

The National Guard Transforming to an Operational Force

By H. STEVEN BLUM



When you call out the Guard, you call out America. Never in the Nation's history has this been more true. From our response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, to our reaction in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, one thing stands: America's National Guard has transformed from a strategic Reserve force into a fully operational force multiplier for the Department of Defense. This transformation makes the Guard ideally suited for missions to protect our homeland from any threat.

The foundation to perform and excel at these missions is a set of core principles that continues to focus our vision as we navigate the operating environments of the 21st century:

- securing and defending the homeland in support of the war on terror
- transforming as we fight, enhancing readiness and capabilities for rapid action across the full spectrum of military operations
- remaining the constitutionally based citizen militia that continues to serve our nation so well in peace and war

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U.S. Air Force (Mike Aeliano)

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Texas Air National Guard forces travel to New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina relief operations



■ insisting on a relevant, reliable, ready, and accessible National Guard.

These principles guide our Citizen-Soldiers and Citizen-Airmen, ensuring that they are ready to face any challenge, anywhere, anytime they are called.

21st-Century Challenges

The National Guard is a critical element of America's warfighting capability. While the Guard has certainly transformed in significant ways, there are challenges ahead that require unwavering focus and attention. It is imperative to achieve the right force mix and types of units. We are developing maximum readiness across the full spectrum of national security requirements—from a full-scale war fought overseas to myriad homeland security missions. To that end, we are aggressively working with the Army and the Air Force

to integrate with their transformation plans. Simultaneously, we are continuing to transform the Guard into a more joint and effective organization from top to bottom to meet the needs of our elected and uniformed state and Federal leaders. We must and will do what is right for America.

The operational environment is vastly different than just 5 years ago. The level of the Guard's involvement inside that environment is equally different. The days of large-scale, single-agency operations are long gone. The war on terror, the responses to September 11 and Hurricane Katrina, and the mission to assist U.S. Customs and Border Control with securing the southern border are windows into the future of U.S. military operations at home and abroad, and are all examples of joint, combined, interagency, intergovernmental, and international operations. The ability to think, plan, and operate in a joint, unified,

and combined construct is essential in such an environment.

The Guard's homeland defense and security roles mandate the ability to operate seamlessly between state and Federal intergovernmental and interagency roles. One need only look back to September 11, 2001, and the response to Hurricane Katrina in September 2005, as illustrations of the new operating environment. On September 11, the Guard was there when it was needed. Some 8,500 Soldiers and Airmen were on the streets of New York in less than 24 hours. Guard members were at the Nation's airports within 72 hours. Moreover, the Guard has flown more than 30,000 incident-free, fully armed combat air patrol missions over the United States since September 11.

Less than 4 hours after Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast, National Guard forces were in the water, on the streets, and in

the air throughout the affected region, rescuing people and saving lives. Also, Guard forces responded in record time with unprecedented numbers, putting more than 50,000 Soldiers and Airmen into the region at the peak of the effort. The fact that units were deployed in Iraq at the time of Katrina did not lessen the Guard's ability to respond with trained and ready personnel and equipment. Perhaps more importantly, the summer of 2005 once again demonstrated that the Guard can operate, and must continue to be able to operate, across the full spectrum of national security missions.

The Guard successfully accomplished all of these missions while conducting close quarters combat (including seven infantry brigades and Special Operations Forces) in Iraq and Afghanistan, international peacekeeping in Bosnia and Kosovo, and counterdrug border support in the United States. Simultaneously, the Guard was responding to Governors' calls for homeland security operations and minimization of suffering in the face of natural and manmade disasters.

Joint Force Headquarters

One reason the National Guard has been able to respond so effectively is the development of the Joint Force Headquarters. This has been a critical innovation in every state and territory and is a significant change from the days of separate Army and Air Guard state headquarters geared toward administrative peacetime operations.

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Every state now has a joint operations center with 24-hour, 7-day-a-week, 365-day-a-year operational coverage. These centers are structured and equipped to provide shared situational awareness with all interagency, intergovernmental, and Federal military partners, particularly U.S. Northern Command. The result is a National Guard with a common operating picture of what is going on across the operating spectrum, as well as a better idea of how to work together as we approach issues.



LTG H. Steven Blum, ARNG

U.S. Air Force (Jim Vahrney)

We have developed the Joint Force Headquarters as a sophisticated communications node capable of assuming command and control from all Services and components when responding to domestic emergencies. These new headquarters were tested and proven effective during multiple national special security events in 2004–2005: the Winter Olympics, the Group of Eight Summit, the Democratic and Republican National Conventions, and the Presidential inauguration. The value of these headquarters was further validated in 2005 by the rapid and successful National Guard response to hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma.

We are moving forward to link these headquarters to provide more robust capabilities for sharing secure and nonsecure information within the states or territories, to deployed incident sites, and to other Department of Defense and intergovernmental partners engaged in homeland defense missions and support to civil authorities. To support these needs, the National Guard Bureau has fielded 13 rapid response communications packages, called the Interim Satellite Incident Site Communications Set. These regionally based packages proved absolutely vital when the entire domestic communications infrastructure in the Gulf Coast region collapsed during Hurricane Katrina.

To satisfy the full range of required command, control, communications, and computers capabilities, the National Guard and U.S. Northern Command have worked

together closely on the Joint Continental U.S. Communications Support Environment (JCCSE). When fully operational, the JCCSE will provide U.S. Northern Command, U.S. Pacific Command, the National Guard Bureau, each state Joint Force Headquarters, and our intergovernmental partners with the vital capabilities and services needed to support continuous and accurate situational awareness of operational capabilities. JCCSE will also enhance information-sharing and collaboration capabilities to facilitate mission planning, resourcing, and execution, and fully integrate trusted information-sharing and the collaboration environment to facilitate coordination and unity of effort.

As the National Guard prepares to respond to a potential influenza pandemic, we know that the state Joint Force Headquarters are the only existing organizations with the intrinsic capabilities, knowledge of local conditions, geographic dispersion, resources, and experience to coordinate the massive state-Federal response that would be required in a pandemic of the predicted magnitude, which experts indicate could challenge domestic tranquility like no other event since the Civil War.

Aided by the JCCSE communication backbone, the state Joint Force Headquarters can assist civil authorities as they share a common operating picture, request and coordinate specialized, regionally based response forces, and receive follow-on forces from other states, Federal Reserve forces, or Active duty forces.

Homeland Security

The Guard must continue to transform to maintain its status as a fully operational force multiplier of the Army and the Air Force, while at the same time increasing its ability to respond to a terrorist attack or disaster at home.

WMD Civil Support Teams. Beginning in 1999, Congress funded the formation of joint weapons of mass destruction (WMD) civil support teams within the National Guard. These teams were designed to provide direct assistance to civilian emergency responders in the event of a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosive (CBRNE) attack on the homeland. Few in number and still in operational infancy in 2001, these teams have proven effective. In fact, the New York National Guard's 2nd Civil Support Team—WMD was the first organized unit of any military Service or component to arrive at Ground Zero on the morning of September 11, sampling the air to ensure that no biological or chemical contaminants were present and providing critical communications capabilities. Overhead, in New York and Washington and across the Nation, Air National Guard fighters conducted armed patrols against further attacks. The homeland defense mission—the original task of our militia forebears when they first settled on this continent—had returned to the forefront at the dawning of a new century, demanding that the National Guard restructure in response.

Of the 55 teams authorized by Congress, 12 were approved in fiscal year 2004 and are nearing completion of the certification process. Eleven teams were authorized in fiscal year 2005, completing the congressional mandate to field at least one team in every state, territory, and the District of Columbia. These final teams will be certified by March 2007.

When requested by civil authorities and with a Governor's approval, the teams rapidly deploy to an actual or suspected domestic incident site, conduct identification of agents/substances, assess the potential effects of the WMD incident, advise the local authorities on managing the results of the attack, and assist with appropriate requests for additional support in order to minimize the impact on the civilian populace. The teams are equipped with a mobile laboratory capable of identifying chemical or biological materials, and with a sophisticated communications suite that can link the incident site with other local, state, and Federal agencies and military headquarters. This combination of skill and equipment

makes these teams decisive contributors to public order, stability of government, and public confidence in our national defense. The timely and effective response of these teams to the needs of the emergency response community has resulted in their acceptance as valuable and integral members of the first military response to terrorism.

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CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Packages. We have also stood up 12 CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Packages, and with the assistance and direction of Congress, we will stand up 5 more. They are arrayed all over the United States so no region is left uncovered. These packages are designed to augment civil support team capabilities in the case of a catastrophic event and consist of a medical company with decontamination/treatment capability, an enhanced engineer company with specialized search and rescue equipment, and a task-trained combat unit capable of supporting law enforcement. The package is fully available to the combatant commanders and meets a previously identified U.S. Northern Command request.

Quick and Rapid Reaction Forces. We have created National Guard Quick and Rapid Reaction forces through dual-missioning and training existing units. These units are immediately available to state and Federal governments for homeland security purposes and are already forward deployed throughout the United States. The units will retain warfighting and homeland security capabilities. They also meet a previously identified U.S. Northern Command request for forces requirement. Located in every state and territory, as well as the District of Columbia, they are a ready security force available at the request of the Governor or President. A company-sized unit can respond in 4 hours and the remainder of a battalion in 24 hours. They can protect key sites, such as powerplants and transportation hubs, establish roadblocks, and secure WMD incident sites. They can also respond to an incident as part of a state effort, well before Federal assets are called on.

A Cost-Efficient Force

Today, the Guard delivers national defense capabilities to the Nation and individ-

ually to the states, Guam, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia in a way that makes it the most cost-effective trained and ready force.

Guard forces already provide efficiencies by maintaining capabilities at a fraction of the cost of full-time Active duty units. For example, the annual operating cost of an Army

National Guard brigade combat team is only 28 percent of the cost of its Active duty Army equivalent. Similarly, an Army National Guard (ARNG) Soldier costs 28 percent of what an Active duty Soldier costs. Given the planned usage level for each force—Active duty Army, 1 deployment every 3 years; ARNG, 1 deployment every 6 years—anything less than 50 percent makes the ARNG the most economical choice for providing the required capability.

In addition to furnishing 44 percent of the Army's brigade combat teams with a quarter of the resources, the ARNG aggressively seeks efficiencies throughout its organization. Current analysis is under way regarding many Army Guard contracts, already resulting in reduced costs.

Clearly, the National Guard is the American taxpayers' best defense bargain. The Army National Guard uses only 12 percent of the Army budget, yet it provides 32 percent of the overall capabilities. At its peak in 2004–2005, the Army Guard provided about 40 percent of the Army deployed overseas on the ground, fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Air National Guard's business model has also proven its efficiency and effectiveness repeatedly. Its mixture of full-time (35 percent) and part-time (65 percent) personnel allows it to provide the Air Force with a comparable combat capability at a significant savings. This ability to surge within a mission area allows the Total Force flexibility in managing critical skill sets. For example, when the Air National Guard operated the B–1 bomber, its average cost per flying hour was \$12,322 compared to Air Combat Command's cost of \$14,101 (fiscal years 1997–2001). Current figures for the F–16C/Ds have the Air National Guard averaging \$3,703 per flying hour compared to Air Combat Command's \$4,185. The Air National Guard flying hour cost for the

F-15C/D is \$8,535 compared to Air Combat Command's \$9,601.

In its aircraft inventory, the Air National Guard overall has 1,304 fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft, which is 29 percent of the total Air Force airframes, to include:

- 764 fighter/attack (A/O-10, F-15, F-16, F-117), or 30 percent of total Air Force fighters
- 229 transports (C-5, C-17, C-130, C-141), or 31 percent of total Air Force airlifters
- 252 tankers (HC-130, KC-10, KC-135), or 40 percent of total Air Force refueling capability.

In fiscal year 2005, of the Air Force budget of \$119 billion, the Air National Guard portion was \$7.3 billion, about 7 percent. The Air National Guard is truly the "big bang" for the Air Force's buck.

Family and Employer Cooperation

A tenet of the National Guard is its sensitivity to the needs of families and employers. Soldiers and Airmen join the National Guard by choice. They want to serve their country, state, and community, yet they also want to remain civilians. They wish to live and work in the community, supporting schools and

culture, rather than serving on Active duty status full time. This is especially appealing to Servicemembers who have separated from the Active duty forces and do not wish to relocate or be away from home frequently or for extended periods.

Guard members want a predictable schedule for traditional weekend training once a month and for annual training, which normally occurs once a year for up to 15 days. They understand their commitment to be available in times of national and state emergency and are willing and able to make the sacrifice as long as it is occasional rather than constant and predictable rather than random.

being deployed for up to 1 year of every 6, as long as the military requires larger numbers of forces for worldwide missions.

For the Air National Guard, the Air Expeditionary Force model forecasts the likelihood that a unit may deploy for up to 120 days in a 20-month cycle. The model provides the Air National Guard maximum flexibility in fulfilling its Air Expeditionary Force requirements. To minimize the impact on the employer and the traditional member, Airmen typically deploy in 15-, 30-, or 40-day periods.

While family matters have always been important for the Guard, they came more to the forefront in the early 1990s

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Employers and families need the same predictability so that they, too, can support both the Nation and their communities and keep the civilian workplace and home operating as normally as possible. The National Guard leadership understands these needs and works at all levels to ensure that families and employers are considered. To that end, the Guard has developed a model for deployed predictability that enhances recruiting and retention. The model for the Army National Guard provides the likelihood of a Soldier

when Guardsmen were called up en masse for operations in Southwest Asia, the first such call-up of that immensity since the Berlin Crisis of 1961. Guard leaders quickly realized that with declining Active duty installations nearby, the families would need more assistance to attain the benefits that would enable them to carry on in the prolonged absence of the Soldier or Airman. The National Guard Family Program was formally established with a full-time support office in each state, staffed by volunteers and family members. Regardless of whether the Guardsman is deployed or serving at home, families have a place to get help.

Recruiting Challenges and Solutions

Maintaining our authorized end strength in recent years has been more challenging, in part because we have become an operational force. Citizens who joined the Guard before September 11 were reasonably certain they would perform their military training 2 days each month plus an annual training period of 15 days and were likely to be called up only in an extreme national security situation or for a deployment that would require up to a 9-month absence from the workplace and home. Since the attacks of September 11, the world has changed completely with respect to national security threats, which has made the National Guard more necessary than ever and has required thousands of Guardsmen to mobilize and deploy for an average of 18 months.

Nevertheless, by working toward greater predictability in deployments, adding new

Czech soldiers wheel Texas National Guardsman during Exercise *Clean Valley* near Prague as part of state partnership program



Texas Air National Guard 149th Fighter Wing (Gregory N. Rippos)

incentives, and changing the ways we market the National Guard, we are making considerable progress in attaining our authorized end strength of 350,000 for the Army Guard and 106,800 for the Air Guard.

Army National Guard. We are especially encouraged by our first quarter 2006 recruiting efforts. The Army National Guard has exceeded its enlistment goal by signing up 13,466 recruits, achieving 106.8 percent of its goal of 12,605. This marks the first quarter since 1993 that the Guard has exceeded its enlistment objectives for this period of the year and the first time it has met 3 consecutive months of recruiting goals since 2003.

We launched a number of changes in fiscal years 2005 and 2006 that account for recent success, including the new American Soldier advertising campaign and the Guard Recruiting Assistance Program (G-RAP), where individual Guardsmen who help recruit new members can receive financial incentive for each referral of a non-prior Service lead that results in an enlistment. G-RAP has been a strong tool in efforts to meet authorized end strength. Launched in December 2005, this contracted program is currently open to traditional Guardsmen, who may receive up to \$2,000 for each referral they provide to a recruiter, provided the prospect meets the enlistment qualifications, is sworn in, and enters basic military training.

Between August 2004 and December 2005, the Army Guard increased the number of recruiters nationwide from 2,700 to 5,100. Enlistment and reenlistment bonuses grew during fiscal year 2005 from \$5,000 to \$10,000 for new recruits and from \$5,000 to \$15,000 for prior service Soldiers who

join the Guard. These benefits were further increased for fiscal year 2006 as new Soldiers will receive up to \$20,000 for joining the ARNG along with tuition assistance from the Montgomery G.I. Bill.

ARNG retention continues to be strong as ARNG Soldiers renew their commitment. Retention bonuses, individual Soldiers' confidence in their leaders, and unit camaraderie are the keys to this success.

Air National Guard. The Air Guard has changed its traditional recruiting operations by adding storefront locations in an effort to match the recruiting force with the population, as post-9/11 security provisions have made it more difficult to gain access to Air Guard installations.

With the cooperation of the Air Force, in-service recruiting liaisons have been positioned at 13 Active duty Air Force bases worldwide to make the Air Guard more available to Airmen who have completed their obligation but want to continue serving.

The Air Guard's G-RAP, implemented in April 2006, is already having a positive impact on recruiting, with nearly 1,800 active recruiting assistants and 800 potential enlistments. Also, prior service, non-prior service, and affiliation bonuses have increased from \$10,000 last year to \$15,000 this year.

In December 2006, the National Guard will be 370 years old. Indeed, we are evergreen—transforming and adjusting to many demands on the new Minutemen. We have transformed the Guard from a

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strategic reserve to an operational force. We have changed the way we fight, the way we do business, and the way we work with others—all to provide the relevant National Guard that America needs.

Today, we are a joint force, and the Army and Air National Guard are united like never before. We are some 444,000 volunteers—trained, combat experienced, and doubly qualified as we bring our civilian skills to the fight and to the aid of our local communities when disaster strikes.

America insists on a reliable, ready, relevant, and accessible National Guard. Today's Guard member, the 21st-century Minuteman, must be available to deploy at a moment's notice to defend the Nation, at home or abroad. America expects no less. And we are always ready, always there. **JFQ**

Minnesota National Guardsmen and residents transport sandbags after Red River flooding

