

Lesson 2

The Active Army



Key Terms

counterintelligence
doctrine
nonaccession
unconventional

What You Will Learn to Do

- Relate the role of the Active Army to the U.S. Army

Linked Core Abilities

- Do your share as a good citizen in your school, community, country, and the world

Skills and Knowledge You Will Gain Along the Way

- Explain how the two Congressional acts impact the organizational structure of Armed Forces
- Identify the Congressional act that provides the basis for recent Army organization
- Distinguish between the fundamental roles of the Army and the Active Army
- Identify how the Active Army contributes to domestic affairs
- Correlate Army commands to the JROTC program
- Determine categories under which the Army classifies its branches
- Classify the basic/special branches of the Army
- Identify two nonaccession branches of the Army
- Define the key words contained in this lesson

Introduction

The U.S. Army dates back to June 1775. On June 14, 1775, the Continental Congress adopted the Continental Army when it appointed a committee to “draft the rules and regulations for the government of the Army.” This authorization marks the birthday of the U.S. Army, the oldest branch of the U.S. Armed Forces.

The Army is a major part of the U.S. Armed Forces, which collectively are responsible for defending American interests by:

- **Supporting and defending the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic**
- **Ensuring, by timely and effective military action, the security of the United States, its possessions, and areas vital to its interests**
- **Upholding and advancing the national policies and interests of the United States**
- **Safeguarding the internal security of the United States**

Within that framework, the fundamental mission of the U.S. Army is to deter war and to win in combat; however, there is much more to the Army than accomplishing that mission. In fact, the Army spends most of its time involved in peacetime activities. This lesson looks at the origins of the U.S. Army, and why this is an Active Army.

Origins of the U.S. Army

The legal basis for the establishment of the Army, as well as for the other branches of the armed forces, is set forth in the Constitution. The Constitution stipulates that the U.S. Armed Forces must answer to and be responsible for the needs and desires of the American people as expressed by their elected representatives. To achieve that, the Framers established the principle of civilian control over the military; that is, the president serves as Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Armed Forces and Congress alone has the power to raise and support armies and to declare war.

Although the Constitution established the need for a system to “provide for the common defense,” it did not define the organization of that system; therefore, in the course of our nation’s history, the national defense structure has taken many forms. After the ratification of the *Constitution*, the newly formed Congress and President George Washington established the Department of War in 1789, as an executive department. The Secretary of War became its director and his powers were entrusted to him by the president.

Congress established our present military structure with the passage of two post-World War II legislations: the National Security Act of 1947 and its Amendments of 1949. The 1947 act:

- Redesignated the Department of War as the Department of the Army, headed by the Secretary of the Army
- Created a separate Department of the Air Force and U.S. Air Force as a branch of the armed forces
- Loosely grouped the Departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force under the title of the National Military Establishment
- Established the Joint Chiefs of Staff, composed of the military chiefs of the three services, as a council to advise the three department secretaries and the president on military matters

In 1949, Congress amended the National Security Act of 1947 by passing the National Security Act Amendments of 1949. These amendments:

- Established the Department of Defense (DoD) under the executive branch of the government and placed the Departments of the Army, Navy (including the Marine Corps), and Air Force subordinate to it.
- Established a Secretary of Defense to assist the president in providing direction, authority, and control of the three services. This secretary is appointed by the president and is a member of the president's cabinet.
- Stipulated that the president would appoint civilian secretaries to head of the Departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, and that those secretaries would come under the authority of the Secretary of Defense. These secretaries are responsible for and have the necessary authority to conduct, all the affairs of their departments.
- Established a chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, also appointed by the president, who would have direct access to the Secretary of Defense.

Note

To learn more about the Department of Defense and the Secretary of Defense, review Chapter 2, Lesson 1.

Following the passage of the National Security Act and its Amendments, Congress passed the Army Organization Act of 1950. This act provides the legal basis for the present internal organization of the Army and the Department of the Army. It organizes the Army into a composite of commands, components, and branches all organized, trained, and equipped primarily for prompt and sustained combat operations on land. This act also:

- Stipulated that the president would appoint civilian secretaries to head of the Departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, and that those secretaries would come under the authority of the Secretary of Defense. These secretaries are responsible for, and have the necessary authority to conduct, all the affairs of their departments.
- Established a chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, also appointed by the president, who would have direct access to the Secretary of Defense.

The Army Concept

Under the Army concept, the U.S. Army consists of the Active Army, the reserve components, and the Department of the Army civilian work force. The reserve components consist of the Army National Guard and the U.S. Army Reserve. The purpose of these components is to provide trained units and qualified personnel to be available for active duty in time of war, national emergency, or at other times as dictated by national security requirements.

Note

The reserve components are detailed in the next lesson.

A bond of mutual agreement exists among the Active Army, the reserve components, and the Department of the Army civilian workforce to ensure the operational effectiveness of the total Army. This bond promotes:

- **A balanced force structure**
- **Programs and projects designed to ensure modern equipment for both the active and reserve components**

There is cooperation and affiliation (teamwork) between active and reserve units, thus enhancing the mobilization potential of the reserve components and ensuring their timely availability to satisfy wartime reinforcement objectives.

Major Roles of the Total Army

In addition to its main mission—to deter war and to win in combat—the Army’s major roles in executing U.S. military policies are as follows:

- **To maintain the ability to respond to any level of aggression**
- **To be well trained and equipped to prevent conflict**
- **To be employed at a level of strength necessary to ensure a swift and decisive end of the conflict if land forces are committed in combat**
- **To bring about an end to the conflict in terms favorable to the United States**
- **To fulfill a peacetime role by being able to contribute personnel and resources to domestic programs that support the general welfare of the people**

The Active Army

The Active (or Regular) Army is a component of the U.S. Army maintained by the federal government in peace and in war. Congress authorizes its strength yearly under the provisions of Article 1 of the Constitution. At the same time, Congress appropriates money for its sustainment, modernization, and pay.

The Army must be able to respond to threats that occur anywhere in the world. In addition, the Army supports security assistance programs conducted by the

Departments of the State and Defense to friendly countries seeking economic and military assistance to maintain their stability and security. The Army makes an important contribution to those programs by providing military advisers, equipment, and other support. The results are positive because the Army's efforts are instrumental in implementing U.S. national security policies, and the Army shares in the benefits of mutual friendship, cooperation, and understanding, all of which serve the nation's interests.

Although maintaining national security is the determining factor in the need for an Army, the Active Army also contributes in peacetime to the nation's general welfare through domestic involvement. However, Congress limits this involvement by law, tradition, and the need for the Army to maintain a high level of readiness to fulfill its primary mission. Some of the ways the Army contributes to domestic affairs are as follows:

- **Providing assistance to communities during natural disasters (see Figure 2.2.1)**
- **Assisting civilian communities during civil disturbances by providing personnel and equipment in support of civilian police forces**
- **Assisting civilian communities with civic-action programs**
- **Improving flood control and navigation**
- **Adding to the nation's scientific and technological skills through extensive research and development programs**
- **Advising and assisting governmental agencies in fighting the war on drugs**

Organization

The Department of the Army is headed by the Secretary of the Army assisted by the Chief of Staff of the Army supported by the Army Staff. The Department of the Army directs a supporting establishment comprised of fourteen Major Commands that recruit, organize, train, equip, and support Army Operational Forces. Army Opera-

Figure 2.2.1: Members of the Army help communities when disaster strikes.

Courtesy of AP/Wide World Photos.



tional Forces are tactically organized into Corps, Divisions, Regiments, and Brigades. At the direction of the Secretary of Defense, the Chief of Staff of the Army will transfer operational control of tactical units to designated Unified Combatant Commands to conduct operations at the direction of the president of the United States.

A Corps is the Army's largest operational maneuver unit. A Division is the basic unit of maneuver at the tactical level; it is the largest Army fixed organization that trains and fights as a tactical team. There can be anywhere from two to five divisions assigned to a Corps. Divisions are tactically self-contained incorporating all elements of combat arms, combat support, and combat service support necessary to conduct prompt and sustained land combat operations. A Division is composed of three to five Brigades. Brigades are task organized to achieve Division objectives that may be part of a Corps operational plan. Brigades are not tactically self-contained but depend on Division and Corps support to conduct sustained combat operations. Regiments are Brigade-size cavalry units that are tactically self-contained to conduct independent reconnaissance and security operations supporting the Division scheme of maneuver.

Tactical Echelons

Missions are executed or carried out by different size elements or organizations within the Army. The Army task organizes to accomplish assigned missions. Task organizations are built from functionally oriented, standard size units.

Note

The basic building block of all Army organizations is the individual soldier.

Squad

The squad/section is the smallest element in the Army organizational structure. The leader is a noncommissioned officer (usually a Sergeant or a Staff Sergeant). The size is dependent on the function of the squad/section. The squad is the final step in completing the mission.

Platoon

A platoon consists of two to four squads/sections with a Lieutenant usually as the leader. A Staff Sergeant or Sergeant First Class is second in command. The platoon leader coordinates and tasks squads to accomplish assigned platoon objectives.

Company

Typically, three to five platoons form a company. A company is normally commanded by a Captain. A First Sergeant is the Company Commander's principal noncommissioned officer assistant. A troop is a company-size unit in a cavalry organization. A battery is a company-size unit in an artillery organization.

Battalion

A battalion is composed of four to six companies. A battalion is normally commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel. The Command Sergeant Major is the battalion

commander's principal noncommissioned officer assistant. A squadron is the cavalry equivalent of a battalion. The commander has a staff typically overseeing the battalion's mission, training, administration, and logistics functions. A battalion is capable of independent operations of limited duration and scope.

Brigade

A brigade headquarters commands the tactical operations of two to five battalions. A brigade is normally commanded by a Colonel. The Command Sergeant Major is the senior, noncommissioned officer. Brigades may be employed on independent or semi-independent operations.

Organization of the Active Army

The Department of the Army organizes the Active Army in a number of ways. There are ten major commands in the Continental United States (CONUS) and four major commands located in Europe, Asia, and other regions of the world (OCONUS). The most well-known commands in CONUS are Forces Command (FORSCOM) at Fort McPherson, Georgia, and Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) at Fort Monroe, Virginia. Other CONUS commands include the following:

- **Army Material Command**
- **Military District of Washington**
- **Medical Command**
- **Army Intelligence and Security Command**
- **Criminal Investigation Command**
- **Corps of Engineers**
- **Military Traffic Management Command**
- **Army Special Operations Command**

OCONUS commands include U.S. Army Europe, U.S. Army Pacific, Eighth Army, and U.S. Army South.

FORSCOM controls all the combat and support units at installations throughout the United States.

TRADOC is responsible for developing Army **doctrine** and training. TRADOC also exercises control over the training installations throughout the United States. U.S. Army ROTC Cadet Command, a major subordinate command of TRADOC, manages both the Senior and Junior ROTC programs.

Branches of the U.S. Army

The Army classifies its units and personnel by branches. Branch names identify the types of units that personnel can select to enter (on enlistment) and the personnel who are trained in the primary functions of that branch. There are basic and special branches; the Army classifies the basic branches into the categories of Combat Arms, Combat Support, and Combat Service Support.

Key Note Term

doctrine – a principle (or creed of principles) relating to a specific belief, subject, theory, or branch of knowledge; the fundamental policy or standard for a principle or set of principles on a specific subject, theory, or branch of knowledge; something that is taught

- **Combat Arms are units and soldiers who close with and destroy enemy forces or provide firepower and destructive capabilities on the battlefield**
- **Combat Support encompasses critical combat functions necessary to secure victory**
- **Combat Service Support sustain Army forces and reconstitute tactical units**

Table 2.2.1 shows the different branches.

Table 2.2.1: Branches of the United States Army

Combat Arms		Combat Service Support	
Infantry	Aviation	Transportation	Surgeon
Artillery	Special Operations	Quartermaster	Dentist
Armor	Air Defense Artillery	Ordinance	Veterinarian
Combat Support		Finance	Medical Corps
Engineer	Intelligence	Legal	Chaplain
Chemical	Signal	Adjutant General	Rabbi
Military Police		Doctor	Muslim
		Nurse	Buddhist

The remaining two, Special Forces and Civil Affairs, are **nonaccession** branches.

Special Forces accomplish missions of **unconventional** warfare, foreign internal defense, direct action, strategic reconnaissance, and counterterrorism. Civil Affairs is only in the Army Reserve and it accomplishes missions of command, control, and coordination of civil-military operations.

Combat Arms

The Combat Arms branches are directly involved in the conduct of actual fighting. The Combat Arms branches are as follows:

- **Infantry.** Closes with the enemy by means of fire and maneuver, on foot or in armored vehicles, in order to destroy or capture the enemy or repel their assault by fire, close combat, or counterattack. Infantry is the nucleus around which the Army groups the other branches in combat operations.
- **Armor.** Conducts mobile land and cavalry warfare; the tank is the nucleus of its forces.
- **Field Artillery.** Provides indirect fire support for Infantry and Armor. Field Artillery uses cannons, missiles, and rockets and is capable of providing both nuclear and nonnuclear firepower.
- **Air Defense Artillery.** Provides air and missile defense on the battlefield by destroying enemy aircraft and missiles with automatic weapons or missiles.

Key Note Terms

nonaccession – the policy or practice of not accepting personnel directly from traditional officer or enlisted entrance sources

unconventional – not bound by or in accordance with international agreements dealing with a specific subject, such as the rules or laws of warfare; the use of nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons or energy

- **Aviation.** Provides prompt and sustained combat air operations. Aviation units participate in a variety of combat and support roles including attack, assault helicopter, aerial observation, transportation, lift, supply, and troop transport duties.
- **Corps of Engineers.** Combat Engineer units are part of the combined arms team in combat operations. Corps of Engineers units provide combat support including construction, demolition, amphibious operations, defensive barriers, camouflage/topographic activities, and minefield employment (see Figure 2.2.2).

Note

Depending on their mission, engineer units can be Combat Arms, Combat Support, or a Combat Service Support Branch.

Combat Support

The Combat Support branches provide operational assistance to the combat arms, and they participate in combat operations as part of the combined arms team. The combat support branches are as follows:

- **Corps of Engineers.** See description under combat arms.
- **Chemical Corps.** Provides the Army with highly trained people in nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) warfare defense programs. These programs include employment, logistical support, defensive procedures, equipment, training, scientific development, and management of NBC materials.
- **Signal Corps.** Provides command and control communications for Army forces. Signal units install, operate, and maintain communications-electronic equipment.
- **Military Police Corps.** Performs missions such as enforcing laws and regulations, conducting criminal investigative operations, securing U.S. government property, discharging of correctional functions, controlling traffic and movements, and securing critical areas and lines of communication.

Figure 2.2.2: The Army Corps of Engineers contributes in part through construction.

Courtesy of Dean Conger/
Corbis Images.



- **Military Intelligence.** Plans, conducts, and supervises collection, analysis, production, and dissemination of intelligence, such as combat intelligence, and **counterintelligence** information pertaining to the enemy, weather, or terrain.

Note

The Signal Corps, Chemical Corps, and Military Police Corps can either be a combat support or a combat service support branch.

Combat Service Support

The Combat Service Support branches perform combat service support activities or administrative functions for the Army. These branches may also provide specialized services to other departments of the federal government and to the people of the United States.

The Combat Service Support branches are as follows:

- **Adjutant General Corps.** Formulates policy and manages the Army's administrative and personnel systems.
- **Corps of Engineers.** See description under combat arms.
- **Finance Corps.** Responsible for the management of the Army's financial resources, which includes paying U.S. Army personnel.
- **Quartermaster Corps.** Plans and directs the acquisition, receipt, storage, preservation, and issue of equipment, repair parts, fortification/construction material, subsistence, petroleum products, water, and other general supplies.
- **Signal Corps.** See description under combat support.
- **Chemical Corps.** See description under combat support.
- **Military Police Corps.** See description under combat support.
- **Ordnance Corps.** Responsible for the maintenance and management of armament, tracked, wheeled, and general purpose vehicles, conventional and special munitions, test equipment, management of air defense and land combat missile systems, and construction material.
- **Transportation Corps.** Responsible for the movement of personnel and equipment for the Army and for the Navy, Air Force, and government agencies as assigned.
- **Judge Advocate General's Corps.** Provides professional legal service and assistance in the fields of both military and civil law and supervises the Army's system of military justice.
- **Army Medical Department (includes Medical Corps, Dental Corps, Veterinary Corps, Army Nurse Corps, Army Medical Specialist Corps, and Medical Service Corps).** Provides medical, dental, and veterinary care. The chief functions of the Medical Department are care of the sick and wounded, physical examinations, prevention of disease, and the operation of hospitals and dispensaries.
- **Chaplains.** The duties of the Army chaplains are similar to those performed by their civilian counterparts. They are clergymen from recognized denominational groups who have volunteered to perform their ministry in the Army. The mission of the Chaplains branch is to promote religion and morality in the Army by providing religious services, education, and counseling.

Key Note Term

counterintelligence – actions taken by intelligence personnel or units to prevent an enemy from gathering information about friendly forces, to deceive the enemy, to prevent sabotage, or to gather political and military information

Note

The eight special branches of the Army are all Combat Service support units: the Judge Advocate General's Corps, Medical Corps, Dental Corps, Veterinary Corps, Army Nurse Corps, Army Medical Specialist Corps, Medical Service Corps, and the Chaplains.

Conclusion

This lesson covered the inception of the modern U.S. Army, from the adoption of the Continental Army in 1775 to the present. The concept of the U.S. Army includes the Active Army, the reserve components, and the Department of the Army civilian work force, all of which work together to provide a balanced force structure as well as programs and projects designed to ensure modern equipment for both the active and reserve components. This lesson showed you the major roles of the total Army as well as the organization of the Active Army.

The following lesson takes a look at the U.S. Army Reserve components. You will learn the difference between the Active Army and the Army Reserves.

Lesson Review

1. Which document sets forth the legal basis for the establishment of the Army?
2. List the three concepts of the U.S. Army.
3. Choose one combat arms branch and explain it.
4. List three missions of the Active Army.