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DOCUMENTED BRIEFING

Army Deployments to OIF and OEF

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Prepared for the United States Army

Approved for public release; distribution unlimited



The research described in this report was sponsored by the United States Army under Contract No. W74V8H-06-C-0001.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Bonds, Tim, 1962–

Army deployments to OIF and OEF / Timothy M. Bonds, Dave Baiocchi, Laurie L. McDonald.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-0-8330-4920-9 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Iraq War, 2003—Manpower—United States.
 2. Afghan War, 2001—Manpower—United States.
 3. Operation Enduring Freedom, 2001–
 4. Deployment (Strategy)
 5. United States. Army—Personnel management.
 6. United States. Army—Recruiting, enlistment, etc.
 7. United States. Army—Operational readiness.
 8. United States—Military policy.
- I. Baiocchi, Dave. II. McDonald, Laurie L., 1955– III. Title. IV. Title: Army deployments to Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

DS79.764.U6B66 2010

956.7044'340973—dc22

2010003443

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Published 2010 by the RAND Corporation

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Summary

In October 2008, the Vice Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army asked the RAND Arroyo Center to assess the demands placed upon the Army by the continuing deployments of soldiers to operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. As part of Arroyo's response, we conducted the analyses documented here in order to give the Army and other policymakers a fresh look at Army deployments.¹ In this analysis we addressed three broad questions:

1. How many soldiers has the Army been asked to maintain in theater over the course of OEF and OIF? How does this demand for soldiers compare with the numbers of troops maintained in theater by the other services?
2. How does the demand for soldiers translate into a rate of soldiers deployed? What has the Army done to reduce the individual deployment ratio by increasing the number of soldiers it can deploy?
3. Of the soldiers on active duty today, how many have deployed? How many have not yet deployed, and for what reasons?

The principal source of data for this analysis was the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC). DMDC uses the Contingency Tracking System (CTS) to track personnel involved in contingency operations. A deployment for OEF/OIF is defined as “a DoD Service member who is or has been *physically located* within the OEF/OIF combat zones or areas of operation (AOR), or has been *specifically identified* by his/her service as ‘directly supporting’ the OEF/OIF mission outside the designated combat zone (e.g., U.S. Air Force

¹ Additional analyses are under way within RAND Arroyo Center to address this request.

aircrew or support personnel located at an airbase outside the combat zone).”² By using this source, we ensured that our data would be consistent with those used by DMDC, other offices within the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), and the other services in their analyses.

Army Troop Levels Maintained in OIF and OEF

We found that the Army has provided over 1 million troop-years to OIF and OEF through December 2008.³ Active-duty soldiers alone have contributed over 700,000 troop-years to these two wars. From the beginning of OIF in March 2003 through December 2008, the Army has maintained an average of 117,000 active-duty soldiers in OIF and OEF combined. The combined average increased to 128,000 active-duty soldiers from September 2005 through December 2008.

In the process of accumulating this much deployed time, most of the active-duty soldiers in the Army (67 percent) have deployed to OIF or OEF—and most of those soldiers have deployed for a second or third year. Approximately 373,000 of the soldiers in the Army as of December 2008 had served in OIF or OEF.⁴ Over 121,000 have deployed for their first year, 173,000 for their second year, and 79,000 for their third year or longer. Of this last group, over 9,000 are deploying for their fourth year. The burden falls most heavily on the middle ranks of the officers and the noncommissioned officers. These soldiers have more deployed time than their counterparts from the other services.

² Michelle Rudolph, Defense Manpower Data Center, prepared for the 10th Annual Force Health Protection Conference, 4–10 August 2007. See the appendix for additional details regarding the CTS database.

³ Total of all Army active-duty and mobilized reserve component soldiers who have served time in OIF or OEF since the beginning of these conflicts. This includes soldiers who have subsequently left the service.

⁴ These 373,000 are all of the soldiers, still on active duty as of December 2008, who deployed one or more times to OIF or OEF.

Soldier BOG:Dwell Ratios

To maintain a high number of soldiers in theater, the Army has deployed them at BOG:Dwell ratios between 1:1 and 1:2—and closer to 1:1—since the beginning of OIF. Boots on ground, or BOG, refers to the time that soldiers spend in theater at their deployed locations. “Dwell” is supposed to represent the time that soldiers spend at their home stations. (In practice, however, the time spent traveling to theater, the time spent traveling home, and the time training away from home station is counted as dwell.)

The BOG:Dwell ratios the Army has sustained in OIF and OEF show that soldiers have deployed more often than the DoD goal of 1:2 for the active component. The Army has increased end strength, moved soldiers from Korea and Europe to home-stationed units, and has decreased the size of the generating force in order to generate more deployable soldiers. However, until recently, demand has increased as quickly as the number of available soldiers—so no net easing of deployment ratio has resulted.

Soldiers Not Yet Deployed

We examined the statement that roughly one-third of the Army has “never deployed” to OIF and OEF.⁵ We found that most of the soldiers included in this category are relatively new to the service, and are often still in training. Therefore, a better characterization for these soldiers (and likely the new members of other services) is “not-yet-deployed” to Iraq or Afghanistan. Out of an active-duty strength of 557,000 soldiers as of December 2008, the Army had deployed 373,000 soldiers. The remaining 184,000 soldiers had not yet deployed. New soldiers account for a majority (109,000) of the Army’s “not-

⁵ See, for example, the briefing by Kris L. Hoffman, Defense Manpower Data Center, entitled “Deployment Accountability Update (June 2008 CTS Deployment File),” prepared for the Honorable Dr. David S.C. Chu, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, July 31, 2008.

yet-deployed” numbers, and roughly 4,000 more personnel are cadets at the U.S. Military Academy, who count toward active-duty end strength.

Of the remaining 71,000, there are over 10,000 soldiers forward-stationed in Korea, Europe, or other overseas locations who have not yet served in OIF or OEF. Another 27,000 are in military occupational specialties that support the current war efforts or other contingency missions, but are not located within Iraq or Afghanistan.

That leaves 34,000 soldiers—of which 3,000 have been injured prior to deployment and are in warrior transition units. The final 31,000 soldiers (about 5.6 percent of the active-duty force) are in the United States, have more than two years in the Army, but have not yet deployed to OIF or OEF.

To recapitulate, the breakout of soldiers in the Army as of December 2008 is as follows:

- 67 percent of the active-duty Army has deployed and contributed a large, and growing, cumulative time deployed in theater.
- 20 percent are recently accessed (including U.S. Military Academy cadets); most of these will deploy when ready, depending on requirements in the OIF and OEF theaters.
- 2 percent have not yet deployed to OIF or OEF and are currently deployed to other overseas locations; they may be rotated through OIF or OEF as they are borrowed from their current stations or after they complete these assignments.
- 5 percent have not yet deployed to OIF or OEF and are in key jobs supporting global military operations; these soldiers too may deploy if they are sent as individual replacements, or, as above, they may deploy in a subsequent assignment.
- 3,000 additional soldiers were hurt prior to deploying.

Therefore, in total, our assessment is that virtually all of the Army’s currently serving soldiers have either already deployed to OIF/OEF at least once (67 percent) or simply have not served long enough to get deployed (20

percent). Of the remainder, 7 percent is made up of soldiers who have not had an opportunity to deploy to OIF/OEF because they have been needed elsewhere, or have been injured prior to deploying. This leaves a small portion of the force—less than 6 percent—made up of soldiers who have been in the Army more than two years, are in military occupational specialties that do typically deploy to Iraq and Afghanistan, are serving in units stationed in the United States, but have not yet deployed to OIF or OEF.

Conclusions

The Army has provided the bulk of U.S. troops to OIF and OEF: over 1 million troop years as of December 2008. These deployments represent 52 percent of the total troop deployments within the area of operations, and over 75 percent of the deployments on the ground in Iraq, Kuwait, and Afghanistan in 2008.

Since the beginning of OIF, the active-duty soldiers who have deployed have operated at a BOG:Dwell ratio of approximately 1:1. Almost 67 percent of the soldiers in the Army in December 2008 had deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. Most of these soldiers were working on their second or third year of cumulative deployed duty.

Most of the remaining soldiers (about 20 percent) were new to the Army and still engaged in individual, collective, or unit training. Of the remainder, 7 percent are in key specialties supporting current operations or are deployed to Korea or Europe. Therefore, the active-duty Army is almost completely (about 94 percent) utilized and therefore retains very little unutilized capacity to deploy additional active-duty soldiers.