

Vigilant Warrior:

General Donn A. Starry's AirLand Battle And How It Changed the Army

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In light of the recent debate over the future of U.S. Army doctrine, it is essential to revisit how the Army developed its doctrine in the past. Probably the best case to analyze and draw lessons from is the development of AirLand Battle doctrine. Although the threat and political and economic environments from which AirLand Battle doctrine emerged are totally different from today's situation, the process and the forces that created AirLand Battle doctrine are even more relevant today. As the Army, and in particular the Armor force, searches for its place in the military of the future, it must draw from the lessons of the past to develop a coherent and relevant doctrine for the 21st century.

How does doctrine evolve? What are the forces and processes that lead the United States Army to recast the way it intends to fight? In his 1979 Leavenworth Paper on the evolution of U.S. Army tactical doctrine since World War II, Robert A. Doughty argues that while many factors influence the development of doctrine, national security policy is the fundamental basis for its development.¹ Doughty's insight is a deceptively simple one, for the interaction between internal and external factors and their relevance to national security policy is frustratingly complex. Each factor influences the evolution of doctrine in its own distinct way. This point is illustrated clearly in the evolution of U.S. Army doctrine from Active Defense to AirLand Battle during the years 1979 to 1982. Dissatisfied with Active Defense, the Army set out to develop a new doctrine in 1977, an initiative that coincided with a shift in national security policy. Four major external events — the overthrow of the Shah of Iran, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the failed Iranian rescue mission in 1980, and the appearance of a Communist-sponsored government in Nicaragua — shifted the focus of President Jimmy Carter's foreign policy from a Third World, "world order politics" orientation to one recognizing the primacy of the Soviet Union as the principal adversary.² Carter's resulting defense spending stimulus and its extensive reinforcement by President Ronald Reagan's defense build-up in the 1980s led to an unprecedented expansion of defense programs, especially the "Big Five."³ This increased spending, along with Reagan's belief that the United States should counter Soviet threats everywhere and that the nation had the resources to accomplish that mission, influenced the Army's doctrinal reform efforts.⁴

As the United States Army's Training and Doctrine Command's (TRADOC) commander during this period, General Donn A. Starry proved to be the Army's primary agent for the doctrinal revision that came to be called AirLand Battle. Recognizing the need for reform, Starry's energy and conceptions about the nature of future warfare combined with alliance considerations, particularly German concerns, to shape an offen-



General Starry, as a colonel in Vietnam in 1970.

sively-oriented doctrine emphasizing firepower, soldiers, and technology. Starry was instrumental in making sense of these influences and melding them into a coherent and effective doctrine.

He took these influences, as well as those of the national strategy and new technologies, and focused the Army's efforts in its quest to perfect the Army's doctrine. His experiences as V Corps commander in Europe and his integral role in the development of the doctrine of Active Defense gave him a unique advantage when General E.C. Meyer, the Army Chief of Staff, tasked him to write a new doctrine. Not only did it allow him to discover firsthand the shortcomings of Active Defense, but it also illustrated the intense resistance to Active Defense within the Army in the field.⁵ This was a key factor in Starry's approach to the doctrinal reform process.

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Understanding the development of AirLand Battle doctrine requires an understanding of the context from which it emerged. By the end of the Vietnam War, the United States faced a Soviet threat to NATO Europe that had grown in numbers, in quality of fielded equipment, and in operational doctrine, while the Vietnam War preoccupied the United States. The Army needed to find a way to fight outnumbered and win at the operational level of war without serious risk of having to resort to nuclear weapons.⁶

In July 1973, General William DePuy became the first commander of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). Using his experiences in World War II and Vietnam, and his analysis of the Arab-Israeli War of October 1973, DePuy developed FM 100-5, *Active Defense Doctrine*, in 1976. Designed to allow American forces to fight outnumbered and win, Active Defense emphasized the principle of economy of force and the need to strike the enemy with surprise and carefully husbanded combat power at the critical place and time. Since Soviet doctrine called for attacking in successive echelons of armor, Active Defense sought to destroy enough Soviet tanks in each echelon to give the U.S. Army and its allies time to re-consolidate and face the next echelon before it came within range.⁷

As soon as TRADOC published the 1976 edition of FM 100-5, Active Defense came under strong criticism. One of the main objections centered on the fact that DePuy had written the field manual with the help of the doctrine department at Fort Monroe instead of using the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, where the Army traditionally writes doctrine.⁸ Other criticisms focused on the doctrine’s preoccupation with weapons effects, exchange ratios, and the return to the American fixation on “firepower-attrition” warfare, rather than a maneuver-centered focus.⁹

In contrast, the 1982 edition of FM 100-5, *AirLand Battle Doctrine*, identified leadership as an element of combat power equal to firepower and maneuver, and emphasized the validity of training, motivation, and boldness. Success depended on the basic tenets of initiative, depth, agility, and synchronization. AirLand Battle sought to defeat the Soviet second and third echelon forces deep within their own territory before they could attack while simultaneously defeating the first echelon. To accomplish these missions, the doctrine proposed using distant fires and electronic warfare to slow, damage, and confuse the enemy in a deep attack, thus creating gaps for a lightning-fast counterattack by mechanized forces, supported by tactical air power and attack helicopters.¹⁰

The study of the development of AirLand Battle needs a more thorough investigation into what focused the Army’s doctrinal reform effort and who advocated and gained its acceptance within the Army. Historical or intellectual change requires vision, advocacy, and direction. Once the decision to change is reached, leadership in the process of the institutionalization of the change is paramount. In the case of the Army’s development of AirLand Battle General Donn A. Starry performed all these tasks, providing focus for the development of the new doctrine and then working tirelessly to ensure adoption within

the Army. General Starry’s ideas developed over a long tenure in the Army. Through his experiences, he perfected his views on the difficulties of using tactical nuclear weapons, the need for meaningful use of the military to obtain strategic and political goals, and the nature of the war with the Soviets or Soviet satellite states.

From 1960 to 1964, Starry served in the 3d Armored Division, first as the Third Brigade’s S3, and then as battalion commander of 1-32 Armor. This experience taught him that tactical and operational commanders would probably never be able to order a nuclear release. Although he saw great utility, both operationally and tactically, for nuclear weapons, the time needed to gain authorization for their release reduced their effectiveness. By the time operational commanders gained authorization to use tactical nuclear weapons, the Soviets would have already won using conventional forces and possibly even nuclear weapons. Even so, many Supreme Allied Commanders in Europe felt that they could not defeat the Soviets without release of nuclear weapons to the theater commander.¹¹

One of the greatest contributions to the development of AirLand Battle was the Yom Kippur War.¹² After visiting the Golan Heights following the war, Starry realized that the old American style of warfare, based on the industrial mobilization model of massed forces and brute force of annihilation, was essentially bankrupt. The increased lethality of modern weaponry and the necessity to fight outnumbered and win the first battle of any future war demanded a new style of warfare.¹³ He also realized, while numbers count, battles usually go to the side that sometime in a fight seizes the initiative and holds it till the end of the battle, regardless of numbers.¹⁴ He now knew the U.S. had to find the way — technically, tactically, and operationally — to fight with conventional means below the nuclear threshold. The lack of reliable intelligence before the Yom Kippur War convinced Starry that the corps commander had to have control of surveillance and target acquisition means to find succeeding echelons and to deliver weapons against them. These echelons could threaten the success of the corps battle plan.

The daunting task of applying these lessons to the Army would not be easy.¹⁵

One of the most important experiences that crystallized Starry’s views on doctrine and operational maneuver was his experience commanding V Corps in Germany from February 1976 to June 1977.¹⁶ His time in command allowed him to lay out Active Defense on the ground and walk the terrain. This firsthand experience exposed glaring shortcomings. It was inadequate at stopping a Soviet breakthrough attack unless the Army found a better means to meet the arrival of new enemy units at the friendly line of contact.¹⁷ He also learned from these terrain walks that too many commanding officers had never visited their General Defense Plan Battle Positions and the vast extent to which the Leavenworth malaise about Active Defense Doctrine affected the Army in the field.¹⁸ His commanders did not feel that they could defeat the Soviets using Active Defense. This resistance showed Starry the need to incorporate the entire Army into the doctrinal reform movement and the need to reform the military school system to teach the

Army how to fight with the new doctrine. In order for the reform to take hold, Starry believed he needed to provide commanders and their staffs the tools and the vehicle to convince themselves that they could win.¹⁹

German doctrinal theory also had a great influence on Starry and AirLand Battle at the tactical level.²⁰ One of the German ideas Starry pushed in the doctrinal development was *Auftragstaktik*, or mission type orders.²¹ This is the idea that subordinate leaders can change the mission within the commander's intent without having to ask for permission in order to obtain the objective.²² Another German idea influenced AirLand Battle at the operational level. The concept of the *Schwerpunkt* combined synergy, fragmentation, successive operations and momentum, deception and surprise, within systemic maneuver. It emphasized both the logical linkage between concentration of effort and accomplishment of the operational aim, and the principle of directing one's own main strike into the enemy's principal operational weakness.²³

These experiences forced Starry to do some serious thinking about the problems of the Army and how to fix them. After analyzing the German Army's successful resurgence between World War I and World War II, he developed a framework to change the way the Army fought. First, he understood the need for an institution or mechanism to identify the requirement for change and draw guidelines for change. This institution or mechanism has to describe clearly what has to be done and how that differs from what was done in the past. The principal staff and commanders responsible for change must be rigorous, relevant, and demanding in order to bring commonality to the solution of the problem. They must work closely with the spokesman for change — usually a maverick or an institution like a staff college — and build consensus, seeking an audience of converts and believers to help in the process.

In order for the reform movement to be successful, someone at the top of the institution must be willing to hear out arguments for change, agree to the need, embrace the new operational concepts, and become at least a supporter, if not a champion, of the cause. Once the proposed change is final, it must be subjected to trials that convincingly demonstrate its relevance to a wide audience by experimentation and personal experience. The process of change does not end there; necessary modifications must be made as a result of such trials.²⁴ This is the blueprint for how Starry helped change the Army.

The formulation of General Starry's ideas did not take place in a vacuum. The quest to change Army doctrine was an Army-wide effort. Political and international concerns, especially NATO alliance obligations, were aired and taken into account by Starry and doctrinal writers. Although these concerns found their way into the development of the doctrine, the driving force behind AirLand Battle was the Soviet threat. Starry did use these and other outside influences to help him focus the doctrinal reform effort.

The then-Army Chief of Staff, General E.C. Meyer, did not directly involve himself in the formulation of AirLand Battle. His main contribution came from his help in lobbying Congress and the Defense Department to support AirLand Battle. He then used the support he gained from AirLand Battle to help gain support for weapons acquisitions and coherent research and development programs.²⁵ However, immediately before he became Army Chief of Staff, he outlined his doctrinal concerns to Starry on 13 June 1979. Meyer's first concern was that doctrine should be applicable in a varying number of environments. War in Europe was the most important war to the United States, but wars in other places were probably more likely to happen.

Doctrine needed to be expanded to address wars in other areas of the world such as the Middle East and Korea. Next, the Army Chief wanted to reduce the emphasis given to the classic Soviet breakthrough scenario on a single axis and give added consideration to other Soviet tactics, including attacks on multiple breakthrough axes with supporting divisional efforts to tie down our forces. Finally, he argued that the current Active Defense doctrine was too heavily defensive in orientation. He emphasized that even though the Army may be on the strategic defense in Europe, it needed to promote an offensive state of mind, conducting offensive operations at the tactical level. He still expected American soldiers to take the fight to the enemy.²⁶ Meyer further emphasized the need for change in his 1980 *White Paper* which stated:

The most demanding challenge confronting the U.S. military in the 1980s is to develop and demonstrate the capability to successfully meet threats to vital U.S. interests outside of Europe, without compromising the decisive theater in Central Europe.²⁷

German and British viewpoints were also fully aired during the development of AirLand Battle.²⁸ Early in 1978, talks began with the two nations to produce agreed tactical concepts for corps level and below, identify short-term interoperability goals, and discuss long-term operational requirements.²⁹ The biggest concern of the Germans was the vulnerability of the inner-German border and the need to defend forward. This was obvious to Starry even before these staff talks began. NATO simply could not afford to give up any ground in its initial defense because so much of Germany lay exposed to a Soviet thrust west.³⁰

During the mid-1970s, the American domestic political environment began to change. The Vietnam War forced the Army to operate with severely constrained weapons budgets, although they gradually increased through the decade. Political currents of the 1970s advocated détente with the Soviets; however, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Iranian hostage crisis invalidated that outlook, and Congress wished to focus inward on domestic problems facing the United States. The Carter Administration's perceptions regarding the state of military readiness also changed vis-à-vis the Soviets and an unstable Third World. This shift on the national level gave impetus to policy changes concerning the tactical nuclear issue and rapid deployment world wide.³¹ President Carter moved back to a national strategy that recognized the Soviet Union as the most dangerous threat.

At the time, a Carter foreign policy shift was not heralded as such by Starry and TRADOC and, as result, did not have a large impact on the development of AirLand Battle. The stark truth was that the United States, the leader of the NATO alliance, was confronted with more serious problems than ever before. Regardless of any policy shift, the Army needed to rewrite its doctrine to deal with the Soviet threat. As a result, this threat was the primary driving force in the development of AirLand Battle.³²

The Soviets used the Vietnam years to perfect their operational doctrine and conduct a massive conventional force build-up in Europe.³³ By 1973, Warsaw Pact tanks outnumbered NATO tanks by two to one and the Soviets alone had 31 divisions along the East-West border and an additional 60 divisions west of the Ural Mountains.³⁴ Their overwhelming numbers and new operational doctrine caused serious problems for the United States and its NATO allies. The Soviets embraced a doctrine of mass, momentum, and continuous combat. Mass was their sheer numbers; momentum was setting those numbers into mo-

tion; and then keeping them in motion in continuous combat, echelon after echelon, to achieve overwhelming combat power at places where they hoped to achieve victory. There were four echelons deployed between European Russia and the inner-German border capable of launching four simultaneous breakthrough attacks against eight NATO corps.³⁵

General Starry now set out to lead the Army in its quest to develop a new doctrine. One of the most important factors in the Army's rejection of Active Defense centered on the idea that General DePuy wrote it himself with the help of the Armor Center and the doctrine writers at Fort Monroe instead of at the Command and Staff College, where doctrine was traditionally written.³⁶ In order to avoid a repeat of rejection, Starry decided to return doctrine writing to TRADOC schools, like the Command and General Staff College (CGSC). The team that actually wrote *AirLand Battle* was from the Department of Tactics (DTAC) at CGSC.³⁷ Starry believed that if the schools did not write the doctrine, the school faculties could not explain the doctrine properly and students left the schools misinformed about the doctrine. This belief also helped prompt him to reorganize the schools because he felt they were a valuable mechanism to the Army's way of thinking.³⁸

However, he did not leave TRADOC totally out of the process. Starry moved TRADOC's Deputy Commander, Lieutenant General William R. Richardson, to Fort Leavenworth where he took on additional duty as head of the Combined Arms Center.³⁹ This allowed Starry to maintain control of the doctrinal writing process without seeming to be too involved. He also directed Brigadier Donald R. Morelli, Deputy Chief of Staff for Doctrine, to keep records describing concisely the operational concepts of any given item developed at TRADOC and forward those ideas to Fort Leavenworth where they were developed into doctrinal field manuals.⁴⁰ This allowed TRADOC to stay involved in the writing of doctrine while allowing traditional writers of Army doctrine to be the primary writers of *AirLand Battle*.

Starry's unique leadership style allowed the free flow approach to the writing of doctrine that helped quell the resistance created in the development of Active Defense. He chose to operate where the problems were and conduct business "on site," sometimes outside his staff. Starry stressed a freer, faster flow of staff actions, unimpeded by undue heed to the chain of command.⁴¹ This explains his close relationship with the principal authors of *AirLand Battle*, Lieutenant Colonel Huba Wass de Czega, Lieutenant Colonel L.D. Holder, and Lieutenant Colonel Richmond Henriques.

According to Wass de Czega, Starry's initial guidance was simple and straightforward. First, work in the ability to fight on the nuclear/chemical/biological battlefield (the integrated battlefield) and second, imitate General George C. Marshall's, the Army Chief of Staff during World War II, 1941 manual and the German 100-100.⁴²

Starry's input did not end there. The authors sent him the drafts, piece by piece, and he made corrections to the chapters and sent them back using express mail. He also called the writers to discuss his recommendations, but gave them latitude not to accept everything he had penciled in.⁴³

In order to gain acceptance within the Army for a new doctrine, General Starry knew that the entire Army and not just TRADOC needed to be involved in the process. Doctrinal development was led by ideas that could be added to and taken from in order to develop better concepts.⁴⁴ He gave many different speeches during his tenure as TRADOC commander, but

never wrote any of his ideas in an official Army document because he knew the ideas would get into the Pentagon and the Army would not be able to revise them as needed. Starry wanted the whole process to be a growing, living, and moving thing. After each briefing, Starry and his aides changed the briefing based on the questions that the audience asked. Early in 1981 when the questions became less substantive, one of Starry's aides, Lieutenant Colonel Dennis Crumley, convinced Starry to write down his ideas. They took a speech Starry gave at the Armed Forces Staff College and printed it in the March 1981 issue of *Military Review* as "Extending the Battlefield."⁴⁵

The Extended Battlefield concept dealt with areas of the world such as Central Europe, the Middle East, and Korea which have relatively large numbers of modern and well equipped mechanized forces that use Soviet-style operational concepts and tactics. The Extended Battlefield became the basis for *AirLand Battle*. The battlefield was extended in depth, time, and interservice cooperation. First, it was extended in depth, with engagement of enemy units not yet in contact in order to disrupt the enemy's time table, complicate his command and control, and frustrate his plans. This wrestled the initiative away from the enemy. The battlefield was also extended forward in time to allow leaders to plan attacks on follow-on echelons; logistical preparation and plans were integrated to maximize the likelihood of winning the close-in battle. Finally, the range of assets available placed a greater emphasis on higher level Army and sister services acquisition means and attack resources.⁴⁶

An integral part of the Extended Battlefield concept was the concept of deep attack. Its main goal was to create opportunities for friendly action — attack, counterattack, or reconstitution of the defense — on favorable ground forward of the battle area.⁴⁷ Deep attack was not a luxury, it was absolutely necessary to defeat a numerically superior enemy. In an environment of scarce acquisition and strike assets, deep attack needed to be tightly coordinated over time with the decisive close-in battle.

It was also important to consider the number of systems the force had during that time that allowed for a more responsive command and control. The force also had the sensors to find, identify and target the enemy for the more lethal and greater range weapon systems. New systems allowed the commander to see deep inside enemy territory and new weapons allowed him to kill them. Deep Attack was the unifying idea that pulled together all these emerging capabilities so that the Army and Air Force could realize their full combined potential for winning.⁴⁸

Realizing the need to attack deep, Starry saw the need to integrate the Air Force into the extended battlefield, primarily in the roles of interdiction and enemy air defense suppression. This enabled Army helicopters to fly behind enemy lines and conduct interdiction missions.⁴⁹ The services bitterly debated issues over the jurisdiction of capabilities and weapons systems. To rectify the situation, General Starry worked closely with Air Force General William L. Creech, Tactical Air Command (TAC) commander, to iron out the many institutional problems created by deep battle.⁵⁰ Starry and Creech had to overcome more than thirty years of rivalries between the Army and the Air Force. The main question was jurisdiction over the suppression of enemy air defenses close to the forward line of troops.⁵¹

Unlike their respective services, Creech and Starry never disagreed over jurisdiction of capabilities and weapons.⁵² The big problem was convincing the Army and the Air Force to cooperate with each other.⁵³ The rivalry began to subside on 3 April 1981, when the two commanders signed a joint operational concept produced by the Joint Suppression of the Enemy Air

Defense (J-SEAD) project. Under this agreement, the Army assumed primary responsibility for the joint suppression from the forward line of troops (FLOT) to the limits of observed fire, but it authorized Air Force crews to attack independently surface air defense points as targets of opportunity inside the fire support coordination line in accordance with certain carefully designed rules of engagement when such attacks did not interfere with the mission objectives.⁵⁴ This was the first time the Army and the Air Force agreed on jurisdiction for close air support and interdiction. It also shows the willingness of Starry to let go of service biases in order to create the most effective force.

On 23 May 1981, the Air Force and Army staffs agreed to the TAC-TRADOC agreement on the apportionment and allocation of offensive air support. This agreement adequately established the Army corps commander's role in prioritizing targets for Battlefield Air Interdiction (BAI). The Air Force component commander apportioned his tactical aircraft to various roles and missions based on the combined or joint force commander's decisions and guidance. The key feature in this agreement was the Army recognition of Air Force management of its deep attack capabilities, and Air Force recognition of the corps function of locating and prioritizing targets for battlefield air interdiction.⁵⁵

In "Extending the Battlefield," Starry stated that defense must begin well forward and proceed aggressively from the forward defense to destroy enemy assault echelons and at the same time slow, disrupt, break up, or destroy follow-on echelons in order to quickly seize the initiative and go on the offensive.⁵⁶ Seizing the initiative allowed the defender to win the battle against an numerically superior opponent. According to Starry, this notion came from Bob Helmbold's report to a NATO operations conference in the late 1950s, which set forth analysis of opposing numbers in battle. Helmbold analyzed a thousand battles and concluded that with reasonable force ratios, one-to-six or six-to-one, battles more often than not went to the side that somehow seized and maintained the initiative to the end of the battle, regardless of who attacked whom, notwithstanding which side enjoyed the greater numbers.⁵⁷ The outcome of the Arab-Israeli war of 1973 further confirmed this notion.⁵⁸ The need to gain the initiative became the intellectual underpinning for *AirLand Battle*.⁵⁹

Even before DTAC finished writing *AirLand Battle*, Starry and his staff set out to gain its acceptance within the Army and in Congress. Starry's ideas on doctrinal development synthesized into a four-phased program to gain acceptance within the Army. Phase one included conferences at each major command designed to lay down the basic ideas. In phase two, TRADOC and the major Army commands jointly refined implementation proposals to fit specific priorities and assets. In the third phase, TRADOC gave the joint product to the corps and divisions in the field. In the final phase, Army service schools and centers conducted training in the concept and implementing procedures to ensure that the officers and noncommissioned officers left the training base ready for their respective roles.⁶⁰

This process showed the need to reorganize the Army's education system in order to educate officers in the operational level of war. The entire system needed to be adjusted in order to educate officers and change views embedded deep within tradition.⁶¹ Starry started with ROTC. He wanted graduates of ROTC to attain a skill level 3 in order to "commission officers who went through AIT."⁶² Instead of using the Basic Course to teach basic soldier skills, he wanted to spend the time teaching

newly commissioned officers how to be platoon leaders.⁶³ Since the ROTC system at the time could not accommodate the new requirement, TRADOC increased the basic course to 19 weeks. In order to compensate for the shift of instructors to the Basic Course, Starry shortened the advanced course to less than 19 weeks, but made up some of the material at the Combined Arms and Services Staff School (CAS³). CAS³ was a nine-week course designed to teach officers how to think logically through tough problems.⁶⁴ Now the advanced course was tailored for those officers about to take command of companies or batteries.⁶⁵ These changes helped soldiers obtain consistency in their thinking and made it easier for them to accept the new doctrine because it familiarized officers with the way the Army wanted them to think early in their careers.

Starry also made several changes to CGSC. He originally wanted to make it a two-year course because of past experience. During the 1930s, CGSC was a two-year course and produced many great leaders in World War II and after. Starry wanted the first year of learning command and staff procedures to be followed by a second year in which the officer studied command and staff at higher levels — corps, army, army group, theater, to include extensive wargames, staff rides, and command post inspections. General Meyer rejected this idea because it took so many of the Army's best majors out of circulation for two years. The two generals reached a compromise in 1981 that allowed for a second year at Leavenworth for a few officers selected from the one-year CGSC course. They called the new course the School for Advanced Military Studies (SAMS).⁶⁶ The following year, Colonel Wass de Czege developed a curriculum for the course that focused on large unit operations. SAMS, designed to give students a better understanding of the operational level of war, accepted its first students in June of 1983. Students studied classical theory, principally Clausewitz's *On War*, and examined large unit operations in history and in simulations in order to understand what the school called operational art.⁶⁷ Although Starry did not invent the idea of operational art in *AirLand Battle Doctrine*, his idea for SAMS and restructuring of the school system, gave the Army a vehicle to teach its officers about the operational level of war. This helped prepare officers for Brigadier General Morelli's insistence on including the operational level of war in *AirLand Battle*. Starry now had to convince many people that *AirLand Battle* was a worthwhile venture. Describing the process as "marketing," he developed a concept for a product needed by a customer, and pulled together the necessary resources such as technology, programs, organizations, and money in order to convince the customer of the worth of the whole. He had to convince people within and outside the Army. To do this, Starry set up a two-pronged approach in which Brigadier General Morelli was "Mr. Outside" and worked closely with the Congressional Reform Caucus to gain support within Congress. General Starry, "Mr. Inside," worked within the Army to gain support for *AirLand Battle*.⁶⁸ Starry gave numerous speeches and wrote numerous articles emphasizing the Army's need to reform and outlining his ideas for change.

Starry also linked doctrine and equipment requirements closely together. This helped justify new technology to Congress while at the same time promoting *AirLand Battle*. In January 1981, Starry implemented a concept-based acquisition system designed as a mechanism to translate broad operational

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concepts into necessary equipment requirements. These concepts determined technology through less costly research, development, test and evaluation. The program set up several goals to guide program development and aid management. Starry wanted integrated operational concepts to be the foundation for an efficient training base that would be expandable in the event of mobilization. He also wanted to develop an organizational and force structure cognizant of weapon and equipment requirements and to provide adequate installation support and maintenance for the new force structure and equipment.⁶⁹ He also felt that equipment requirements drawn from the new doctrine had to be reconciled with requirements flowing from Active Defense. Weapons like the "Big 5" had to be integrated into the doctrine. This was a serious concern for Starry.⁷⁰

Connecting the new doctrine with the development of these new weapons also helped gain Congressional support. Starry understood that new weapons meant jobs in many Congressional districts and linking the two closely together helped win support of the Congressmen whose districts gained from the new weapons contracts. Congressmen jumped at the chance to support a doctrine that needed weapons built in their districts. The new jobs created by the weapons contracts meant votes in upcoming Congressional elections.⁷¹ Intertwining weapons and doctrine also brought the arms industry on board and in turn helped win support in Congress.⁷² By gaining support from industry, Starry was able to use their powerful Congressional lobbyists as another indirect approach to win Congressional support.

The development of AirLand Battle was a long and arduous process, and many contributed. By the end of the Vietnam War, the United States faced a strong Soviet threat that used the distraction of Vietnam to leap ahead of the United States and NATO, in numbers, technology, and doctrine. The Army needed a way to defeat the new Soviet threat on the modern battlefield without reverting to nuclear weapons. At the center of the Army's attempts to meet this challenge was its quest to develop a doctrine to win the next war. General Donn A. Starry played an integral role in the Army's doctrinal reform push. He provided focus for the Army's doctrinal reform movement. His experiences in Vietnam, as V Corps commander, and analyst of the 1973 Arab Israeli War, showed him what the Army needed to do in order to win the next war.

Starry followed his blueprint for change to the letter. He and his staff officers at TRADOC recognized the need for change and provided commonality to the doctrinal reform movement. Starry and Morelli worked tirelessly to build a consensus that gave AirLand Battle an audience of believers and converts. Starry's unique and direct leadership approach provided consistency among the architects of AirLand Battle that brought consistency of effort to the process, but allowed traditional Army mechanisms to do what they always did.

Starry also played an important role in the Army and Congress's acceptance of AirLand Battle. He understood that the entire Army needed to be involved in the doctrinal reform process. Recognizing the need to educate the Army about the new doctrine, Starry gave several speeches and wrote several journal articles that illustrated his view of doctrinal reform. The Army's failure to accept Active Defense doctrine showed him the need to acknowledge the traditions of the Army and return writing of doctrine to Fort Leavenworth. However, he did maintain close

control over the development process by having direct contact with the writers. He also knew he had to change the school system in order to train a wide range of officers in the new doctrine. These ideas helped AirLand Battle gain acceptance throughout the Army. General Starry was the person who brought together all these influences and focused them into a coherent doctrine able to defeat the Soviets. His restructuring of the Army school system allowed TRADOC to teach the principles of the new doctrine to officers early in their careers. Linking weapons procurement directly with the new AirLand Battle made it easier for Congressmen to back the new doctrine and utilized the lobbying resources of defense contractors as another weapon to gain Congressional support.

In order to resurrect the Army after the Vietnam War, the Army needed a corps of bright officers willing to work vigilantly to fix the tough problems that faced the Army. One of the most important of these officers was General Donn A. Starry. He understood the problems the Army faced and knew what had to be done to fix them. His unique leadership style allowed for a free flow of ideas to contribute to the development of the doctrine best suited for the United States Army. At a time of great turmoil within the ranks, Starry was the "Vigilant Warrior" who overcame great obstacles and persevered to help the Army evolve into a well trained effective fighting force. The Army and the nation owe a great deal to General Starry for his leadership during a time of great need.

No matter what future FM 100-5 holds in store for the Army, two things are clear. It needs to be flexible, but well defined in order to give a framework for the units on the ground engaged in nation-building, peacekeeping, warfighting, as well as numerous other missions. Although I do not claim to have the answer of what the Army's new doctrine should look like, I do know that it must take into account the ever-changing threat and political and economic environments in this post-Cold War world. Who knows what the Army's future doctrine will look like, but one thing is for sure: there will be much debate about it in the months and years to come.

Notes

¹Robert A. Doughty, *The Evolution of U.S. Army Tactical Doctrine, 1946-76*, Leavenworth Paper Number 1, (Fort Leavenworth: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1979), p. 47.

²James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., *American Foreign Policy: FDR to Reagan* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1986), p. 331.

³The "Big Five" are the UH-60 Blackhawk, the M1 Abrams tank, the Patriot, the AH-64 Apache, and the M2/3 Bradley.

⁴Lou Cannon, *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime* (New York: Touchstone Books, 1991), pp. 162-163.

⁵Letter, Donn A. Starry to Richard Swain, 7 June 1995, 22, *AirLand Battle* folder, TRADOC Archives, Fort Monroe, Va.

⁶Letter, Donn A. Starry to Martin J. D'Amato, 10 April 1998, in author's possession.

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- ⁵⁹Ibid., p. 4.
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