



Army FY2017 Force Structure Decisions

Background

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, P.L. 114-328, authorizes the Army to maintain an endstrength of 1.018 million soldiers, an increase over previous programmed plans to reduce the Army to 980,000 soldiers by the end of FY2018. FY2017 endstrength authorizations are:

- Regular Army: 476,000
- Army National Guard (ARNG): 343,000
- U.S. Army Reserve (USAR): 199,000

Given this increase in endstrength, the Army plans to initiate the following force structure decisions (see https://www.army.mil/article/189082/departments_of_the_army_announces_force_structure_decisions_for_fiscal_year_2017 for more information).

Enhance Readiness

The Army's goal for units deploying on operations is that these units have 100% of their authorized personnel available. This goal is often not achievable due to the Army-level inventory of soldiers—in both grade and military occupational specialty (MOS)—available to be assigned to units. In addition, soldiers assigned to units can become “non-deployable” and ineligible to participate in operations for a variety of reasons. Some of the more common ones include medical (e.g., illness, injury, pregnancy), conduct (e.g., incarceration, awaiting conduct discharge) or training (e.g., soldiers attending mandatory occupational or leadership or academic training).

In order to mitigate at least part of the non-deployable problem, the Army plans to establish “Readiness Enhancement Accounts” for both the Active (Regular) and Reserve (ARNG and USAR) components. This account is to consist of about 10,000 soldiers allowing the Army Human Resources Command to ensure units are fully manned when deployed.

In addition to the Readiness Enhancement Accounts at Army-level, the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) is to receive about 1,300 additional soldiers to address manpower shortfalls in initial basic soldier training units and recruiting commands.

Retain Units Previously Scheduled for Deactivation

The Army plans to retain a number of units previously slated for deactivation. These include:

- The 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division based at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. Previous plans called for reducing this unit to a battalion task force-sized unit.
- A Combat Aviation Brigade in South Korea.
- The 18th Military Police Brigade Headquarters in Europe.
- The 206th Military Intelligence Battalion at Ft. Hood, Texas.
- The 61st Maintenance Company in South Korea.

Create New Units

The Army plans to both create new units and convert existing units into new units. These include:

- Converting the 2nd IBCT, 3rd Infantry Division at Ft. Stewart, Georgia, into an Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT).
- Creating two Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFABs)—one in the Active Component and one in the ARNG.
- Creating an aviation training brigade at Ft. Hood, Texas.
- Creating three Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) battalions each with about 370 soldiers. The Army plans to station these battalions overseas.
- Creating a Short Range Air Defense (SHORAD) battalion consisting of about 465 soldiers and employing the Avenger system—a Stinger missile-based platform.
- Other units to be created and stationed overseas include a field artillery brigade headquarters with an organic brigade support battalion headquarters, a signal company, two forward support companies, a theater movement control element, a petroleum support company, and an ammunition platoon.

Potential Issues for Congress

Potential considerations for Congress include but are not limited to:

- Other than establishing Readiness Enhancement Accounts, what measures are being undertaken to reduce soldier non-deployability?

- How does TRADOC plan to allocate its 1,300 additional soldiers between basic training and recruiting, and how will this impact overall force readiness?
- How long will it take before new units reach full operational capability (FOC)?
- What are some of the equipment challenges associated with converting existing and creating new units? Legacy systems such as the M-1A2 Abrams, M-270 MLRS, and the Avenger SHORAD system are not in large-scale active production so how does this impact plans to activate these units?
- What is the Army's overseas stationing plan for its three new MLRS battalions and the SHORAD battalion as well as the new headquarters and support units cited in the previous section?
- Are there any associated military construction (MILCON) requirements for these new units, including requirements for training facilities and ranges?

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