

INTRODUCTION

During the European wars that followed the French Revolution, Napoleon gained a pronounced advantage over his opponents by grouping combined arms divisions into formations. These formations, called corps, were capable of dispersed maneuver and independent action. The speed, versatility, and agility of Napoleon's corps changed the nature of land warfare and forced other armies to adopt similar organizations. Since then, and in spite of vast changes in weapons and equipment, the corps has remained a standard unit in western armies.

Corps have been important in US Army operations since the Civil War when Generals Sherman, Thomas, Jackson, and Longstreet made their names as corps commanders. Corps have continually demonstrated their value as maneuver forces of the field army and as forces capable of significant independent action. In World War I (WWI), World War II (WWII), and the Korean War, the corps served as the Army's principal ground maneuver force.

Generals Patton and Stilwell successfully conducted independent operations with corps in Africa and Asia during World War II, while Generals Collins, Haislip, Middleton, and Gerow, among others, led corps that fought the battles of western Europe under command of Field Armies. General Almond's X Corps carried out the critical amphibious landing at Inchon and regained the initiative for United Nations (UN) Forces in Korea. During the Vietnam War, field forces performed corps functions. They had regional authority and considerable administrative and logistic responsibilities. They also maintained the traditional tactical concerns normal to a corps.

Early in the 1970s, the US Army realigned and reduced headquarters layering to improve command and control (C2). The corps assumed most of the field army's administrative and logistic functions. The realignment established the headquarters of a unified command, a specified command, a combined command, or a joint task force (JTF) above the corps in the operational chain. A theater Army, if established, would provide combat service support for deployed US corps.

In the 1980s, the corps had organic armored and mechanized divisions along with an armored cavalry regiment (ACR). Whatever its mission or exact composition, the corps was to conduct the following critical functions:

- Maintaining surveillance over an area to the corps' front to provide an accurate picture of the enemy as he is deployed 96 hours movement time from the forward line of own troops (FLOT) extending as far as 300 kilometers (km) from the FLOT.
- Fighting the enemy throughout the area of influence, 72 hours movement time from the FLOT or from corps objectives.
- Supporting the battle with CS and CSS forces.
- Sustaining the battle by drawing together forces to carry the fight to successive enemy echelons.

Today, corps must possess the flexibility required to execute current warfighting doctrine and be capable of projecting the forces necessary to support unforeseen operations. They must be able to conduct simultaneous operations instead of the sequential operations against an echeloned threat they were expected to face during the cold war era.