

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

**LIEUTENANT GENERAL ROBERT D. HARTER
CHIEF OF ARMY RESERVE
UNITED STATES ARMY**

AND

**COMMANDING GENERAL
UNITED STATES ARMY RESERVE COMMAND**

BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

FIRST SESSION, 119TH CONGRESS

ON THE POSTURE OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY RESERVE

MAY 20, 2025

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION
UNTIL RELEASED BY THE COMMITTEE**

Two and a half centuries after the first shots of the American Revolution, the Army Reserve continues to embody the spirit of those original Minutemen. Like their predecessors, Citizen Soldiers stand ready to answer the nation's call – not as a force in reserve, but as a critical, integrated component of the Total Army, in support of the Joint Force and the Nation. Today, the Army Reserve delivers over half of the Army's maneuver support capabilities and over 90% of certain key theater-level enablers like sustainment, medical and engineering. In a large-scale conflict, our Warrior Citizens won't serve as *follow-on* forces in support of the Active Army – they will be needed alongside their Active teammates, early and often. This reality demands the Army Reserve be combat ready on day one, despite ongoing resourcing challenges. This statement will outline our efforts to build combat-ready soldiers and formations, and our strategy to mitigate risk and ensure our readiness.

Operational by Design and Necessity

The Army Reserve is a nationwide and globally-present force – more than 2,000 units across 50 states, five territories, and over 20 countries, and five key installations. Representing nearly 20% of the Total Army's personnel, the Army Reserve provides a quarter of the Army's force mobilization capacity – all while accounting for just 6% of the total Army budget.

The Army Reserve has one clear purpose: to deliver combat ready soldiers and formations at time of need in support of the Army, the Joint Force and the Nation. Currently, nearly 9,000 Warrior Citizens are deployed globally across all Combatant Command theaters, with approximately 200 units activated – including a dedicated force of over 700 soldiers supporting the Army and the Department of Homeland Security on our Southern Border. In addition to global and component command requirements, the Army Reserve stands ready to rapidly respond to domestic crises, with Soldiers and equipment in more than 1,000 communities nationwide. When it comes to supporting Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) operations, the Army Reserve is well-postured, offering capabilities such as aviation lift, search and rescue, logistics, and full-spectrum engineering support.

Furthermore, Army Reserve support to the Army and joint and allied forces will be critical in a contested logistics environment, where operations, facilities, and activities are targeted in the homeland, in transit, and in the theater. With eight of the Army's 14 Expeditionary Sustainment Commands and 95% of the Total Army's bulk fuel line-haul capacity, the Army Reserve is essential to set the theater for the Joint Force, enabling combat formations to seize and maintain initiative and extend operational reach in Large Scale Combat Operations (LSCO). Simply put, we don't exist to support ourselves. Our units are pushing food, fuel, ammunition, and repair parts to Active and Army National Guard (ARNG) combat formations in contact. ***We are essential to the total force fight.***

The Army Reserve Posture

The Army Reserve is a cost-effective provider of capabilities and specialties. Enhanced by civilian expertise acquired across businesses, industry and academia, the Army Reserve brings unique talents, skills, and capabilities, adding critical depth to the Army and the Joint Force. In a world increasingly defined by uncertainty and conflict, the Army Reserve will continue to drive on its purpose and, given adequate notice, continue to meet projected operational requirements. Preparing more than 174,000 Warrior Citizens and 11,000 civilians for large scale conflict is a significant task – particularly with 85% of the force serving on a part time basis. In order to deliver the capability our Nation requires, the Army Reserve must attack the chronic/persistent challenges that hinder our readiness: manning shortfalls, declining facility and equipment readiness, outdated stationing actions, and ineffective/inefficient use of our limited but critical collective training time. Meeting the evolving demands of modern warfare requires that we proactively transform the Army Reserve – its structure, facilities, and stationing to keep pace with our adversaries and threat environment. To that end, we’ve established four lines of effort to guide our transformation:

- Build Combat Ready Formations
- Mobilize and Deploy on Time and at Scale
- Adapt, Transform, and Modernize
- Invest in our Soldiers, Civilians, and Families

Building Combat Ready Formations – Man, Equip, Train

Manning

Based on the Army Reserve’s critical mission set, if we’re short people, the Army is short people. Our struggle to meet end strength requirements is due, in large part, to recruiting shortfalls. U.S. Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) recruits for the Army Reserve and has fallen short of its mission by roughly 4,000 recruits per year for the past eight years. To address this effort, we are committing 1,500 Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) recruiters and working closely with USAREC to better leverage AGRs to target Reserve recruiting.

We’ve had additional challenges within our internal retention and recruiting missions and retention which, when combined with the accession shortfalls, have created a cumulative 40,000-soldier gap in our collective formations. For context, we are currently short nearly 10,000 soldiers in the grades private through private first class. ***This equates to manning for 60 medium truck companies.*** We also have significant shortages in our mid-grade NCOs and officers – staff sergeants, sergeants first class, captains and majors.

To retain the force, we are maximizing Active Component to Reserve Component (AC2RC) accessions, strengthening integration at transition points and revamping the onboarding process for AC soldiers transitioning to the Army Reserve. In Fiscal Year (FY) 24 we were able to successfully transition over 4,500 soldiers to the Army Reserve. Through our Reserve Component Career Counselors, we are engaging with Active Duty Servicemembers scheduled to transition out and make them aware of opportunities within the Army Reserve so they can continue their service.

Equipping

Army Reserve equipment remains a top concern for senior leaders. With over half of the Army's maneuver support capabilities and over 90% of certain key theater-level enablers, any equipment shortfalls equates to operational risk during LSCO. For example, while we provide approximately 50% of Army Water Distribution and Storage capacity, we are currently filled to 28% (131ea on-hand of 468ea authorized) of Load Handling System Compatible Water Tank Rack System (HIPPO) requirements, with projected improvements to 50% in FY26. Additionally, our legacy Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Unit (ROWPU) is filled to 69% (37ea of 54ea) of its authorized quantity, but is beyond its economic useful life, experiences frequent operational failures, and suffers from parts obsolescence. The modernized replacement for the Reserve Osmosis Water Purification Unit (ROWPU) is the Tactical Water Purification System (TWPS) with expected fielding to all COMPOs in FY28. Overall, we must work on out-of-the-box solutions – analyzing structure, organization, posture, and resourcing solutions – to enhance combat readiness in support of the Army and Joint Force.

Maintaining our equipment across the Army Reserve's dispersed footprint is certainly challenging. To mitigate this challenge, we are exploring forward-positioning critical equipment and fleets in key theaters to improve maintenance and readiness. In partnership with the Army Materiel Command, we are also divesting excess, inoperable, and outdated equipment. This effort has already yielded thousands of pieces for repair and upgrade, with thousands more slated for divestment.

Training

The Army Reserve is prioritizing integrated training partnerships with active duty and National Guard forces to enhance force-wide interoperability. Operation Mojave Falcon exemplifies this approach, providing a realistic, large-scale training environment for maneuver support and sustainment forces across all echelons, replicating future battlefields and better preparing our formations for the spectrum of conflict.

The Army Reserve maintains a strong forward presence in support of U.S. Army Pacific and U.S. Army Europe-Africa, actively participating in joint exercises. In FY24, nearly 50 exercises were conducted as part of the Joint Exercise Program, involving over 8,000 Army Reserve Soldiers.

We anticipate continued high levels of engagement, particularly in the priority theaters of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and U.S. European Command. To further enhance our responsiveness, we are exploring opportunities to forward-position additional equipment in these key regions.

The Department of Defense Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) delivers valuable, non-traditional training opportunities. These initiatives provide critical full-spectrum support to communities across the nation and its territories, enhancing readiness while strengthening vital partnerships between the military and civilian communities. This year, the Army Reserve will lead multiple IRT exercises, including American Samoa Wellness, Healthy Broome in Broome County, New York, and MOWA Choctaw Wellness in Washington County, Alabama.

Adapt, Transform, and Modernize

Command and Control

The Army Reserve is actively adapting, transforming, and modernizing to prepare for the future battlefield. A key priority is streamlining our Command and Control (C2) structure, which is currently cumbersome and not optimized to build readiness. The U.S. Army Reserve Command currently oversees 28 geographically dispersed Major Subordinate Commands. We've already implemented a significant realignment, reducing reporting commands to 15 while maintaining functional oversight.

Modernizing the Force

In direct support of Army Futures Command, the Army Reserve's 75th Innovation Command continues to drive modernization efforts, combining a unique blend of civilian-acquired skills, certifications, and abilities, with functional military expertise to assess new capabilities and technologies in support of continuous transformation. The 75th IC recently hosted a "code-a-thon" with the 18th Airborne Corps, developing an AI tool that dramatically reduces intelligence analysis time – from 2-4 hours to mere minutes – enabling faster, more informed command decisions. Other successes include a secure AI system for special operations and blockchain technology providing 100% accuracy in Army equipment tracking. These innovations demonstrate how the Army Reserve leverages the skills of our Citizen Soldiers and innovative American companies to become a more capable and efficient force.

The Army Reserve is also a vital asset in cyberspace. U.S. Army Reserve Cyber Command (ARCYBER) routinely deploys Cyber Protection Teams comprised of soldiers with professional IT and security backgrounds. These teams contribute significantly to national preparedness through participation in exercises like Cyber Shield and support real-world operations defending critical networks against threats like ransomware. This combination of skill development and practical application ensures the Army Reserve remains at the forefront of cyber defense.

Facilities and Stationing

Our current stationing and facility model is challenging. For example, the Army Reserve's 300th Military Police Brigade is currently comprised of 3,200 soldiers living in 37 states, drilling at 31 Reserve Centers in 11 states, with 71,000 pieces of equipment across 22 separate locations.

The Army Reserve is a Reserve Center-centric force, organized around drilling at approximately 800 locations, many of which are in disrepair and a significant distance from quality training areas. This model, initially designed to facilitate manning (put units where the people are), is outdated and outpaced by changing demographics. Piecing together units in an attempt to counter demographic shifts has only exacerbated the issue.

The Army Reserve manages almost 4,000 buildings across the United States and territories, with an average facility age of 44 years. Thirty-one percent of these structures are rated as poor or failing condition. Most of these Reserve Centers are not near quality training facilities or ranges. Furthermore, the Army Reserve faces \$2.3 billion in deferred restoration and maintenance (R&M) costs and a \$9.3 billion backlog in military construction. Should the funding trend remain at this level across these lines of effort, the backlog will continue to compound and increase beyond our ability to properly sustain and build our critical infrastructure required to enable our readiness capabilities.

To mitigate this unsustainable challenging stationing and facility model, we are standing up an effort to review and adapt our stationing and facility model to be more agile and responsive – increasing investments in our major training areas, like Fort McCoy, while reducing investment in failing facilities. To counter demographic shifts, we are focused on leasing rather than fixed investments in stand-alone Army Reserve Centers (which normally costs \$45-\$60M to build).

Most importantly, we are looking to increase partnerships with our Guard and AC teammates and invest precious facility resources in locations like Camp Shelby or Fort Knox, where we can store and maintain equipment, providing soldiers with readiness-building training complexes.

Invest in Soldiers, Civilians & Families

Readiness relies on our families who support and sustain our soldiers and the employers who enable them to serve the Army and the Nation. The Army Reserve promotes quality of life programs to improve the Army Reserve experience while making it easier to integrate family, civilian work, and military life in our geographically dispersed force. The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program, Private Public Partnership Program, (P3O), Health and Holistic Fitness (H2F) are among the resources that enhance readiness by supporting recruiting and retention, and inspiring confidence in soldiers and families.

To support work-life integration for our Citizen Soldier force, P3O provides an essential link to private sector expertise, connecting eligible team members to both immediate and long-term employment opportunities. These partnerships extend to over 350 businesses in more than 20 industry sectors, providing a diverse range of employment opportunities to soldiers and families. Additionally, P3O helps recruiting and retention, collaborating with the AC2RC program, which contracted 153 soldiers in FY24.

The Army Reserve continues to invest in H2F. We are piloting a “surge” model through our Readiness Divisions in which H2F teams will surge to units at their Home Station or training locations. H2F is key to enabling soldier resiliency; we will continue to revise our delivery model and seek opportunities to partner with our teammates in the National Guard and Army Reserve.

Conclusion

Should the Army be called to support LSCO scenario, Army Reserve soldiers and formations will be among the first to fight – and we must be fully ready to do so. As an operational force, by both design and necessity, the Army Reserve maintains the bulk of the Total Army’s enabling capacity and structure. It is imperative that the Army review its current capabilities by component; I believe that a rebalance of structure and capabilities across the components is needed to reduce risk and better posture our Army for LSCO.

We are grateful for Congressional support for defense spending, which remains vital to our modernization strategy, enabling readiness generation and interoperability. The Army Reserve understands the demands placed upon us, and we remain steadfast in our purpose: to deliver combat-ready soldiers and formations, at the point of need, in support of the Army and the Nation.

Twice the Citizen, Combat Ready – This We’ll Defend.