



Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen

Subcommittee on Defense, House Committee on Appropriations

**FY 2016 Budget Hearing – National Guard and U.S. Army Reserves
March 17, 2015
Opening Statement As Prepared**

The Committee will come to order.

This morning the Committee will hold a hearing on the posture of the National Guard and U.S. Army Reserves. We will focus primarily on near-term readiness issues related to personnel, training, equipment modernization, reset and the effects of fiscal constraints on the force.

Ladies and gentlemen, we owe a debt of gratitude to the men and women of the reserve component. The soldiers and airmen of the Guard and Reserve performed magnificently in Iraq and Afghanistan, and throughout the world. They worked seamlessly with their active-duty colleagues in ways that allows mission after mission to be accomplished.

And I might add, they paid the price.

Of the 6,800 military personnel who died in the war zones of Iraq and Afghanistan, nearly 700 were Guard, Army Reserve or Marine Reserve members.

And we also never forget that the military is an inherently dangerous job, even far away from combat.

So this morning we note the loss of four members of the Louisiana National Guard, who, along with seven special forces Marines, died in the service of the country last week in a training accident off the coast of Florida. We mourn with their families and thank them for their sacrifice.

We'd like to thank your troops for their dedication to their communities, to their states, and to their country during a time in which our way of life continues to be threatened.

We are pleased this morning to welcome four distinguished general officers as witnesses.

- General Frank J. Grass is the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, a permanent member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, representing more than 460,000 Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen in the Army and Air National Guard. I would also like to extend the Committee's appreciation to General Grass' "better half" Pat for all the work she has done on behalf of the troops.

- Lieutenant General Stanley E. "Sid" Clarke III, is the Director of the Air National Guard. General, we appreciate the experience and expertise that you bring to this hearing.
- Major General Judd Lyons, is the Acting Director of the Army National Guard. This is General Lyons' second year to testify before this committee. We welcome you General Lyons.
- And finally, we are pleased to welcome back the Chief of the U.S. Army Reserve, Lieutenant General Jeffrey W. Talley. Thanks for your contributions, General.

Generals, welcome. We are eager to hear your testimony which will assist the Committee to better determine the needs of Guardsmen and reservists, whether at home station or deployed around the world.

Of course, this Committee is worried about the funds that will be made available for the Guard and Reserve under the Budget Control Act. Even given limited resources, this committee will continue to do everything possible to ensure adequate funding for the equipment, modernization, and readiness for both your homeland and wartime missions.

We remain very concerned about the readiness of the National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve following over a dozen years of war, and the likelihood of further conflict across the globe. As General Odierno has said – very bluntly and clearly, I might add – that if we do not protect readiness, more soldiers' lives will be lost.

Endstrength – how do we “right-size” your forces to maximize your military effectiveness while making our national security dollars go as far as possible?

The Army Aviation restructure is the Big Army's top priority. We will look forward to your perspectives on the future of Apaches, Blackhawks, Lakotas and Kiowa Warriors.

The Committee also understands that NGREA has been a critically important tool in the modernization of the Guard and Reserve. We want to hear from you how this fund is working.

The Committee is also eager to discuss your increasingly important role in the CYBER world. It seems to many of us that Guardsmen and Women bring critical skills sets from the private sector into the their military job and we must find a way to take advantage of those special skill sets.

Generals, we look forward to your testimony, but first, I would like to call on the ranking member, my friend, Pete Visclosky for his comments.

#####