

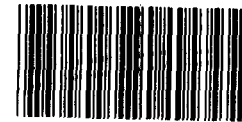
GAO

Report to the Chairman, Subcommittee on  
Readiness, Committee on Armed Services,  
House of Representatives

August 1992

# OPERATION DESERT STORM

## War Highlights Need to Address Problem of Nondeployable Personnel



147561

**RESTRICTED--Not to be released outside the  
General Accounting Office unless specifically  
approved by the Office of Congressional  
Relations.**

555250

RELEASED

---

---

**National Security and  
International Affairs Division**

B-249536

August 31, 1992

The Honorable Earl Hutto  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Readiness  
Committee on Armed Services  
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As you requested, we examined the issue of nondeployable military personnel for Operations Desert Shield and Storm. Our objectives were to determine (1) the extent of nondeployable<sup>1</sup> personnel, (2) the factors contributing to nondeployability, and (3) identify any systemic weaknesses that could impair future readiness and deployability.

---

**Results in Brief**

A number of active and reserve personnel were unable to deploy for Operations Desert Shield and Storm. However, the lack of complete and comparable data makes it impossible to develop a reliable estimate of the total number of nondeployable personnel. Moreover, any numbers cited would not reflect the potential for additional nondeployables that were minimized or masked by varying degrees of prescreening to avoid such problems, and the special packaging of forces by the services for Operations Desert Shield and Storm.

Indications of nondeployable problems came from various reports and records of observation by military personnel directly involved with the packaging and deployment of forces. The causes of nondeployability ranged from incomplete training to varying medical conditions or personal problems. Some nondeployable situations were temporary while others were long-term or permanent. It is reasonable to expect that the services would have some nondeployable personnel at any one time, and the Department of Defense (DOD) said nondeployables were not considered a serious problem because the services were able to replace them with other personnel. Nevertheless, available data indicates the number of nondeployables was sizeable.

Data available suggests that nondeployability problems were exacerbated by systemic weaknesses in the peacetime screening of active and reserve

---

<sup>1</sup>Nondeployable generally refers to service members assigned to units who could not deploy to the Persian Gulf for Operations Desert Shield and Storm.

---

personnel and inadequate reporting of nondeployables as part of normal readiness reporting. Action is needed to minimize future recurrences, particularly when there will be fewer active and reserve forces from which to tailor and substitute personnel to meet force requirements.

---

## Background

Five days after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the President deployed U.S. forces to the Persian Gulf area. This deployment, called Operation Desert Shield, and the subsequent military conflict to liberate Kuwait, called Operation Desert Storm, constituted the largest U.S. military action since the Vietnam War. Three weeks into the crisis, the President authorized the activation of Selected Reserve<sup>2</sup> personnel (known as the 200-K call-up) under 10 U.S.C. 673b. This authority permitted up to 200,000 Selected Reserve personnel to be activated for up to 90 days, with an extension of another 90 days if needed.<sup>3</sup> Subsequently, on January 18, 1991, the President invoked a broader call-up authority under 10 U.S.C. 673, known as a partial mobilization, that authorized up to one million reservists for up to 2 years. This also permitted the call-up of Individual Ready Reserves (IRR), individuals not normally assigned to reserve units.

The United States deployed about 540,000 active and reserve troops to the Persian Gulf; over half were Army personnel. Approximately 20 percent of the total U.S. forces in theater were activated reserves.<sup>4</sup>

Both active and reserve components had personnel who were found to be nondeployable. The services had to take compensating actions to meet personnel requirements. Nondeployables, particularly those of a more permanent nature, represent excess personnel, administrative, and other costs to the government. Nondeployables may adversely affect unit cohesion and readiness, and can create delay and disruption in filling personnel needs and meeting deployment requirements and timetables.

---

<sup>2</sup>Selected Reserve generally refers to individuals who are assigned to organized reserve components and engage in monthly and yearly paid training. The Selected Reserve includes the reserve components of each of the services and also the National Guard components of the Army and the Air Force.

<sup>3</sup>This authority was later extended by the Congress to double the amount of time combat reserves might be activated under this authority for this conflict.

<sup>4</sup>Nearly 230,000 reservists were activated, and approximately 106,000 were deployed to the theater of operations. Others filled positions at bases in the United States and elsewhere overseas.

## Data Was Insufficient to Determine the Extent of Nondeployables

Although data was not available to develop a reliable, composite picture on nondeployables, data available from officials within the services has indicated sizeable problems of nondeployable personnel in some instances. For example:

- Three National Guard combat brigades were not deployed pending further training after activation. About 33 percent of the brigades' personnel were also found to have deployability problems because of dental conditions or incomplete dental records when they reported to their mobilization stations.<sup>5</sup>
- About 42 percent of a group of active medical personnel in the Army's automated system for identifying active duty doctors and nurses for assignment to units in the event of war were nondeployable for a variety of reasons ranging from their own physical condition, to not meeting skill requirements, or having insufficient training.<sup>6</sup>
- Nearly 23 percent of the assigned strength of units of an Army Reserve Command were nondeployable for a variety of reasons - - a lack of training being the major reason.

We obtained incomplete and in some instances best recollection service data on nondeployables collected as part of a DOD study on the role of military women in the Persian Gulf.<sup>7</sup> The study showed numbers of active duty nondeployables ranging from about 1,400 for the Navy to about 8,000 for the Marine Corps, and over 15,000 for the Air Force.<sup>8</sup> An accurate total number of nondeployable personnel in Operations Desert Shield and Storm could not be determined because military personnel data bases did not have complete and consistent information on nondeployables. For example, the number of nondeployables reported by the Army represented a moving average rather than a total, and was significantly lower than the total reported at one point by the Army's Forces Command. Force selection and packaging efforts, such as prescreening of reservists to avoid calling up those who could not deploy, helped to minimize and mask the

<sup>5</sup>National Guard: Peacetime Training Did Not Adequately Prepare Combat Brigades for Gulf War (GAO/NSIAD-91-263, Sept. 24, 1991).

<sup>6</sup>Operation Desert Storm: Full Army Medical Capability Not Achieved (GAO/T-NSIAD-92-8, Feb. 5, 1992).

<sup>7</sup>We also have a separate study underway dealing with the role of women in the U.S. military, including a focus on deployability issues related to Operations Desert Shield and Storm.

<sup>8</sup>The numbers do not distinguish between temporary and permanent conditions of nondeployability.

---

potential for nondeployability problems. Efforts initiated after the fact by DOD and the services to collect data on nondeployables were not systematic and the data reported lacked precision. Military officials associated with the effort questioned the data's reliability.

Varying statistics were available at active and reserve command headquarters, reserve personnel centers, and divisions or units; however, they do not provide a uniform or complete picture on the issue of nondeployables. The Army began collecting data earlier than the other services, and after the war, it analyzed the information at the headquarters level. The Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force did not accumulate nondeployable data at the headquarters level until it was requested for the DOD study on the role of military women in the Persian Gulf. This study tried to collect comparative data on men and women regarding a variety of issues, including nondeployability.

The project manager of the DOD women's role study said data collected as part of that effort is probably the best available information on nondeployables for Operations Desert Shield and Storm. However, the project manager and the services providing the data expressed caution about the reliability of the numbers generated and also expressed concern that they were not sufficiently valid to make comparisons among the services, between active and reserve components, or even among different units within the same service.

The services were formally tasked on June 3, 1991, with providing data on deployability, premature returns from deployment, and pregnancy, along with other data pertinent to the role of women in the Gulf. In response, each service sent messages to active duty, reserve, and National Guard units throughout the world asking them to provide the information based on their best recall and historical records.

The project manager for the women's study outlined several problems that inhibited obtaining complete and consistent information on nondeployables. Problems were encountered in consistency of interpretations regarding who was nondeployable, and how the numbers were tabulated. For example, one unit might identify a member as nondeployable due to a broken leg, while another would recognize the same individual as deployable because the cast could be removed later, allowing the individual to deploy with the unit. Commanders who were tasked with deploying only a portion of their unit could be selective in who was deployed and not report having any nondeployables (this problem was

noted as often being the case for Selected Reserve units). Further, data provided by the services for this study commingled permanent and temporary nondeployables, and was accumulated using different time periods and criteria. Some data on nondeployables reflected cumulative totals, while other data reflected a daily average.

The military services tried to deploy the most ready units possible to the Persian Gulf. In some cases, this meant tightening existing criteria for deployability and creating a greater number of nondeployables in some instances than otherwise might have occurred. For example, standards for deployability involving dental care were tightened to minimize the need for care in the field.

## The Force Selection Process Minimized and Masked Nondeployability Problems

The number of nondeployable personnel in both the active and the reserve forces was unintentionally masked by the force selection, mobilization, and packaging efforts and helped to screen for and substitute personnel to avoid nondeployability problems. Active units replaced their nondeployable personnel with personnel from units that were not being deployed at that time or avoided nondeployables by the selectivity of their selection and deployment processes. Some reserve units screened their personnel at home stations so nondeployables would not report to mobilization stations,<sup>9</sup> whereas other units did not screen their personnel. Selection processes varied somewhat by individual services. (Appendix I provides additional information about the force selection process and its impact on nondeployables.)

## Causes and Indicators of Nondeployability Problems

The causes of nondeployability ranged from pending legal actions, lack of training, medical profiles, and pregnancy, to inadequate family care plans.<sup>10</sup> Some personnel were only in a nondeployable status for a few hours, others had problems difficult enough to warrant involuntary separation from the military. The two principal policy criteria are (1) criteria set by DOD and the services consisting of categories such as pregnancy, attending school, sole-surviving son, and other items defined by instruction or law and (2) commanders' discretion over such areas as personal hardships, injuries, or other temporary conditions known to the

<sup>9</sup>Efforts to minimize nondeployable reservists was important early on since DOD was initially operating under a more constrained 200-K call-up authority.

<sup>10</sup>Family care plans refer to advance contingency arrangements for the care of dependents that military personnel are required to make should they be required to deploy away from home.

commander. By its nature, use of commanders' discretion led to variances among those who would be considered nondeployable.

Throughout the Operations, internal service reports and other information sources cited nondeployable problems impairing unit cohesiveness and personnel readiness. Several of these problems were reported via the military's Joint Universal Lessons Learned System (JULLS)<sup>11</sup> and a similar data system organization known as the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL). (Appendix II provides additional information about indicators of nondeployability problems.)

---

### Peacetime Screening and Readiness Reporting Have Been Inadequate to Identify and Address Nondeployability Problems

Many military units are manned at lower rates in peacetime than is required in wartime. It stands to reason that the extent to which units are also significantly affected by nondeployable personnel further affects unit integrity, cohesiveness, and readiness. The collective impact of such factors increases the importance of screening personnel for deployability and reflecting the results in readiness reporting and manning decisions. Much of the available data pertaining to the Army suggests that insufficient attention has been paid to the issue of nondeployability. Less flexibility may be available in the future to compensate for personnel shortages since DOD's post cold-war defense strategy will be accomplished by smaller active and reserve forces.

---

### Peacetime Screening for Nondeployables Has Been Inadequate

Available data indicates that considerable problems of nondeployability surfaced as the United States responded to the requirements of Operations Desert Shield and Storm. The recent Persian Gulf experience was such that the services had sufficient time to prepare for the conflict, which permitted the services to engage in an extensive force selection process. Nondeployable personnel could have posed a greater obstacle if time had been more critical or the personnel base had been smaller.

In past years, the United States planned primarily for a European threat, while today's world calls for multiple contingency planning and the need for forces to be deployable virtually worldwide. The Commander in Chief of U.S. Army Forces in Europe recently noted the problem of identifying forces that were not deployable worldwide and suggested the need for improved screening.

---

<sup>11</sup>A data base in which lessons learned from each of the services are collected and analyzed to improve future operations.



A February 1992 CALL publication devoted to lessons learned related to the mobilization of the reserve components for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm states that Headquarters, Department of the Army, recognized during the operations that some nondeployable soldiers being released from active duty should be discharged rather than transferred to nonmobilized units or to the IRR. It noted that "paradoxically, the administrative process available to RC [Reserve Component] commands to discharge nondeployables is administratively cumbersome. Thus, some soldiers who are not deployable during mobilization continue as members of the mobilization pool." CALL's publication, in citing the burden of nondeployable IRR members, states that activating personnel without screening their records, and discharging them within a few days, costs the government thousands of dollars in travel expenses, active duty pay and allowances, and administrative costs.

CALL cited the need to (1) amend personnel policies to discharge personnel who are not valid mobilization assets, (2) develop a standard policy on the disposition of reserve component soldiers identified as permanently nondeployable, and (3) establish categories of nondeployables (i.e., temporary or permanent) and treat each category appropriately. Nondeployability problems were not limited to the reserves; therefore, such policy guidance may have similar applicability to active component personnel.

### Readiness Reporting Has Not Sufficiently Identified Deployability Problems

Active component unit commanders are required to report monthly on their units' ability to accomplish their assigned wartime missions through the Status of Resources and Training System (SORTS). A DOD official noted that significant changes in unit status are supposed to reach the National Military Command Center within 24 hours of the change or as may be directed. This official also said that contrary to current policy, Reserve and National Guard commanders were previously noted to prepare these reports less frequently. Reporting requirements call for commanders to evaluate an overall readiness category level and to indicate the extent to which various factors affect their ability to meet missions requirements. In recent years, in examining Army training and readiness issues, we have found the Army's readiness reports to consistently portray a high state of unit readiness.<sup>12</sup> Despite high readiness ratings, the detailed readiness reports we have examined sometimes indicated problems of insufficient

<sup>12</sup>See *Army Training: Evaluations of Units' Proficiency Are Not Always Reliable* (GAO/NSIAD-91-72, Feb. 15, 1991) and *Army Training: Various Factors Create Uncertainty About Need for More Land* (GAO/NSIAD-91-103, Apr. 22, 1991).

---

numbers of key personnel but did not cite problems of nondeployable personnel. Reserve component units, because of how they are organized and manned, are more likely than active component units to have personnel who have not completed required basic levels of skill training and as such are not deployable. DOD guidance governing personnel data associated with these reports places primary emphasis on assessing strength levels and personnel with required training and skills, although some criteria are provided for assessing the availability of personnel to deploy. A JULLS report, originating from the Army's Forces Command, dealing with the Persian Gulf operations, noted that the proper reporting of personnel availability on readiness reports would have eliminated the timely burden of fixing units to deploy.

---

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Available data suggests that the issue of deployability has received inadequate attention in the past. Screening for deployability should be an ongoing process during peacetime. The impetus for doing so grows as forces are reduced and the importance of deployability is even greater among the remaining forces. Whether active or reserve, there are tremendous monetary and readiness costs involved in retaining personnel who are not deployable. All of this suggests that greater emphasis on assessing and reporting on nondeployability issues is warranted both for active and reserve forces.

Therefore, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense

- provide additional policy guidance and emphasis as needed to require the services to identify the magnitude of temporary and permanent nondeployable personnel in both active and reserve forces and
- strengthen the SORTS reporting system to require the services to more fully reflect the impact of temporary and long-term nondeployable personnel, both active and reserve in their reports.

---

## Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

In commenting on a draft of this report, DOD concurred with our principal findings. It took the position that nondeployability was not a serious problem, but DOD also acknowledged that the active force does not maintain historical data on nondeployables. We recognize that DOD was able to overcome nondeployable problems in Operations Desert Shield and Storm, but the intent of our report is to point out the need for better peacetime screening of nondeployables to avoid problems in the future

---

when less time may be available and selection of personnel to deploy will have to come from a smaller personnel base.

DOD commented that it disagreed with our proposed recommendation to strengthen the reporting system by requiring the services to identify the magnitude of temporary and long-term nondeployable personnel. DOD stated that the current reporting system was not designed to be a management information system reporting on detailed personnel issues of a particular unit. However, DOD acknowledged that (1) the system does provide a vehicle to calculate and state the personnel status by considering fill and nondeployable personnel and (2) the DOD Inspector General will be asked to conduct an investigation to measure compliance with current directives to assure accurate reporting of unit status. The intent of our proposed recommendation was to strengthen the reporting system, not to create a new management information system as DOD inferred. Therefore, based on DOD's comments, we have modified our final recommendation to better reflect our intent.

DOD stated that it partially concurred with our recommendation calling for better identification of the magnitude of temporary and permanent nondeployables in active and reserve forces, and indicated that the following actions were being taken:

- DOD is issuing revised guidelines on effective family care planning with guidance to be given to the services by October 1992.
- The Army is conducting a review of retention and deployability criteria to resolve discrepancies, and that review is expected to be completed by October 1993.
- DOD will identify the added requirements for mobility and incorporate the deployability criteria in supporting personnel plans as part of its ongoing efforts to rewrite contingency plans to support the National Military Strategy. Most of the contingency plan effort is expected to be completed by October 1993.

Our scope and methodology are discussed in appendix III.

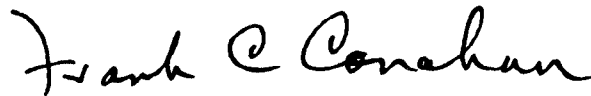
Unless you announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until 15 days after its issue date. At that time, we will send copies to the Chairmen of the Senate Committee on Armed Services and the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations; the Director of the Office of Management and Budget; and the Secretaries of Defense, the Air

---

Force, Army, and Navy. We will also make copies available to others upon request.

This report was prepared under the direction of Paul L. Jones, Director, Defense Force Management Issues. He can be reached on (202) 275-3990 if you or your staff have any questions concerning this report. Other major contributors to this report are listed in appendix V.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Frank C. Conahan".

Frank C. Conahan  
Assistant Comptroller General



---

# Contents

---

Letter		1
Appendix I		14
The Force Selection, Mobilization, and Deployment Processes	Army Process Navy Process Marine Corps Process Air Force Process	14 15 17 18
Appendix II		20
Indicators of Nondeployability Problems	Army Indicators Navy Indicators Marine Corps Indicators Air Force Indicators	20 21 22 22
Appendix III		23
Scope and Methodology		
Appendix IV		25
Comments From the Department of Defense		
Appendix V		41
Major Contributors to This Report		

---

---

**Abbreviations**

CINCCENT	Commander in Chief, Central Command
CALL	Center for Army Lessons Learned
COMNAVRESFOR	Commander Naval Reserve Force
DOD	Department of Defense
IRR	Individual Ready Reserve
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JOPEs	Joint Operation Planning and Executions System
JULLS	Joint Universal Lessons Learned System
MAGTAF	Marine Air-Ground Task Force
SORTS	Status of Resources and Training System
UTC	unit type codes

# The Force Selection, Mobilization, and Deployment Processes

Mobilization and force planning officials in each of the services told us that force selection, mobilization, and deployment decisions concerning Operations Desert Shield and Storm were based on the requests of the Commander in Chief, Central Command (CINCCENT), and other Unified Commands to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). Service representatives received the CINCCENT requirements that were filled through each service's own procedures. The processes followed by the services in selecting forces for deployment make it difficult to obtain a full accounting of nondeployables.

## Army Process

CINCCENT, along with the theater Army component commander, modified the existing Army mobilization plans to meet the contingency in the Persian Gulf and determined the force requirements and the priorities for resource allocation. CINCCENT then recommended the forces required for various military options through the Joint Staff to the National Command Authority, which made the final decision and approved the forces to be used. The Secretary of Defense then notified the Army about its portion of the force package for the Persian Gulf contingency.

According to Army officials, the active force selection and reserve mobilization processes were done within the general framework of its deployment and mobilization plans, but they were modified to meet the specific contingency. The impending deployments prompted active component installation commanders to conduct soldier readiness processing reviews to determine who could deploy and, based on these reviews, cross-leveled<sup>1</sup> personnel to bring deploying active units to an acceptable level of personnel readiness to compensate both for nondeployables as well as attain higher wartime manning requirements.

As Selected Reserve units received notice of call-up, some units prescreened their personnel to identify and replace nondeployable personnel by cross-leveling persons from other units within the Reserve Command. Other commanders did not replace nondeployables prior to reporting to mobilization stations. Thus, some commanders reported to mobilization stations with all assigned personnel, including pregnant soldiers and persons with other nondeploying medical conditions, such as having had coronary bypass surgery or amputations. A sizeable number of

<sup>1</sup>The Army's practice of exchanging or transferring personnel between units to eliminate shortages or imbalances in personnel by position, military occupational specialty, or grade, or to balance leadership experience by grade.



reservists were nondeployable because they did not have required training. As the call-up continued, commanders were instructed to report only with individuals that had no obvious disqualifying conditions. Even with the new instructions, however, some reservists continued to arrive at mobilization stations who later were determined to be nondeployable.

The Selected Reserve support units were deployed initially under the 200-K call-up authority until the President declared a partial mobilization allowing the call-up of additional personnel, including the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR). During partial mobilization, the Army Reserve Personnel Center activated the IRR soldiers released from active duty within the last 12 months. The qualified IRRs served as fillers to bring under-strength units in the United States, Europe, and Saudi Arabia to full strength. The Desert Shield and Storm operations ended before the IRR was extensively deployed. However, the IRR also experienced nondeployability problems. When a partial mobilization was invoked allowing the activation of IRRs, those IRR soldiers released from active duty within the last 12 months were reactivated, but not screened before reporting. Many IRRs reported to duty with the same problems for which they had recently been separated from active duty, such as hardship, misconduct, and unsatisfactory performance.

One cognizant Army official estimated that 50,000 active and reserve soldiers were cross-leveled during Desert Shield and Storm to increase manning levels to wartime requirements as well as to compensate for nondeployable personnel. It is not clear to what extent persons replaced through cross-leveling efforts were counted as nondeployables. The Army did not have composite data on the numbers of soldiers left behind, nor did it have good numbers on how many reservists were kept on active duty for a time for stateside duty versus those sent back home.

---

## Navy Process

According to Navy officials, Navy deployments were also implemented by the National Command Authorities through JCS. CINCCENT's requirements for forces were validated through the Chief of Naval Operations and filled by the Commander and Chiefs of the Atlantic and Pacific Fleets. The forces were assigned to the CINCCENT Naval component commander for operations in Desert Shield and Storm.

According to Navy officials, deployment of active naval forces was routine, with few active duty nondeployables. These Navy officials said that only a "minimal" amount of transferring of personnel among ships

("cross-decking") was necessary. Some of the ships being deployed shortened their normal deployment cycle and had their scheduled maintenance or deactivations delayed so they could be sent to the Southwest Asia area. Personnel deployability is part of Navy's daily business, since the majority of active Navy personnel are in some phase of a deployment cycle most of the time.

The active Navy assets in theater were considered sufficient and large numbers of naval reserve units and personnel were not initially needed. Later, as needs were identified, local naval reserve activities coordinated with locally assigned Navy personnel support detachments and medically screened each individual and administered exemption procedures. The naval reserve involuntary recall process authorized by title 10 U.S.C. 673b had not been used until Operations Desert Shield and Storm. According to the officials, the recall was a learning experience from the top down. Task groups and operation centers were manned by Navy headquarters staff to coordinate the decision-making process and provide standardized guidance to the field.

The reserve requirements were generated through the JCS planning system for unique Desert Shield and Storm needs and from the active Navy commands to stabilize their force structure. Once the units/personnel required were identified and authorized for recall, the personnel recall list was transferred electronically to the Commander Naval Reserve Force (COMNAVRESFOR) for implementation. The COMNAVRESFOR notified its sub-commands and the local naval reserve activities and activated the reservists being recalled. This involved coordinating with locally assigned Navy personnel support detachments and medically screening each member, administering exemption procedures, arranging for pay, uniform and gear requirements, ensuring family support plans were complete, and providing quarters before departure to their gaining command.

Navy officials told us that the process used in activating reservists for the Persian Gulf conflict did not mask their nondeployables. However, these officials also told us that in the beginning of the reserve recall, the qualifications of reservists being activated were screened very carefully under orders from the Chief of Naval Operations, who directed that each reservist recalled would have a position and would be qualified for that position.

---

## **Marine Corps Process**

According to Marine Corps officials, the Corps deployed for the Persian Gulf according to its standard process, in which combat units are rarely split up or cross-leveled. Under the standard process, even if a unit has a shortage of personnel, it deploys as a part of the Corps' task force as long as the unit reaches a certain level of readiness. Marine Corps officials said that this supports the Corps' position of deploying cohesive units. Subsequent efforts are made to back-fill needed personnel. Active forces are deployed as units to support the Marine doctrine of a Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTAF).<sup>2</sup> According to the officials, the Marines rarely split-up or cross-level combat units (artillery, infantry, armor, or aviation).

Marine Corps officials said that the Selected Reserve combat forces also strive to preserve unit integrity, that is, to keep their units together for deployment, if at all possible. However, the Marine Corps' active and reserve support forces do not maintain the same level of unit integrity as the combat forces. The support forces are put together based on what is needed to keep the combat units functioning and are made up of varying sizes and skills. They select or recall individuals with these skills as a requirement is identified, and frequently detachments are grouped to form specified support units. These detachments range from groups numbering as low as two selected personnel with the required skills up to entire companies or battalions.

Although Marine Corps officials said they had minimal problems with nondeployable personnel, they also told us that some prescreening of personnel took place for the reserves because home units obtained advance knowledge of the call-ups and completed as much administrative processing as they could before proceeding to the mobilization processing centers.

According to Marine doctrine, the Marine Corps' IRR is activated for fillers and casualty replacements for the deployed units. The officials stated that

---

<sup>2</sup>The Fleet Marine Force is an integral part of the U.S. Navy. It is a balanced force of combined arms, including land, air, and service support elements of the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps provides operating forces to support the Navy through deployment and employment of MAGTAFs, the Marine Corps' mandated forces of combined arms, including infantry, artillery, armor, engineer, reconnaissance, aviation, and logistics components. MAGTAF elements are drawn principally from Marine divisions, Marine aircraft wings, force service support groups, and surveillance, reconnaissance, intelligence groups. MAGTAFs can operate across the full spectrum of conflict in all levels of war as (1) a landing force of an amphibious task force; (2) a part of a joint, multi-service or combined task force; and (3) a single service command.

the Marine Corps' IRR was mobilized to provide casualty replacements and individual fillers for the supporting and training establishment.

---

## **Air Force Process**

According to Air Force officials, the Air Force deployed its forces in support of Desert Shield and Storm under the JCS activating system and the Joint Operation Planning and Executions System (JOPES). JOPES translates all the service's force allocations and planning tasks into operational plans and operational orders. The Air Staff and Air Force Commanders specifically used the Air Force War and Mobilization Plan to plan the Desert Shield and Storm operations. The War and Mobilization Plan consists of six volumes that encompasses all basic functions necessary to match facilities, personnel, and material resources with planned wartime activity. War and Mobilization Plan-3 is the starting document for deliberate and contingency war planning. It has three parts,

- combat forces,
- combat support and combat service support forces, and
- a listing of specific Air Force units.

Air Force officials stated that the Air Force normally deploys in "force packages" designed from a "catalogue" of unit type codes (UTC). The force packages are designed to meet the requirements of a unified/specified commander's contingency plans. Air Force officials told us they rarely deploy an entire unit. Instead, they usually fill requirements by selecting parts of units and/or individuals by specialties to make up the requested components. UTCs are maintained by the major commands and provide the Air Force with a contingency force prepared for worldwide deployment. The Air National Guard and Air Force Reserves are a part of this contingency force and are assigned to specific major commands for ongoing training during peacetime. This allows the active and reserve forces to be easily combined for deployment.

According to the Chief of Mobilizations and Plans, the Air Force Component for Desert Shield and Storm was built to meet the CINCENT requirements using this standard system for contingency war planning. The basic construction of the force was UTCs and selected individuals. The chief stated that the UTC system automatically gives you primary and alternate personnel for deployment. The majority of the UTCs deployed were standard as listed in the War and Mobilization Plan-3, but a few were non-standard built to meet unique Desert Shield and Storm requirements. An example is the requirement for a special UTC of truck drivers that

---

**Appendix I**  
**The Force Selection, Mobilization, and**  
**Deployment Processes**

---

occurred because of a lack of civilian drivers in Southwest Asia. This requirement was easily met by deploying a non-standard UTC of truck drivers.

The Air Force's packaging and deployment process in effect during the Gulf War minimized, but could also have masked the potential for nondeployable personnel by designating primary and alternate personnel for each position. If a person could not deploy, an alternate could be quickly designated. According to an Air Force official, the service usually deploys partial units or individuals selected by specialty areas to make up the requested components. These officials said that with only a small percentage of Air Force personnel deployed to the Gulf, nondeployables could not have been a problem using the Air Force mobilization process. However, data collected in connection with DOD's study of military women in the Gulf indicated there were over 15,000 nondeployable active Air Force personnel. It is not clear to what extent these numbers reflect temporary conditions rather than longer term deployability problems.

The Air Force mobilized only a small amount of its Reserve Forces totaling about 17 percent. The reserves and Guard were integrated into the forces through major commands either as UTCs or as individuals.

# Indicators of Nondeployability Problems

---

Internal service reports and lessons learned systems, as well as a key DOD study completed after the end of Operations Desert Shield and Storm provided indicators of nondeployability problems.

---

## Army Indicators

As the Army selected and prepared units for deployment, substantial numbers of personnel were transferred into units scheduled to deploy in order to raise their personnel readiness to acceptable levels. An Army official estimated that 50,000 soldiers were cross-leveled into active or reserve units deployed over the course of the war. The Joint Universal Lessons Learned System (JULLS) data base contained entries indicating nondeployability problems for the Army's active and reserve forces. For example, one entry reported that many incoming active component replacement personnel coming from other duty locations were nondeployable. Another noted excessive dental work was required for both active and reserve component personnel before deployment. Further, as reported in December 1990 by a Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) publication:

A large number of personnel were assigned as fillers to units immediately prior to deployment. Their level of expertise varied. One unit received 29 new personnel and experienced a 60-percent turnover in officers including the company commander.

Soldiers that fail to update, in detail, their family care plans and family support programs experience enormous difficulties during deployment. This results in added stress, morale problems, and can affect soldier readiness.

In some units, 18 to 20 percent of their female soldiers were nondeployable. The primary reasons for nondeployability among female soldiers were disqualifying physical profile and pregnancy.

As additional reserve and National Guard troops were activated, deployability problems continued. The JULLS data base contained entries such as the following:

- Deploying Army units reported to their mobilization stations with soldiers who were nondeployable for a variety of medical, dental, and personal reasons. The reserve soldiers required more medical and dental services than their active counterparts primarily because the reservists were older with more medical and dental problems.

- Information on the Army National Guard's "roundout" combat brigades indicated they lacked the training, dental and medical care, and physical fitness for timely deployment.<sup>1</sup>
- Status of Resources and Training System (SORTS) reports masked the true readiness of individual units. During the onset of Operations Desert Shield and Storm, many changes were made to status reports and many of the soldiers who were previously reported as deployable became nondeployable.<sup>2</sup>
- Several units, with excellent personnel readiness status on their last SORTS report, were less so after nondeployable soldiers were removed at the mobilization station.

## Navy Indicators

Available data indicates that Navy nondeployability problems were related primarily to reserve components. Some reservists did not report at the proper time and place or had medical or dental disorders. For example, only 75 percent and 78 percent of the Selected Reserve supplement for two Navy hospital ships deploying to the theater arrived when and where they were needed, and a significant number of reservists did not deploy with these ships due to medical problems or personal hardships.<sup>3</sup> The lessons learned data indicated that the Navy had to make a large number of last-minute recalls and borrow personnel from other fleet hospitals to fill the two ships' shortages. Furthermore, fewer than 50 percent of the Navy Reserve medical support personnel assigned to Marine units had the required "field" Navy enlisted classification training. Valuable time was lost after activation while reservists were given this training.

<sup>1</sup>Additionally, our review of the training and preparedness of the three Army National Guard roundout brigades that were activated during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, but which subsequently did not deploy to the Gulf, pointed out that not only did the units suffer from training deficiencies which prevented their deployment, but numerous soldiers were found to have serious medical ailments which adversely affected deployment. National Guard: Peacetime Training Did Not Adequately Prepare Combat Brigades for Gulf War (GAO/NSIAD-91-263, Sept. 24, 1991).

<sup>2</sup>Additionally, our review of DOD's provision of support forces for Operations Desert Shield and Storm pointed out that unreliable unit status reports made it more difficult to identify the readiest units and also highlighted the need for significant personnel cross-leveling resulting from the nondeployability of reserve component personnel—many due to the lack of training and medical problems. Operation Desert Storm: Army Had Difficulty Providing Adequate Active and Reserve Support Forces (GAO/NSIAD-92-67, Mar. 10, 1992).

<sup>3</sup>These internal Navy lessons learned reports did not quantify the precise numbers of nondeployables. However, Navy officials, in responding to what they described as a serious deficiency in the show-rate of its reserves, have initiated actions to develop more rigorous retention standards and deployability screening criteria to be used in peacetime.

Deployment was sometimes delayed by internal procedures. According to the Marine Corps, some naval reserve medical support personnel were 5 to 7 days late joining their units because the Navy's reporting requirements were different from that of the Corps.

---

## **Marine Corps Indicators**

Available figures on Marine Corps nondeployables vary. A personnel official familiar with Marine Corps deployment of the 2nd Marine Division estimated active and reserve nondeployables as ranging between 3 and 4 percent for that division. Data gathered in conjunction with DOD's study of women in the military indicated that the Marine Corps had approximately 8,500 nondeployables, most in the active component. The official said that the data does not distinguish between the extent of temporary and permanent nondeployables.

---

## **Air Force Indicators**

Officials at the Air Force Office of Mobilization and Plans said the Air Force had no nondeployable personnel, and its lessons learned reporting system did not have any reports regarding personnel deployability. The office credited the selectivity of the Air Force's mobilization process with preventing nondeployables from affecting its personnel readiness. However, as noted already, data from DOD's study of military women in the Persian Gulf showed that the Air Force did have several thousand nondeployable personnel, if only temporarily so designated.



# Scope and Methodology

---

To obtain information for this report we reviewed data available for Desert Shield and Desert Storm nondeployable personnel and regulations governing the services mobilization processes. We also interviewed officials directly involved with personnel selection and mobilization as well as individuals responsible for overseeing force deployment issues for each service's active and reserve components.

The following locations were visited during this review:

Headquarters locations (Washington, D.C.):

- Department of Defense
- JCS
- Department of the Army
- Department of the Air Force
- Department of the Navy
- Marine Corps
- National Guard Bureau

Subordinate commands:

Army

- CALL, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
- Forces Command, Atlanta, Georgia
- First Infantry Division, Fort Riley, Kansas
- Army Reserve Personnel Center, St. Louis, Missouri

Navy

- Naval Reserve Center, New Orleans, Louisiana

Marine Corps

- 4th Marine Division Headquarters, New Orleans, Louisiana
- 2nd Marine Division, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina
- 2nd Marine Fleet Service Support Group, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina
- 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina
- Marine Corps Replacement Center, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina
- Marine Corps Reserve Support Center, Overland Park, Kansas

**Air Force**

- Air Force Lessons Learned System, Washington, DC

**National Guard**

- Air National Guard, Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland

The available data we reviewed was both service- and location-specific; however, the data was not always comparable or complete. Accordingly, we limited our efforts to validate the available data.

We performed our review between March 1991 and April 1992 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

# Comments From the Department of Defense

Note: GAO comments supplementing those in the report text appear at the end of this appendix.



**FORCE MANAGEMENT  
AND PERSONNEL**

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

JUL 20 1992

Mr. Frank C. Conahan  
Assistant Comptroller General  
National Security and International Affairs Division  
U.S. General Accounting Office  
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Conahan:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the General Accounting Office (GAO) draft report entitled--- "OPERATION DESERT STORM: War Highlights Need to Address Problem of Nondeployable Personnel" (GAO Code 391145/OSD Case 9083). The Department concurs with the principal GAO findings, but does not agree with all of the recommendations.

Nondeployability is not a serious problem in the Department. Military manpower factors such as illness, leave, and training account for time away from the job. The DoD plans on nondeployables in its manpower calculations, just as engineers plan on downtime for equipment and purchase backup systems. Cross-leveling and task-specific packaging insure that forces required to meet a contingency are trained and available in sufficient numbers. The system worked in the Persian Gulf conflict.

The all volunteer force has achieved unprecedented levels of quality, dedication and mission readiness. The Department recognizes, however, improvements can be made. The Services and their National Guard and Reserve components are working to enhance their combat posture. Detailed DoD comments on the draft report are provided in the enclosure. An annotated draft with several technical corrections was also provided separately. The Department appreciates the opportunity to respond to the draft report.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Christopher Jehn in cursive script.  
Christopher Jehn

Enclosure:  
As Stated

GAO DRAFT REPORT - DATED MAY 21, 1992  
(GAO CODE 391145) OSD CASE 9083

"OPERATION DESERT STORM: WAR HIGHLIGHTS NEED TO ADDRESS  
PROBLEMS OF NONDEPLOYABLE PERSONNEL"

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMENTS

\* \* \* \* \*

FINDINGS

- o **FINDING A: Data Was Insufficient to Determine the Extent of Nondeployables.** The GAO reported that data available from officials within the Services have indicated sizeable problems of nondeployable personnel in some instances, such as the following:

- three National Guard combat brigades were nondeployable pending further training after activation, and about 33 percent of the brigade personnel were also found to have deployability problems because of dental conditions or incomplete dental records when they reported to their mobilization stations;
- about 42 percent of a group of Active medical personnel in the Army automated system for identifying active duty doctors and nurses for assignment were nondeployable for a variety of reasons ranging from their own physical condition, to not meeting skill requirements, or having insufficient training; and
- nearly 23 percent of the assigned strength of units of an Army Reserve Command were nondeployable for a variety of reasons, the majority due to a lack of training.

The GAO reported that incomplete Service data showed the number of Active duty nondeployables ranging from about 1,400 for the Navy to about 8,000 for the Marine Corps, and over 15,000 for the Air Force. The GAO found that an accurate total number of nondeployable personnel in Operations Desert Shield and Storm could not be determined because Military personnel data bases did

not have complete and consistent information on non-deployables. The GAO noted, for example, the number of nondeployables reported by the Army represented a moving average rather than a total, and were lower significantly than totals reported at one point by the Army Forces Command. The GAO also found that force selection and packaging efforts, like prescreening of reservists to avoid calling-up those who could not deploy, helped to minimize and mask the potential for nondeployability problems. The GAO reported that efforts initiated, after the fact, by the DoD and the Services to collect data on nondeployables were not systematic and the data reported lacked precision. The GAO observed that Military officials, associated with the effort, questioned the data reliability.

The GAO reported that varying statistics were available at active and reserve command headquarters, reserve personnel centers, and divisions or units, but they do not provide a uniform or complete picture on the issue of nondeployables. The GAO explained that, while the Army began collecting data earlier than the other Services and, after the war, analyzed the information at the headquarters level, the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force did not accumulate nondeployable data at the headquarters level until it was requested for a DoD study on the role of Military women in the Persian Gulf.

The GAO reported that the data collected as a part of the women's role study is probably the best available information on nondeployables for Operations Desert Shield and Storm, although the numbers may not be valid sufficiently to make comparisons among the Services, between active and reserve components, or even between different units within the same Service. The GAO noted that problems were encountered in consistency of interpretations regarding who was nondeployable, and how the numbers were tabulated. The GAO observed, for example, that Commanders responsible for deploying only a portion of their unit could be selective in who was deployed and not report having any nondeployables. The GAO also explained that data provided by the Services for the study comingled permanent and temporary nondeployables, and was accumulated using different time periods and criteria, and some data reflected cumulative totals, while other data reflected a daily average. The GAO also pointed out that the Military Services made efforts to deploy the most ready units possible,

Now on pp. 3-5.

which, in some cases, meant tightening existing criteria for deployability and creating a greater number of nondeployables that otherwise might have occurred. (pp. 3-6/GAO Draft Report)

**DoD Response:** Partially concur. The active force does not maintain historical data on nondeployables. Because the number of deployables varies daily, the focus is prospective: will a unit be able to perform the mission assigned to it when called upon to do so? Moreover, different units are assigned varying degrees of mobility missions. Some are expected to be ready to deploy within hours, others after weeks. The observation that the Services deployed the most ready units is accurate because that is the plan: to respond first with units that have the rapid response missions. The GAO report assumes that every unit must be ready to go at any time with all of its people. However, that is not the way the Services and, in particular, the Guard and Reserves are structured--nor would it be necessary or cost effective to maintain every unit (regardless of mission or role in contingency response) at the highest level of readiness. Army National Guard brigades called to service are not expected to be immediately deployable. Time for post-mobilization training was a known factor. Consequently, the apparent nondeployable rates claimed by the GAO are misleading. For example, the Army National Guard experienced a 6 percent nondeployable rate after standard medical, dental and training actions were accomplished upon mobilization. The Marine Corps number of 8,000 nondeployables is an 8-month running total from all the operating forces and reserves, and includes people who were returned to duty during Operation Desert Storm. Finally, the nondeployable figure of 15,000 cited for the Air Force was a result of a survey based on memory and included members not available for as little as one day during the duration of the Persian Gulf Conflict, or members committed to other priority missions. Additionally, the GAO did not sufficiently define what it meant by "nondeployable." Consequently, the numbers the GAO used in the report are confusing and not, in themselves, useful in determining the impact on combat effectiveness.

See comment 1.

- o **FINDING B: The Force Selection Process Minimized and Masked Nondeployability Problems--Army.** The GAO reported that the number of nondeployable personnel in both the active and the reserve forces was masked by the force selection, mobilization, and packaging efforts and helped to screen for and substitute personnel to avoid nondeployability problems. The GAO explained that active units replaced their nondeployable personnel with

personnel from units that were not being deployed at that time or avoided nondeployables by the selectivity of their selection and deployment processes. The GAO also observed that some reserve units screened their personnel at home stations so nondeployables would not report to mobilization stations, whereas other units did not screen their personnel.

The GAO found that the Army active force selection and reserve mobilization processes were done within the general framework of its deployment and mobilization plans, but they were modified to meet the specific contingency. The GAO reported that the impending deployments prompted active component installation commanders to conduct soldier readiness processing reviews to determine who could deploy, and based on the reviews, cross-level personnel to bring deploying active units to an acceptable level of personnel readiness to compensate both for nondeployables, as well as attain higher wartime manning requirements.

The GAO reported that some, but not all, Selected Reserve units prescreened their personnel to identify and replace nondeployable personnel by cross-leveling persons from others units within the Reserve Command. The GAO observed that a sizeable number of reservists were nondeployable because they did not have required training.

The GAO reported that, when a partial mobilization was invoked allowing the activation of the Individual Ready Reserve, those soldiers released from active duty within the last 12 months were reactivated, but not screened before reporting. The GAO found that many of the Individual Ready Reservists reported to duty with the same problems for which they had been separated from active duty, such as hardship, misconduct, and unsatisfactory performance. The GAO noted that the war ended before the Individual Ready Reserve was deployed extensively. The GAO reported that one Army estimate was 50,000 active and reserve soldiers cross-leveled during Desert Shield and Storm to increase manning levels to wartime requirements as well as to compensate for nondeployable personnel. The GAO found that it was not clear to what extent persons replaced through cross-leveling were counted as nondeployables, because the Services did not have composite data on the numbers of soldiers left behind, nor did they have good numbers on how many reservists were kept on active duty for a time

Now on pp. 3, 14-15.

for stateside duty versus those sent back home.  
(pp. 6-8/GAO Draft Report)

**DoD Response:** Partially concur. There was no intentional effort to mask nondeployables by any DoD component. A specific contingency requires a special mixture of numbers and kinds of forces. The Services tailored their force packages to meet Operation Desert Storm needs. It is unlikely the next contingency will require the same force mix--it too will necessitate modifying force packages to employ our fighting power most effectively. The Department does not agree that the National Guard experienced an excessive nondeployable rate. As mentioned in Finding A, the Army National Guard reports a 6 percent nondeployable rate. In addition, Reserve units also experience nondeployables as a natural consequence of recruiting new members who may be in the basic and follow-on skill proficiency training pipeline at the time of a contingency. The Department does recognize that maintenance of the Individual Ready Reserve encompasses a difficult screening challenge; management of the Individual Ready Reserve requires changes to procedures to eliminate the difficulties encountered. Such an effort is already underway.

See comment 1

- o **FINDING C: The Force Selection Process Minimized and Masked Nondeployability Problems--Navy.** The GAO reported that the Navy indicated that deployment of active naval forces was routine, with few active duty nondeployables. The GAO noted, according to the Navy, only a "minimal" amount of cross-decking was necessary. The GAO reported that, as needs were identified, local Naval Reserve activities coordinated with locally assigned Navy personnel support detachments and medically screened each individual and administered exemption procedures. The GAO reported that Navy officials indicated that the process used in activating reservists did not mask their nondeployables and orders from the Chief of Naval Operations directed that the qualifications of each reservist being activated be screened very carefully, and each reservist recalled have a position and be qualified for that position. (pp. 8-0/GAO Draft Report)

Now on pp. 15-16.

**DoD Response:** Concur.

- o **FINDING D: The Force Selection Process Minimized and Masked Nondeployability Problems--Marine Corps.** The GAO reported that Marine Corps officials indicated that the Corps deployed for the Persian Gulf according to its standard process, in which combat units are rarely split



up or cross-leveled. The GAO explained that, even if a unit has a shortage of personnel, it deploys as a part of the Corps task force as long as the unit reaches a certain level of readiness, and subsequent efforts are made to back-fill needed personnel. The GAO reported that Marine Corps active and reserve support forces do not maintain the same level of unit integrity as the combat forces. The GAO observed that the support forces are put together based on what is needed to keep the combat units functioning and are made up of varying sizes and skills. The GAO reported that the Marine Corps selects or recalls individuals with a given skill as a requirement is identified and frequently detachments are grouped to form specified support units. The GAO noted that such detachments range from groups numbering as low as two selected personnel with the required skills up to entire companies or battalions. The GAO also found that, while the Marine Corps indicated minimal problems with nondeployable personnel, some prescreening of personnel took place for the Reserves because home units obtained advanced knowledge of the call ups and completed as much administrative processing as they could, before proceeding to the mobilization processing centers. (pp. 9-10/GAO Draft Report)

Now on pp. 17-18.

**DoD Response:** Concur. The Marine deployment system recognizes that there will be nondeployable personnel for a particular mission and has established procedures to field an effective fighting force.

- o **FINDING E: The Force Selection Process Minimized and Masked Nondeployability Problems--Air Force.** The GAO reported that the Air Force packaging and deployment process in effect during the Gulf war minimized, but could also have masked, the potential for nondeployable personnel by designating primary and alternate personnel for each position. The GAO explained that the Air Force usually deploys partial units or individuals selected by specialty areas to make up the requested components. The GAO noted that Air Force officials indicated that, with only a small percentage of Air Force personnel deployed to the Gulf, nondeployables could not have been a problem using the Air Force mobilization process. The GAO found, however, that data collected in connection with the DoD study of Military women in the Gulf, indicated over 15,000 nondeployable Active Air Force personnel. The GAO noted that it was not clear to what extent the numbers reflect temporary conditions rather than longer

Now on pp. 18-19.

See comment 1.

term deployability problems. The GAO reported that the Air Force is now undergoing restructuring, creating composite wings which the Air Force describes as organizing in peacetime for how it expects to fight in the future. The GAO noted that this could give greater visibility to any nondeployability problems. (p. 10/GAO Draft Report)

**DoD Response: Partially concur.** The Air Force force packaging system is designed to provide planners with maximum flexibility in designing the numbers of aircraft and people required to provide air support to a particular contingency. The Department does not agree with the 15,000 nondeployables mentioned by the GAO. That number is explained in the DoD response to Finding A. Additionally, the first composite wings are just now being established. There is no basis to assert that potential Air Force nondeployability problems will be more visible as a result.

- o **FINDING F: Causes and Indicators of Nondeployability Problems.** The GAO reported that the causes of nondeployability ranged from pending legal actions, lack of training, medical profiles, and pregnancy, to inadequate family care plans. The GAO explained that some personnel were only in a nondeployable status for a few hours and others had problems difficult enough to warrant involuntary separation from the Military. The GAO reported that the two principal policy criteria for nondeployable status are (1) criteria set by the DoD and the Services consisting of categories such as pregnancy, attending school, sole surviving son, and other items defined by instruction or law, and (2) commander discretion over such areas as personal hardships, injuries, or other temporary conditions known to the commander. The GAO noted that, by its nature, the use of commander discretion led to variances among those who would be considered nondeployable.

The GAO reported that, throughout the operations, internal Service reports and other information sources cited nondeployable problems impairing unit cohesiveness and personnel readiness. The GAO noted that some of the problems were reported in the Military Joint Universal Lessons Learned System, and a similar data system organization known as the Center for Army Lessons Learned. (pp. 10-11/GAO Draft Report)

Now on pp. 5-6.

**DoD Response: Concur.** The Department is taking the experience from the first major conflict of the all volunteer force and

improving its procedures to meet future contingencies. Each of the Services and their National Guard and Reserve components are developing better procedures to enhance the readiness of the force. The extensive bottom up lessons learned captured from the experiences in the Persian Gulf Conflict will have an impact on the Department for years to come. However, the DoD anticipates the Services will have worked the majority of the nondeployable issues within the next 12 months.

- o **FINDING G: Army Indicators.** The GAO reported that, as the Army selected and prepared units for deployment, substantial numbers of personnel were transferred into units scheduled to deploy in order to raise their personnel readiness to acceptable levels. The GAO found that an estimated 50,000 soldiers were cross-leveled into active or reserve units deployed over the course of the war. The GAO found that the Joint Universal Lessons Learned System had one entry that indicated that many incoming active component replacement personnel were nondeployable, and another entry noting that excessive dental work was required for both active and reserve component personnel before deployment.

The GAO observed that the December 1990 Center for Army Lessons Learned publication reported (1) a large number of personnel were assigned to filler units, including one unit that received 29 new personnel and experienced a 60-percent turnover in officers, including the company commander, and (2) in some units 18 to 20 percent of the female soldiers were nondeployable, most due to either disqualifying physical profile or pregnancy. The GAO also reported that the Joint Universal Lessons Learned System indicated that Reserve and National Guard troops required more medical and dental services than their active duty counterparts, primarily because the reservists were older with more medical and dental problems. The GAO noted that information on the Army National Guard "roundout" combat brigades indicated that they lacked the training, dental and medical care, and physical fitness for timely deployment.

The GAO also reported that the Status of Resources and Training System reports masked the true readiness of individual units. The GAO explained that many changes were made to status reports and many of the soldiers previously reported as deployable became nondeployable. The GAO noted that several units with excellent personnel readiness status on their last Status of Resources and

Now on pp. 20-21.

Training System report were less so after nondeployable soldiers were removed at the mobilization station. (pp. 12-13/GAO Draft Report)

**DoD Response: Concur.** The Guard met pre-mobilization training requirements. Additional training prior to deployment is part of the mobilization plan. To speed mobilization processing, the Army has established plans for placement of dental care units at mobilization stations to clear nondeployables due to dental problems. In addition, the Army has implemented a program to provide dental care during initial Reserve training.

- o **FINDING H: Navy Indicators.** The GAO reported that available data indicate that Navy nondeployability problems were related primarily to reserve components. The GAO found that some reservists did not report at the proper time to the proper place or had medical or dental disorders. The GAO observed that only 75 to 78 percent of the Selected Reserve supplement for two Navy hospital ships deploying to the theater arrived when and where they were needed, and a significant number of reservists did not deploy with the ships due to medical problems or personal hardships. The GAO noted that the lessons learned data indicate that the Navy had to make a large number of last-minute recalls and borrow personnel from other fleet hospitals to fill the two ship shortages. The GAO also found that fewer than 50 percent of the Navy Reserve medical support personnel assigned to Marine units had the requested "field" training and valuable time was lost after activation while reservists were given training. The GAO also reported that deployment was sometimes delayed by internal procedures. The GAO explained that some Naval Reserve medical support personnel were five to seven days late joining their units because the Navy reporting requirements were different from that of the Marine Corps. (pp. 13-14/GAO Draft Report)

Now on pp. 21-22

**DoD Response: Partially concur.** The Navy did experience minor problems with Reserve nondeployables during Operation Desert Storm. However, nondeployables were created as a result of a change in the use of Reserve medical personnel---not, as the GAO states, as problems in manning the hospital ships. Before Operation Desert Storm, Navy plans called for active duty Navy medical personnel to be used to man the two hospital ships and for Reserve personnel to backfill active duty positions in the United States. However, in response to a demand to retain full manning in military treatment facilities

See comment 2.

in the United States, the medical mobilization plan was adjusted to include Reserve and active duty mix aboard the hospital ships. That change in plans required additional shipboard training for some recalled Naval Reservists. The short nature of the conflict reduced the need for medical support more quickly than anticipated. Consequently, the deployment of some of the Reservists was diverted or cancelled before they left the United States. In addition, the Department agrees there were different deployment schedules for the Navy and Marine Corps and, therefore, reporting requirements for medical personnel differed. However, the Department of the Navy met both Navy and Marine medical mobilization requirements.

Now on p. 22.

- o **FINDING I: Marine Corps Indicators.** The GAO reported that available figures on Marine Corps nondeployables vary. The GAO explained that a Marine Corps personnel official, familiar with the deployment of the 2nd Marine Division provided estimates of active and reserve nondeployables ranging from three to four percent for that division. The GAO found that data gathered in conjunction with the DoD study of women in the Military indicated that the Marine Corps had approximately 8,500 nondeployables, mostly in the active component. The GAO noted, however, that available data does not distinguish between the extent of temporary and permanent nondeployables. (p. 14/GAO Draft Report)

See comment 1.

**DoD Response: Concur.** The Marine Corps developed two additional deployment codes during Operation Desert Storm to assist commanders in assessing the nondeployables in Marine units. These codes, along with the established personnel tracking system, inform commanders of the nature of the nondeployability, that is, if it is temporary or permanent without using those labels. In addition, the correct understanding of the GAO number of 8,500 nondeployables is discussed in the DoD response to Finding A.

- o **FINDING J: Air Force Indicators.** The GAO reported that Air Force Officials indicated that it had no nondeployable personnel, and its "lessons learned" reporting system did not have any reports regarding personnel deployability. The GAO noted that the Air Force credited the selectivity of the Air Force mobilization process with preventing nondeployables from affecting its personnel readiness. The GAO pointed out, however, that data from the DoD study of Military women in the Persian Gulf showed that the Air Force did

Now on p. 22.

have several thousand nondeployable personnel, if only temporarily so designated. (pp. 14-15/GAO Draft Report)

**DoD Response:** Concur. Comments regarding the problems in using nondeployable numbers from the DoD study of Military Women are discussed in Finding A.

- o **FINDING K: Peacetime Screening for Nondeployables Has Been Inadequate.** The GAO found that much of the available data pertaining to the Army suggests that insufficient attention has been paid to the issue of nondeployability. The GAO noted that nondeployable personnel could have posed a greater obstacle than they did in the Persian Gulf if time had been more critical or the personnel base had been smaller.

The GAO reported that a February 1992 Center for Army Lessons Learned publication stated that Headquarters, Department of the Army, recognized during Operations Desert Storm and Shield that some nondeployable soldiers being released from active duty should be discharged rather than transferred to nonmobilization units or the Individual Ready Reserve. The GAO noted that the publication indicated that "paradoxically, the administrative process available to Reserve Component commands to discharge nondeployables is administratively cumbersome." The GAO explained that the publication went on to state, "Thus some soldiers who are not deployable during mobilization continue as members of the mobilization pool." The GAO reported that activating personnel without screening their records, and discharging them within a few days, costs the Government thousands of dollars in travel expenses, active duty pay and allowances, and administrative costs.

The GAO reported that the Center for Army Lessons Learned cited the need to (1) amend personnel policies to discharge personnel who are not valid mobilization assets, (2) develop a standard policy on the disposition of reserve component soldiers identified as nondeployable permanently, and (3) establish categories of nondeployables (i.e., temporary or permanent) and treat each category appropriately. The GAO noted that nondeployability problems were not limited to the reserves, therefore, such policy guidance may have similar applicability to active component personnel. (pp. 15-16/GAO Draft Report)

Now on pp. 6-7.

**DoD Response:** Partially concur. Peacetime screening of nondeployables is effective. However, the Department is working to enhance its effectiveness. Each of the Services screens its members as appropriate to the type of unit and mission to be performed. Designated mobility units receive more intense screening, but all military members are screened to insure medical and dental readiness. For example, active Army units and soldiers are required to conduct soldier readiness screening at least twice annually. To supplement existing procedures, the Army National Guard is instituting a State-level medical classification board system to review soldiers who have a permanent nondeployable defect and to effect their separation. Completion is expected by the end of Fiscal Year 1993.

- o **FINDING I: Readiness Reporting Has Not Identified Deployability Problems Sufficiently.** The GAO reported that the impact of nondeployable personnel increases the importance of screening personnel for deployability and reflecting the results in readiness reporting and manning decisions. The GAO observed that Army readiness reports consistently portray a high state of unit readiness. The GAO found, however, that, despite the high readiness ratings, the detailed readiness reports sometimes indicated problems of insufficient numbers of key personnel, but did not cite problems of nondeployable personnel. The GAO noted that reserve component units, because of how they are organized and manned, are more likely than active component reporting units to have personnel who have not completed required basic levels of skill training and, as such, are not deployable. The GAO reported that DoD guidance governing personnel data associated with the readiness reports places primary emphasis on assessing strength levels and personnel with required training and skills, although some criteria is provided for assessing the availability of personnel to deploy. The GAO reported that a Joint Universal Lessons Learned System report, originating from the Army Forces Command, noted that the proper reporting of personnel availability on readiness reports would have eliminated the timely burden of fixing units to deploy to the Persian Gulf.

The GAO concluded that available data suggest that the issue of deployability has received inadequate attention, and screening for deployability should be an ongoing process during peacetime. The GAO further concluded that the impetus for doing so grows as forces are reduced and

Now on pp. 7-8.

the importance of deployability is even greater among the remaining forces. The GAO also noted that there are tremendous monetary and readiness costs involved in retaining personnel who are not deployable. The GAO concluded, in summary, that greater emphasis on assessing and reporting on nondeployability issues is warranted both for active and reserve forces. (pp. 16-17/GAO Draft Report)

**DoD Response:** Partially concur. Deployability screening is an ongoing process. Major exercises practice mobility and are an accurate test of screening procedures. The Army is studying current deployability and retention criteria to determine if any change to DoD policy or public law is required. The review should be completed by the end of next fiscal year.

\* \* \* \* \*

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- o **RECOMMENDATION 1:** The GAO recommended that the Secretary of Defense strengthen the Status of Resources and Training System reporting system to require the Services to identify the number of temporary and long-term nondeployable personnel, both active and reserve, and to fully reflect such assessments in their reports. (p. 18/GAO Draft Report)

Now on p. 8.

**DoD Response:** Nonconcur. The purpose of the Status of Resources and Training System is to provide broad bands of assessment of a unit's status. It was not designed as a management information system to report on the detailed personnel, logistics and training issues of a particular unit. The system does, however, provide a vehicle to calculate and state the personnel status by considering fill and nondeployable personnel. The Assistant Secretary of Defense (Force Management and Personnel) will request the DoD Inspector General to conduct a functional management inspection to measure compliance with current directives to assure accurate reporting of unit status in the Status of Resources and Training System.

- o **RECOMMENDATION 2:** The GAO recommended that the Secretary of Defense provide additional policy guidance and emphasis, as needed, to require the Services to identify



Now on p. 8.

the magnitude of temporary and permanent nondeployable personnel in both active and reserve forces. (p. 18/GAO Draft Report)

**DoD Response:** Partially concur. As reviews and analyses are completed across the Department, policy will be issued or revised as required. The DoD is issuing revised guidelines on effective family care planning, with guidance to be given to the Services to monitor compliance by the end of Fiscal Year 1992. Additionally, the Army is reviewing retention and deployability criteria to resolve discrepancies, and that review should be completed by the end of next fiscal year. The Department has an ongoing effort to rewrite contingency plans to establish mission and roles to support the National Military Strategy. As these plans come in focus, the added requirements for mobility will be identified and deployability criteria incorporated in the supporting personnel plans. It is anticipated that most of contingency plan effort will be completed by the end of Fiscal Year 1993.

The following are GAO's comments on DOD's letter dated July 20, 1992.

## GAO Comments

1. We recognize that some level of nondeployability is inevitable; we do not suggest that every unit must be ready to go at any time with all of its people. DOD is correct in pointing out the limitations in data concerning the overall number of nondeployables, as we have in the body of the report. Numbers cited, however, are useful in pointing out instances and circumstances where each service faced nondeployability problems, some more significant than others. Some instances of nondeployability are temporary while others are of much longer duration. This is reflected in DOD's citation of a 6-percent nondeployability rate for the Army National Guard after actions were taken to delete some categories of nondeployability. Also, it is worth reiterating that the ability to determine reliable composite numbers and percentages of nondeployable personnel is further obscured by the selectivity of services in activating personnel and packaging forces for deployment.

2. Although DOD's comments take exception with our example of deployability problems affecting two Navy hospital ships, our data, as indicated in our report and noted by DOD in its comments, came from internal Navy documents pertaining to lessons learned. DOD is correct in pointing out that some nondeployability problems resulted from service decisions not to deploy certain groups of individuals. We recognize that the military services made efforts to deploy the most ready units possible to the Persian Gulf; in some cases, this meant tightening existing criteria for deployability and creating a greater number of nondeployables in some instances than otherwise might have occurred. DOD's comments provide an additional example to one already mentioned in the report.

---

# Major Contributors to This Report

---

National Security and  
International Affairs  
Division, Washington,  
D.C.

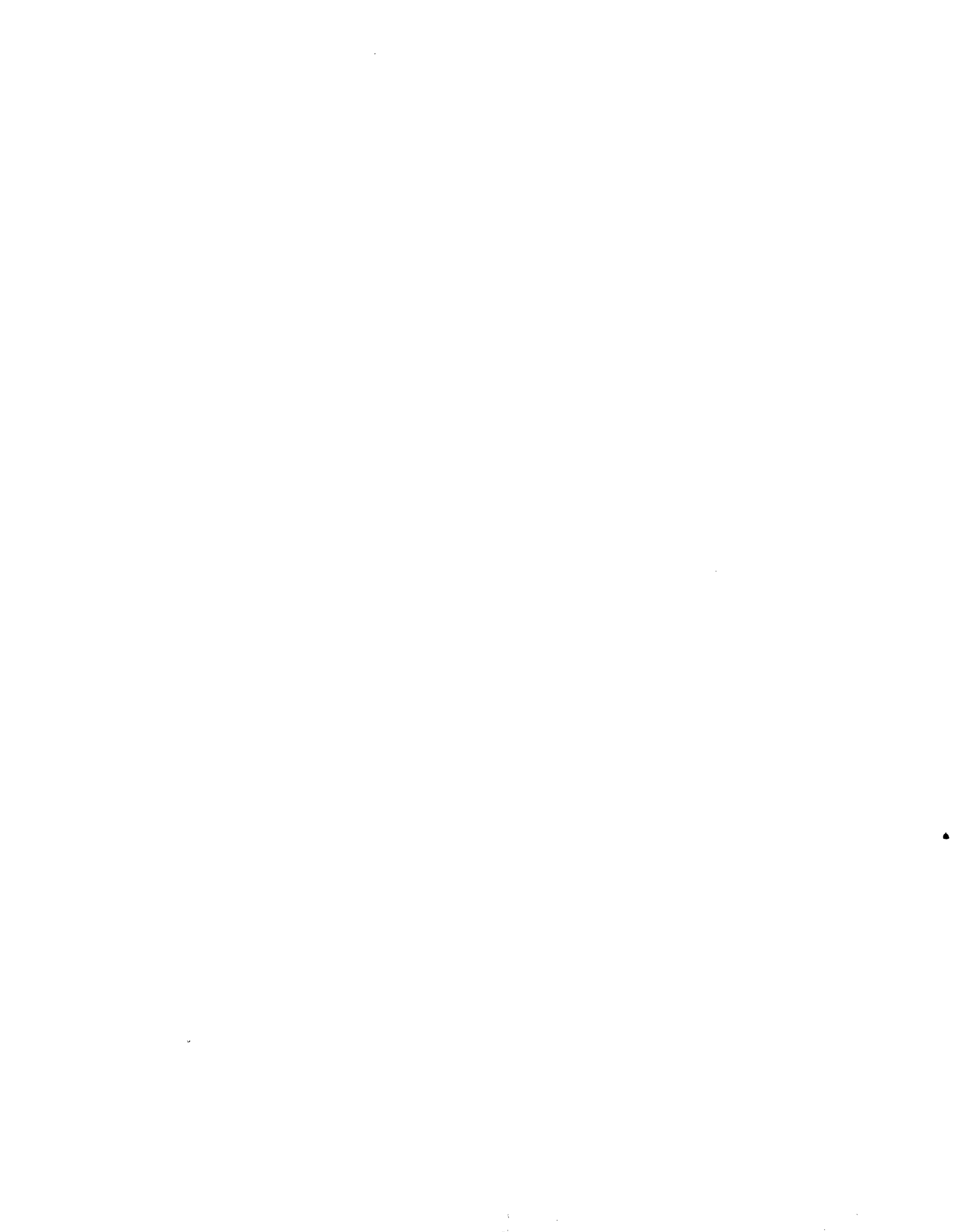
Barry W. Holman, Assistant Director

---

Norfolk Regional Office

Dudley C. Roache, Regional Management Representative  
Lawrence E. Dixon, Evaluator-in-Charge  
Jeanett H. Reid, Evaluator





United States  
General Accounting Office  
Washington D.C. 20548

Official Business  
Penalty for Private Use \$300

First Class Mail  
Postage & Fees Paid  
GAO  
Permit No. G100

---

### **Ordering Information**

**The first copy of each GAO report and testimony is free. Additional copies are \$2 each. Orders should be sent to the following address, accompanied by a check or money order made out to the Superintendent of Documents, when necessary. Orders for 100 or more copies to be mailed to a single address are discounted 25 percent.**

**U.S. General Accounting Office  
P.O. Box 6015  
Gaithersburg, MD 20877**

**Orders may also be placed by calling (202) 275-6241.**