



Updated December 11, 2020

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

## Overview

Article I, Section 8, Clause 12 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.”

### Constitutional Provision

Article I, Section 8, Clause 12, known as the Army Clause. “The Congress shall have Power To ... raise and support Armies ... ”

### Relevant Statutes

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

The Department of the Army (DA) is one of the three 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 it 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 **Figure 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 I. Army Components**

Component	Total Number	Location (CONUS/OCONUS)
AC	480,893	432,297/ 48,596
USAR	188,703	182,609/ 6,094
ARNG	336,129	328,444/ 7,685
DAC	252,747	240,490/ 12,257

**Source:** Defense Military Manpower Center (DMDC), Military and Civilian Personnel by Service/Agency by State/Country as of September 30, 2020.

## Senior Leadership

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

## Operational and Institutional Missions

The operational Army—known as the Operational Force—conducts or directly supports the full spectrum of military operations and consists of numbered armies, corps, divisions, brigades and battalions (e.g., Brigade Combat Teams [BCTs], Aviation Brigades, Medical Brigades). The majority of the Army is currently based in the continental United States (CONUS) relying on forward-stationed and rotational units outside the continental U.S. (OCONUS) to deter potential enemies, defend against aggression if needed, and train allies.

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 (e.g., U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command [TRADOC], U.S. Army Materiel Command [AMC], U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command [INSCOM]) are also known as the Generating Force. According to the Army’s website, “Without the institutional Army, the operational Army cannot function. Without the operational Army, the institutional Army has no purpose.”

## 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. They include U.S. Army Forces Command, U.S. Army Futures Command, U.S. Army Materiel Command, and U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command.

**Army Service Components Commands (ASCCs).**

ASCCs are operational organizations that are aligned with combatant commands. ASCCs supporting geographic combatant commands include U.S. Army Europe and Africa, U.S. Army Central, U.S. Army North, U.S. Army Pacific, and U.S. Army South.

ASCCs with a global mission supporting functional combatant commands include U.S. Army Cyber Command, U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command/U.S. Army Strategic Command, U.S. Army Special Operations Command, and U.S. Army Surface Deployment and Distribution Command.

**Direct Reporting Units (DRUs).** DRUs consist of one or more units that have institutional or operational functions. These units provide broad, general support to the Army in a single, unique discipline not available elsewhere in the Army and include U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center; Arlington National Cemetery; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command; U.S. Army Human Resources Command; U.S. Army Installation Management Command; U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command; U.S. Army Marketing and Engagement Brigade; U.S. Army Medical Command; U.S. Military Academy; U.S. Army Military District of

Washington; U.S. Army Reserve Command; U.S. Army Test and Evaluation Command; and U.S. Army War College.

**CRS Products**

CRS Insight IN10889, *Army Futures Command (AFC)*, by Andrew Feickert.

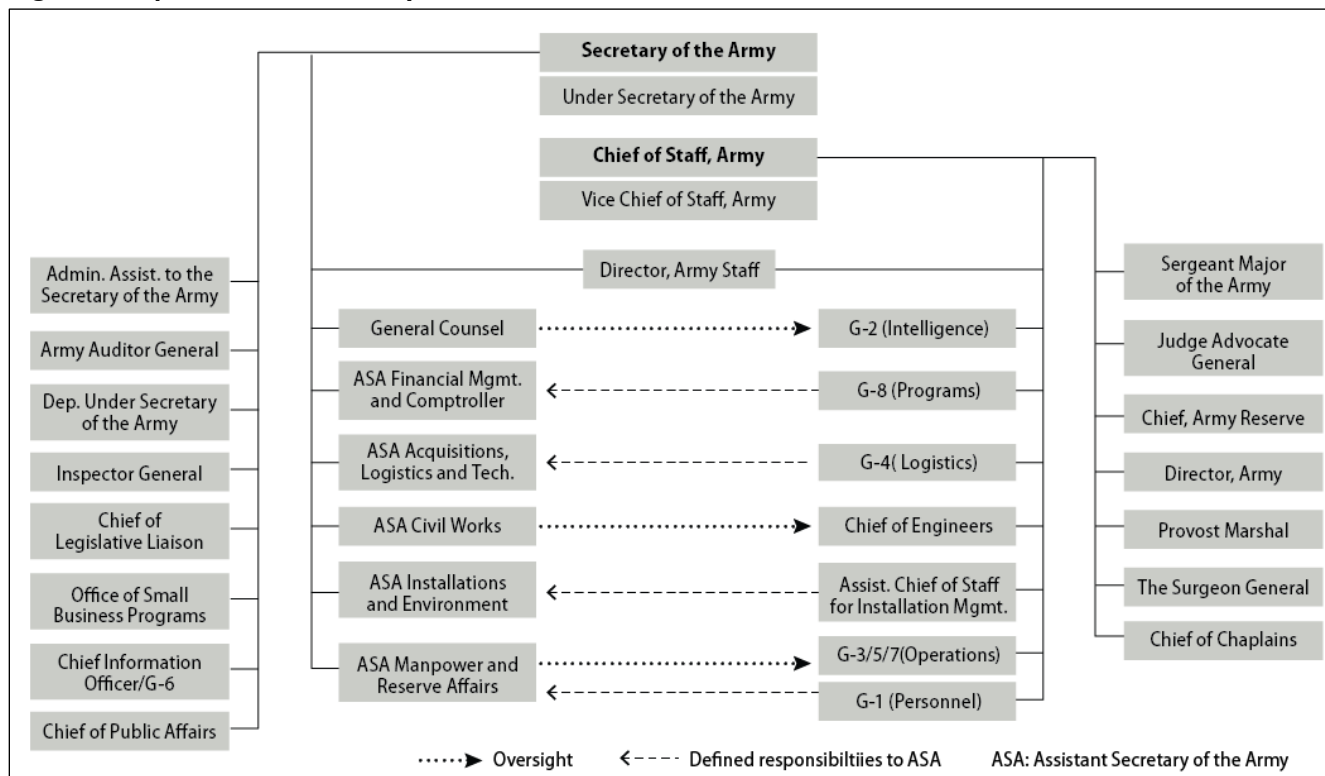
CRS In Focus IF10540, *Defense Primer: Reserve Forces*, by Lawrence Kapp.

**Other Resources**

Department of the Army, DoD Releases Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Proposal, February 10, 2020, at <https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Releases/Release/Article/2079489/dod-releases-fiscal-year-2021-budget-proposal/>

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

**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 2020.

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