

PROFESSIONAL FORUM



Army War Reserve-3 Prepositioned Equipment Afloat

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In October 1994 the 3d Brigade Combat Team (BCT) of the 24th Infantry Division (now the 3d Infantry Division) deployed to Southwest Asia as part of Operation VIGILANT WARRIOR. Its mission was to configure and deploy the Army's prepositioned-afloat contingency stock to deter possible Iraqi aggression. The mission was successful, and it served to validate and improve prepositioned-afloat doctrine.

The Army War Reserve-3 (AWR-3), the Army's prepositioned equipment afloat, was exercised for the first time during this operation. It represents the Army's latest move toward flexible response and the rapid deployment of heavy forces.

AWR-3 is based on a heavy brigade (plus), or an armored cavalry regiment, and the associated combat support and combat service support elements normally included in brigade level operations. Additional CSS elements are included because of the unique requirements of ship off-load, port, and onward movement operations.

The post-VIGILANT WARRIOR force consists of four balanced task forces (TFs) of two infantry companies and two armor companies, a field artillery battalion reinforced by a multiple launch rocket system (MLRS) battery, a heavy divi-

sion engineer battalion, an enhanced support battalion, an air defense artillery battery, a military police company, a signal company, a military intelligence company, a chemical company, and a brigade headquarters and headquarters company (HHC). The force is prepositioned on five "roll-on roll-off" (RO-RO) ships, three of them Cape H-class and two Cape D-class.

Additionally, the brigade is supported by a composite transportation group, a heavy corps support group, and a terminal services company for port operations currently prepositioned on three RO-RO ships, two of which are Cape W class. The equipment is accompanied by a 15-day supply of most required classes. These ships are currently sited at two separate locations, ready to sail in contingency operations.

Doctrine

Prepositioned-afloat doctrine is described in Field Manual 100-17-1, *Army Prepositioned Afloat* (Draft). The purpose of the prepositioned heavy force is to allow for the introduction of a heavy combat brigade in several roles. These roles range from rapid peacetime response in support of operations other than war, to reinforcing an ally with credible force, to reinforcing an initial lodgement in a forced-entry situation.

Doctrinally, the first task force is prepared to conduct combat operations 15 days after notification. Ideally, port-opening forces arrive first, along with the support ships to establish port operations and the port support activity, followed by the brigade's combat forces.

The combat forces receive the equipment, finalize its configuration, conduct precombat checks and services, and prepare for onward movement. In an unconstrained environment, the doctrine calls for the brigade (plus) to be prepared for combat operations 22 days after notification.

Several major commands are involved in these operations: the U.S. Army Materiel Command, U.S. Army Forces Command, U.S. Air Force Air Mobility Command, and the joint Military Traffic Management Command.

The Army Materiel Command "owns" the equipment and is tasked with preparing, issuing, and accounting for it to the gaining unit. Army Forces Command provides the operational forces to fight using the prepositioned equipment.

The Air Mobility Command provides strategic airlift support to move the operational forces with the "to accompany troops" (TAT) equipment to the sea port of debarkation. The Military Traffic Management Command manages the port

and coordinates the onward movement of the configured heavy brigade. The successful execution of the doctrine requires the coordinated effort of all the major commands involved.

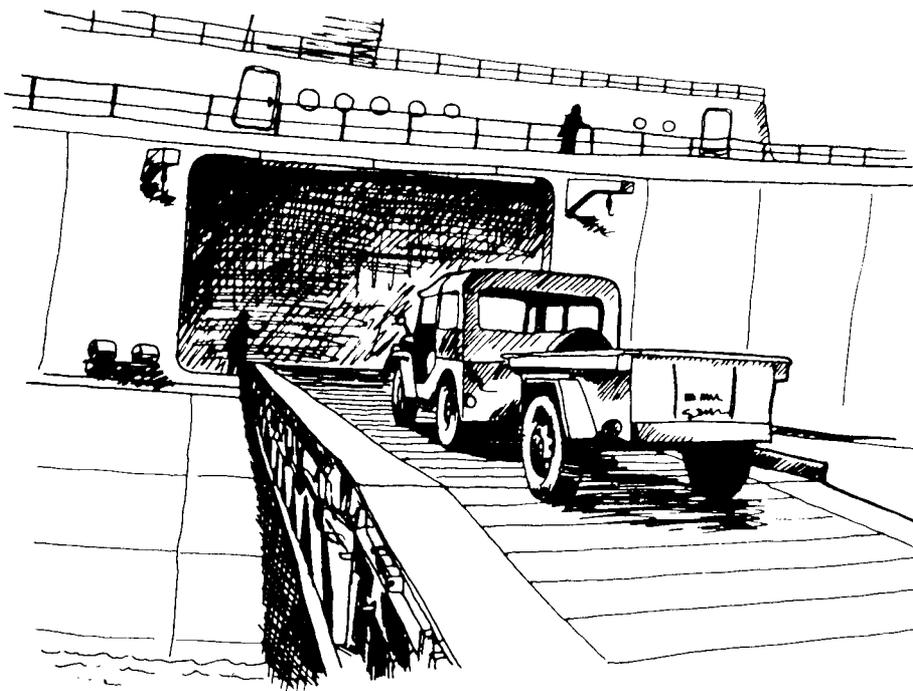
Several Army elements participate in prepositioned-afloat operations to produce the required combat power. The Army Service Component (during VIGILANT WARRIOR, the U.S. Third Army, Army Central Command) assumes operational control of the equipment and determines the type of forces required as well as the size of the force that is to be landed and configured.

The primary Army elements that fall under the Service Component during the operations are the combat brigade, the corps support group, and the composite transportation group. The combat brigade provides forces to operate the equipment and to conduct operations with the configured equipment. It deploys in accordance with the Time-Phased Force Deployment Document (TPFDD), providing drivers and mechanics early in the effort as an additional port support activity package to help with off-load operations.

The corps support group, which provides port support activities and logistical support, begins to establish the required troop life-support facilities. The composite transportation group, which operates the port, provides motor transport for onward movement. The detailed coordination of these elements is the task of the Army service component headquarters.

The prepositioned-afloat program is further described in the battlebooks produced for each ship. Each battlebook provides a wealth of critical information. Each gives a generic overview of the entire AWR-3 fleet, followed by detailed information for the specific ship.

The battlebook lists the units whose equipment is stored on the ship, the equipment authorized for those units, and what equipment—if any—is not on board at the time of publication. The modified tables of organization and equipment for the units also provide information that is critical for determining TAT requirements. Additionally, each battlebook contains a detailed, foldout stowage plan for the ship (deck-by-deck) that describes



where all of the equipment and containers are stowed. The container list identifies the container by serial number and describes what is in each. The task force (TF) ships carry 1.5 basic loads of ammunition, which the battlebook describes by Department of Defense Identification Code (DODIC), quantity, and container number.

Operation VIGILANT WARRIOR demonstrated the need to get all battlebooks to the using units as early as possible and to keep them up-to-date so that they accurately reflect the property on the ships. The battlebooks are now being updated in accordance with the modifications to AWR-3 made during the operation.

Effects of the Operation

As a result of Operation VIGILANT WARRIOR, the warfighting capability of the AWR-3 improved dramatically. The prepositioned stocks were loaded in pure battalion and company units as space was available before the operation began.

Several ships had to be downloaded so the "slice" elements could be arrayed to take full advantage of the heavy task force's capabilities. By order of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the AWR-3 set was reconfigured and restowed during VIGILANT WARRIOR, and it now represents

a more effective fighting force. The intent was to create ships that would more closely represent a heavy task force when downloaded. The task forces converted from pure battalions (two tank and two mechanized infantry) to balanced task forces of two tank companies and two mechanized companies each. The combat support and combat service support elements were then dispersed among the four balanced task forces, which represented a more accurate picture of the "habitual slice" found in a task force.

The engineer battalion was broken down into three companies and an HHC. The three companies were stowed on TF ships 1, 2, and 4, with the headquarters company on TF ship 4, creating an engineer-heavy task force.

The artillery battalion (M109A2 and M109A3) was also divided among the TF ships. Batteries were placed on TF ships 1, 2, and 3. The reinforcing MLRS (multiple-launch rocket system) was also stowed on TF 3, along with most of headquarters and headquarters battery (HHB) to create an artillery-heavy ship.

The air defense battery was also prepositioned on the TF ships. Bradley fighting vehicle Stinger platoons were stowed on TF ships 1 and 2, with the HMMWV (high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle) Stinger section and the

headquarters section being stowed on TF ship 3. TF 4 did not receive an air defense slice because of scarce resources and the requirement to maintain unit integrity for command and control purposes.

A military police platoon was stowed on TF ship 1, and the rest of the company was stowed with the support battalion on TF ship 5. The brigade command and control module, consisting of HHC and an MSE (mobile subscriber equipment) signal company, was stowed on TF ship 2. The military intelligence company and the chemical company were stowed on TF ship 4.

The "fightable" ship concept was strengthened by several lessons learned during VIGILANT WARRIOR download operations:

A ship discharge package (SDP), consisting of forklifts and rough terrain container haulers (RTCHs), was placed on each TF ship. (The SDPs were previously consolidated on several non-task-force ships, which slowed discharge of individual ships before the arrival of the one carrying the SDP.)

The SDPs were restowed near the ramp of the RO-RO ships to facilitate rapid access. Also stowed near the ramp were recovery assets organic to the task force—M88 tracked recovery vehicle and 5-ton and HEMTT (heavy expanded-mobility tactical truck) wreckers—which were needed to move any vehicles that could not be started.

Maintenance support teams (MSTs) were stowed on the four task force ships to improve logistical abilities. The MSTs, constructed from support battalion assets, consisted of an M936A1 wrecker, two M109 shop vans, a contact truck, a 5-ton truck to carry tools, and a HMMWV and an M113 for command and control. The MST on TF ship 4 is not complete because of shortages in several pieces of equipment, but all TF ships also have the organic maintenance capabilities of the HHC.

The task force stows were also improved through better use of the available ships. The brigade ships are H-class and D-class RO-RO vessels. The H-class is 20 percent larger than the D-class, providing more stowage capacity.

The support battalion equipment, previously stowed on one of the larger H-class ships, was restowed on a D-class ship, allowing the first three task forces to be stowed on the H-class ships. This modification enabled a larger slice of support elements to be placed with TFs 1, 2, and 3.

After-action review comments indicated the need for several additional modifications, and these suggestions will help make the AWR-3 even more effective.

An engineer company should be added to AWR-3 so that all four task forces have an engineer company in direct support. A fourth artillery battery should also be added to ensure that all task forces have indirect fire support available until the force can be massed; then the artillery elements can revert to the control of the artillery battalion. The remaining SDPs and maintenance support teams should all be fully resourced.

Major improvements were also made among the individual vehicles that make up the AWR-3 fleet. These vehicles were brought up to fully-mission-capable status and were combat configured. Previously, vehicle basic issue items, components of end items, camouflage nets, and radios were stored in containers on board the ships. The configuration of the vehicles required that the containers be downloaded and the equipment issued to the individual vehicles for combat storage. The vehicles were reconfigured with all of the above equipment before being restowed during VIGILANT WARRIOR; this will save precious time for the next user of the vehicles and equipment.

The communications status of the AWR-3 was also improved during this operation. The radios in TF 1 were upgraded from 12-series nonsecure to SINCGARS (single-channel ground and airborne radio system) secure radios following onward movement to Kuwait. The upgrade will enable deploying units to fall in on equipment like that at home station. The other task forces are equipped with 12-series radios, which will be upgraded to SINCGARS during subsequent maintenance periods. The mobile subscriber element signal company will support the AWR-3 once the required shel-

ters for the M1037 HMMWVs arrive with the deploying unit.

The addition of several equipment types will continue to improve the AWR-3 and reduce a major portion of the TAT requirement, making the force more "fightable."

A Bradley fighting vehicle should be provided for the brigade commander (if it is an infantry brigade), as well as several Bradleys to serve as operational readiness floats during combat operations.

Vehicles and the radios required for a tactical air control party (TACP) are not a part of AWR-3 at this time. The TACP is a critical combat multiplier for a heavy brigade and a bulky TAT requirement as well. The AN/TPQ36 counterbattery radar should also be added to the fleet.

Although the required 5-ton trucks and HMMWVs are stowed, the radar and support equipment is not. To make the most of the chemical company capabilities, decontamination trucks and Fox NBC reconnaissance vehicles should be added to the force. The MSE signal shelters should also be prepositioned on board the TF ships to increase the AWR-3 and decrease the TAT requirements. Stowing the above-listed equipment would reduce the amount of critical equipment that would have to be restowed on other than the first five ships.

AWR-3 is a heavy force projection tool that is available worldwide for major regional contingencies. It provides the flexibility today's Army needs to meet diverse requirements. Because of its basic design, any heavy Forces Command brigade unit can use it.

Operation VIGILANT WARRIOR validated the principles of AWR-3 and also provided the opportunity to continue improving the force and the doctrine involved in prepositioned-afloat operations.

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