

BACKGROUND

Historically, the Army ran three separate school systems—one each for the Active Component (AC), the Army National Guard (ARNG), and the United States Army Reserve (USAR). In 1994, the Chief of Staff of the Army, realizing the need to improve quality and increase efficiency in the face of declining training resources, called for an integrated training system to serve soldiers of both the AC and the Reserve Component (RC). This new concept was referred to as the Total Army School System (TASS). Intended to improve quality, efficiency, and performance, TASS involved organizing the nation into separate regions, consolidating existing RC training institutions, and making one organization (and one component) responsible for managing training in a single functional area (combat arms (CA), combat support (CS), and combat service support (CSS)). In addition, within the TASS concept, the RC schools were to be linked to their AC counterpart proponent schools, which would be responsible for quality assurance by accrediting the RC schools and certifying the instructors. The TASS concept was initially tested as a prototype in one region—Region C—the southeastern United States, which encompasses North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

TASS has made some significant advances that are improving the efficiency and performance of RC schools.¹ However, to this point,

¹For a discussion of TASS performance, see Winkler et al. (1996), Shanley et al. (1997), Winkler et al. (MR-928-A, forthcoming), and Winkler et al. (MR-955-A, forthcoming).

TASS has concentrated primarily on changing how RC training institutions are organized and managed. Currently, RC soldiers still receive training nearly exclusively at RC training institutions, and AC soldiers receive training at AC training institutions. Given continued pressure on training resources and continued evidence of underutilized training capacity in both the AC and the RC, further improvements are needed in how the Army uses its training infrastructure and resources. Such improvements may be possible from cross-component consolidation and leveraging of training infrastructure and by integrating training resources into a common, “component-blind” Army training system that serves all Army soldiers irrespective of their component.

Such resource integration can have economic, efficiency, and cultural benefits. In terms of the economic benefits, a more fully integrated school system should provide the current level of training at reduced cost. Allowing a soldier to take a course at the Army school closest to his or her home or unit location, regardless of which component currently “owns” that institution, can reduce travel cost and, in the case of AC soldiers, the cost of per diem associated with temporary duty (TDY) training. Economies of scale may result in fewer instructors, or even schools, needed for training.

Such integration can also yield efficiency. With reduced budgets, some of the training missions of AC schools cannot be fully accomplished. For example, under pressure to reduce AC training resources, the Army eliminated the mobile training teams that would go to units to conduct functional and/or new equipment training. Existing RC training assets could help in this regard by assuming some of the auxiliary missions once performed by the AC proponent schools.

Finally, integration can provide cultural benefits. Specifically, a significant benefit of integrating the AC and RC training systems would be an increase in cross-component contact and cooperation. Having soldiers attend classes taught by instructors from other components, and possibly advancing to a point where AC and RC soldiers are trained in the same classroom, could strengthen confidence and understanding between the AC and the RC.

An additional benefit of sending AC soldiers to schools either collocated with their home locations or within an easy commute—including schools now “owned” by the RC—is a reduction in the time spent away from their home and unit. This would increase soldier morale.

RAND’s Arroyo Center has been involved with TASS from its inception, starting with an assessment of the performance and efficiency of the prototype regional school system in the southeastern United States and subsequently providing recommendations for monitoring the efficiency and performance of the full system of RC schools as the TASS expanded to additional regions.

As part of that research, researchers determined that efficiencies could be gained within the RC school system by consolidating Annual Training (AT) training sites for courses with high support, supporting an effort by the Army National Guard (ARNG) to create regional sites for training in specific career fields.² Given the potential benefits discussed above, the next logical question was whether further efficiencies and economies of scale could be gained by integrating and leveraging resources across the Active and Reserve Components.

OBJECTIVES

This study extends the previous research to examine that question. More specifically, we developed a methodology for exploring the implications of shifting some training across existing component lines and used this method to illustrate potential benefits and tradeoffs of the approach. This report describes our methodology and presents exploratory analyses of three options for moving the TASS toward a more complete integration of AC and RC training infrastructure.

The **nearest school** option involves allowing students to attend the Army school closest to them, regardless of the component of the student or of the school. Under this option, RC soldiers will receive training at an AC proponent school if that school is closer than an RC school and AC soldiers will receive training at an RC school if it is

²For a more thorough discussion of this research, see Shanley et al. (1997).

closer than the AC proponent school, as long as the school is accredited and offers the course the student needs.

The **reassign courses** option entails modifying the courses offered at schools based on the localized demand for training. Here, we allow an RC school certified in a given functional area to offer AC and RC courses if there is sufficient demand within close proximity of the school. There are two cases within this option. In the *multi-functional* case, an RTS-M can offer a wide range of courses. In the *specialized* case, an RTS-M concentrates its course offerings in one or two functional areas.

The **consolidate schools** option considers the structure (i.e., the number of schools) needed to meet the integrated training requirement. Under this option, we examine the potential for existing RC schools to assume new training missions consistent with the localized demand for training.

SCOPE

It is important to note several issues about the exploratory analyses. First, they address only a subset of training: military occupational specialty (MOS) reclassification and functional training, and non-commissioned officer (NCO) education of enlisted personnel.³ Currently, Initial Entry Training (IET) is conducted solely at AC training institutions under AC supervision (by law). Although our focus is on enlisted training, we believe there is also potential for integrating the training of officers.

Second, we selected a specific functional area as the focus of exploratory analyses—maintenance training conducted at the RC Regional Training Sites–Maintenance (RTS-Ms) and their AC proponent schools. These schools conduct over 100 courses in the maintenance area, including courses in enlisted leadership, MOS reclassi-

³NCO courses typically include a technical portion, specific to the MOS, and a general leadership portion. Completion of the Basic Noncommissioned Officer (BNCOC) course is required for promotion to the grade of E6. Completion of the Advanced Noncommissioned Officer (ANCOC) course is required for promotion to the grade of E7. Many MOS career fields end in a specific advanced leadership course; in some cases, several MOSs will feed into a single advanced course.

fication and advanced skills, and various sustainment and new equipment transition areas. In fiscal year 1996, almost 6,000 AC soldiers and over 8,000 RC soldiers received training in these types of courses (within their separate systems).

The 16 RTS-Ms in the continental United States plus the one in Hawaii provide an extensive network of alternative locations for RC maintenance training.⁴ Although Aberdeen conducts the majority of the AC maintenance courses, Fort Lee, Fort Knox, Fort Jackson, Fort Leonard Wood, and Fort Sill also offer maintenance-related courses for AC soldiers.

Several of the RTS-Ms are collocated on Active bases (e.g., Fort Stewart, Fort Bragg, and Fort Hood) or are within an easy commute of one (e.g., Salina, Kansas is very close to Fort Riley). AC commanders have recognized the advantage of the collocated RC training facilities and have utilized the RTS-Ms to train their Active soldiers in various functional areas. In fiscal year 1996, over 1,000 AC soldiers took sustainment and modernization training courses at the local RTS-Ms.

The RTS-Ms in many ways are smaller versions of the AC schools. They have fixed facilities, permanently assigned training equipment, and a staff of full-time Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) administrators and instructors. They have close relationships with their AC proponent schools and have achieved accreditation and instructor certification. In fact, the instructors typically have greater teaching experience than their AC counterparts, with many having served at their RTS-Ms for several years.

Third, the three options examined only changes in the *location* of training. That is, we allow AC soldiers to take AC-configured courses at RC schools and RC soldiers to take RC-configured courses at AC schools. However, we do not commingle students from different components within the same classes, although we do allow the instructors of the classes to be from the other component (i.e., AC instructors could teach RC courses to RC students and RC instructors

⁴There are two other RTS-Ms, one at Tobyhanna, Pennsylvania, and one at Sacramento, California, that teach signal-related courses. Since we were focusing on maintenance courses, we have excluded these two from our analyses.

could teach AC courses to AC students). Of course, instructors from one component could be assigned, perhaps temporarily, to a school of the other component to assist in the training provided to any soldier.

The segregation of students could change, however, as Total Army Training System (TATS) courseware becomes available. Under TATS, one courseware package will be valid for all components. In principle, any student could take a course at any certified training location, taught by any qualified instructor, regardless of the component of the student, school, or instructor.

At this time, however, we are dealing with a relatively modest change, in which AC and RC courses are taught to AC and RC soldiers, respectively, albeit at any accredited Army school and by any certified instructor.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

In Chapter Two, we discuss the optimization modeling approach developed to explore the potential benefits of the three different options for integrating resources across the two components. Chapter Three discusses the results of applying that approach to the three options described above. Chapter Four presents some implications of the exploratory analyses.

Appendix A provides a technical description of the optimization model, and Appendixes B and C contain spreadsheets (from which the tables and figures in this document are derived) detailing the changes in student loads and course offerings for the various options we examined.