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Army Reserve celebrates birthday with new CSM

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(Photo courtesy the Army Reserve)

The Army Reserve will celebrate its birthday this month with a new senior enlisted adviser.

Army Reserve Chief Lt. Gen. Charles D. Luckey, commanding general of the Army Reserve Command, last month announced the appointment of Command Sgt. Maj. Ted L. Copeland.

“He brings a broad mix and array of experience, operational focus and drive, and sound appreciation for the unique challenges of building readiness throughout our tribe,” Luckey said in a statement.

Citizen-Soldiers have been an integral part of the United States’ military forces since the war for independence in 1776, but it wasn’t until 1908 that Congress formally established the predecessor of the modern Army Reserve.¹

During the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection from 1898 to 1902, the United States struggled to mobilize elements of the Army, specifically suffering from a shortage of medical professionals in the officer and noncommissioned officer ranks. In response to these shortages, Congress created the Medical Reserve Corps in 1908 to provide a structure for volunteers to serve during peacetime.²

The National Defense Act of 1916 created the Organized Reserve. The Army was able to mobilize nearly 90,000 Reserve officers by the time the United States entered World War I in 1917. Medical doctors made up a third of those officers. More than 80,000 enlisted Army Reserve Soldiers served in World War I, as well; 15,000 of them were assigned to medical units.³

Congress passed sweeping amendments to the National Defense Act in 1920, and from 1920 to 1940, the Army made plans for an Organized Reserve force of 33 divisions, which existed as either paper units or units with cadre status.⁴

Funding and training opportunities for the Organized Reserve were austere between the end of World War I and the lead up to World War II. However, during the Great Depression, the United States found another way for Reserve Soldiers to serve. One of President Franklin D.

Roosevelt's New Deal programs, the Civilian Conservation Corps, put citizens in barracks and military-style organizations to help maintain the country's national forests and work on other outdoor projects. More than 30,000 Army Reserve officers were commanders or staff officers at the 2,700 Conservation Corps camps from 1933 to 1939.⁵

Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor and the subsequent entry of the United States into World War II would put the Army Reserve back on the front lines of the battlefield.⁶

The Army called Army Reserve Soldiers to active duty in June 1940. In one year, the number of Army Reserve officers on active duty rose from fewer than 3,000 to more than 57,000. During World War II, the Army would mobilize 26 Army Reserve infantry divisions. More than 200,000 Army Reserve Soldiers served in the war.⁷

In the years following World War II, the United States took on a global role in security, particularly in its "Containment Policy" regarding the Communist countries headed by the Soviet Union and China. The United States, for the first time, required a large peacetime military force that was manned, equipped, trained and ready for deployment to a combat zone within a few months' notice. The old policy of relying primarily on untrained citizen-Soldiers, who took nine months to a year to ready for deployment, was over. Congress looked to the Army Reserve to fill this gap. In 1948, Congress authorized retirement and drill pay for Reserve Soldiers, and during the Korean War, more than 240,000 Army Reserve Soldiers were called to active duty.⁸

More than 70 Army Reserve units served in Korea from 1950 to 1953. During the conflict, Congress approved significant changes to the structure and role of Reserve forces. The Organized Reserve Corps became the U.S. Army Reserve, and "was divided into a Ready Reserve, Standby Reserve and Retired Reserve. Reserve units were authorized 24 inactive duty training days a year and up to 17 days of active duty," known as "annual training."⁹

The president now had the authority to order as many as 1 million personnel from the Reserve components of all services to active duty.¹⁰

Between the Korean War and the Vietnam War, the Army changed how it used Reserve forces, as well. Instead of attaching Reserve Soldiers as replacements into existing operational units, the Army implemented the strategy which exists to this day — to mobilize and deploy fully trained and staffed Army Reserve units at the outbreak of conflicts.¹¹

With Vietnam War's end in 1975, and the concurrent end of the draft, the United States began to rely even more heavily on its Reserve forces. The Total Force Policy of 1973, also known as the Abrams Doctrine, for Army Chief of Staff Gen. Creighton W. Abrams Jr., called for the United States to maintain an active force capable of deterring aggression across the globe. The active-duty component was to be reinforced by a well-trained and – equipped Reserve component within a month's notice.¹²

The Army Reserve became increasingly combat support-oriented, but operationally, was rarely used during the Cold War period after the Korean War. More than 68,000 Army Reserve Soldiers were mobilized in 1961 and 1962 for the Berlin Crisis, and nearly 6,000 were activated for the Vietnam War in 1968 and 1969. But the organizational groundwork laid during this period and the drawdown of the active-duty Army in the 1990s would set the stage for the Reserve's primary role in the Army's conflicts into the next century.¹³

The Berlin Wall in 1989 and the Soviet Union disbanded soon after. The Cold War appeared over and the likely threat of war on a global scale seemed reduced. The United States implemented steep reductions in its military budget and personnel levels. At the same time, though, the demands of modern warfare required increasingly numerous and complex specialty branches. Congress intended to further leverage the Army Reserve to make up the difference, which required the Army Reserve to be manned, equipped and trained at levels comparable to

active-duty units. In 1990, Congress approved the creation of the U.S. Army Reserve Command to allow more centralized management of reserve forces.¹⁴

Meanwhile, the vacuum left by the fall of one superpower soon created tensions globally. In August 1990, Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein's forces invaded Kuwait. Because of the drawdown in the U.S. military, the active-duty Army couldn't deploy without the Army Reserve. The U.S.-led Desert Shield and Desert Storm in defense of Kuwait necessitated the largest call-up of Reserve Soldiers since the conflict in Korea. About 80,000 Army Reserve Soldiers provided combat support to coalition forces in the Persian Gulf. In many cases, Army Reserve Soldiers were the first called to serve in the Persian Gulf and often the last to leave, preparing equipment for retrograde to the United States or Europe long after the end of the conflict.¹⁵

Army Reserve Soldiers would go on to be a significant presence in operations in Somalia, Haiti, Egypt and Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1990s.¹⁶

The Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States would increase the demands on the Army Reserve even more. The active-duty Army ranks alone could not meet the demands of the more than a decade of persistent conflict that followed the 9/11 attacks. U.S. Army Reserve and Army National Guard forces were routinely called upon to meet demands on the military both at home and abroad, but primarily in the Southwest Asia Theater of Operations — Iraq and Afghanistan. The Army developed a new force provision model, "Army Force Generation," or ARFORGEN, to increase resources for training. With the additional training and the experience derived from multiple combat rotations, the Army Reserve achieved unprecedented levels of readiness. The Army Reserve was dubbed an "operational force."¹⁷

Since the 9/11 attacks, more than 200,000 Army Reserve Soldiers have been activated in the Global War on Terrorism. Currently, almost 150,000 Army Reserve Soldiers serve in more than 1,600 units progressing through the Army's five-year, rotational ARFORGEN model. On its 109th

birthday, the Army Reserve has become a critical component of the nation's military far beyond its original role as a supplemental, strategic reserve force.¹⁸

In making his announcement about Copeland, Luckey said Copeland's "mission mandate will be simple."

"Use all the tools in the box to unleash the power of our team as we build and sustain the most capable, combat-ready and lethal federal reserve force in the history of the United States," Luckey said. "CSM Copeland's primary place on the battlefield will be out there in the mix. Simple as that. Noncommissioned officers who are trained, led, empowered and infused with infectious enthusiasm will make the decisive difference. He will be our combat-multiplier in embracing that ethos and driving that cultural mandate."

Before his appointment as the senior enlisted advisor to the U.S. Army Reserve, Copeland served as the command sergeant major of the 79th Sustainment Support Command at Los Alamitos, California. He joined the U.S. Army as a military policeman in 1984 and is also a civilian police sergeant. He has participated in five mobilizations and operational deployments — to Saudi Arabia; Turkey, Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; to Fort Riley, Kansas, as part of Operation Enduring Freedom; Iraq; and Afghanistan.¹⁹

"His awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (three oak leaf clusters), the Army Commendation Medal (three oak leaf clusters), the Army Achievement Medal (two oak leaf clusters), the Army Good Conduct Medal (two), the Army Reserve Achievement Medal (seven), the National Defense Service Medal (two), Southwest Asia Service Medal (with three Bronze Stars), Iraq Campaign Medal (one Bronze Star), Afghanistan Campaign Medal (one Bronze Star), Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal and Service Medal, Korean Defense Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Ribbon (20 Year Device, M-Device, Numeral 3), the NCO Professional Development Ribbon (Numeral

4), the Army Service Ribbon, the Army Overseas Ribbon (Numeral 2), Kuwait Liberation Medal (Saudi Arabia), Kuwait Liberation Medal (Kuwait), NATO Medal (Afghanistan), Army Reserves Overseas Training Ribbon, Joint Meritorious Unit Award and the Unit Meritorious Award.”²⁰

In introducing himself to the 79th Sustainment Support Command, Copeland wrote that he had a two-part command philosophy: “Soldier readiness and inspiring leadership, especially within the Noncommissioned Officer Corps.”

He wrote that he expected his NCOs, in particular, to lead from the front and set a proper example. He expects them to exceed their individual readiness requirements and “to foster a command climate of respect and Soldier care.”²¹

“To me, Soldier care is much more than just caring for Soldiers,” he wrote. “It starts with the NCO first embodying the unit’s standards and expectations. Then transforms into the NCO enforcing the same standards and expectations through well-planned and executed training, timely and focused counseling at the individual Soldier level, and engaged mentorship. Caring for our Soldiers means all of these things! I challenge the command’s NCOs to be innovative and resourceful; whether it is planning training or setting aside time for one-on-one counseling, Soldiers deserve the very best from their NCOs.”²²

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