dedication, personal sacrifices and professionalism of countless Reservists made achieving this outcome a high priority for our committee.

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11   Army Submission 47, p. 777.
12   Derived from April Strength Summary, Department of Defence, Submission 73.
13   Brigadier D Ball, Transcript, pp. 280–286.
14   Members of the Committee were privileged to be invited to a Defence Reserves Association Conference in July 2000 to be briefed on Reserve issues. (Defence Reserves Association Conference, Randwick Barracks, 8 July 2000)

Subordinate Elements of Headquarters Special Forces

6.16   Headquarters Special Forces commands the following units:

- The Special Air Services Regiment based in Swanbourne, WA;

- 1 Commando Regiment with elements drawn from NSW and Victoria;

- 4 Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment (Commando) based at Holsworthy Barracks, NSW; and

- 126 Signal Squadron based at Simpson Barracks, Vic.

6.17   In 2000, 4 RAR was being brought up to strength for service in East Timor. The elements grouped under Headquarters Special Forces appear to share common operational objectives in the form of special force operations. These operations include counter-terrorism, strategic strike, special recovery and long range reconnaissance.[15]

Subordinate Elements of Headquarters Logistic Support Force

6.18   The Logistic Support Force (LSF) provides supply, health, repair, transport and other logistic functions to deployed forces. As currently structured the LSF consists of:

- Three Force Support Battalions (FSBs) with a varying range of medical, transport, repair and military police elements. The FSBs are not uniformly structured and appear to be, in some cases, convenient administrative groupings.

- Construction engineering elements

- Medical elements

- Other miscellaneous elements including communications, supply, military police and Army ship detachments seconded to RAN ships.

6.19   As a complete organisation the LSF is able to support elements of two brigades conducting the same operation.[16] We took this assessment to mean that the LSF cannot support concurrent operations by two brigades geographically dispersed.

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15   Army Submission 47, p. 776.

16   ibid. p. 778.

Training Command – Army

6.20   Training Command – Army consists of three broad groupings:

- The Combined Arms Training and Development Centre (CATDC). This Centre controls individual training for soldiers and officers allocated to combat corps. It also conducts doctrine development.

- Individual Training Centres. Army operates a number of schools and training centres in addition to the CATDC. Some of these centres have tri-service training responsibilities.

- Regional Training Centres (RTC). These are largely state based training centres with a heavy emphasis on providing training for soldier promotion courses. There are eight RTCs.

6.21   In total Training Command operates 23 training establishments. This number will be reduced to 12 establishments by July 2002. The current personnel strength of Training Command is 6000.[17] Its staffing levels are maintained close to the operational requirement. The Army has identified significant deficiencies in the capability of Training Command to meet individual training requirements. These deficiencies will be discussed later in this chapter.

Consideration of the Evidence on Force Structure

General Comments

6.22   Comments on the Army's force structure were varied. The Department of Defence noted that the current force structure is the result of a combination of the resource and strategic imperatives of the 1980s and 1990s.[18] Some have argued that structure decisions preceded this period. The case was put that the broad structure of the regular Army formations was fixed as early as 1979–1980.[19] We assumed, if this is true, that the Army's force structure in 1980 was either remarkably prescient or force structures have persisted within the Army in spite of strategic policy shifts.

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17   Major General R Powell, Transcript, pp. 289-290.
18   Department of Defence, Submission 35, p. 556.
19   Mr G Hollingsworth, Submission 42, p. 640.

6.23   The underlying rationality behind the existing force structure must also be looked at in the context of previous attempts to modify structures. The two most notable attempts mentioned were the establishment of a pentropic structure[20] in the 1960s and the Army 21 trials in the late 1990s. One submission noted that:

> It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the same innate conservatism that saw off the pentropic structure has prevailed in ensuring that a conventional structure, rather than the integrated structures being tried during the Restructuring the Army process, is retained.[21]

Professor Dibb also raised concerns about the fate of the Army 21 process:

> I think it is a pity that Army dumped – and I use the word advisedly – the Army 21 concepts at the speed they did.[22]

6.24   This line was pursued with suggestions that the Army contains too many 'one-off' units that complicate sustainment and rotation. The suggestion was made that a smaller number of better staffed and commonly equipped brigades should be the force structure goal.[23] A suggestion proposing a slight reduction in the brigade force structure but with a capability for increased air and ground mobility was received. The concept was to divide the Army into a responsive Ready Force of three brigades and a Reinforcing and Expansion Force based on four brigades.[24] Overall this proposal required an increase to the Army's regular personnel.

6.25   Better staffing and resources was an issue picked up by the Defence Reserves Association as they argued that the:

> … arbitary economic restrictions by Army, on the Reserve unit and formation strengths be removed and they be manned to operational levels.[25]

The Defence Reserves Association, and others, were concerned about the idea of reducing the under staffed current force structure to free resources to properly staff a smaller structure.[26] There was also concern about attempts to modify the force structure under the Restructuring the Army initiative.

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20   See Chapter 2 for a discussion on this subject.
21   Colonel D Chalmers, Submission 50, p. 9.
22   Professor P Dibb, Transcript, p. 202.
23   Colonel D Chalmers, Transcript, p 103.
24   Brigadier B and Mr S Cooper, Submission, p. 156-157.
25   Defence Reserves Association, Submission 25, p. 259.
26   Major General Glenny, Transcript p. 208, and Dr J Wood, Transcript, p. 162.

6.26   The Defence Reserves Association argued that resources should be used to enhance the current structure of formations and units rather than a move towards structures considered under the Army 21 concept.[27] Army 21 would have seen an internal restructuring within units and formations and an overall reduction in the number of formations.[28] Others proposed that the structure should go beyond the divisional concept and be centred on a skeletal organisation of a Corps.[29]

6.27   In a very different vein Dr Cheeseman urged the consideration of non-traditional force option alternatives. In his submission he noted a number of authorities that suggest military force will not be applied in the future as it had in the past.[30] He saw Army's current structuring of the Ready Deployment Force as being too expensive to sustain and focused on the wrong combat tasks.[31] He suggested a smaller and lighter structure.[32]

6.28   A proposal for a significantly reduced force structure based on traditional warfighting was also received. This model reduced the regular Army to 15,000 personnel largely divided into two very capable brigade groups. This model relied on an underlying system of conscription to provide a militia which, after ten years, would provide a potential force of 225,000 personnel. It was focused on the territorial defence of Australia.[33]

6.29   The most common issue discussed about the Army's force structure was the issue of declared versus actual capability – commonly referred to as hollowness. Other issues discussed included sustainability, force generation and the requirement to create new units to address capability deficiencies. Because of the range of issues raised the discussion in this section will be grouped under the following topics:

■ Declared versus Actual Size - Hollowness

■ Force Generation and Sustainment

■ Capability Mix

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27   See Defence Reserves Association, Submission 25, p. 259–262.

28   Department of Defence, *Restructuring the Army*, 1997, Directorate of Publishing and Visual Communications, Canberra.

29   Dr J Wood, Transcript, p. 166. A Corps is an Army tactical formation consisting of two or more divisions. The size of a corps can range between 30,000 and 60,000 troops. The term skeletal is used here to refer to an organisation that exists in framework only. It does not have its full entitlement to equipment or personnel.

30   Dr G Cheeseman, Submission 30, p. 439.

31   ibid. p. 92.

32   ibid.

33   Mr R Downey, Submission 3, pp. 28-29.

Declared versus Actual Size - Hollowness

6.30   As mentioned in Chapter 4, the Army operates nine brigades but currently has only sufficient personnel and equipment to operationally deploy three to four brigades. Figure 6.3 indicates the overall state of the Army's staffing situation. This indicates that the average staffing of Army combat units and formations is approximately 50 per cent. Or in other words the Army's organisational liability is twice the size of its available personnel asset.

6.31   The evidence received generally pointed to one of two paths to solve this problem:

■ Consolidate the force structure to match funding.

■ Increase funding to match the force structure.

6.32   As the Defence Reserves Association noted, paring back to free up resources is no guarantee those resources will be given back or maintained. However, it was clear that the current situation was damaging in a number of ways. Under strength units in both the Reserve and Regular army damaged morale[34] and retention,[35] provided a poor vehicle for training and, in the final analysis, do not provide useable capability.[36]

6.33   The result appeared to be a vicious circle in which the less utility an organisation provided, the less resources it received and therefore the less effectively trained were its personnel. For the Reserve units we realised that the issue of legislative cover for callout and job protection was a significant factor. This is discussed further in Chapter 7. However this was not the only factor as the problem of hollowness existed within regular units as well.[37]
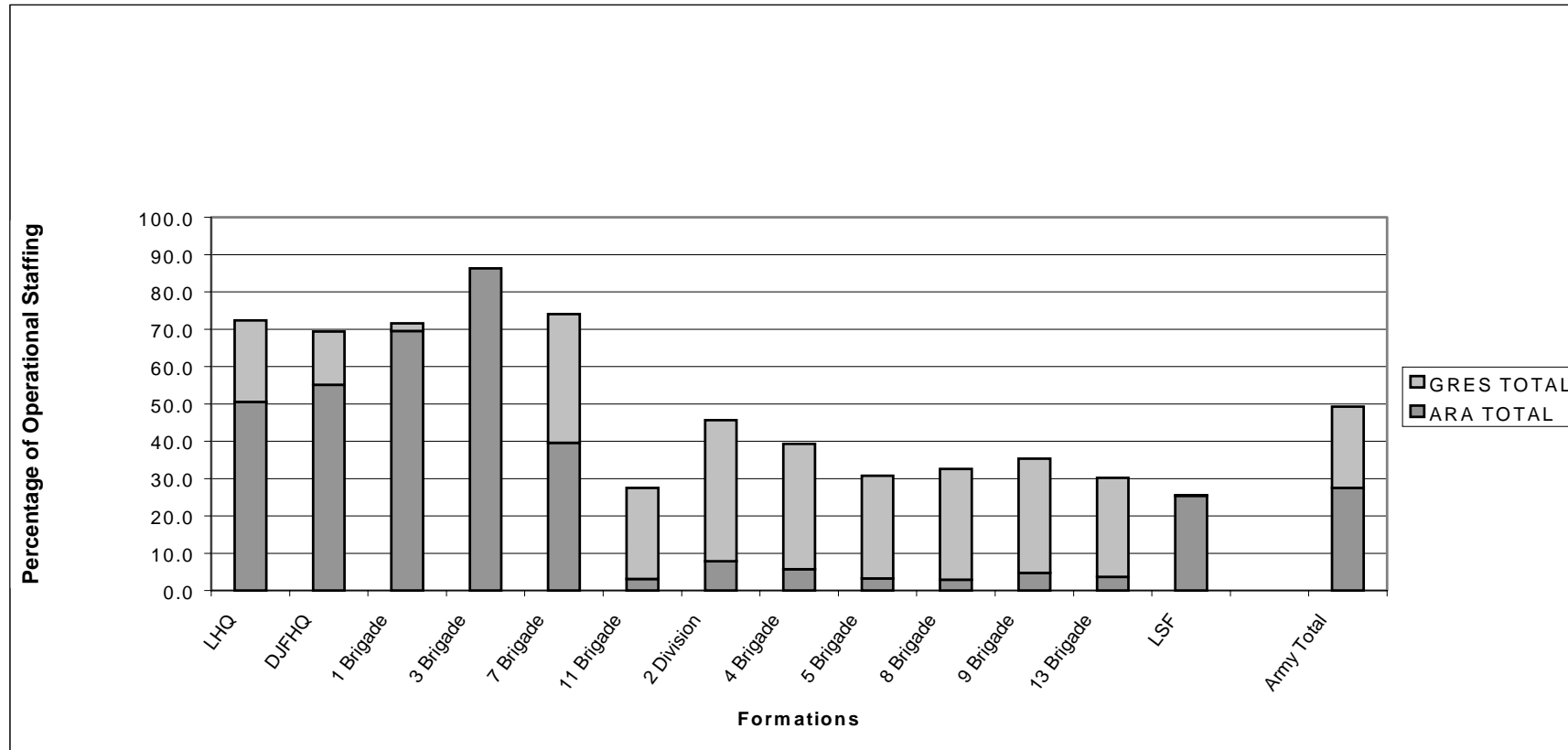
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34   See Captain J Cunningham, Transcript, in particular, p. 124.
35   Mr M O'Connor, Transcript, p. 171.
36   Lieutenant General J Sanderson, Transcript, p. 149.
37   Defence Reserves Association, Submission 25, pp. 241-242.

Figure 6.2   Staffing of Units as a Percentage of Operational Staffing

Source   Derived from Submission 73 – the Army Manpower Strength and Liability Statemen

6.34   There appeared to be a clear choice between persisting with a force structure size that was not sustainable or establishing a force structuring principle to alleviate the problem. We felt, as a point of principle, that no units should be maintained which were not staffed to 100 per cent of their operational requirement. If this structuring principle is accepted then the issue of force structure size revolves around:

- how efficiently allocated resources are used by the Army; and

- the decision by Government on how much it is willing to fund the Army.

6.35   As discussed in Chapter 5, if funding remains unchanged it will not be sufficient to provide:

- A force-in-being of four capable brigades

- A capability for force generation of an additional eight brigades

Should funding rise to between 2 and 2.5 per cent of current GDP it may be able to provide the desired capability. It would not be able to provide for the current force of nine brigades in a fully staffed and equipped state. This would require an additional 4.5 billion dollars for equipment and would double the Army's wage bill to 2.5 billion dollars.[38]

Force Generation and Sustainment

6.36   In Chapter 4 we concluded that the Army was deficient in its capability for force generation. We concluded that the force-in-being should never be on more than four months notice for operations. The combat elements of the force-in-being should consist of four brigades. We further concluded that the combat elements should be able to expand from this base line to an additional eight brigades within two years.

6.37   This last capability requirement imposes two demands on the army's capacity for force generation:

- An ability to generate approximately 30,000 additional trained personnel, and

- An ability to equip these personnel within units and formations.

Force Generation – Providing Personnel

6.38   Three possible approaches exist for the creation of trained units and formations. These are:

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38   Derived from Army Submission 61, p. 918. This figure assumes that the proportion of ARA and GRes remains constant in a fully staffed force.

- Maintain skeletal organisations which, in time of emergency are fleshed-out with newly trained personnel

- Split existing units and formations to create the basis for absorbing newly trained personnel

- Create new organisations from scratch.

The Skeletal Organisation

6.39   The current structure of the Army's enabling force provides a skeleton for force expansion. The idea of using the partially staffed reserve/militia units as a basis for expansion has existed for most of this century. The concept appears to be supported by a number of individuals and organisations.[39] Properly resourced the concept should allow for rapid expansion of the Army. It appears to have three main disadvantages. These are:

- It requires the continuous maintenance of equipments and facilities. These equipments and facilities may age, become technologically obsolescent and be replaced without ever being used.

- It assumes that personnel in partially staffed units will develop the full range of staff, managerial and leadership skills needed to handle the unit when it is fully staffed.

- Since the end of World War I the reality has been that governments are reluctant to provide sufficient resources to the concept. (See Chapter 2)

6.40   The Australian Defence Association is particularly critical of the concept, as it has never functioned as intended. The Defence Association points out that each time it should have been used the government has resorted to the conducting special drafts to form a force.[40]

Splitting Organisations

6.41   Another option is to split already trained units. Experienced personnel are promoted and newly trained personnel are inducted to replace them. The process has the advantage that a framework of skeleton units and equipment does not have to be maintained. It does, however, have a major disadvantage. To create the new unit or brigade one existing unit or brigade must be taken off-line.

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39   See Dr J Wood, Submission 32.

40   For further discussion on this topic see the Australian Defence Association, Submission 46, and Mr M O'Connor, Transcript, pp. 168–178. The 1st and 2nd AIFs illustrate this trend to create special drafts for overseas service.

Generating New Organisations

6.42 The final option is to create units from scratch. This system falls down if there is not the trained commanders and junior leaders to populate the newly equipped unit. To generate a new unit, without a core of trained personnel, would simply take too long. If a resource of trained leaders exists it has the following advantages:

- No resources are wasted in maintaining skeletal organisations which may never be used and whose equipment will age, become obsolescent and have to be replaced; and

- No units or formations have to be taken away from operations to form new units.

6.43 In considering these structure options, the option of creating new units in time of emergency is worthy of more attention. As will be seen in Chapter 7, the available supply of commanders and junior leaders exists now. As a consequence of separations from the regular forces almost 2000 additional militarily trained personnel are added to society each year. It is a matter of having the legislation, institutions and procedures for tapping this resource.

Force Generation – Providing Equipment

6.44 All the above force generation strategies will not work if equipment cannot be procured to enable soldiers to train and ultimately fight. In fact, up to a point, the key factor that appears to limit the speed of mobilisation is equipment - not trained personnel.[41] The nub of Army's force generation problem lies with the plans, institutions, legislation and resources dedicated to equipping and supplying the Army in a time of tension or defence emergency. Regardless of which technique is used to raise numbers of trained personnel, force generation cannot occur without a system for rapid procurement of equipment.

6.45 **As indicated in Army's submission,[42] the priority for addressing issues of force generation has been low within Defence. The Army force structure, and the Departments own internal systems for equipment selection and procurement must address this.** A more detailed discussion of this issue will be covered in Chapter 8 – Equipment.

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41 O'Neill, R and Horner, D (Eds) *Australian Defence Policy for the 1980s,* University of Queensland, St Lucia, 1982, p. 187.

42 Australian Army, Submission 47, p. 773.

Capability Mix

Force Structuring Principles

6.46   The availability of major equipment naturally divides the Army's brigades into three broad categories – light, mechanised and motorised. Based on the submissions received, there appeared to be wide support for improved air and road mobility and protection. In Chapter 4 we implicitly rejected structuring the Army solely for peacekeeping. We did however, accept the views of Doctor Cheeseman and others that wider dimensions to conflict and warfare were emerging that the Army needed to address.

6.47   There was a clear tension between the Army's current stated desire to provide capability options within the force structure and the issues of sustainment. We had difficulty getting a clear definition of what the spectrum of conflict, especially at the higher end, entailed for the Australian Army. For instance it was difficult to see an event where the combat power of a single mechanised brigade would be needed or decisive. If Australia's threat environment necessitates a mechanised capability at formation level then logically three mechanised brigades would be required.

6.48   The Army responded to similar observations by stating:

> The lack of any uniformly structured, trained and equipped brigades is the result of the necessity to deliver a broad range of capability outputs within funding constraints.[43]

We had difficulty with this response because it went on to observe that:

> ... The Latent Combat Force provides rotation forces and individual reinforcements to these brigades.[44]

The Army's position contains within it an internal contradiction. How can units and brigades that are dissimilarly 'structured, trained and equipped' be used as rotation forces?

6.49   We felt that the Army had an obligation to provide the Government with the greatest number of sustainable options up to and including mid-intensity conflicts. The need for sustainability demands a greater degree of interoperability through common structures, equipment and training. We did not believe we had the expertise or the evidence to determine these structures. We did feel, as a point of force structuring principle, that:

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43   Department of Defence, Submission 73, p. 1091.

44   ibid.

- There should be no single unit or formation present in the force structure unless it is able to detach useful capability in components. These components need to be in multiples of three – a component in commitment; a component returning and a component being prepared.[45]

- Where multiple units or formations exist in the force structure they must exist in multiples of three. This would preclude, for instance, two-of-a-kind units.

- Where neither of these conditions can be satisfied the capability being sought should either:

  ⇒ be reduced to a force size that can meet the structuring principle, or

  ⇒ be removed from the force structure

  In short, if resources prevent a capability from being developed within a sustainable structure it should be removed from the Army.

6.50   Under this concept it would be possible for the Army to maintain a single mechanised or a light brigade. However, that brigade must be structured to have three identical components that could be rotated through a prolonged commitment at battalion group level. Alternately a formation could be created without this capability but it must be replicated by two other formations. We felt that these principles do not preclude the Army from having specialist units. They simply require that no specialist unit be created which is unsustainable in prolonged or intense operations.

6.51   Finally, the maintenance of units as 'seed'[46] capabilities is not supported. Units should not exist within the Army unless they provide useable and sustainable capability. Should the 'art' of a particular capability need to be maintained this should be pursued through the selective use of foreign exchange postings. Alternately the 'seed' capability should be expanded so that it is operationally useful and sustainable – ie, it should adhere the structuring principle listed above.

Adding, Re-roling and Removing Units

6.52   Chapter 4 identified a number of capabilities that need to be included or bolstered within the Army. The problem with including new units within

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45   There will be exceptions to this rule – such as RFSU. Although internally RFSU should be structured so that their rate of patrolling can be sustained for long periods at a defined level.

46   An example of a 'seed' capability might be the creation of a single chemical decontamination section. If a decontamination capability is required it should be of such a size as to provide a sustained decontamination capability on operations. (This example assumes a section would not be able to be broken into three viable and deployable decontamination groups.)

the Army force structure is the reluctance to remove old units or capability. During our seminar on defence strategy one participant stated:

> I want to hear what we are going to take out of the force structure to compensate for the fact there will be, under any government, limited resource allocation. Frankly, very few commentators and still fewer politicians will tell us what we are going to take out of the force structure.[47]

6.53 The incorporation of additional capabilities for Terminal Operations, Civil Affairs[48] and Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Defence will require that existing units either be re-roled or removed. Inevitably some capabilities may have to be removed from the Army if the force structuring principles listed above are adhered to. Generally however, rationalisation of the Army's force structure should simply mean capabilities are consolidated into a more capable and ready force structure.

6.54 In some cases there is possibly an excess of capability that could be trimmed to make way for other capabilities. For instance, the Army's provisioning with artillery and mortar pieces, compared to the provisioning in the United Kingdom appears excessive. Conversely the Army, in comparison to these countries has a lower provisioning in air defence weapons and armour. (See Figure 6.3)

6.55 This is not to suggest the Army needs less artillery and more armour. It does suggest that there are aspects of the force structure that are open to debate. As noted earlier in this Chapter much of the Army's force structure has been driven by resource imperatives – not a first principles assessment of what is now needed. These aspects should be revisited from first principles. This particularly applies to the Army reassessing what capabilities it can now draw on from the other Services – such as fire support. As stated previously in this report we believe that the Army, in conjunction with the other Services, should function as a tightly integrated and mutually supporting warfighting system. To this end it might be possible when working in a littoral environment for:

- the Army to supplement its own fire support under a heavier calibre naval gun fire umbrella, and for

- the Navy to supplement its air defence under an army medium altitude air defence missile umbrella.[49]

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47 Defence Strategy Debate, Transcript, 30 June 2000, pp. 16–17.

48 See Glossary for definitions.

49 These specific examples are provided for illustration purposes only. They have not been selected because of any evidence received by, or suggestions made to, the Committee.

6.56   The apparent move away from the restructuring process under Army 21 suggests that the Army has difficulties conducting a review of force structures from first principles. In defence of the Army however, no reform of force structures can occur without resources. This point was obvious when reviewing the Army's background in Chapter 2. If the Army is again to review its structures and better exploit capabilities within the other Services, it will have to be appropriately resourced.

Figure 6.3   A Comparison of the Ratio of Key Equipments to Personnel
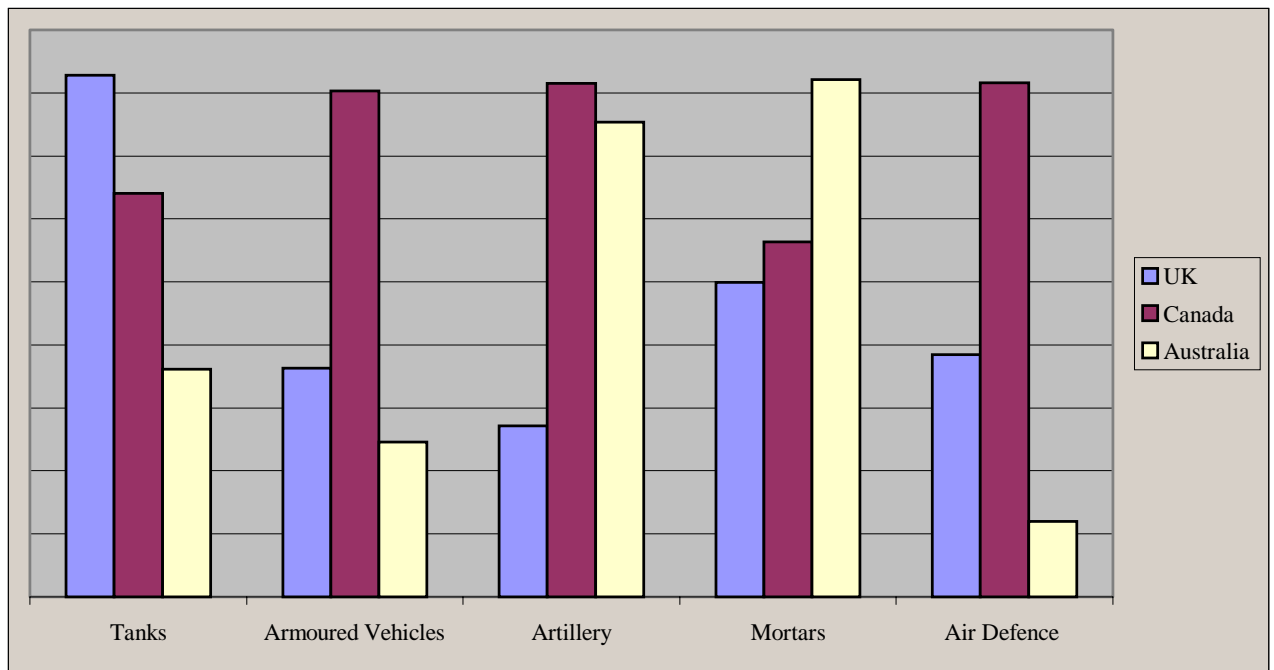
Source   Derived from The Military Balance 1989-1999.[50]

Conclusion – the Implications of the Evidence

Introduction

6.57   In this Chapter we examined the existing force structure and considered the evidence proffered to the inquiry. Our key conclusions will follow the structure of this Chapter. We will finish by explaining how the

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50   *The Military Balance 1998–1999*, International Institute for Strategic Affairs, London.

conclusions we reached satisy the need for the force structure to be both credible and efficient.

The Higher Structure

6.58   They key deficiencies in the Army's ability to satisfy future capability requirements lie in:

■ The hollowness of the Land Command; and

■ The limited resources for the Training Command to generate trained personnel to meet higher levels of threat.

6.59   Within the Land Command we were confused by the organisational groupings. Special Forces and the Logistic Support Force Headquarters seemed to be functionally grouped to achieve set roles. The groupings under the Deployable Joint Force Headquarters and Headquarters 2nd Division did not seem functionally organised. The 2nd Division and the Deployable Joint Force Headquarters appeared to be used as administrative headquarters that did not share the operational role of their subordinate formations.

6.60   The Departments response as to why the Deployable Joint Force Headquarters could not be established as a splinter headquarters from Headquarters Northern Command was not particularly satisfying.[51] It did not explain why the internal study conducted within Defence disagreed with the recommendations of the Defence Efficiency Review. In the absence of a justification by the Army we support the recommendation previously made in the Defence Efficiency Review.

6.61   **Within Training Command we were concerned that recent rationalisation had left it with very little surge capability. We believed that further rationalisation should not occur until a statement of the required surge capability is provided by the Department of Defence.** This will need to occur even if the exiting force structure remains unaltered. The reason for this is that the force structure is deficient 50 per cent of its operational personnel. Training Command would have to generate the trained soldiers to fill this gap.

Force Structure Hollowness

6.62   Force structure hollowness denies the Nation capability from the Army. We estimate that with the resources currently provided, the Army has

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51   Department of Defence, Submission 73, p. 1088.

only sufficient equipment and trained personnel to field three to four brigades. The remaining five to six brigades effectively consume resources without providing useable capability in meaningful time frames. Within foreseeable funding constraints the only solution to this dilemma is to rationalise the force structure to create additional capability.

Force Structure – Force Generation

6.63   The current model used for force generation is to maintain a force structure of nine brigades. Most of these brigades are skeletal – they lack most of their staff and equipment (See Chapter 8 on equipment shortfalls). We do not believe that this model is the most efficient from which to generate additional capability. The Department of Defence does not resource any credible mobilisation plans to provide the necessary equipment and personnel to field these brigades. In this sense the model is a fiction.

6.64   We believe that there should be resourced plans and institutions to ensure that force can be generated in meaningful time frames. The Army's best guarantor of having the trained personnel to lead this force is to maintain a small but highly capable force-in-being and a surge training capability within the Army's Training Command.

Force Structure Capability Mix

6.65   We believe that the capability mix within the force structure needs to be adjusted. It needs to incorporate emerging needs for Terminal Operations, Civil Affairs and possibly Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Defence. It needs to do this by removing surplus capability through the re-roling or disbandment of units.

6.66   We also believe that the force structure needs to be designed on principles that make it sustainable in more intense or prolonged conflict within Australia's ACSI. There appears to be too much 'boutique'[52] capability within the Army paid for through reduced sustainability. The criterion that should guide the Army's force development is the provision of sustainable capability options. We accept that any review and

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52   The word 'boutique' is used to describe any capability that is not structured to be sustainable. It was put to the Committee during their visit to Darwin (7–8 August 2000) that 1, 3 and 7 Brigades are not interchangeable for serious operations. Therefore they possibly could not be used to easily replace each other during mid-intensity conflict. They represent light, mechanised and motorised formations. Internally they are not structured to readily break into three battalion groups that could be rotated and sustained. They instead represent a 'golf bag' of useful but unsustainable capability.

rationalisation of structures cannot be achieved without additional resourcing to facilitate it in the short term. This should be one of the key lessons for Government from the Army's unhappy history of structure reform in peacetime.

Conclusion

6.67   It is clear, based on the capability requirement specified in Chapter 4 and the funding limitations discussed in Chapter 5 that Australia neither needs, nor can it afford, a nine brigade Army. For the Army to be credible and efficient this structure needs to be reviewed. Rationalisation of the force structure could transform the Army from a having three useable brigades to four useable brigades. It could also free up resources to provide a true capability for force generation – something that does not exist now. How this can be done in terms of equipment and personnel is discussed in the next two Chapters.