

CENTURIES OF SERVICE



THE UNITED STATES ARMY
1775–2025

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David W. Hogan

Cover: “This We’ll Defend” by Col. Michael P. Solovey
(Courtesy of the artist)



FOREWORD

I am pleased to unveil this updated edition of *Centuries of Service*, a monograph celebrating 250 years of determination, valor, and transformative legacy by the United States Army. Born in the crucible of the Revolutionary War in 1775, the Army has stood consistently as the resolute guardian of freedom and democracy—embodying the ideals that have steered our nation through challenges and triumphs alike.

Over these two-and-a-half centuries, themes that continue to inspire and galvanize our national spirit have defined the Army's history. Its relentless commitment to defending freedom pairs with a spirit of adaptation and innovation that has driven transformative advancements in technology, logistics, and strategic thinking. The Army's steadfast pursuit of leadership and training has forged elite warriors, rigorously prepared to confront an ever-evolving landscape of challenges. The heroic actions of soldiers who selflessly have secured our present and safeguarded our future have immortalized the enduring legacy of sacrifice and service. At its core, the United States Army is its people: the soldiers, civilian professionals, and families who have served this nation since its very beginning.

Equally integral is the narrative of unity—a call to arms that has brought together countless patriots under our nation's flag, forging an unbreakable chain of commitment and shared purpose. Although its warfighting prowess highlights the Army's storied journey, it also has taken a leading role in humanitarian operations and the cultivation of strategic partnerships and alliances. These initiatives extend the Army's influence far beyond the battlefield to heal, support, and strengthen communities both at home and abroad. Throughout every trial, the Army's resilience and endurance has shone as a beacon, igniting a fervent pursuit of excellence in the profession of arms.

As you journey through the pages of this updated monograph, I hope you will come to appreciate how these powerful themes have

sculpted the destiny of the United States Army. This 250th anniversary is not only a celebration of history—it is a tribute to every soldier whose courage and resolve define our national character, and a clarion call to continue the legacy of innovation, unity, and service in shaping a secure and prosperous future.

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CHARLES R. BOWERY JR.
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CENTURIES OF SERVICE THE U.S. ARMY, 1775–2025

The Army and the New Nation

In June 1775, the Second Continental Congress formed a military force to preserve the “liberties of America” from the encroachment of British King George III’s government. It drew on an Anglo-American military tradition that had sustained the colonists for more than 150 years. Early settlers in the Americas faced danger from Native Americans and predatory foreign expeditions, as well as threats from dissidents and criminals. A long land frontier and an extended coastline, political disunity, dispersed population centers, and an imperial government that rarely furnished a substantial regular force further complicated the task of colonial defense. Given these circumstances, along with a general lack of resources and a distrust of standing armies inherited from the English Civil War of the seventeenth century, the colonists relied on a militia system. It required all males of military age to serve when called, to provide their own weapons, and to attend periodic musters. In the case of prolonged expeditions or patrols along the frontier, communities called for volunteers or drafted men into service.

The militia system had its weaknesses, but overall it served the colonists well until the coming of the revolution. The militia’s dispersion among the settlements did mean that few militiamen were present at any given point. It thus left many targets vulnerable to a mobile enemy. When militiamen conducted expeditions into the wilderness in search of marauding Native Americans or French patrols, their deficiencies in fieldcraft and military discipline became apparent. Nevertheless, the system did provide a ready defense force for each colonial community, and it proved of real value as a local police force and preserver of existing order. Thus, when open warfare erupted in the spring of 1775 between colonists and British troops in Boston, the New England militia bore the brunt of the initial clashes at Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill.

Assembling in Philadelphia amid the conflict, the Second Continental Congress recognized that a regular military force was necessary if the colonials were to have any hope of standing up to the British army. On 14 June, Congress adopted the New England army encircling Boston as an American army and authorized the recruitment under congressional sponsorship of ten companies of riflemen—six from Pennsylvania and two each from Maryland and Virginia. This emerging Continental Army provided the permanent nucleus of a force that would be supplemented by militia units from the locality in which that army was operating. Congress chose one of its own, George Washington, as commander in chief of the new Army. His strength of character, resourcefulness, and military experience in the colonial wars against the French would serve the patriots well in the difficult years ahead.

After Congress approved the Declaration of Independence on 4 July 1776, the Continental Army's mission changed from the local defense of American rights to overall national survival. At the time, few national institutions and relatively little national feeling existed; to a considerable degree, the Continental Army *was* the nation. Washington knew well that the destruction of the Army probably would result in the collapse of the American cause. He and his subordinates tried to avoid battles that might put the survival of the Army at risk. Nevertheless, the Continental Army needed to win victories to maintain patriot morale and to obtain support from foreign countries. In the fall of 1776, Washington preserved his Army from destruction after the fall of New York City, but as the end of the year approached, the Army and the patriot cause faced the prospect of dissolution if success was not soon forthcoming. Crossing the Delaware River on Christmas night, 1776, Washington surprised and overwhelmed the enemy garrison at Trenton. Eight days later, he defeated another British force at Princeton. The rejuvenated revolution survived the loss of its capital of Philadelphia the following September. In October 1777, British Lt. Gen. John Burgoyne's army surrendered at Saratoga, inducing France to enter the war on the side of the Americans.

Now that the British were engaged in a worldwide struggle against France—and later Spain and the Netherlands—Washington needed only to maintain an army in the field long enough for the enemy to tire of



"Washington at Valley Forge"
by E. Percy Moran (Library of Congress)

the struggle. The outcome was by no means certain, and in the ensuing years the American cause frequently teetered on the brink of collapse. Soldiers suffered terribly at Valley Forge during the bitter winter of 1777–1778. During this ordeal, however, Maj. Gen. Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben, a Prussian soldier of fortune, gave Washington's Continentals the standardized training they needed to meet the British regulars on equal terms. The revitalized Army distinguished itself at Monmouth in the summer of 1778 and at Stony Point in July 1779. In the west, George Rogers Clark strengthened the American claim to the Ohio Valley by capturing British outposts at Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Vincennes. In addition to service alongside the Continentals, local militia maintained order and suppressed loyalist sentiment. Nevertheless, by 1781 American fortunes were at another low point. Congress almost had run out of money; the British were sweeping through the south; and one of the Continental Army's most distinguished commanders, Benedict Arnold, had deserted to the British. However, Congress and General Washington found resources to continue the fight, and Continentals and militia recovered the south. In October 1781, a Franco-American force under Washington compelled the army of Lt. Gen. Charles, 2nd

Earl Cornwallis, to surrender at Yorktown. Disheartened by this defeat and exhausted by more than six years of war, Great Britain agreed to make peace and to recognize American independence.

Having won independence, the Continental Army now made perhaps its most important contribution to the nation—deference to civilian authority. Throughout the revolution, Congress had lacked funds because it never possessed the power to tax. The resulting irregular pay, absence of arrangements for compensation after disbandment, and general neglect aroused discontent in the Army. When an officer delegation presented its grievances to Congress during the winter of 1782–1783, civilian and military proponents of a stronger central government sought to use the Army’s dissatisfaction to pressure Congress and the states to grant taxation power to the national government. To force the issue, they incited demonstrations among some Continental officers, who denounced Congress and called for a meeting to discuss ways of obtaining redress. Washington responded quickly. Calling his own meeting at the Army’s encampment at Newburgh, New York, he warned the officers against impulsiveness, argued that an attempted coup would open the way to civil discord, and emotionally recalled the sacrifices they had made in the common cause. Washington’s timely intervention ensured the collapse of the “Newburgh Conspiracy,” and the chastened officers reaffirmed their loyalty to Congress. In June 1783, Washington permitted his troops to return home pending final settlement of the pay issue, and the majority of the veterans departed without incident.

The legacy of civilian control over the military survived the difficult early years, as the young republic struggled to establish a workable military system. Washington proposed a small regular force, enrollment of all men between the ages of 18 and 50 for emergency service, and organization of them into volunteer units under national control, ready to serve on call. This plan achieved only partial acceptance. In a society characterized by localism and distrust of power, suspicion of military establishments was so strong that some believed it possible to do without a national military force at all, leaving such missions as existed to state militias. In that spirit, Congress reduced the Continental Army to 80 soldiers, barely

enough to garrison the post at West Point, and called on the states to furnish 700 troops from their militias for one year of service on the frontier.

When the delegates to the Constitutional Convention met in Philadelphia in 1787, they recognized the need for a more permanent military establishment. The new Constitution allowed for a national regular army and navy and a militia under state control. However, it took pains to keep those forces under tight civilian rein. The Constitution provided for congressional control of appropriations and designated the president as commander in chief of the regular forces and of the militia when called into federal service. Despite the feared influence of political factions in the nation's early years, the Army established a priceless legacy of subordination to civilian leadership, as exemplified in the officer's oath of allegiance to the Constitution.

For a new nation struggling to establish credible central government and control over its far-flung territory, the Army was an invaluable asset. Seeking to "insure domestic Tranquility," the Constitution stipulates that the president "take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed," and gives Congress power to "provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections, and repel invasions." When in 1794 farmers in western Pennsylvania rebelled against a federal excise tax on liquor and stills, President Washington called the militia into federal service and restored order with only a minimal resort to force. After the second president, John Adams, used regulars without congressional authorization to enforce a federal tax in 1799, his successor, Thomas Jefferson, obtained in 1807 legislation that authorized the president's use of regulars in all instances where he had been authorized previously to use the militia. This controversial mission—the maintenance of domestic order—repeatedly would fall to the Army in the years ahead.

Although Thomas Jefferson often had expressed his suspicion of a standing army, as president he supported a small permanent establishment that, in time of peace, would serve the nation in ways beyond the strictly military. He established the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, in 1802, largely to create a school for the training of scientists and engineers who could aid in national development.



"Lewis and Clark Meeting Indians at Ross' Hole"
by *Charles M. Russell* (Montana Historical Society)

He also turned to the Army to assert federal control over the newly acquired western territories. In 1803, the Louisiana Purchase transferred a vast region west of the Mississippi River from France to the United States. The Army governed this territory pending the establishment of civilian rule. To gather information on the new domain and to assert American authority over it, Jefferson sent an Army expedition, the Corps of Discovery under Capt. Meriwether Lewis and Lt. William Clark, to explore the continent west to the Pacific. Lewis and Clark returned to St. Louis after a two-year expedition. They had traveled 7,689 miles, gathered invaluable geographic and scientific data, and greatly strengthened the American claim to the Pacific Northwest. Their odyssey was but the first of many such expeditions to open the American West.

Given the precarious existence of the early republic, caught between often-hostile Native Americans on the frontier and major European wars that might engulf the United States, the Army focused on its primary mission "to provide for the common defence." It began construction of coastal fortifications and occupied western forts after the belated withdrawal of British garrisons under the terms of the treaty that ended the Revolutionary War. As the federal agency with the most contact with the tribes, the War Department had the responsibility for the conduct of Native American affairs, along with the military obligation to preserve peace and order on the frontier. Army officers served as agents and

commissioners, negotiating treaties of trade and friendship. If talks failed and hostilities ensued, the Army sent expeditions to subdue the Native American nations. When two successive, largely militia expeditions in 1790 and 1791 failed to pacify the tribes in the Ohio Valley, President Washington turned to Maj. Gen. "Mad" Anthony Wayne to lead a third attempt. Wayne took advantage of two years of ongoing negotiations to drill his force of regulars, the "Legion of the United States," into a trained, potent fighting force. At the Battle of Fallen Timbers in August 1794, he won a striking victory, opening Ohio and part of Indiana to settlement and convincing congressional skeptics of the value of a capable Regular Army led by professionals. The great Native American leader Tecumseh attempted to revive resistance, but a force of regulars and militia under the governor of the Indiana Territory, William Henry Harrison, dealt a fatal blow to his hopes at the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811.

Even though the United States had enjoyed nearly a generation of independence from Great Britain, frictions between both countries continued on land and at sea. The British supported Tecumseh's campaigns against the American forces, and the Royal Navy harassed American merchant shipping and sailors as it fought for naval superiority against Napoleonic France. These and other violations of the United States' "neutral rights" led many Americans to believe that their national honor and perhaps the republic's very survival required a "second war for independence": the War of 1812.

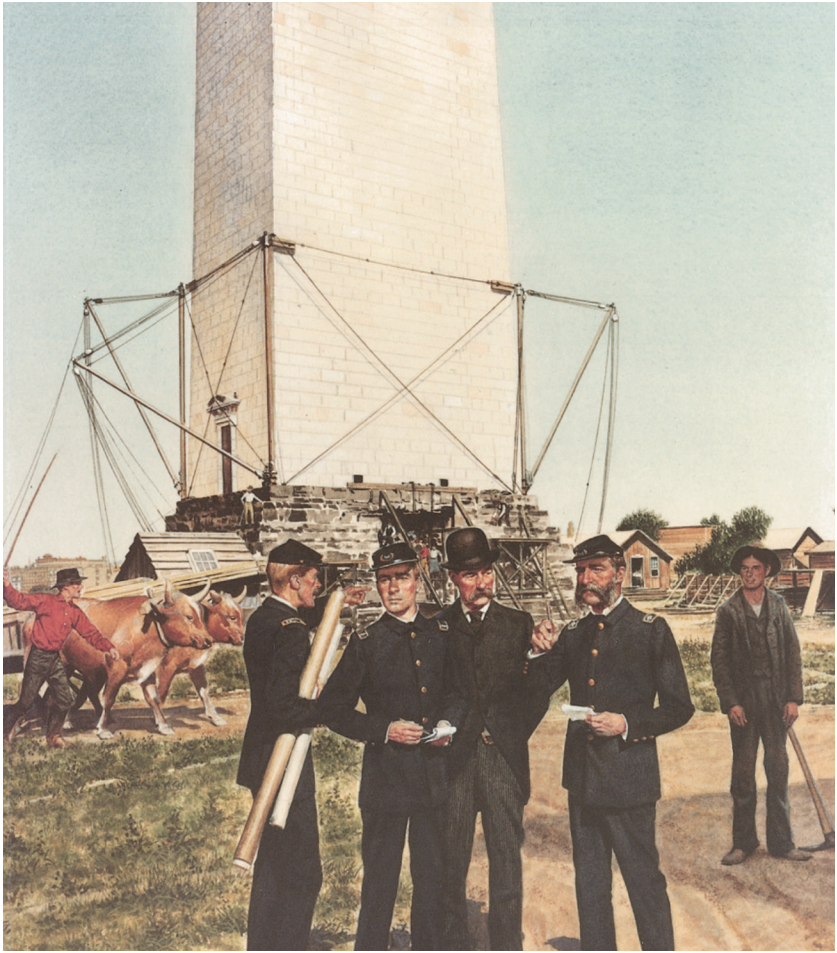
During the early phases of this war, the Army was plagued by mismanagement in the War Department, incompetent generals, and militiamen who refused to serve outside the boundaries of the United States. In 1813 and 1814, however, the Army largely redeemed itself through a War Department reorganization, improved recruiting, and competent new commanders. In July 1814, near the Canadian hamlet of Chippewa, American troops under Brig. Gen. Winfield Scott stood their ground against a comparable number of British regulars, supposedly causing the surprised and impressed enemy commander to exclaim, "Those are regulars, by God!" Two months later, the Army's spirited defense of Fort McHenry near Baltimore inspired Francis Scott Key to write "The Star-Spangled Banner." In January 1815, Maj. Gen. Andrew Jackson won a smashing victory at New Orleans, securing the entire

Mississippi Valley for the United States. Although the United States failed to conquer Canada or obtain concessions on neutral rights, the Army's conduct of these and other engagements earned respect abroad and inspired a newfound sense of national pride and confidence.

The Army and the Early Republic

The end of the War of 1812 and of the Napoleonic Wars marked the dawn of the so-called Age of Free Security. Abandoning its ambitions on the territory of the United States, Great Britain used its naval supremacy to keep the peace at sea. This stance not only insulated America from European quarrels but also enforced the American Monroe Doctrine, a warning issued by President James Monroe against further European interference in the affairs of the Western Hemisphere. The Army continued to construct coastal fortifications against the receding threat of seaborne invasion, but it turned its focus to the South and West, where many Americans were moving in search of new lands and opportunities. At times, the Army served as a buffer between these restless settlers and Native Americans. At other times, the government directed it to move the tribes, forcibly, if necessary, from their lands. The tragic removal of the Cherokees from their ancestral homeland in the Southeast to present-day Oklahoma was a case in point. The Army fought tribes that refused to turn over their lands when directed by the federal government to do so. With the final collapse of Tecumseh's confederacy during the War of 1812, the Native Americans of the Old Northwest posed little obstacle to expansion. In Florida, however, regulars and militia achieved only a partial success in driving the Seminoles from their homelands in two bitter wars spanning the period from 1817 to 1842.

Its value as a frontier constabulary notwithstanding, the Regular Army of the early Republic needed to show its practical utility. The nation faced almost no external threat, and, in an age dominated by the self-made military hero and president, Andrew Jackson, many looked down on the professional military. Nevertheless, as one of few national institutions in a young republic of great size, small government, and dispersed population, the Regular Army was in a good



*"I Deliver to You This Column" by H. Charles McBarron
(Army Art Collection)*

position to contribute to national development. Soldiers proved especially well-suited for exploration, given their organization, discipline, survival training, and ability to display governmental authority in a way that civilians could not. Army officers such as Stephen H. Long and John C. Fremont earned fame through their expeditions into the

Missouri Valley, Rockies, Great Basin, and Southwest, making maps and gathering data that helped open those regions for transit and settlement. Until 1835, West Point was the only school in the country to produce qualified engineers, and its graduates played a vital role in the economic development of the nation in the 1820s and 1830s. When local governments and civilian contractors could not meet demands for internal improvements—especially with respect to transportation—the Army stepped into the breach. Army engineers surveyed for roads, canals, and railroads and often supervised their construction. They similarly were instrumental in river and harbor improvements. In Washington, D.C., Army engineers built aqueducts, bridges, and public edifices, notably the Capitol dome, the Washington Monument, and the Smithsonian's main building.

The Army of the Jacksonian era made other significant contributions. Army doctors contributed to medical knowledge through the establishment of the Army Medical Library and their work in such areas as smallpox vaccination and the study of digestion. The surgeon general directed hospitals to collect data on weather conditions for medical use and thus encouraged the evolution of a national meteorological system. The Army's use of interchangeable parts in the manufacture of arms spurred the Industrial Revolution in the United States. Under the leadership of Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, the War Department completed the organization of a bureau system that it had begun during the War of 1812. Despite Jacksonian notions that a true military commander need only rely on his natural talents, the Army developed professionalism in its officer corps through a reformed course of instruction at West Point and establishment of branch schools and professional journals.

The Army's new professionalism made it an effective instrument in support of American expansionism during the 1840s. In 1846, President James K. Polk stationed Bvt. Brig. Gen. Zachary Taylor with an army of about 4,000 troops near the Rio Grande to pressure Mexico into accepting that river as the boundary between the two countries. When war erupted in May, Taylor's force quickly showed its professional mettle. At Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma, Monterrey, and Buena Vista, regular enlisted soldiers demonstrated their toughness and resilience, and

the new officer corps provided skillful leadership, particularly with respect to the artillery. Volunteer regiments that had grown out of the militia system also generally served with distinction. Farther north, Col. Stephen W. Kearney's Army of the West secured California and the future Arizona and New Mexico for the United States. Despite these victories, Mexico continued to resist, and American leaders concluded that a direct strike at Mexico City was necessary. During Maj. Gen. Winfield Scott's brilliant march on the Mexican capital in 1847, American soldiers again displayed fine fighting qualities at Veracruz, Cerro Gordo, Churubusco, and Chapultepec, and their officers distinguished themselves as scouts, engineers, staff officers, military governors, and leaders of combat troops. Many of these officers—including Robert E. Lee, Joseph E. Johnston, Thomas J. Jackson, Ulysses S. Grant, and George B. McClellan—would command the armies that would face each other when North and South went to war fourteen years later.

On the eve of the Civil War, the Army policed Native Americans and unruly settlers, conducted surveys for the proposed transcontinental railroad, and kept track of military developments at home and abroad, but it could not remain entirely above the sectional crisis. Northerners increasingly opposed what they saw as the efforts of the Southern "slave power" to extend slavery into the new western territories and to hunt down fugitive slaves in their communities. Southerners worried about growing Northern power and resented Northern interference with the South's "peculiar institution." Federal authorities already had called on regular troops to respond to South Carolina's attempts to nullify federal laws in the 1830s. During the 1850s, the federal government again turned to regulars to control Northern crowds protesting the return of fugitive slaves. In "Bleeding Kansas," Army troops struggled to keep the peace between proslavery and Free Soil factions.

For both the Army and the nation, the Civil War was the defining event of the nineteenth century. The Regular Army, numbering only about 16,000 and depleted by the resignations of Southern officers, was clearly insufficient for the task of restoring the Union after the firing on Fort Sumter, South Carolina, in April 1861. The rush of enlistments in the U.S. Army following President Abraham Lincoln's call for volunteers reflected the country's tradition of a citizens ready to spring to arms



*"The Battle of Gettysburg, July 1863" by Paul Philippoteaux
(Gettysburg National Military Park)*

when the nation was in danger. Within months, the Army increased to almost 500,000 troops, and it would grow much larger in the ensuing years. Regular personnel, West Pointers returning from civilian life, and self-educated citizen-officers all did their part in transforming raw recruits into an effective fighting force. The War Department and its supply bureaus fed, clothed, equipped, and armed the troops and otherwise mobilized the Army's war effort for the task ahead. For an impatient public that had idealized the natural, irresistible "martial spirit" of Americans, the notion that the new armies required considerable organization and training became acceptable only after the U.S. Army's rout at the first Battle of Bull Run showed the need for more thorough preparation. That belated realization allowed professional Army officers like Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan to begin the arduous effort of transforming volunteers into soldiers.

In its first efforts to restore the Union in 1861 and 1862, the Army achieved mixed results. It secured Washington, D.C., and the border states, provided aid and comfort to Unionists in West Virginia, and, in cooperation with the Union Navy, seized key points along the Southern coast, including the port of New Orleans. Under such leaders as Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, it occupied west and central Tennessee and

secured almost all the Mississippi River. In the most visible theater of the war, however, the Union Army of the Potomac made little progress against the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, commanded by General Robert E. Lee. After victories at the Seven Days and Second Bull Run, Lee, ably assisted by his chief subordinate, Maj. Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson, invaded Maryland in the hope of encouraging European intervention. The U.S. Army victory at the Battle of Antietam, which forced Lee to return to Virginia, reduced that danger, although subsequent defeats at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville brought the Army's effort in the East no closer to success than it had been at the start of the war.

After President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation expanded the Army's mission of restoring the Union to include the emancipation of slaves in the Confederate states, the Army found itself in the middle of a revolution. As the U.S. Army moved through the South, a swelling crowd of African American refugees followed them, most destitute and with few means of survival. The Army gave food, clothing, and employment to the formerly enslaved people, and it provided as many as possible with the means of self-sufficiency, including instruction in reading and writing. African Americans in the U.S. Army were among those who thus achieved literacy. After years of excluding African Americans, the Army took 180,000 into its ranks. Formed into segregated units under White officers, these former slaves contributed greatly to the U.S. Army's eventual victory.

After four years of bitter struggle, the Army finally destroyed the Confederacy. In July 1863, Grant's triumph at Vicksburg gave the North control of the entire Mississippi River, and the U.S. Army's victory at Gettysburg turned back Lee's last invasion of the North. The capture of Chattanooga, Tennessee, that fall opened the way for an invasion of the Southern heartland. Appointed commander of all the United States' armies, Grant planned not only to annihilate the Confederate armies but also to destroy the South's means of supporting them. While Grant wore down Lee's army at the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, and Petersburg during the 1864 and 1865 campaigns, his commander in the West, Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman, drove through Georgia and the Carolinas, burning crops, tearing up railroads, and otherwise

obliterating the economic infrastructure of those regions. Cavalry raids and other Army operations also carried out Grant's goal of destroying the economic and moral basis for resistance.

The Army's role in reunifying the nation did not end with Lee's surrender at Appomattox in April 1865. To restore Southern allegiance to the United States, the Army already had established military governments in occupied areas, cracking down on Confederate sympathizers while providing food, schools, and improved sanitation to the destitute. This role continued after the collapse of the Confederacy, when the Republican Congress adopted a tough "Reconstruction" policy to restore the Southern states to the Union. Serving as an occupation force, the Army was the main means of enforcement. For occupation troops in the South, the real problem was not so much the imposition of federal rule as the protection of African Americans and Unionist Whites from violence perpetrated by other Southerners, notably the Ku Klux Klan. Keeping watch over local courts, the Army sought to ensure the rights of African Americans and Unionists, a task that became increasingly difficult as support for Reconstruction waned and the occupation forces declined in numbers. At the same time, military governors expedited the South's physical recovery from the war. Through the Freedmen's Bureau, the Army provided relief for both African Americans and Whites, providing 21 million rations, operating more than fifty hospitals, arranging labor for wages in former plantation areas, and establishing schools for formerly enslaved people. The Army's thankless but essential role in Reconstruction ended with the withdrawal of the last federal troops from the South in 1877.

The Army and America's Emergence as a World Power

Following the Civil War and a brief show of force to induce a French withdrawal from Mexico in 1867, the bulk of the Regular Army returned to its traditional role of frontier constabulary. Army officers negotiated treaties with the Sioux, Cheyenne, and other western tribes and tried to maintain order between the Native Americans and the White prospectors, hunters, ranchers, and farmers flooding into the West. When hostilities erupted, soldiers moved to force Native Americans

onto reservations. Campaigns generally took the form of converging columns invading hostile territory to bring the enemy to battle. Most of the time, the tribes lacked the numbers or inclination to challenge an Army unit of any size. At Little Bighorn in June 1876, however, they had both, and annihilated Lt. Col. George A. Custer's 7th Cavalry. This victory proved short lived, as the Army, aroused by "Custer's Last Stand," campaigned through the winter to force the belligerent tribes onto reservations. The combination of Army campaigns with the pressure of advancing White settlement and culture effectively ended Native American resistance throughout the West by 1890.

During the Indian Wars, the Army contributed in other ways to the development of the West. On the reservations, soldiers frequently became involved in the efforts of the Bureau of Indian Affairs to assimilate the Native Americans into White culture. The U.S. Indian Training and Industrial School at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, established by Capt. Richard H. Pratt, was one element of the Army's cultural assimilation efforts, intent on instilling White social norms and values in Native American children. At the same time, other soldiers conducted explorations to finish the task of mapping the vast continent. The surveys from 1867 through 1879 completed the work of Lewis and Clark, while discoveries at Yosemite, Yellowstone, and elsewhere led to the establishment of a system of national parks. Army expeditions also explored the newly purchased territory of Alaska and the northwest coast of Greenland. For ten years between the acquisition of Alaska and formation of a civilian government, the Army governed the Alaska Territory.

With the nation focused on internal development and laissez-faire economic and social policy during the "Gilded Age" of the 1870s and 1880s, the Army had little visibility. When it did intrude on the public consciousness, it was often to maintain order amid convulsions unleashed by the Industrial Revolution. The militia, in the form of the newly organized National Guard, carried the bulk of the responsibility for maintaining order during the labor disturbances of the late nineteenth century. State governors summoned Guard units on 481 occasions from the Civil War to 1906, mostly in response to civil disorders. On occasion, regular troops also became involved. The widespread

riots and destruction of property accompanying the railroad strikes of 1877 led President Rutherford B. Hayes to use regulars to guard federal facilities and to honor requests from governors and federal judges for troops to put down disorders. The Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 put severe limitations on the use of federal troops in law enforcement, but presidents still authorized the use of regulars on several occasions to keep order during the labor unrest of the 1890s.

Meanwhile, the Army maintained its involvement in other areas of American life. By public demand, Army engineers became more involved in flood control, particularly on the Mississippi River, where they built up the existing levee system. They also continued to work on harbor improvements, constructing lighthouses and improving navigation on the Great Lakes. In response to popular pressure on Congress and the secretary of war, the Signal Corps built thousands of miles of underwater cables and telegraph lines, most of which were open to civilian use. Despite such involvement with public works, with the closing of the frontier the Army generally turned inward to focus on professional development for a war that few civilians believed would ever come.

At the end of the nineteenth century, however, the Army again served as an instrument of American expansion. Some Americans, notably Republican politician Theodore Roosevelt, believed that warfare and military service contributed to the moral and spiritual uplifting of people and nations and that it was the duty of the “civilized” White nations to educate the “backward” peoples of Asia and Latin America. Such views—as well as the desire in some quarters to assert American power on a global stage, lingering attachment to the Monroe Doctrine, strategic considerations of Caribbean stability, humanitarian sentiments, and the desire for new markets—contributed to the American intervention in Cuba’s war of liberation from Spain in 1898. The Army again struggled to organize, equip, instruct, and care for the raw recruits flooding into its training camps. An expeditionary force—which included the newly commissioned Colonel Roosevelt’s volunteer cavalry regiment—landed in Cuba, drove the Spanish from the San Juan Heights overlooking the port of Santiago, and caused an enemy fleet that had taken refuge in the port to flee into the waiting



"Edge of the Storm" by D. J. Neary
(Heritage Studio)

guns of the United States Navy. Other expeditionary forces landed in Puerto Rico and in the Philippines, following Commodore George Dewey's victory at the Battle of Manila Bay. With the end of the war and American acquisition of the Philippines, the Army's task of establishing American authority over the islands began in earnest. For the next four years, Army troops conducted a series of brutal, arduous counter-guerrilla campaigns to carry out President William McKinley's mandate to "civilize" the Filipinos.

With the expansion of American authority into the Caribbean and the Far East, soldiers became governors. In Puerto Rico and the Philippines, the Army prepared the two new U.S. possessions for a transfer of authority to a civilian regime. In Puerto Rico, the transition took only two years, but the Army retained control in the Philippines until 1902, when it had effectively suppressed the *insurrectos*. Recognizing the value of civic action as a tool of pacification, military commanders instituted numerous reforms. Improved school systems

reduced illiteracy; new railroads, bridges, highways, and communications lines strengthened the Filipino economy; and medical programs reduced disease and lowered the infant mortality rate. In contrast to Puerto Rico and the Philippines, military governors in Cuba during the three-year occupation following the Spanish-American War saw their role as cooperation with Cuban revolutionaries in preparing the island for self-government. They rebuilt the devastated countryside, restored the economy, and introduced reforms in education, municipal government, and the legal system. Army troops issued large quantities of food to meet shortages, and local commanders worked to assure improved sanitation and water supplies.

The nation's new imperial responsibilities led to perhaps the greatest achievements in the history of Army medicine. Army doctors had already earned distinction for their improvement of frontier community sanitation, and Brig. Gen. George M. Sternberg, the surgeon general from 1893 to 1902, had won international acclaim for his work in the science of bacteriology. Now he and his doctors had to overcome some of the most dreaded diseases of the tropics if the United States was to rule effectively in its new possessions. Mosquito nets helped prevent malaria. In 1899, a medical officer discovered that hookworms were responsible for Puerto Rican anemia. One year later, the Medical Department created a commission under Maj. Walter Reed to determine the source of yellow fever. After years of difficult research, including the use of volunteers who contracted the disease, the commission traced its transmission to the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, and the Army moved to eliminate the insect's breeding grounds. As early as 1903, the surgeon general reported that "Yellow fever does not now exist in the United States territory and no case has originated in Cuba for about two years." In ensuing years, the Army also produced a typhoid vaccine and a simplified test for syphilis.

The conquest of yellow fever made possible the construction of a canal that would link the Atlantic and the Pacific. American leaders had long sought a Central American canal that would save merchant and naval vessels the long, dangerous journey around Cape Horn at the tip of South America. The need became more pressing after the annexation of Hawai'i and the Philippines in 1898 and the accompanying expansion

of American interests in the Far East and elsewhere around the globe. After President Theodore Roosevelt's acquisition from Panama of a canal zone, the War Department assumed responsibility in 1907 for building the canal. Col. George W. Goethals was appointed chair of the Isthmian Canal Commission and chief engineer for the project. Even after Col. William C. Gorgas's medical personnel had taken measures to control malaria and eliminate yellow fever, Goethals faced near-insurmountable obstacles. The proposed canal would need locks to permit an 85-foot ascent and descent, and the construction workers had to deal with the problem of landslides that would add 25 percent to the amount of earth to be shifted and 10 percent to the cost of construction. Goethals overcame all these obstacles, moving more than 267 million cubic feet of earth. In August 1914, the first oceangoing vessel traversed the new Panama Canal.

Expanding American interests abroad required expeditionary forces to protect them. Although the Marine Corps responded to most contingencies in the Caribbean and elsewhere around the globe, the Army also played a conspicuous role, joining the marines in a peace-making mission in Cuba from 1906 to 1909 and establishing a presence in China that would last through World War II. In 1900, soldiers participated in the international expeditionary force that relieved the legations under siege by Boxer rebels in Peking. Closer to home, the Army became involved in the Mexican Revolution. Soldiers and marines occupied the port of Veracruz in April 1914 after an international incident involving American sailors in Tampico. When Pancho Villa's Mexican rebels killed fifteen American soldiers and civilians in a raid on Columbus, New Mexico, in March 1916, President Woodrow Wilson sent Brig. Gen. John J. Pershing's punitive expedition south of the border in pursuit of Villa. The Mexican government threatened war over the violation of its territory, causing Wilson to call up 112,000 National Guard troops and to send most of the Regular Army to the border. In the end, the nation averted a major conflict, and Wilson withdrew the punitive expedition.

The Army's list of missions expanded in the early twentieth century with the Progressive Era and a more active role for the federal government in such areas as political reform, economic regulation,

and conservation. Soldiers had already become involved in conservation through their guardianship of national parks in the 1880s, and they continued in this role until they turned over the mission to the National Park Service in 1918. The first years of the century saw more participation by the Army in humanitarian relief after natural disasters. Americans in the past had been reluctant to involve the federal government—and the Army—in what seemed primarily a state and local concern. Lacking statutory authority and generally deployed far from population centers, the Army also had been hesitant to become involved. On occasion, however, the Army had supplied rations and tents to victims of disasters. In 1906, it played a key role in fighting fires and providing supplies to victims of the San Francisco earthquake, and as the need arose it helped flood and tornado victims and fought forest fires across the country. Signal Corps experiments with aircraft and radio greatly contributed to civilian work in those two fields.

In the face of great public concern about the assimilation of immigrants, the Army proved the workability of the American “melting pot.” Throughout the nineteenth century, it welcomed a high proportion of the foreign-born—mostly English, German, Irish, and Scandinavian—into its ranks. Before the Civil War, two-thirds of the Army’s soldiers were immigrants, and the percentage of foreign-born during the ten years after the Civil War remained at 50 percent or higher. In its use and treatment of segregated African American units, such as the so-called Buffalo Soldiers of the 9th and 10th Cavalry, the Army of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reflected racial attitudes of the time. Nonetheless, despite widespread racial prejudice, African American regiments served with distinction in both the Indian Wars and the Spanish-American War.

The experience of the Spanish-American War, the perception of increased external threats in a shrinking world, and other looming challenges of the new century served as catalysts for a thorough reform of Army organization, education, and promotion policies. After the Civil War, the Army had expanded its school system and supported the new Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) program, which eventually would supply the Army with a high percentage of its officers and provide promising youths with educational opportunities otherwise

unavailable to them. After the Spanish-American War, a new Secretary of War, Elihu Root, added an Army War College as the apex of the service's educational system. Secretary Root also took steps to replace the outmoded system of War Department bureaus and a commanding general with a chief of staff and general staff that could engage in long-range war planning. To ensure the rise of promising officers, he installed a new promotion system. A new militia act laid the foundation for improved cooperation between the Regular Army and the inheritors of the militia tradition, the National Guard. These reforms, as well as some first steps toward joint Army-Navy planning, reflected the emphasis on professionalism, specialization, and organization that characterized the Progressive Era and were in accord with Secretary Root's conviction that the "real object of having an Army is to prepare for war."

The Army and Two World Wars

A much more professional Army spearheaded President Wilson's crusade to reform the international order through American intervention in World War I. After Wilson's war message in April 1917, Army officers worked with business and government counterparts to mobilize the nation's resources, despite enormous friction resulting from the magnitude and unprecedented nature of the effort. To meet the need for a massive ground force capable of fighting on the European battlefield, the Army drew on its Civil War expertise and on popular acceptance of a more activist federal government to develop a more efficient system of manpower allocation through conscription. To utilize these levies in a rational fashion, it employed innovative intelligence tests that foreshadowed the widespread use of testing in the civilian sector. As the Army organized and trained the draftees for overseas duty, it found within its ranks many soldiers who could not read or write and recent immigrants who spoke little English. In response, it formed "development battalions," each of which specialized in a particular task, and drilled the participants in reading, writing, and other skills. By the Armistice, 225,000 soldiers had passed through such units, and over half emerged fit for some form of military service. In addition to these remedial



"American Troops Advancing"
by Harold Brett
(Army Art Collection)

programs, the Army made available classes in vocational skills for soldiers eager for activity during the long period between the war's end and the return home.

Although it had not yet reached its full potential as a fighting force by the Armistice that ended the war, the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) contributed morally and tangibly to the Allied victory and to President Wilson's efforts to win the peace. Within three months of American entry into the war, the 1st Infantry Division reached Paris in time to participate in a Fourth of July parade, raising French spirits at a low point in the fighting. When the German offensive of 1918 pen-

etrated to the outskirts of the French capital, American soldiers played a key role in turning back the enemy tide at Château-Thierry. Two months later, the First U.S. Army launched its initial offensive at St. Mihiel. In the Meuse-Argonne campaign, the AEF contributed to the final Allied drive before the Armistice. Ultimately, eight Regular Army divisions, seventeen National Guard divisions, and seventeen newly organized National Army divisions served in France. After numerous predictions that the unprepared United States would be unable to provide timely help to the Allies, such material evidence of American aid elated the British and French and utterly destroyed German morale. As commander in chief of the AEF, General John J. Pershing was determined to preserve the independence of the AEF and not allow its soldiers merely to be absorbed into existing British and French units. This stance served the diplomatic goals of President Wilson, who sought to maintain his freedom of action from the other Allies while trying to build a new world order around the League of Nations.

Any notions that the Army no longer had a reason to exist in the aftermath of “the war to end all wars” soon were dispelled by the events of the 1920s and 1930s. Despite isolationist rhetoric, the United States remained involved in international politics. American troops occupied the German Rhineland alongside other Allied contingents, doing much to restore normal economic life in their zone. At home, Army engineers by congressional mandate assumed a greater role in flood control, experimenting with ways to divert excess water into cutoffs and holding reservoirs. Dams constructed by Army engineers in the Missouri Valley not only helped prevent floods but also supplied hydroelectric power and recreation on reservoir lakes. By the 1920s, disaster relief had become a routine feature of military activity. The Army helped with flood relief in the Mississippi Valley in 1927 and the Ohio Valley in 1937, as well as in other domestic and foreign natural disasters. The Signal Corps conducted important experiments with aviation and radar, and Army medics fought disease in the Balkans, Germany, and Poland while developing preventives for malaria and rabies. Responding to strikes, riots, and fears of Communist revolutionaries in the postwar years, regulars and Guard troops acted to preserve order. In a dramatic demonstration of federal authority in 1932, regulars performed the thankless task of evicting demonstrating veterans from Washington, D.C., after Congress had adjourned without meeting their demands for immediate payment of a promised bonus for military service in World War I.

When the Great Depression of the 1930s, the worst economic crisis in American history, hit the United States, the Army joined the unprecedented federal response. It played an especially important role in the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s program to provide work for the unemployed through public improvements. Roosevelt sought to put 250,000 CCC youths to work on conservation projects throughout the United States, planting trees, clearing firebreaks, digging irrigation ditches, and reclaiming land, while educating them and improving their general health. The greatest burden of the CCC fell on the War Department, which built the CCC camps and provided food, fuel, vehicles, medical care, and supervision. In its first six years, the CCC offered employment

to more than 3 million men, removing them from the poverty of the Great Depression and teaching them new skills. The program drew heavily on the Army's manpower, involving more than 20 percent of its officers at the start. This experience in supervising large numbers of young citizens would later pay benefits to Army personnel facing another world war and national mobilization.

As the nation emerged from the Great Depression, it faced the greatest external threat to its security since 1815. By mid-1940, Nazi Germany was supreme on the continent of Europe, while imperial Japan dominated the Asian mainland. The U.S. Army, a professional constabulary of a mere 230,000 soldiers that still included horse cavalry, seemed ill-prepared to challenge either of those powers. Fortunately, the Army had devoted much of its efforts during the interwar years to mobilization planning and to educating and preparing officer and enlisted cadres capable of handling a major expansion. Congress authorized the president to call up the National Guard and passed the Selective Service Act of 1940, the nation's first peacetime draft. Under the leadership of its Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall, the Army expanded to a strength of more than 1.6 million troops by the end of 1941 and 8 million by the end of 1945. It organized these soldiers into a modern fighting force that effectively used tanks, planes, and other implements of war to achieve victory. By the end of the war, the Army had activated seventeen Regular Army divisions, eighteen National Guard divisions, twenty-nine Army of the United States divisions, and twenty-six Organized Reserve divisions. As in World War I, many soldiers benefited from Army educational programs, notably the Army Specialized Training Program, which offered scientific, engineering, and linguistic courses at the college level to qualified soldiers, and the Army Institute, which gave thousands of soldiers the opportunity to earn the equivalent of a high school or junior college diploma. Also as in World War I, the Army collaborated with the other services, business, and government to mobilize the nation's resources. Not least of the Army's contributions was its role as a symbol of national unity, bringing together individuals from across the country in a common effort.

During the first year after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the Army's major task was to stave off disaster

and preserve American morale while building strength for the eventual counteroffensive. Cut off from relief, American troops in the Philippines under General Douglas MacArthur held out for more than four months against overwhelming Japanese air, naval, and ground power before they were forced to surrender. MacArthur, who had obeyed President Roosevelt's orders to evacuate to Australia before the final capitulation, vowed to return to the Philippines, a promise which, combined with the heroism of the American defenders, gave the nation a needed symbol of defiance. In India, Lt. Gen. Joseph W. "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell surveyed the remnants of his Chinese army after an arduous retreat from Burma and frankly admitted, "We got a hell of a beating. . . . I think we ought to find out what caused it, go back, and retake it." Not until November 1942 could American soldiers take the offensive on any scale, with the invasion of North Africa and the campaign against Buna in New Guinea. When they did so, they received rude lessons in the demands of modern combat. At Buna, they bogged down in the jungle against strong Japanese positions. Even after having overrun Morocco and Algeria against little opposition, they took heavy losses at the hands of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps near Kasserine Pass in Tunisia.

During 1943 and early 1944, the Army overcame its early mistakes and, along with other services and the Allies, turned the tide against the Axis. In Tunisia, American troops recovered from the defeat at Kasserine Pass to participate in an offensive that forced the surrender of Axis forces in North Africa. Under the leadership of General Dwight D. Eisenhower and Lt. Gen. George S. Patton Jr., they joined with Allied forces to drive the Germans and Italians from Sicily, knocking Italy out of the Axis alliance. American and Allied troops then landed on the Italian mainland and, against fierce German opposition, slowly advanced up the peninsula to Rome by early June 1944. In the Pacific, MacArthur's forces finally captured Buna and leapfrogged their way along the northern New Guinea coastline. Army troops joined their Navy and Marine counterparts in advances through the Solomon and Marshall Islands of the South and Central Pacific. In northern Burma, Stilwell's Chinese army, aided by a special infiltration force of Americans known as Merrill's Marauders, drove back Japanese defenders and laid



"Omaha Beach" by Joseph Gary Sheahan
(Army Art Collection)

siege to the key crossroads city of Myitkyina. By reopening the Burma Road to China, Stilwell hoped to supply the Chinese with the means to defeat the Japanese on the Asian mainland while American forces converged on Japan from the Pacific.

The unprecedented mobilization of national resources and the long drive back from initial defeat bore their ultimate fruit in the final advance into the Axis homelands. On D-Day, 6 June 1944, Eisenhower's Allied armies landed in France. The same month American soldiers and marines came ashore on the Mariana Islands, part of the inner ring of Japan's Pacific defenses. After two months of near stalemate in the hedgerows of Normandy, American troops under Lt. Gen. Omar N. Bradley and General Patton broke through the German cordon and raced across France to the German border. Only stiff German resistance along the border during the autumn and a last-ditch enemy counteroffensive in the Ardennes in December could delay the final Allied push into the German heartland in the spring of 1945 and the unconditional German surrender in May. In Burma, the fall of Myitkyina in August 1944 and a further Sino-American advance to the south finally reopened the Burma Road in February 1945. In the Pacific, American soldiers and marines captured the Marianas in July 1944, bringing

American B-29 bombers within range of the Japanese home islands. MacArthur's forces landed at Leyte in October, fulfilling the general's promise to return to the Philippines. By February 1945, American forces had retaken Manila and were reestablishing American authority over the main Philippine island of Luzon. When American soldiers and marines completed their bloody occupation of Okinawa in June, they had closed almost the last link of the ring around Japan.

The blow that finally forced the Japanese surrender, however, came not from ground combat units but from the American scientific research and development community. The Army was a key participant in the unparalleled wartime mobilization of American scientific expertise, a cooperation of scientists and the military that would become a permanent feature in the postwar era. Along with involvement in the wartime development of radar, the proximity fuze, computers, and other innovations, the Army supervised the development of the atomic bomb through the enormous, supersecret Manhattan Project directed by Maj. Gen. Leslie R. Groves. Originally launched to counter a German program to develop an atomic weapon, the Manhattan Project assembled thousands of scientists, engineers, and other experts at Oak Ridge, Tennessee; Hanford, Washington; and Los Alamos, New Mexico. The \$2 billion project paid off in July 1945, when the Los Alamos team exploded the world's first nuclear device. Civilian use of atomic energy would benefit greatly from the Army's wartime work, but the initial fruits of that research were military: the dropping of atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These attacks forced Japan to surrender and ended history's greatest conflict.

One of the most lasting, yet least noticed, contributions of the Army to the nation and the world was the reconstruction of defeated Germany and Japan after World War II. In both conquered nations, the Army's occupation governments restored order and economic prosperity, eliminated prewar fascist and militaristic parties and cultures, and nurtured democratic forms of government through innovative political reform. In Germany, occupation authorities revived a comprehensive health insurance system covering 80 percent of the population; in Japan, the Army instituted a massive program to prevent and treat communicable diseases and to raise the standards for medical personnel.

By reconstructing both countries along democratic, capitalist lines, the occupation governments converted them into strong allies in the post-war confrontation with communism.

The Cold War Army

Despite some arguments that ground combat in the atomic age was obsolete, it soon became apparent that the nation in the postwar era needed a ground force for more than the occupation of enemy-held areas after their devastation by atomic bombs. Within two years of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Americans found themselves in a “Cold War,” a long-term global struggle of power and ideology against the Soviet Union and international communism. Technology and changes in world politics had ended the Age of Free Security, and the U.S. government felt that it could no longer afford to leave to others the task of fending off aggressors as it belatedly mobilized its own military response. Americans gradually came to accept alliance commitments, a sizable professional military establishment that stressed readiness, and even a peacetime draft. The new Army would serve as both a deterrent to Communist adventurism and a support to foreign policy on a greater scale than ever before. World War II had shown the need for improved cooperation among the services, and the Army strongly supported the process of defense unification, leading to the creation of a new Department of Defense. In Greece and the newly independent Philippines, the Army administered aid programs and supplied training expertise to governments fighting Communist insurgents. In western Europe, it helped launch the buildup of a large, multinational force to deter Soviet attack on the new North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

The Korean War confirmed this mobilization of military resources to contain communism. In June 1950, the forces of North Korea’s Communist regime struck south across the 38th Parallel to unify the Korean peninsula by force. President Harry S. Truman sent American naval and air forces to the aid of South Korea. When these did not stem the North Korean tide, he ordered in ground troops. By mid-September, General MacArthur’s United Nations (UN) forces had managed



155-mm. artillery in night action, 1952
(National Archives)

to stabilize the front along a perimeter enclosing the southeast Korean port of Pusan. A brilliant amphibious landing at Inch'on then cut North Korean lines of communications and sent disorganized enemy units fleeing north across the 38th Parallel toward the Yalu River at the border of Korea and Communist China. The United Nations expanded its objective from the preservation of South Korea to reunification of the entire peninsula, and UN forces pursued north to the Yalu, despite warnings from the Communist Chinese that they would intervene should UN troops approach their border with Korea. In November, a final UN offensive to the Yalu was met by an overwhelming counterattack by the Communist Chinese, forcing a UN withdrawal back across the 38th Parallel.

As a new field commander, Lt. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway, rallied the demoralized UN forces, the United States and its allies decided to limit their objectives to the maintenance of South Korea, rather than risk a third world war to reunify the peninsula. The Army became

the primary instrument of this strategy of limited war, so baffling to Americans accustomed to overwhelming victory. While negotiations for a ceasefire progressed, Army troops developed tactics to hold the line in Korea with a minimum of casualties, building up fortifications and maximizing the use of artillery. Army planners adopted personnel and logistics policies, such as individual rotation, which made the burden of service in such a war as bearable as possible. The Army shared with other Americans the frustrations of limited war, but when MacArthur exceeded his authority to pursue policies that might have widened the conflict, the Army leadership supported President Truman in his decision to relieve the general. After two years of stalemate and tedious negotiations, the two sides finally agreed to an armistice in July 1953. Although the Army and other UN forces had not achieved the reunification of Korea, they had preserved the independence of South Korea, strengthening the credibility of the American containment policy against communism.

In the aftermath of the Korean War, facing a tense bipolar world living under the shadow of nuclear destruction, the Army under the administration of President Dwight D. Eisenhower sought an organization and doctrines that would support the nation's policy of containing communism over the "long haul" without wasting American resources or bankrupting the American economy. The Army especially needed to develop a credible deterrent in western Europe, where it faced the prospect of being overwhelmed by the numerically superior Soviet Army. To meet this challenge, it turned to tactical nuclear weapons that it hoped could repel an attack by the Communist nations of the Warsaw Pact without touching off a general nuclear exchange. It also adjusted its organization to fight a tactical nuclear war, adopting atomic artillery and a new divisional organization, the so-called pentomic division, which used self-contained battle groups that supposedly could fight under the confused conditions of a nuclear battlefield with only minimal direction from higher headquarters. The new organization was in line with the Eisenhower administration's desire for a military force that could provide "bigger bang for a buck."

As the Soviet Union approached nuclear parity and doubts grew over the ability of nations to keep tactical nuclear warfare limited, the

new administration of President John F. Kennedy adopted the strategy of “flexible response.” Under this design, the United States would respond to the different forms of threat and aggression across the spectrum of conflict with an appropriate level of strength, ranging from nuclear exchanges through conventional warfare to low-key assistance to countries fighting Communist-sponsored “wars of national liberation.” The Army dropped the pentomic organization in favor of the Reorganization Objectives Army Division (ROAD). The ROAD division consisted of brigade task forces that were supposed to be flexible enough to fight in any environment, nuclear or nonnuclear, and to have a plausible chance of defending western Europe without resort to tactical nuclear weapons. The Army also prepared to meet the threat from Communist wars of national liberation that so concerned the Kennedy administration, developing the Special Forces as an elite counterinsurgency cadre. It continued its provision of security assistance funds and training to anti-Communist governments. In the case of the Dominican Republic, it intervened to forestall the possibility that Marxist revolutionaries might seize control of the country.

Given the demands of the Cold War and the higher prestige of the military, Americans accepted an increased level of military involvement in traditionally nonmilitary sectors than ever before. Officers served in a variety of governmental and diplomatic roles. The Army also added to its list of contributions to society in the scientific and technical sectors. Army researchers contributed heavily to the development of improved communications, including transistors, miniaturization, and satellite signals. While working on missiles to deliver projectiles to targets, the Army developed the Jupiter rocket that propelled the first American satellite, Explorer I, into space in 1958. In the 1960s, the Army contributed to the space program by constructing launch facilities; designing complicated communications systems; and producing simulators, special foods, protective clothing, and maps of the moon’s surface. The Army also continued its long tradition of contributions to meteorology by developing devices to record and transmit weather data from the upper atmosphere and outer space. Through their work on the intra-coastal waterways and the St. Lawrence Seaway, Army engineers helped make inland waterway travel available on an unprecedented scale.

Army medics were heavily involved in efforts to improve global health standards, with considerable success.

The Cold War Army did not remain isolated from changes in the society from which it came. The postwar Army acknowledged that racial integration was desirable, but it moved slowly toward that goal even after President Truman directed the full integration of the armed forces in 1948. Faced with administrative problems resulting from the maintenance of two personnel systems during the Korean War, the Army integrated its units, placing the service at the forefront of the battle for racial equality. When violence erupted in Little Rock, Arkansas, after nine African American students enrolled at Central High School in September 1957, President Eisenhower called the state National Guard into federal service and sent a battle group of the 101st Airborne Division to enforce a court order for integration. Army troops helped enforce integration at the University of Mississippi in 1962 and in Alabama schools in 1963. Later in the 1960s, the Army joined efforts by the Department of Defense to end discrimination in off-base housing. Since the 1970s, it has stood in the vanguard of attempts to expand equal opportunity through affirmative action programs.

In the mid-1960s, the Army joined the nation's "War on Poverty" by taking steps to overcome the weak educational backgrounds of many of its recruits. The Army already provided its soldiers with skills of value to the civilian sector, as well as opportunities to earn college credits through military extension courses. In 1966, it added Project 100,000, a program to annually induct and train to a standard of competence 100,000 soldiers who normally would not qualify for military service. Participants in the program took part in training on an equal basis with other troops, receiving extra instruction where necessary. The Army thus hoped to expand its pool of qualified manpower while easing a major social problem. The results exceeded the service's expectations. Of the project's participants, 95 percent completed basic training, compared to 98 percent for the Army as a whole, and the Army had to drop only 10 percent of the participants from its rolls before they finished their enlistments. Equipped with skills as mechanics, medical technicians, clerks, and other vocations, these soldiers returned to their communities better able to contribute to society than before they

had entered the Army. Encouraged by the success of Project 100,000, in 1968 the Army instituted Project Transition, which provided job training and counseling to help veterans return to civilian life. Through Project Transition, thousands of soldiers left the Army prepared for careers in such fields as automobile repair, electronics assembly, book-keeping, drafting, masonry, phone repair, and data processing.

The Army of the 1960s and 1970s also offered new opportunities for women. Although women had long served proudly in numerous supporting roles, they only officially became part of the Army with the Army Nurse Corps' formation in 1901, and they achieved full military status only with the creation of the Women's Army Corps (WAC) in 1943. Even after World War II, WACs faced numerous restrictions. They could not constitute more than 2 percent of the Army, serve in the combat arms, or obtain promotion to general officer rank. They also faced discharge if they married or became pregnant. With the reexamination of the role of women in American society during the 1960s and 1970s, and given the Army's need for qualified recruits for the post-Vietnam all-volunteer Army, these restrictions began to dissolve. In 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson eliminated the restrictions on percentages of women and promotions, opening the door to the first female generals in the Army in 1970. Also during the 1970s, the Army expanded the number of military occupational specialties (MOSs) open to women, moved to ensure equal opportunity within those MOSs, abolished involuntary separation for parenthood, allowed women to command men in noncombat units, and established innovative programs to assist military couples with assignments, schooling, and dependent care. In 1972, women first entered ROTC, and in 1976 they entered the U.S. Military Academy. Despite an ongoing prohibition on women in combat positions, the Army had compiled an enviable record in providing new opportunities to women.

The containment policy, drawing a line against communism throughout the world, led the Army to the rice paddies and jungle-covered mountains of Vietnam. In 1950, the United States began aid to the French colonial rulers of Indochina, who were attempting to suppress a revolt by the Communist-dominated Viet Minh. After the French withdrawal from Indochina following the Geneva Accords of 1954, and the



"Perimeter Patrol" by Michael R. Crook
(Army Art Collection)

division of the region into the countries of Laos, Cambodia, and North and South Vietnam, Army personnel played a key role in American assistance to the fledgling South Vietnamese state. This aid increased in the early 1960s, as the Kennedy administration came to view Vietnam as a test case of American ability to resist Communist wars of national liberation. Army special forces teams formed paramilitary forces and established camps along the border to cut down the infiltration of combatants and materiel from North Vietnam, and other Army personnel trained South Vietnamese troops and accompanied them as advisers in field operations. Despite American efforts, the South Vietnamese government seemed on the point of collapse through late 1963 and 1964, as repeated coups and ongoing Communist infiltration and subversion undermined the regime's stability. In early 1965, President Johnson began a process of escalation that put 184,000 American troops in South Vietnam by year's end.

From 1965 to 1969, American troop strength in Vietnam rose to 550,000 troops, as the Johnson administration sought to force the North Vietnamese and their Viet Cong allies in the South to either negotiate or

abandon their attempts to reunify Vietnam by force. Barred by policy from invading North Vietnam, General William C. Westmoreland adopted a strategy of attrition, seeking to inflict enough casualties on the enemy in the South to make the Communists more amenable to American objectives. In the mountains of the Central Highlands, the jungles of the coastal lowlands, and the plains near the South Vietnamese capital of Saigon, American forces attempted to locate the elusive enemy forces and bring them to battle on favorable terms. As the North Vietnamese admitted after the war, these “search and destroy” operations inflicted significant losses but never forced the Communists to abandon their efforts. In February 1968, during the Vietnamese lunar new year (Tet) celebrations, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong launched a countrywide offensive against the Americans and South Vietnamese, penetrating within the very gates of the American embassy in Saigon. The Tet offensive was repulsed with crippling losses to the Viet Cong. Nevertheless, it confirmed the feeling of a growing number of Americans that the preservation of the Saigon regime was not worth the continued expenditure of American blood and resources necessary to achieve it.

Over the next five years, the Army slowly withdrew from Vietnam while carrying out a policy of “Vietnamization” that transferred responsibility for the battlefield to the South Vietnamese. Throughout the process, President Richard M. Nixon sought to balance the need to respond to domestic pressure for troop withdrawals with diplomatic and military efforts to preserve American honor and ensure the survival of South Vietnam. While some American units departed, other formations continued operations in South Vietnam and even expanded the war into neighboring Cambodia and Laos. By the end of 1971, the American military presence in Vietnam had declined to a level of 157,000, and a year later it had decreased to 24,000. In the spring of 1972, Army advisers played a key role in defeating the Easter offensive, an all-out conventional attack by the North Vietnamese Army. Nevertheless, the Army’s efforts to preserve South Vietnam proved, in the end, unavailing. Within two years of the Paris Peace Accords of 1973, North Vietnamese troops overran the country. After the fall of Saigon in April 1975, the Army helped close one of the most unfortunate chapters in American history with its assistance in resettling Indochinese refugees.

The bitter aftertaste from the Vietnam War and the revival of anti-militarism in the 1970s caused the Army to adopt a lower profile and to focus on more traditional tasks. Already disdained by many Americans for its involvement in an unpopular war, the Army earned little credit for its work in restoring order in many American cities during the riots of the late 1960s—a role that, however necessary, added to the image in some quarters of an American police state. Antimilitarism contributed to the end of the Cold War draft, leaving the Army with the difficult task of adjusting to an all-volunteer force. The Vietnam War also raised serious questions about flexible response and limited war, the *raison d'être* for the Army since the Korean War.

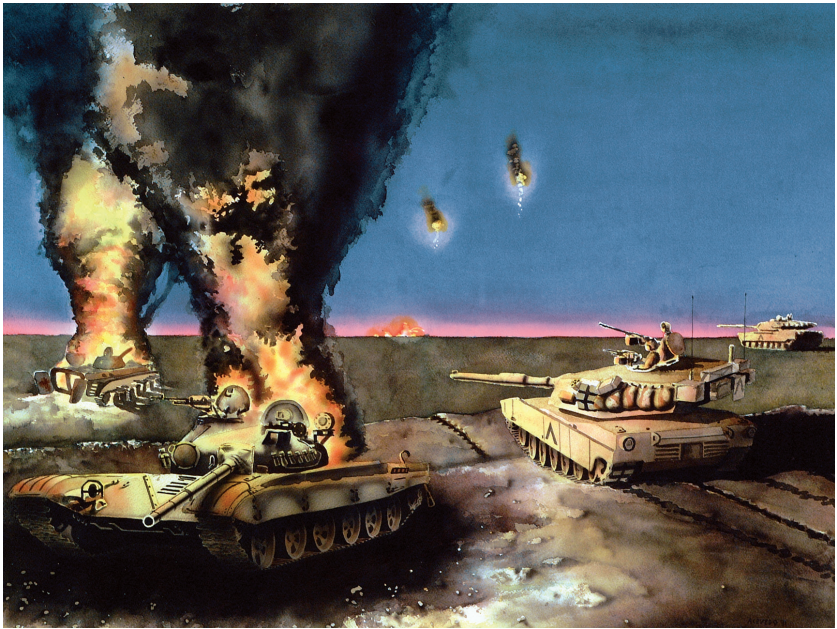
For the rest of the 1970s and into the 1980s, the Army, while continuing civil works and humanitarian relief, focused on rebuilding its forces and adjusting doctrine for conventional war, especially the defense of western Europe against a possible attack by Warsaw Pact forces. The Army strengthened its NATO forces with new technology and a new doctrine that emphasized maneuver, mobility, and air support. It also formed a Rapid Deployment Force to meet the Soviet threat to other areas of the world, particularly the oil-rich Middle East. At the same time, the service continued its battle at a lower level against Marxist regimes and movements in developing countries, furnishing aid and advisers to the embattled government of El Salvador and assistance to rebels against the Sandinista rulers of Nicaragua. In October 1983, Army troops participated in a joint task force that invaded the island of Grenada to block an attempt by Cuba's Communist dictator, Fidel Castro, to expand his influence in the Caribbean. Throughout the 1980s, Soviet and Marxist expansion continued to be the Army's main concern.

The Post-Cold War Army

With the destruction of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet-backed regimes in eastern Europe, the Cold War effectively ended. The demise of the Soviet empire left the United States as "the world's only superpower." Having overcome fascism and communism during the twentieth century, many Americans anticipated a new era

of peace and stability that would enable them to use the “peace dividend” from cuts in military spending for domestic needs. But ancient hatreds and old rivalries among tribal, religious, ethnic, and national groups reemerged from the breakup of the bipolar order, fueled by the tensions from population growth and the surplus of arms in the developing world because of the East-West rivalry. Most dangerous was the increasing availability of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons—“weapons of mass destruction”—to rogue states, multinational movements, and other disaffected groups or individuals seeking to upset the international order. Facing violence and turmoil in many areas, amid renewed questions about the nation’s role in the world and the justifications for military intervention, Americans again turned to their Army. That Army had already begun its evolution during the 1970s and 1980s into a smaller, more diverse force of professional volunteers who relied on skill, maneuver, timely information, and precision weapons to carry out expeditionary missions around the globe. Those missions included everything from deterrence of large-scale conventional war in Korea and Kuwait to peacemaking, peacekeeping, counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, drug interdiction, and humanitarian relief.

The challenges of the post-Cold War world did not take long to materialize. In late December 1989, Army units conducted airborne night assaults across Panama in a successful effort to topple Manuel Noriega’s rogue regime, which had been involved in drug trafficking in defiance of American attempts to halt the illicit trade. Seven months later, Saddam Hussein’s Iraq overran neighboring Kuwait, and appeared poised for a further advance on the Saudi Arabian oil fields upon which western prosperity depended. Rapid deployment by the U.S. XVIII Airborne Corps and U.S. Marines, as well as air and sea power, deterred an Iraqi attack and bought time for the U.S. VII Corps and allied forces to take position along the Saudi Arabia–Kuwait border. By January 1991, Army logisticians had built an enormous infrastructure in the desert to support a 500,000-strong force. After negotiations failed to dislodge Saddam from Kuwait and an overwhelming bombing offensive softened the enemy defenses, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf and his Saudi counterpart Lt. Gen. Khalid ibn Sultan sent their ground forces across the border in late February 1991. Within 100 hours, the coalition destroyed almost 4,000



*"Night Attack" by Mario H. Acevedo
(Army Art Collection)*

Iraqi tanks, captured an estimated 60,000 Iraqis, and ruined 36 Iraqi divisions at the cost of 148 American dead. In the wake of Operation DESERT STORM, the Army not only rebuilt Kuwait and aided the Kurds in northern Iraq, but also cleared the way for a new Middle East peace initiative. Within a few years, this initiative produced an unprecedented accord between the Israelis and Palestinians.

DESERT STORM sparked a new era of American involvement in developing nations. Although American leaders were wary of major unilateral involvements in other countries, they responded positively at first to multinational "humanitarian interventions" under UN sponsorship to restore order and deliver aid in failed nation-states. These operations grew in scale as they ran into heavily armed factions not as able or inclined to make peace as in earlier peacekeeping missions. In arid, impoverished Somalia, internecine clan warfare blocked efforts by international relief agencies to fight a famine that thrust dying children onto television screens throughout the world. A multinational task

force that included about 13,000 U.S. soldiers and marines deployed to Somalia in December 1992 and cowed the warring factions into allowing relief workers to deliver more than 40,000 tons of food. By May 1993, the worst of the humanitarian crisis seemed to have passed, the coalition had averted mass starvation, and the UN took command of the operation. However, the UN soon became embroiled in clan politics, resulting in the June massacre of twenty-four Pakistani soldiers by a faction headed by Muhammed Farah Aideed. UN and U.S. forces responded with several raids against Aideed's clan. During one of them, in October 1993, a U.S. special operations task force captured some of Aideed's leading subordinates at a cost of two downed helicopters and eighteen American dead. Americans at home watched in horror as television news broadcast the spectacle of cheering Somalis dragging the bodies of some of the U.S. soldiers through the Mogadishu streets. Five months later, President William J. Clinton withdrew the remaining American troops. The episode in Somalia would have a chilling effect on future American interventions, particularly in regions where American interests were unclear and no peace existed to keep.

The American interest seemed more apparent in the Caribbean island of Haiti, a nation with a long history of repressive regimes and outside interventions. With the end of the Cold War, the United States became more assertive in its support for democracy among its Latin American neighbors. When a military coup in September 1991 by Lt. Gen. Raoul Cedras overthrew the democratically elected president of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the Organization of American States and the UN imposed sanctions on Haiti. Thousands of Haitians tried to flee to the United States in fragile boats, many drowning or reaching the American mainland only to be turned back by immigration officials. In the face of this humanitarian crisis, the Clinton administration concluded that it must act to restore democracy and a viable economy in Haiti. After Cedras reneged on an agreement for the landing of a UN peacekeeping force, the U.S. XVIII Airborne Corps prepared to deploy in September 1994. At the last moment, Cedras and his accomplices capitulated, and American troops landed unopposed. For six months, American forces stayed in Haiti, maintaining civil order, protecting the interests of American citizens and other



*"On Watch" by Jeffrey T. Manuszak
(Army Art Collection)*

nationals, providing technical assistance, retraining the Haitian Army and police, and supervising Cedras' exile and Aristide's return. At the end of March 1995, the American-dominated coalition force transferred these responsibilities to the UN Mission in Haiti, a first step toward restoration of full independence.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, torn by ethnic strife after the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, the United States was initially content to allow other, primarily European, countries to take the lead, but bitter hatreds in the region made a mockery of UN peacekeeping efforts. Despite participation by 38,000 troops from 37 nations, the UN Protection Force could not protect Bosnian Muslims and Croats from heavily armed Serbs who conducted a brutal campaign of murder, rape, intimidation, and deportation to "ethnically cleanse" Bosnia. In August 1995, after sanctions on neighboring Serbia and aerial bombardments of Serbs besieging the Bosnian city of Sarajevo, Serbia's president Slobodan Milošević finally agreed

to a ceasefire. The peace was to be enforced by a robust, 60,000-soldier NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) that would ensure separation and withdrawal of the rival forces into their respective territories, collection of heavy weapons into agreed cantonment sites, and NATO control of Bosnian air space. The United States contributed 20,000 troops, who marched overland from central Europe, bridging the flooded Sava River, to take up their zone in northern Bosnia around Tuzla. Although the Serbs, Croats, and Muslims had little desire to work with each other in a new Bosnia, they were tired of war and respectful of IFOR's display of force. IFOR—later the Stabilization Force (SFOR)—separated the two sides, kept track of heavy weapons, removed mines, rebuilt houses and resettled refugees, restored some degree of free movement, and supervised new elections. By 2003, the peace had lasted eight years, but the result had been de facto partition of Bosnia rather than the restoration of a truly integrated state.

While helping keep the peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Army took part in attempts to contain the spread of Serb ethnic cleansing to surrounding areas. It deployed an infantry battalion to neighboring Macedonia. In Kosovo—a Serb province and historic place but also home to an overwhelmingly Albanian population—it helped turn back another Serb attempt at repression. When in March 1999, Milošević rejected NATO peacekeepers in Kosovo and launched a major effort to drive the ethnic Albanians out of the province, NATO responded by building refugee camps, flying in supplies, and launching an air campaign against Serbia. At first, the bombers could do little to keep the Serbs from terrorizing Albanians on the ground, given poor weather and Serb use of camouflage and of Albanians as human shields. But the campaign shattered much of Serbia's infrastructure and, using intelligence from the growing Albanian Kosovo Liberation Army, destroyed Serb tanks, vehicles, and troop concentrations. After seventy-eight days, Milošević gave in and agreed to withdraw his forces from Kosovo and to allow NATO peacekeepers to secure the province. The United States contributed a brigade of 7,000 troops to the Kosovo Force (KFOR), which kept the peace, searched for illegal weapons, supported humanitarian relief efforts, carried out liaison with allies, and protected the few remaining Serbs from their vengeful Albanian neighbors. Over time, the violence subsided and

economic life returned, but, as in Bosnia, the ethnic communities showed more of a tendency to separate than to reconcile.

Peacekeeping duties stretched the capacity of an Army already carrying out numerous other missions, both foreign and domestic. In Korea, the Army continued to defend an armed border against a powerful enemy dedicated to reunification of the country under Communist rule. Despite the destruction of much of Saddam Hussein's military capability in DESERT STORM, the situation in Iraq still required deployments and training exercises in Kuwait throughout the 1990s. Closer to home, the Army had worked closely with the Drug Enforcement Agency, the U.S. Customs Service, and foreign agencies since the 1980s to halt the flow of illicit drugs into the United States. In Texas, the Army contributed as many as three battalions to Joint Task Force SIX to help with aerial reconnaissance, border surveillance, intelligence analysis, communications, and other military skills in the war on drugs. Both at home and abroad, the Army aided victims of earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, forest fires, oil spills, war, famine, and other natural and human-caused disasters. It helped with toxic waste removal under the Superfund cleanup program, and it provided helicopters and paramedics to communities lacking these resources for medical emergencies. While performing these missions, the Army also strove to transform itself in anticipation of the challenges of the future.

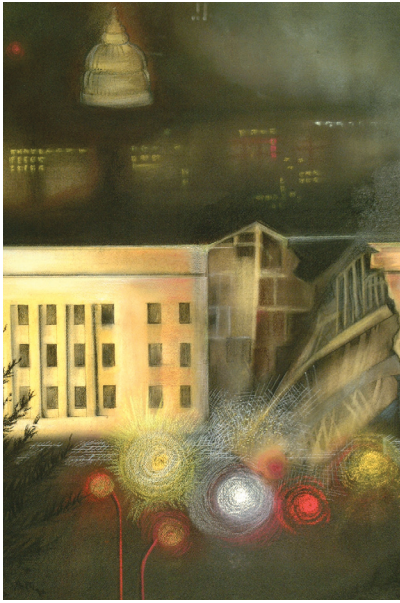
The Army also worked with foreign and domestic agencies to counter the shadowy threat of international terrorism, particularly Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda movement. An offshoot of radical Islamic fundamentalism, deeply hostile to Israel and the American presence in the Middle East, al-Qaeda already was suspected of numerous attacks, including the car bombings of American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 and the suicide ramming of the U.S. destroyer *Cole* in Yemen in 2000. The United States retaliated with cruise missile strikes against possible terrorist bases and training camps in the Sudan and Afghanistan but seemed to do little damage to the terrorist movement. Under the Department of Defense's Domestic Preparation Training Initiative, the Army trained local law enforcement for a terrorist attack that used weapons of mass destruction. Still, terrorists had never been able to conduct a successful attack on the American homeland.

A World Changed: The Army after 11 September 2001

The dawn of the twenty-first century presented a world undergoing rapid transformation. The U.S. Army faced a complex and evolving global landscape. Soldiers were trained and ready to defend the nation in a changing world after the end of the Cold War—ready to go anywhere in the world quickly and defeat any opposing army. However, on 11 September 2001, everything changed. Terrorists used commercial airliners to attack the World Trade Center in New York City, and the Pentagon near Washington, D.C. The passengers on a fourth hijacked plane thwarted an additional attempted attack on the U.S. Capitol. The attacks killed almost 3,000 innocent people—including 22 soldiers, 47 Army civilians, and 6 contractors—and the tragedy sent the country into shock.

The nation's first job was to recover from the attacks. The Army drew on its broad experience with homeland security and civil defense during the Cold War and rushed personnel and equipment to help. The New York National Guard immediately deployed to help New York City authorities with traffic control and security, medical support, and removal of debris from the World Trade Center collapse site. Other guard and Army Reserve units across the country activated to secure federal facilities, airports, waterways, nuclear plants, tunnels, bridges, and railroads. As the federal response evolved, the Army helped secure major public events like the Super Bowl and the 2002 Winter Olympics, conducted disaster training exercises, reinforced border patrol and customs operations at points of entry into the United States, and generally supported local agencies.

At the same time, the nation sought out the attack's perpetrators. Intelligence identified the pan-Islamist militant terrorist group al-Qaeda and its founder Osama bin Laden as the attack planners. Backed by strong public approval, President George W. Bush declared a "Global War on Terrorism" and targeted al-Qaeda and nations that provided aid and safe haven to the organization. Operation ENDURING FREEDOM began on 7 October 2001, targeting Afghanistan with long-range bombing after the country's Taliban regime refused to give up al-Qaeda's leaders. In a matter of weeks, soldiers from the 5th Special Forces Group



"September 11" by Henrietta M. Snowden (Army Art Collection)

had embedded with the Northern Alliance, a resistance movement that opposed the Taliban and had been American proxies during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s. Accompanying Afghan mujahideen warriors by foot, truck, and even horseback while carrying sophisticated communications and laser designators, the teams called in air strikes with precision-guided munitions on targets. Swift and coordinated actions between Green Berets on the ground and American and British Air Force bombers and Navy carrier-based fighter aircraft disrupted al-Qaeda's operations and forced the Taliban out of major urban centers.

By the end of 2001, the U.S.-led coalition had driven the Taliban from power and a special conference of regional powers and Afghan groups met in Bonn, Germany. The group reaffirmed the independence, national sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Afghanistan and acknowledged the right of the people of Afghanistan to determine freely their own political future. On 22 December, the group agreed on a six-month interim administration led by Hamid Karzai to govern Afghanistan until a permanent government could be established.

The war in Afghanistan was far from over. The remnants of al-Qaeda and the Taliban fled to remote areas, especially to the mountains along the Safed Koh mountain range near the border with Pakistan. A small number of American special operations forces and Afghan militia groups defeated al-Qaeda at the Battle of Tora Bora from 6 to 17 December 2001, but they were unable to capture senior terrorist leaders. American conventional forces began arriving in Afghanistan in early January. Meanwhile, U.S. special forces partnered with Afghan



*"A Huge Responsibility" by Martin Cervantez
(Army Art Collection)*

militias to push into the mountainous border areas, fighting in rugged, frozen terrain as much as 12,000 feet above sea level. In February 2002, Afghan reconnaissance teams reported a concentration of about 200 al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters in the rugged Shahi Kot Valley, south of Kabul and close to the Pakistan border. Maj. Gen. Franklin L. Hagenbeck and his 10th Mountain Division thought the enemy would leave some forces in place as a rear guard and withdraw the rest into Pakistan. While Afghan militias advanced into the valley, soldiers of the 3d Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, and other coalition forces would establish a cordon to block any escape.

Blizzards delayed the start of the operation, and when it finally began the coalition forces discovered that at least 600 al-Qaeda fighters held positions above the valley, and they were prepared to stand and fight. For eighteen days in early March, American soldiers engaged in vicious fighting, including risky air assault landings on mountain peaks in poor weather. Overloaded communications nets, confused command

relationships, and sporadic close air support plagued the fighters. Operation ANACONDA finally cleared the region and killed anywhere from 200 to 800 enemy fighters, although many undoubtedly escaped. As coalition forces continued to hunt the border area for terrorists, the Afghan Interim Authority planned a grand council for the summer to lay the groundwork for elections.

The mountainous terrain of Afghanistan and the unconventional tactics employed by the enemy necessitated significant tactical adaptations by the U.S. Army. Notably, special forces often utilized horses for transportation and combat in areas inaccessible to vehicles, demonstrating a blend of traditional and modern warfare methods. Technology played a crucial role, with precision-guided munitions used extensively. Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) such as the Predator and the Reaper provided vital surveillance capabilities and targeted strikes.

Over time, the scope of the operation broadened beyond counterterrorism to include efforts aimed at nation-building and supporting the establishment of a new Afghan government. The United States envisioned helping Afghanistan become a stable and self-sufficient nation, drawing parallels with the post-World War II Marshall Plan in Europe. To facilitate this broader objective, the Army established Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) to coordinate redevelopment efforts with the United Nations and nongovernmental organizations.

The Taliban regrouped and grew in strength using sanctuary locations in Pakistan, where it had longstanding strategic ties and could recruit new fighters. In early 2003, the new American commander, Lt. Gen. David W. Barno, shifted from an emphasis on counterterrorism to a greater focus on the Afghan people. Rather than conduct large-scale sweeps to locate and destroy terrorist bases, each unit became responsible for an area. The unit would clear the area and then introduce civil affairs, medical, and psychological operations specialists to consolidate the gains. Over time, various bands reinfiltrated Afghanistan, establishing a presence in the eastern and southern provinces where the coalition was weakest. At first, they harassed bases with small arms, mortars, and rocket-propelled grenades, but attacks increased in 2003, targeting civilians, security forces, and nongovernmental organizations with suicide strikes and roadside bombs to undermine efforts to

create a new Afghan national government. Many Afghans in remote villages viewed the Taliban as more effective than the interim government in Kabul.

A key component of the strategy involved training the Afghan National Army (ANA) to eventually take responsibility for the country's security. The Army's effort expanded to include the Afghan National Police beginning in 2005. The United States invested heavily in this effort but faced numerous challenges. The total American force in theater seldom ran much more than 10,000. Corruption within the Afghan government and security forces, a lack of strong national identity, and the influence of tribal loyalties hampered the development of a cohesive and effective fighting force. The frequent rotation of U.S. trainers and the short-term focus of deployment cycles also limited the long-term progress of the training mission. Although there were some successes, such as the ANA achieving limited goals in increasing literacy rates and demonstrating improved capabilities in certain areas, the Afghan forces remained reliant on long-term American support. The U.S. approach of modeling the Afghan military after its own structure did not always align with the local context and realities. However, the counterinsurgency tactics, along with the gradual expansion of Afghan security forces, extended the influence of the Afghan government, which held its first presidential elections in late 2004 and parliamentary elections in September 2005.

The coalition was slow to recognize and respond to the Taliban revival even as the violence increased in 2005 and 2006. Distracted by Iraq, American policymakers tried to involve its North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies to a larger degree, and in October 2006, the International Security Assistance Force, a multinational mission, assumed responsibility for security across Afghanistan. U.S. forces remained independent for training and counterterrorism missions. Other coalition troops had even fewer resources than the United States. The convoluted command structure and wide dispersion of coalition forces made it hard to create an overall strategy or unified effort. As insurgent attacks rose, coalition forces tried to protect the PRTs while laboriously training Afghan soldiers and police to eventually take over security missions. To strengthen the regime's presence, commanders

pushed their limited forces to establish forward bases and outposts to disrupt the insurgents and facilitate economic development. Commanders mustered some larger forces to conduct more major operations and scored some tactical victories. However, the Taliban simply moved to unoccupied parts of the country, built up strength, and returned and fought hard. Remote outposts became increasingly untenable.

Shortly after his inauguration in January 2009, President Barack H. Obama authorized 17,000 more soldiers to defeat al-Qaeda and prevent its return to Afghanistan. By the end of the year, President Obama agreed to raise the troop ceiling in Afghanistan to 98,000 but also set a deadline of July 2011 for a troop drawdown, by which point the Afghan security forces should take on most of the burden. The expanded mission focused more on counterterrorism and blocking terrorists from reentering Afghanistan, but also stressed counterinsurgency, enhancing Afghan military capacity, governance, and the ability to provide essential services at the local level. Even with a surge of forces, the coalition had only a limited ability to secure population centers, supply routes, and outlying bases while still pursuing insurgents. The Taliban showed increasing tactical skills in their assaults on isolated outposts, such as an attack on Combat Outpost KEATING in October 2009; if they could not stand up to more sizeable coalition operations, they withdrew and waited for the deadline. Despite the surge, training of the Afghan National Security Forces remained plagued by systemic problems such as high desertion rates, corruption, and illiteracy. In July 2010, General David H. Petraeus assumed command in Afghanistan and, although still stressing counterinsurgency and building Afghan forces, continued aggressively killing insurgents as the deadline neared. In May 2011, special operations forces killed Osama bin Laden in Pakistan; by then, however, al-Qaeda's presence in the region had diminished to little more than an ideological movement as al-Qaeda-affiliated groups in Iraq took on a more active role. From June 2011, when President Obama announced the start of the drawdown and handover of operations to Afghan government and security forces, to the end of 2014, the Army's mission focused on training, advice, and assistance for Afghan security forces and institutions. U.S. forces continued to pursue al-Qaeda remnants wherever they found them.

The war in Afghanistan had centered on the terrorist threat of al-Qaeda, but even as U.S. forces were engaging in combat on one front, a different security concern prompted the United States to turn its attention to Iraq. In the summer of 2002, President Bush and his senior advisers believed that Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was hiding weapons of mass destruction from United Nations arms inspectors. Arguing that an Iraq with such weapons and possible ties to terrorists was a threat to regional and American security, Bush decided that regime change was necessary. On 20 March 2003, U.S. Central Command launched Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, with coalition aircraft and missiles attacking strategic Iraqi targets, including Saddam's command bunker, and the sending of the Army's V Corps and the I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) across the Kuwaiti frontier. To the north, special forces and an airborne battalion joined Kurdish guerrillas to create a front that diverted thousands of Iraqi troops from the real point of decision. In the western desert of Iraq, more special operations forces carried out a series of raids on Iraqi installations and potential weapons storage sites, helping keep the Iraqis off balance. On the main axis in the south, the V Corps and I MEF, with the support of coalition troops, drove rapidly toward Baghdad. Most Iraqi divisions melted away or surrendered, but some Republican Guard units resisted, and guerrilla raids harassed the coalition's nearly 400-mile line of communications. Despite these raids and the occasional sandstorm, the 3d Infantry Division reached the outskirts of the capital by 3 April 2003 and began conducting a series of armored raids, known as "Thunder Runs," into the city. By 9 April, organized resistance had ended.

The Bush administration's original plans for Iraq envisioned a modest reconstruction effort, a quick turnover to a new regime, and a rapid withdrawal of American forces. These soon fell by the wayside. After twelve years of sanctions and another decade of warfare, Iraq lay in a shambles. The economy was crumbling, the infrastructure was in dire condition, and looting and lawlessness were rampant. Societal divides ran deep among a wary Muslim Shi'a majority long repressed by Saddam, a fearful and resentful Muslim Sunni minority, and independence-minded Kurds in the north. Additionally, insurgents were out to kill American troops and stir as much chaos as possible. There

was no readily viable successor regime. The United States could not just depart and leave a failed state, open to terrorist penetration. In May 2003, a U.S.-led Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) assumed the task of reconstruction. As part of creating a new Iraq, the CPA abolished the Iraqi Army and thoroughly purged Saddam's old Ba'ath Party members from the governing structure. However, the Saddam regime had required most Iraqi civil servants to join the Ba'ath Party, and the blanket purge inadvertently destabilized the government at a time when it was needed to restore basic services. In December, patrols captured Saddam, whom the interim regime eventually executed.

In the summer of 2003, a deepening insurgency replaced the indiscriminate violence, and coalition forces were unprepared for the change. Iraqis opposed to the occupation—whether Ba'athists, former soldiers, or Islamist terrorists—began to stage attacks against the emerging Iraqi government and the coalition. They used ambushes and roadside improvised explosive devices to disrupt supply lines, kill Iraqi civilians and American soldiers, and plunge Iraq into chaos. American troops responded with traditional security operations, conducting cordons and searches of neighborhoods, establishing checkpoints to prevent insurgents from entering populated areas, and training new Iraqi security forces. However, the force lacked enough soldiers to impose order and American soldiers had little training in policing missions. Aggressive tactics angered the population more than conciliating or reassuring it. This anger was compounded in early 2004 when journalists published reports of human rights abuses at the U.S.-run Abu Ghraib prison complex. As stories and photographs of abused and tortured detainees spread across the internet, they inflamed the Iraqi population and drove many to join the insurgency.

In April 2004, an uprising by Shi'a militias led to some of the most intense combat in the country in over a year, and the Army delayed the planned rotation home of some of its units. In November 2004, the coalition cleared insurgents from the city of Fallujah in six weeks of the heaviest urban fighting since the Vietnam War. Through 2005 and 2006, Army units continued efforts to eliminate safe havens for the insurgents. Successful elections had installed an interim Iraqi government in 2004 and then a permanent government in 2005. However, this



"Ambush" by Heather Englehart
(Army Art Collection)

fleeting stability was shattered on 22 February 2006 when insurgents destroyed the al-Askari mosque in Samarra', one of the holiest shrines for Shi'a Muslims. Mass sectarian violence broke out and continued to escalate throughout 2006. The American public feared another Vietnam-type quagmire.

A more population-centered approach to reduce the violence in Iraq lay at the center of the 2007 effort led by General Petraeus. President Bush approved a surge of 30,000 soldiers and marines to restore security and protect the Iraqi people. These soldiers and those already in Iraq found their tour extended from twelve to fifteen months. Between February and June 2007, five brigades deployed to the country, raising

American troop levels to 162,000 troops by mid-August. Units emphasized protection of the population by moving soldiers from large bases outside cities to small outposts within urban areas, where they established a presence and used concrete barriers and checkpoints to restrict travel and disrupt insurgent activity. Living and working alongside Iraqi security forces and partnering with coalition combat units, soldiers cleared Baghdad of extremists, neighborhood by neighborhood, and denied sanctuary to insurgents. More than 1,000 Americans died in the surge, but with enough forces available to simultaneously clear and hold towns and urban areas, the coalition had restored a significant degree of order as it began to withdraw surge forces in 2008.

As successful as it was in the short term, the surge only bought time for the transition to Iraqi responsibility for security. An agreement between Iraq and the United States in late 2008 called for all American troops to withdraw from Iraq by the end of 2011 and set more restrictions on American operations in the country. Many observers thought President Obama would negotiate an extension, but neither he nor the Iraqi government could come to a satisfactory agreement. In February 2009, he announced his intent to end the American combat role in Iraq by the end of August 2010, leaving 50,000 advisers and security personnel. In the meantime, the Army sought to promote reconciliation among factions, eliminate any remaining terrorists, and train the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). However, it encountered many obstacles. Insurgents continued to target civilians, officials, and American troops. Under Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, the Shi'a majority dominated the government and security forces, and they resisted bringing Sunnis into those institutions. Many Shi'a militias acted as surrogates of Iran, receiving weapons, training, and funding from that country.

For the next three years, stability transition teams and brigades that the Army had modified for the advisory mission concentrated on training the ISF and assisting them in their efforts to restore and maintain order. Over time, the Army lowered its presence, returning units to the United States without replacing them and handing over bases and equipment to the Iraqis. Despite President Obama's efforts to maintain a residual force, the two governments could not reach an agreement, and in December 2011, all remaining American troops withdrew.

In Afghanistan, following the conclusion of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM in 2014, the U.S. military continued its presence under Operation FREEDOM'S SENTINEL. It continued to participate in the NATO effort, now designated Operation RESOLUTE SUPPORT, which focused on training, advising, and assisting Afghan security forces. American counterterrorism operations continued as well under FREEDOM'S SENTINEL. This operation officially concluded in September 2021. Simultaneously, Operation INHERENT RESOLVE was launched in 2014 to combat the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria and set conditions for regional stability in the Middle East.

During its last years in Afghanistan, the Army introduced security force assistance brigades. These units had received special training to advise and support foreign counterparts from many different countries, each with its own unique political and professional military cultures. Yet despite the trainers' efforts and a surge of 4,000 additional troops in August 2017, the security situation in Afghanistan continued to deteriorate. In February 2018, a new Afghan president, Ashraf Ghani, proposed peace talks with the Taliban and on 29 February 2020, President Donald J. Trump and the Taliban negotiated the Doha Agreement establishing peace between the United States of America and the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, commonly known as the Taliban. The agreement called for closing most military bases by July 2020 and the complete withdrawal of U.S. and NATO forces by 1 May 2021. Insurgent attacks on Afghan government forces increased as the U.S. and NATO greatly reduced air support missions. Over the next eighteen months, the Afghan government struggled against the Taliban offensive. Extensive Afghan government corruption and poor civilian and military leadership led to a cascade failure across Afghanistan. With the situation devolving into chaos as the Afghan government collapsed and the Taliban entered Kabul, the United States and a coalition of nations evacuated 124,334 people from Kabul. After the withdrawal from Afghanistan, Operation ENDURING SENTINEL was initiated in October 2021 to address ongoing terrorist threats emanating from the region.

Beyond the U.S. Army's combat and support missions from 2001 to 2025, it sought to embrace remarkable technological advancements

that significantly affected its capabilities. Precision-guided munitions and the leveraging of information technology broke new ground in methods of enhancing command and control. The development and deployment of UAVs revolutionized surveillance and provided a crucial capability for targeted strikes.

Recognizing the increasing importance of robotics, the Army allocated greater spending to this area, exploring the use of autonomous systems for various tasks, including reconnaissance and combat support. As the threat landscape evolved, the Army focused on developing counterdrone technologies and innovative electronic warfare capabilities. The potential of artificial intelligence and quantum computing to transform military operations led to more investments in these cutting-edge fields. The Army also pursued advancements in hypersonic systems and directed energy weapons, recognizing their potential to provide a decisive advantage on future battlefields. Key programs like the Next Generation Squad Weapon program aimed to replace legacy infantry weapons with more lethal and versatile systems. These technological advancements collectively enhanced the Army's lethality, situational awareness, and operational reach, preparing it for the complexities of modern warfare.

During this period, the Army also underwent significant changes to its force structure. Among the most important was the creation of the brigade combat team at the turn of the century. These replaced the division as the Army's primary deployable unit. Smaller than a division, the brigade combat team nevertheless had greater firepower than the older line brigades and included organic engineering, intelligence, artillery, and support troops. In February 2024, the U.S. Army announced another significant force structure transformation initiative aimed at modernizing the service and better aligning it with future threats. This initiative seeks to bridge the gap between the force structure designed for a larger end strength and the current authorized levels. A key component of this transformation is the completion of the Army's five Multi-Domain Task Forces. These theater-level assets are designed to integrate long-range precision effects and fires across all domains, including in the electromagnetic spectrum as well, enhancing the Army's ability to counter antiaccess and area denial capabilities.

The transformation also involves changes to brigade combat teams and other units, including the inactivation of cavalry squadrons in some brigades and the conversion of weapons companies to platoons.

Even as it was occupied with its readiness for major conflicts, the Army continued to render numerous services to American society. Following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, over 60,000 military personnel, including significant contributions from the National Guard, mobilized to provide relief to the affected areas along the Gulf Coast. The same year, the Army also played a vital role in the international response to a devastating Pakistan earthquake, offering medical care, transportation, and logistical support. When an earthquake struck Haiti in 2010, Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE saw the deployment of more than 22,000 servicemembers from various branches, including the Army, to provide critical aid and support. In 2014, the 101st Airborne Division led Operation UNIFIED ASSISTANCE in Liberia, contributing significantly to the fight against the Ebola virus outbreak. These missions highlight the Army's ability to leverage its resources and expertise to alleviate suffering and provide essential assistance in times of crisis, often working in conjunction with other federal agencies, international organizations, and multinational partners.

As the number and destructiveness of hurricanes and tropical storms increased, the National Guard performed a mission of assisting communities in the Southeast. With the outbreak of numerous wildfires in the western United States, the Guard directed traffic, evacuated families, flew helicopters with water buckets, and gave logistical support. In flooding emergencies, the Guard placed sandbags, transported first responders, and dropped hay bales for stranded cattle. In 2018, the secretary of defense again authorized the Guard's mobilization to assist the Department of Homeland Security with border security, providing surveillance, logistical support, medical services, communications, and engineering, all while not infringing on law enforcement. When unaccompanied children crossing the border reached crisis levels, the Army assisted the Department of Health and Human Services with their care. In the spring of 2020, when the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic hit the nation, the Army took steps to protect soldiers and families and assessed buildings for use as alternate care sites, staffed



"Beret Ceremony" by Jason Spencer
(Army Art Collection)

emergency hospitals, created medical task forces to assist local hospitals with the flood of COVID patients, and transported and distributed supplies. The Guard also helped maintain order amid national protests in 2020. In 2025, the Army deployed forces in support of Joint Task Force SOUTHERN BORDER. These activities were fully in the tradition of the Army's history of services to the nation in ways beyond combat.

The U.S. Army underwent a period of profound transformation from 2001 to 2025. The defining events of the attacks on 11 September 2001 propelled the Army into two prolonged and complex conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, demanding significant adaptations in its doctrine, tactics, and force structure. The initial focus on counterterrorism evolved to encompass nation-building and stabilization efforts, highlighting the multifaceted nature of modern warfare. The Army embraced technological advancements, integrating cutting-edge capabilities to enhance its effectiveness across all domains. Beyond combat,

the U.S. Army demonstrated its unwavering commitment to humanitarian aid and disaster response, providing critical support to communities both at home and abroad during times of great need. However, significant challenges marked this period, including difficulties in recruiting and retaining personnel, complexities in interagency and interservice cooperation, and several high-profile controversies that tested the institution's reputation. The 2024 Army Force Structure Transformation Initiative signals a continued adaptation to address new global threats and ensure the Army remains a ready and capable force for the future, with a renewed focus on large-scale combat operations and the integration of multidomain capabilities. As the U.S. Army moves forward, the lessons learned, and the transformations undertaken during this period, undoubtedly will shape its role in maintaining national security and responding to the ever-evolving challenges of a complex world.



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