

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-19-367T](#), a testimony before the Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support, Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate

Why GAO Did This Study

The 2018 National Defense Strategy emphasizes that restoring and retaining readiness across the entire spectrum of conflict is critical to success in the emerging security environment. The top priority for Army leadership is readiness. The Army has undertaken a variety of efforts since 2016 to prepare for potential large-scale combat operations against major adversaries. This statement provides information on the Army's progress and challenges in readiness rebuilding in the areas of (1) force structure and personnel, (2) equipment repair and modernization, and (3) training for potential large-scale conflict. Also, GAO summarizes recommendations to address these challenges and actions taken by the Army to address them.

This statement is based on previously published GAO work since 2016. This prior work related to, among other things, Army readiness, skills shortages, equipment maintenance and modernization, acquisition, training, force structure. GAO also updated information and incorporated preliminary observations from ongoing work related to warfighting concepts.

What GAO Recommends

GAO has made 44 recommendations in prior unclassified work described in this statement. DOD and the Army have generally concurred with them, have implemented seven, and have actions underway to address others. Continued attention to these recommendations can assist and guide the Army moving forward as it seeks to rebuild the readiness of its force and transforms for the future.

View [GAO-19-367T](#). For more information, contact John H. Pendleton at (202) 512-3489 or pendletonj@gao.gov.

February 6, 2019

ARMY READINESS

Progress and Challenges in Rebuilding Personnel, Equipping, and Training

What GAO Found

In GAO's prior and ongoing work, GAO found that the Army has made progress in rebuilding readiness and projects that it will reach its readiness goals by 2022. While the Army continues to make progress, it faces challenges in staffing its evolving force structure, repairing and modernizing its equipment, and training its forces for potential large-scale conflicts (see table).

Army's Progress and Challenges in Rebuilding Readiness

Area	Progress made	Selected challenges
Personnel and force structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Army has reversed planned reductions, and is now increasing personnel in order to fully man units. The Army has added force structure to prepare for potential large-scale combat. For example, the Army is activating new Mobile Short Range Air Defense battalions by fiscal year 2022, and is also creating new cyber and electronic warfare units. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulty in expanding force due to missed recruiting targets Shortfalls in key skills, such as civilian flight test pilots in depots Staffing new cyber and security force assistance units Tracking and managing personnel time away from home
Equipment repair and modernization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Army is developing new warfighting concepts to address future threats. The Army is modernizing its equipment through updates and upgrades, which the service believes is critical to future readiness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repairing heavily-used Patriot air defense equipment Evaluating the costs and effectiveness of near-term modernization efforts Applying leading practices for technology development
Training for potential large-scale conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Army has made progress in training for decisive-action operations, including multiple rotations through training centers. The Army has implemented GAO recommendations to better incorporate its use of virtual training devices into its operational training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring adequate facilities and airspace for training unmanned aerial system (UAS) pilots Enhancing the UAS pilot selection approach Fully training personnel in new units under accelerated schedules

Source: GAO analysis. | GAO-19-367T

Looking to the future, the Army plans to grow its forces, provide them with modernized equipment, and train units to conduct large-scale, decisive-action operations. All of these efforts are underway as the Army contemplates the implications of future warfare—which it reports is likely to require operations in multiple domains, especially cyber. As a result, it is important for the Army to balance its efforts to rebuild and sustain the operational readiness of its existing force with its preparations for future threats.