

Doctrinal Development— AirLand Battle

The 1976 version of US Army Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations, reflected the Army's doctrinal exit from Vietnam and its refocus on Europe and the Soviet threat. In the manual, US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Commander General William E. DePuy espoused using active defense to "fight outnumbered" to "win the first battle of the next war." This issue was debated for the next six years in Army schools, training centers, major commands and between Military Review's covers.

General Donn A. Starry, DePuy's successor, wrote substantial parts of the active defense doctrine as the US Army Armor Center commander. After testing the doctrine in Germany as V Corps commander, Starry proposed revising the active defense idea to produce a viable concept embracing the operational and tactical levels of war for Central Europe and elsewhere. Thus, TRADOC developed the Army's vision of joint operational-level operations designed to seize the initiative and defeat Soviet-style warfare.



Starry decided the doctrine should be written at the then Combined Arms Command (CAC), Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. His concept paper, "Extending the Battlefield," became the blueprint for AirLand Battle doctrine. CAC Commander Lieutenant General William R. Richardson assigned Lieutenant Colonel Richmond B. Henriques to draft the 1976 FM 100-5 revision. Richardson selected two more doctrine writers: then Lieutenant Colonels Huba Wass de Czege and L.D. Holder. Their efforts resulted in the 1982 FM 100-5, which contained radically different concepts, including AirLand Battle.

In 1986, FM 100-5 was again revised to assuage NATO's concerns about the US military's new strategy. NATO accepted AirLand Battle at the tactical and operational levels—"follow-on forces attack" using conventional munitions. Notwithstanding, NATO refused to accept a strategic doctrine espousing chemical or tactical nuclear weapons' use on a European soil. Because the AirLand Battle tenets

met US objectives, the 1986 FM 100-5 retained them, as does the 1993 revision, which expands doctrine to include full-dimensional operations and focuses on a new strategic era that no longer includes an adversarial Soviet Union.

These relatively frequent FM revisions reflect the Army's recognition that doctrine must be dynamic, evolutionary and capable of assimilating change as a means for growth. As the 1993 FM 100-5 notes, doctrine "reflects the collective wisdom of our Army against a background of history.... It considers the nature of today's threats. It is a doctrine for the entire Army, one that seeks nothing less than victory for the United States—now and in the future."