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A Georgia Army National Guard soldier jumps out of a CH-47 Chinook helicopter April 26 during training in Sylvania, Georgia. (ARMY NATIONAL GUARD/SPC. AYANNA TILLMAN)

Guard, Reserve face ‘pivotal moment’

The National Guard and Army Reserve need continued investment to outcompete America’s adversaries, the components’ top leaders testified Tuesday on Capitol Hill.

“Our nation’s investment in the National Guard comes at a pivotal moment,” said Gen. Daniel Hokanson, chief of the National Guard Bureau. “Our strategic competitors are seeking advantages in every domain, [including] land, sea, air space and cyber. If we are to compete and deter successfully, and, if necessary, prevail in combat, we must invest in our people.”

In response, the Army is undergoing a “once-in-a-generation transformation,” said Lt. Gen. Jody Daniels, chief of the Army Reserve and com-

manding general of Army Reserve Command.

Hokanson and Daniels, along with leaders from the other reserve components, testified before the House Appropriations defense subcommittee during a hearing on the fiscal 2025 budget request for National Guard and reserve forces.

The Army’s fiscal 2025 request projects an Army National Guard troop strength of 325,000 and an Army Reserve strength of 175,800.

Amid “the most challenging recruiting environment in decades,” Daniels said, “the Army Reserve’s end strength has remained above the fiscal year ‘24 ... strength objective.”

The Guard and Reserve continue to push for duty status reform, which

would ensure that reserve component service members who perform the same duties as active-duty troops receive comparable benefits. The reform “would streamline the process significantly” and “ensure that we no longer have disparity between service members,” Hokanson said.

In terms of readiness, access to health care is one of the biggest challenges the Guard faces, Hokanson said. “We have about 30,000 Guardsmen that don’t have health care. We need them 24/7, not just for their overseas deployments but ... emergencies occur in a community, [and] anytime we need them to be medically ready,” he said. “If they don’t have health care or access to health

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Stitt: Army working to expand recruiting reach, message

Army recruiters are looking at the “totality” of the nation’s labor market for talented people who can become soldiers and help the service meet its recruiting goals, a senior Army officer said.

In testimony before the House Armed Services subcommittee on military personnel, Lt. Gen. Douglas Stitt, deputy Army chief of staff for personnel, G-1, said the Army’s overhaul of who it recruits, how it recruits and who is doing the recruiting is part of a “significant” transformation of the service’s recruiting enterprise.

“When we talk about who we recruit, we look at the totality of the United States’ labor market,” Stitt said at the April 17 hearing. He explained that 80% of high schoolers go on to college, university or a two-year school. “Let’s move beyond just having a conversation with a potential applicant who’s in high school,” he said.

To better reach potential recruits, Stitt said, the Army is “upskilling and



Staff Sgt. Joben Hitalla, left, and Staff Sgt. Rangel Velarde, recruiters assigned to the Up-land Army Recruiting Company, demonstrate CPR techniques to students April 22 during a ‘Meet Your Army’ event in Los Alamitos, California. (U.S. ARMY/SGT. BRANDON HERNANDEZ)

ARMY magazine May issue



AUSA Basic Members can now view a selection of articles from the May issue of *ARMY* magazine. To read the articles, [click here](#).

re-skilling the recruiting workforce to not only engage high schoolers but engage those who are attending college but may not have completed, and then also engaging others that are in the workforce today but may be looking for other options.”

He pointed out that recruiters are engaging more broadly on platforms such as job boards, social media and employment market sites to include Glassdoor, Indeed and LinkedIn. Additionally, the Army is collecting and analyzing data from homespun pilots and innovative initiatives at recruiting sites across the country, and applying any lessons learned or best practices, he said.

Stitt told panel members that the Army also is “moving away from a borrowed military manpower situation” in which unit cohesion and readiness are disrupted when an infantry NCO, for example, is tapped to temporarily serve as a recruiter.

Instead, the Army is “creating a professionalized workforce across

the nation that can start to thin the lines and send those other noncommissioned officers back to do their jobs across the force and enhance our readiness,” he said.

The Army has missed its recruiting goals for the past two years. Stitt said he is “cautiously optimistic” that the service will meet this year’s goal of 55,000 new recruits and 5,000 people in the delayed entry pool.

His statement echoed that of Army Secretary Christine Wormuth who, in testimony before the full House Armed Service Committee on April 16, said the Army is on pace to meet this year’s goal.

“While I don’t want to be overconfident because we have six more months in the fiscal year, if we continue to perform as we have, there’s an excellent chance we’ll meet our recruiting goal this year,” Wormuth told the committee. “The things the Army’s been doing in the last year and a half, I think, are beginning to work.”

Innovative pilot program to provide 3D-printed barracks at Fort Bliss



The 3D-printed facilities will be used as collective training barracks, each featuring 36 bunk beds that can house up to 72 soldiers. (U.S. ARMY/ALYX RIEBELING)

Three 3D-printed barracks are set to open this summer at Fort Bliss, Texas, as part of a pilot program to improve soldiers' quality of life while enhancing the resilience of Army installations.

"By prioritizing soldier well-being with mold-resistant materials and energy-efficient designs, these new barracks truly represent how it's better at Bliss," Fort Bliss Command Sgt. Maj. Dave Sweeney said in an Army news release. "The introduction of 3D-printed barracks embodies our commitment to creating a truly exceptional experience for soldiers living and working here."

At more than 5,700 square feet, the barracks began construction as the largest 3D-printed structures in the Western Hemisphere, according to the news release. The three facilities will be used as collective training barracks, each featuring 36 bunk beds that can house up to 72 soldiers.

The 3D-printed barracks pilot program is a part of the Army's larger efforts to support soldiers' quality of life. The Army also has invested in family and privatized housing across 50 Army installations, refined its hiring at child development centers

and increased bonuses, among other initiatives.

"This pilot embodies the Army's dedication to innovation in meeting the evolving needs of our force," said Sgt. Maj. Michael Perry, senior enlisted adviser to the deputy Army chief of staff for installations, G-9. "We're not only exploring ways to build better and faster, but we're also exploring construction options that will ensure our soldiers thrive in sustainable living quarters."

In addition to their energy efficiency, the material used for the barracks can weather natural disasters and extreme weather, according to ICON, a construction technology company selected for the pilot.

Quality barracks are vital to ensuring soldiers' well-being, Perry said.

"The weather resilient and mold-resistant properties of this pilot underscore the Army's commitment to enhancing quality of life for our soldiers," he said. "By prioritizing pilots that offer these properties, we safeguard soldier health and well-being, creating homes for our soldiers that can withstand the test of time and environmental challenges faced across our installations."

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Guard, Reserve

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care, then they can't be ready, and then they can't perform the job that we've trained them to do."

To prepare for the future fight, the Guard will continue to deepen its ties with U.S. allies, particularly through the State Partnership Program, which pairs state Guards with a partner country, Hokanson said.

"We've actually spoken with a lot of former neutral countries," he said. "Sweden and Finland ... became members of the State Partnership Program, Switzerland recently submitted an application to be a state partner. We've also talked to other neutral countries yet to be named, but they have all expressed an interest that they need to develop a capability based on what they saw [when Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022]."

Ensuring that the Guard and Reserve have sufficient funding is es-



Soldiers assigned to the Washington National Guard conduct wildfire training April 28 at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington. (ARMY NATIONAL GUARD/SPC. STEPHEN SAN JOSE)

sential to the future fight, Hokanson said in written testimony to the subcommittee.

"The 2025 Department of Defense budget request makes responsible choices to prioritize operational readiness and take care of people, continuing to build a Joint Force that is lethal, resilient, survivable,

agile, and responsive," he said. "If we fail to modernize our equipment and force design adequately, we increase the risk of sending America's sons and daughters into large-scale combat operations with equipment and formations that may not be fully interoperable with the active duty forces we serve alongside. "

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WWII lessons can help soldiers prepare for jungle warfare

Facing a future in the Indo-Pacific, the Army should ensure its soldiers can adapt to and overcome the “relentless challenges” of jungle warfare, according to the author of a new paper published by the Association of the U.S. Army.

“Only through active experimentation and trial by fire did ... the U.S. and Australian armies during World War II make strides in recognizing the unique impacts the jungle environment had on the tactical and operational levels of war,” writes Maj. Karl Rauch. “These lessons must be considered as the contemporary U.S. Army trains and prepares for contingency operations across the Pacific in the coming century.”

In “Welcome (Back) to the Jungle,” Rauch, a student at the School of Advanced Military Studies and a recent graduate of the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, analyzes historic lessons in jungle warfare and applies them to the future fight.

The paper is available here.

Though there are several types of jungles, sound, light and disease unite them all, Rauch writes.

“The tropical rainforest, specifically the jungle, is unlike anything else on earth,” Rauch writes. “Armies in conflict within the jungle must adapt to extreme weather, the high risk of disease, confined physical space and countless forms of flora and fauna.”

During the New Guinea Campaign of World War II, Lt. Gen. Robert Eichelberger led the 32nd Infantry Division as it worked to capture the village of Buna. Despite the challenges of jungle warfare, his approach enabled the first U.S. ground battle victory of the war.

“Beyond anything the Americans had experienced in their history, those jungles took advantage of their lack of regional knowledge and experience,” Rauch writes. “Eichelberger did the only thing he could without properly trained jungle Soldiers: He



Spc. John Barron, assigned to the 25th Infantry Division, provides security April 28 for the jungle survival portion of the Jungle Operations Training Course during Exercise Balikatan 24 at Fort Magsaysay, Philippines. (U.S. ARMY/SPC. BENJAMIN ANDERSON)

demonstrated visible leadership. He walked for hours in knee-deep water from one flank to the other, led small units against Japanese bunkers and openly wore gassed rank on his uniform on the front lines.”

When it comes to anticipating where the next major conflict will happen, “wars have the habit of taking place where they are unexpected,” and “militaries cannot afford to forego preparation in unique environments simply because planners and thinkers do not anticipate significant conflict to occur in those

environments,” Rauch warns.

Lessons learned during the New Guinea Campaign could apply to future battles, Rauch writes.

“A study of New Guinea demonstrates that large-scale combat in this region inevitably boils down to land forces competing to control key terrain,” he writes. “Despite how drastically yesterday’s Pacific battlefields have changed over the past 80 years, the foundations of jungle fighting will become the link between yesterday’s lessons and tomorrow’s conflicts.”



Three soldiers with the 32nd Infantry Division move supplies by boat on the Girau River in Buna, New Guinea, in 1942. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO)

Weimer addresses AUSA members at chapter social event

During a recent visit to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Weimer and Command Sgt. Maj. Raymond Harris, senior enlisted leader for Army Training and Doctrine Command, joined installation and community leaders for a social event hosted by the Association of the U.S. Army's Fort Leonard Wood-Mid Missouri chapter.

"The social was an opportunity for engagement and to show how the community across the region show[s] support for soldiers and families on Fort Leonard Wood," according to the chapter.

Fort Leonard Wood-Mid Missouri

community across the region show[s] support for soldiers and families on Fort Leonard Wood," according to the chapter.

Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Freddie Brock, the chapter president, and retired Command Sgt. Maj. Rick Morris, AUSA's Fifth Region president and civilian aide to the secretary of the Army for Missouri-South,



Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Weimer, left, greets retired Command Sgt. Maj. Freddie Brock, president of AUSA's Fort Leonard Wood-Mid Missouri chapter, during a social event for Army and community leaders hosted by the chapter. (AUSA PHOTO)

introduced Weimer, who praised the community for its support to Fort Leonard Wood.

"He encouraged everyone in the room to keep telling our story and

show our pride in Mid-Missouri," Brock said.

During his time with attendees, including command teams, soldiers, families and members of the community, Weimer offered time for questions. "This unique period provided answers to questions from the strategic level of the Army regarding current issues being faced by service members and families as well as new recruits," Brock said.

Weimer also lauded the bond between Fort Leonard Wood and the community during his time at the installation. "There's a ton of amazing stuff happening here," he said, according to an Army news release. "The community and the teamwork that I see here—there's just a good vibe going on here."

Soldiers and civilians at Fort Leonard Wood and throughout the region have a lot to be proud of, Weimer said.

"I've got to give Missouri a shout-out, I've got to give the local community a shoutout, and the leaders here at the installation," Weimer said, according to the release. "The garrison's kicking butt here. ... I mean, you see it. It's evident when you interact with everybody here."

Chapter leader honored for volunteerism



GEN Creighton W. Abrams

Gemma McGowan, center, president of AUSA's GEN Creighton W. Abrams chapter in Wiesbaden, Germany, is recognized for the second year in a row as the Wiesbaden Military Community Civilian Employee Volunteer of the Year by the garrison command team, Col. David Mayfield, left, and Command Sgt. Maj. Yves Pamphil. (AUSA PHOTO)



Gen. David Petraeus
Andrew Roberts

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