

Pilot Program to Ensure Soldiers 'Fight As One Army'

By David Vergun - Army News Service

March 25, 2016



Pilot Program to Ensure Soldiers 'Fight As One Army'

Select National Guard and Reserve units will soon train more closely with active Soldiers in a program known as "Associated Units."

This pilot program was announced by the acting secretary of the Army, in a March 21 memorandum: "Designation of Associated Units in Support of Army Total Force Policy."

Shortly after the announcement, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Milley said: "Much of America's Army's capacity is resident in the Reserve components and we must rely more heavily on them to meet the demands of a complex global environment."

"The Associated Units pilot allows us to leverage the capabilities and capacities of the Active Component, Army Reserve and the Army National Guard as one Army," he said.

Chief of Army Reserve and Commanding General, U.S. Army Reserve Command Lt. Gen. Jeffrey W. Talley said: "The Associated Units pilot facilitates readiness and strategic depth across components. These units will train, build readiness and ultimately fight as one Army."

How it works

If a reserve-component battalion is associated with an active brigade combat team, the BCT commander assumes responsibility for approving the training program of the reserve-component unit. The BCT commander will assess manpower, equipment and resources requirements needed for the training.

In addition, there will also be active-component units associated with RC headquarters. For example, the 1-28 Infantry at Fort Benning, Georgia, will be associated with the 48th Infantry BCT of the Georgia Army National Guard, or ARNG. In this case, the National Guard Infantry Brigade Combat Team commander will approve the training of the active-component battalion.

Key elements

An annual evaluation will be made by the higher commander regarding the compatibility and capabilities of the associated unit during the pilot.

Another key element of the pilot is the exchange of personnel between the units — a small number of active officers and noncommissioned

officers will go to the RC units and vice-versa.

Additional training

RC units selected for the pilot will conduct up to 15 additional days of training each year, above the one weekend-per-month and two weeks of annual training. Some of this time will be spent at the combat training centers to maximize benefits to readiness.

“Readiness is increased by the number of training days for these units,” said Col. Brian Ellis, chief of the Organizational Integration Division, Force Management Directorate, G-3.

“A sustainable readiness model has been built for each of these units, something we’re trying to get back to as an Army. We’re transitioning from the cyclical base of readiness where we take a unit to a CTC, and deploy them, and drain the readiness that was built up. Now we’re trying to sustain that readiness over multiple CTC rotations in the event of a deployment.”

Why the pilot

“This is how we’ll fight in the future,” Ellis said, explaining RC units will operate alongside the active component. It’s about building relationships prior to mobilization, he said.

“We will train as we fight,” he said. “It makes sense to train as one Army.”

Way ahead

The pilot program will last for three years and after that time an assessment will be made for how the program could expand.

The 27 units for the pilot program were selected “with multiple criteria in mind, including geographic location and capability gaps,” Ellis said.

Associated units in the program will receive additional resources, he said. “If we expand, we’ll determine where those resources will be coming from.”

Units participating in the Associated Units pilot are:

- 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, stationed at Fort Polk, Louisiana, will be associated with the 36th Infantry Division, Texas Army National Guard
- 86th Infantry BCT, Vermont ARNG, will be associated with the 10th Mountain Div., stationed at Fort Drum, New York
- 81st Armored BCT, Washington ARNG, will be associated with the 7th Infantry Div., stationed at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington
- 48th Infantry Brigade, Georgia ARNG, will be associated with the 3rd ID, stationed at Fort Stewart, Georgia
- Task Force 1-28 Inf., stationed at Fort Benning, Georgia, will be associated with the 48th IBC, Georgia ARNG
- 100th Bn., 442 Infantry Reg., an Army Reserve unit, will be associated with the 3rd BCT, 25th ID, stationed at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii
- 1st Bn., 143 Inf. Reg., Texas ARNG, will be associated with the 173rd Airborne BCT, stationed in Vicenza, Italy
- 1st Bn., 151 Inf. Reg., Indiana ARNG, will be associated with the 2nd BCT, 25th ID, stationed at Schofield Barracks
- 5th Engineer Bn., stationed at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, will be associated with the 35th Engineer Bde., Missouri ARNG
- 840th Engineer Company, Texas ARNG, will be associated with the 36th Engineer Bde., stationed at Fort Hood, Texas
- 824th Quartermaster Co., a North Carolina-based Army Reserve unit, will be associated with the 82nd Sustainment Bde., stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina
- The 249th Transportation Co., Texas ARNG and the 1245th Transportation Co., Oklahoma ARNG, will be associated with the 1st Cavalry Div.’s Sustainment Bde., stationed in Fort Hood
- 1176th Transportation Co., Tennessee ARNG, will be associated with the 101st Sustainment Bde., stationed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky
- 2123rd Transportation Co., Kentucky ARNG, will be associated with the 101st Sustainment Bde., stationed at Fort Campbell