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# Defense Primer: Department of the Army and Army Command Structure

## Overview

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution stipulates, “The Congress shall have power ... to raise and support Armies ... make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces ... for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel invasions.”

### Relevant Statutes

Title 10, U.S. Code, Subtitle B, Armed Forces: Army  
Title 10, U.S. Code, Subtitle E, Reserve Components  
Title 32, U.S. Code, National Guard

The Department of the Army (DA) (**Figure 1**) is one of four military departments reporting to the Department of Defense (DOD). The Army’s primary mission is to fight and win the nation’s ground wars. The Army’s mission is both operational and institutional and is composed of four distinct components: the regular Active Component (AC), the reserve components of the United States Army Reserve (USAR), the Army National Guard (ARNG), and Department of the Army civilians (DAC). See **Table 1**.

- The Regular Army is the full-time, federal force of AC soldiers.
- USAR is a federal reserve force that provides specialized units and capabilities, as well as individual soldiers when mobilized.
- ARNG is a dual-status force that normally remains under the command of state governors and can respond to domestic emergencies, unless its units are mobilized for a federal mission.
- DAC are federal government workers who fill a variety of support roles.

**Table 1. Army Components**

| Component | Total Number | Location (CONUS/OCONUS) |
|-----------|--------------|-------------------------|
| AC        | 440,127      | 392,897/47,230          |
| USAR      | 175,122      | 167,945/7,177           |
| ARNG      | 323,377      | 314,693/8,684           |
| DAC       | 229,121      | 217,943/11,178          |

**Source:** DMDC as of June 30, 2024.

**Note:** CONUS = Continental United States and OCONUS = Outside of the Continental United States (overseas).

## Senior Leadership

The DA is led by a civilian Secretary of the Army (SECARMY) appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate. The SECARMY reports to the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) and serves as civilian oversight for the Army and Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA). The CSA is an administrative position held by a four-star Army general and is a statutory office (10 U.S.C. §3033). The CSA is the chief military advisor and deputy to the SECARMY and, by statute (10 U.S.C. §151), serves as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). The JCS is composed of DOD’s senior uniformed leaders who advise the President, SECDEF, and Cabinet officials on military issues.

## Operational and Institutional Missions

The operational Army—known as the Operational Force—conducts or directly supports military operations and consists of numbered armies, corps, divisions, brigades and battalions. The majority of the Army is based in the continental United States (CONUS) relying on forward-stationed and rotational units outside the continental United States (OCONUS) to deter potential enemies, train allies, and defend against aggression if needed.

The institutional Army supports the operational Army by providing the training, education, and logistics necessary “to raise, train, equip, deploy, and ensure the readiness of all Army forces.” Army organizations whose primary mission is to generate and sustain the Operating Forces, such as the Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) and Army Materiel Command (AMC) for example, are part of what is known as the Generating Force.

## Army Command Structure

There are three types of commands: Army Commands, Army Service Components Commands (ASCCs), and Direct Reporting Units (DRUs).

**Army Commands.** Army commands perform many Title 10 functions across multiple disciplines. The four Army Commands include Army Forces Command (FORSCOM), Army Futures Command (AFC), AMC, and TRADOC.

### Army Service Components Commands (ASCCs).

ASCCs are operational organizations aligned with combatant commands. The ASCC commander is responsible for advising the combatant commander on the allocation and employment of Army forces within a combatant command. There are nine ASCCs, with five ASCCs aligned with geographic combatant commands and the remaining four ASCCs aligned with functional combatant commands, including U.S. Army Cyber

Command, Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command, U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command, and U.S. Army Special Operations Command.

**Direct Reporting Units (DRUs).** DRUs have institutional or operational functions and provide broad, general support to the Army. There are 13 DRUs:

- U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center (USAASC);
- Arlington National Cemetery (ANC);
- Civilian Human Resources Agency (CHRA);
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE);
- U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Division (USACID);
- U.S. Army Human Resources Command (HRC);
- U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM);
- U.S. Army Medical Command (MEDCOM);
- U.S. Military Academy (USMA);
- U.S. Military District of Washington (MDW);

- Military Postal Service Agency (MPSA);
- U.S. Army Test and Evaluation Command (ATEC); and
- U.S. Army War College (AWC).

### CRS Products

CRS In Focus IF10571, *Defense Primer: Organization of U.S. Ground Forces*, by Barbara Salazar Torreon and Andrew Feickert.

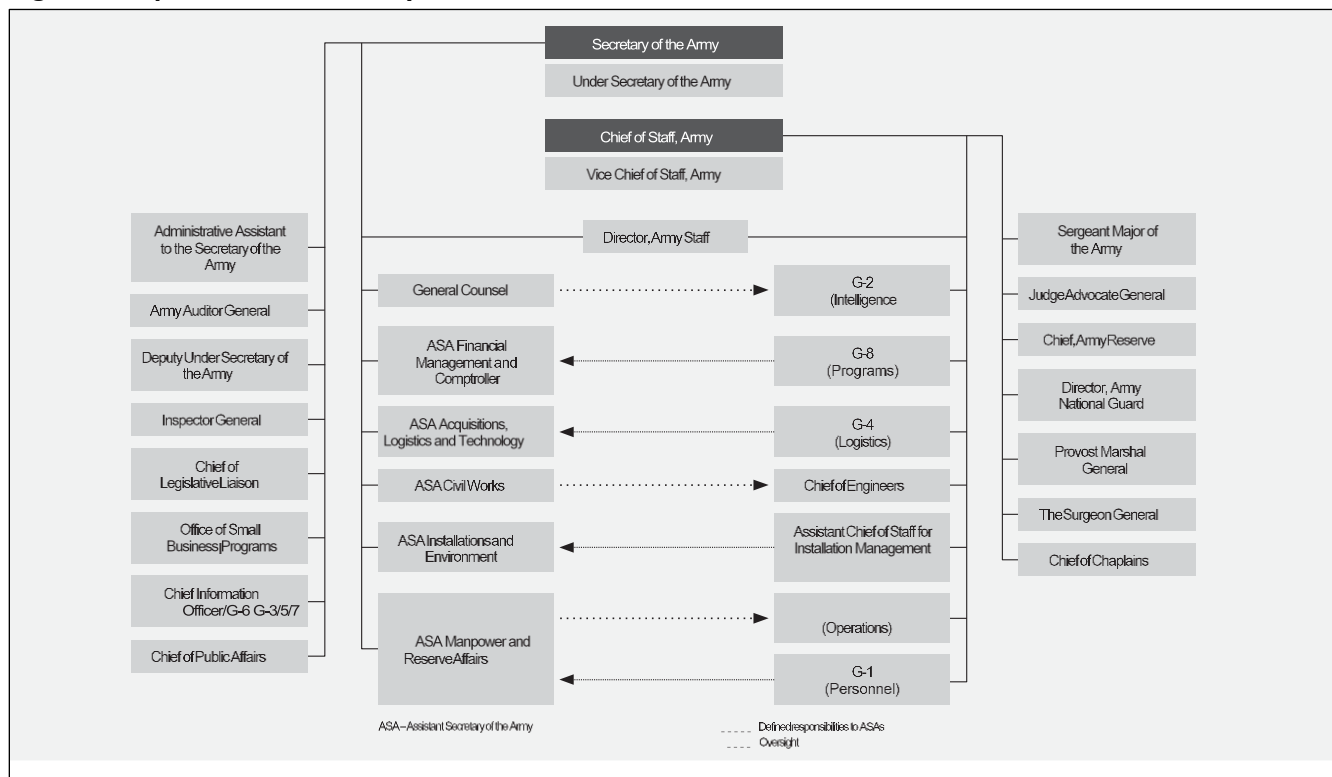
CRS In Focus IF10540, *Defense Primer: Reserve Forces*, coordinated by Kristy N. Kamarck.

### Other Resources

Department of the Army Budget Materials at <https://www.asafm.army.mil/Budget-Materials/>.

Understanding the Army's Structure at <https://www.army.mil/organization/>

**Figure 1. Department of the Army**



**Source:** Association of the United States Army (AUSA), Institute of Land Warfare, *Profile of the United States Army*, September 2024, p. 11 at <https://www.ausa.org/publications/profile-united-states-army-2024>.

**Note:** This publication is updated and published every two years, and it “serves as an introduction to the structure, purpose and activities of the entire Army.”

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