



This We'll Defend

Our Promise to America

This year, our Army celebrates a major milestone. For two and a half centuries, the Army has answered the call to defend this Nation. Our motto, “This We’ll Defend,” is more than just words—it is why we exist and our promise to the American people. For 250 years, as the world changed and the battlefield evolved, our promise has not wavered.

America's Oldest Institution

The Army's origins date back to before we were even a country. In the spring of 1775, the shot heard around the world at Lexington and Concord led to fighting between colonial militias and British forces. But to secure our independence, the country needed one collective, professional force.

On 14 June 1775, the Second Continental Congress resolved “that six companies of expert riflemen be immediately raised in Pennsylvania, two in Maryland, and two in Virginia; ... and join the army near Boston, to be there employed as light infantry, under the command of the chief Officer in that army.”¹

With this act, the Continental Army was born, transforming disparate colonial militias into a unified force under national authority. Since then, American soldiers have stood ready to defend freedom.

The Army's history is a story of selfless service in defense of our Nation and its values. It is also a story of adaptation—from the battlefields of the Revolution and the Civil War to the beaches of Normandy and the islands of the Pacific, from the frozen hills of Korea and the jungles of Vietnam to the mountains of Afghanistan and the dusty streets of Iraq. Every generation of soldiers has faced new threats, and every generation has overcome those threats.

A Legacy of Adaption and Transformation

The Army's ability to adapt and transform is one of the key reasons it has remained the world's premier land force for 250 years.

During the Civil War, the Army introduced repeating rifles and used railroads and telegraphs to coordinate and move troops and supplies. In World War I, the Army shifted from trench warfare to combined arms operations, incorporating tanks, artillery, and air.

World War II saw the Army grow to over eight million soldiers, mastering amphibious warfare in the Pacific and conducting the largest waterborne landing in modern history at Normandy.

The Army continued to innovate in Vietnam, pioneering helicopter warfare to rapidly deploy troops into battle. The Gulf War showcased the effectiveness of precision strikes and maneuver warfare, resulting in a quick, decisive victory.

In response to the 9/11 attacks, the Army adapted to counterinsurgency and urban warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Note

1. Worthington Chauncey Ford, ed., *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789*, vol. 2 (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1905), 89–90, <https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/lj/ljcd/ljcd002/ljcd002.pdf>.

Over the years, we have proven that the ability to transform is just as important as the ability to fight. The challenges of the future will be different from those of the past, but no matter the challenge we will always adapt, overcome, and win.

Transforming for the Future

Today's Army is the most capable and lethal force in the world. Our adversaries are evolving, and we must stay ahead. That is why we continue to transform. We are transforming in contact, meaning we are adapting and innovating even as we continue to meet current threats.

We are investing in the right capabilities to ensure our formations are more lethal, more mobile, and more survivable. This includes uncrewed and counter-uncrewed systems to expand our reach and counter emerging threats, electronic warfare systems to dominate the electromagnetic space, and a next-generation network that integrates more easily across echelons and shrinks our command post footprint.

Being ready to fight and win is about more than just having the right equipment—it's about having

disciplined, well-trained soldiers who can operate in any environment, under any conditions, against any adversary. The American soldier is the most skilled and disciplined warrior on the battlefield. We live a culture of warfighting and excellence because that is what the American people expect and what our mission demands.

Our readiness is bolstered by our families and loved ones. Their unwavering support allows us to focus on the mission, knowing we have a strong foundation at home.

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As we celebrate this milestone, we remember the sacrifices of previous generations and honor their legacy by continuing to serve with courage and integrity. We honor them by always staying ready.

In an era of rapid change, our focus remains clear: warfighting, delivering combat-ready formations, continuous transformation, and strengthening the profession. For 250 years, the Army has been America's force of decisive action. That will not change. We do not pick our fights, but when called, we will fight, and we will win. ■

We are the United States Army, and This We'll Defend.

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