

CHIEF OF ARMY SPEECH

FORMATION OF FORCES COMMAND

01 JULY 2009

Retired Chiefs of Army, Lieutenant Generals O'Donnell and Hickling; Vice Chief of Defence Force, Lieutenant General Hurley; MAJGEN Morrison, inaugural Commander of Forces Command; MAJGEN Symon, Deputy Chief of Army; serving and retired Generals of the Australian Army; and, members of Forces Command.

Welcome.

Before I go on, the Minister for Defence, who was unable to attend today, has asked me to pass on his congratulations to you all and to read the following message:

I would like to congratulate the Australian Army on the achievement of a significant element of the Adaptive Army initiative with today's formation of Forces Command. I regret that I cannot be at the ceremony at Victoria Barracks today.

I expect that the new Forces Command to be a significant enabler for a more effective and efficient approach to the complex business of generating, and preparing, land forces for contemporary operations.

Combining the best elements of the former Land and Training Commands, Forces Command will unify Army's individual and collective training with its operational deployment program. It will allow for the better sharing of lessons and information, and more rapid institutional learning. This will see the Army become an even more robust and adaptive organisation.

I am confident that through the ongoing implementation of the different streams of the Adaptive Army initiative, Army will continue to build on its ongoing contribution to Australia's national security.

To those who have worked hard in the planning for this day – well done!

I look forward to building a close working relationship with the Army into the future.

Senator John Faulkner, Minister for Defence

It is a tremendous pleasure to be here today to officiate at the formation of our newest Functional Command. Forces Command will be responsible for the leadership and employment of approximately 85 percent of Army's regular, reserve and civilian manpower. It will be responsible for Army's individual and collective training, with the exception of some special operations training, and the command and management of Army formations, schools and units across the nation.

The Forces Command initiative is also the result of much analysis, war-gaming and plain hard work over the last 12 months. When I assumed command of the Army one year ago, I laid out three challenges.

The first challenge was to continue to excel on operations. The planning, execution, and support to these operations has resulted in the Army becoming a more operationally focussed, and vastly more experienced, organisation. But we can never rest on our laurels and it was clear to me that we could do better.

The second challenge was to ensure our Army remains capable, responsive and relevant now and into the future. We owe it to our people and our nation to keep a weathered eye on the future despite the tempo and challenges of the present.

And, finally, the third challenge I described was to ensure that Army's structure, organisation and processes are best suited to get the most from our existing capabilities and resources, and that we can develop capabilities, and perhaps retire other capabilities, as required.

Intimately related to this was the clear need to ensure that we are better able to employ and manage Army's complex fleet of equipment. So on 8 July last year, I issued an Order of the Day that described how I had commissioned a review of Army structures.

The last time that the Army undertook such a wide ranging re-examination of itself was in the early 1970s. While the regional approach had been appropriate for periods of Australia's early history, by the late 1960s it had become clear that the disadvantages of the approach outweighed its advantages. So General Hassett introduced Army's Functional Command structure. This aggregated regionally-based units into Commands focussed on individual and collective training as well as logistics.

While there have been some changes since that time, the fundamental approach has remained essentially intact for the last 35 years. The Functional Command structures General Hassett implemented served the Army well in the 1970s, the 1980s and into the early 1990s. However, as our operational tempo increased in the late 1990s, this structure started to show its age.

The formation of Forces Command is a direct response to these challenges.

Today's ceremony demonstrates in the most tangible way that the command and control of Army is adaptive to the changes that the Australian Defence Force has undergone in the last few years, and that we have considered our needs for the future. Over the past decade, the Australian Defence Force has significantly changed the way it plans and conducts operations. Army's conduct of force generation and preparation needed greater alignment with this new joint command and control paradigm.

The manifestation of this has been the Adaptive Army initiative, launched in August 2008. Since that time, across Army there have been many of our officers and soldiers involved in the implementation of the various streams of Adaptive Army.

One stream of the Adaptive Army initiative has been the review and rationalisation of our command and control, and structures, in order to ensure our force generation, preparation and certification procedures are efficient and highly adaptive. In turn, this has enabled the implementation of our new Army Training Continuum, which will ensure our officers and soldiers remain at the forefront of the world's best trained and prepared Armies. It will ensure that a single training model synchronises individual and collective training across the Army and thereby reduce duplication of training. The Army Training Continuum will also ensure better alignment of training with the force generation cycle and enable the generation of agile land forces, capable of excelling at complex warfighting.

I would stress however, that while today is a landmark day, we have not reached the end of our aspirations for Adaptive Army. The four other streams of this initiative – personnel, knowledge management, training and education and material management reform – are also very important. Given the tremendous support I have received so far in the development and implementation of Adaptive Army, I am confident that these four streams will also deliver results for Army in the ongoing Strategic Reform Program, and the defence of our nation.

Today, I am happy to announce the raising of Forces Command. It combines the strengths of the previous Land and Training Commands. It is also a key outcome of our work to ensure Army is better postured to train and education our people for the demands of contemporary, and future, conflict.

Importantly, the development of Forces Command it is a vital part of our inculcation of a more adaptive culture within the Army. Our ability to recognise changed circumstances, and adapt as an institution to suit these new circumstances, is at the heart of the Adaptive Army initiative.

To those who have played a role in the development and raising of Forces Command – well done! In particular, I would like to thank MAJGEN Morrison and MAJGEN Symon – both here today – for their leadership and energy in the development and implementation of Adaptive Army.

To all of you who have contributed, your hard work and inspiration has been well worthwhile. I know that you will apply the same levels of energy and intellect to the operations of Army's newest – and largest - Functional Command.

The role you will play in generating conventional land forces will ensure the continued success of our soldiers in the service of our Nation.

Thank you.