

# The Army National Guard Beyond 2030

*Director, Army National Guard Paper #3:  
The ARNG Enterprise Today and Tomorrow*



**Army National Guard Directorate**  
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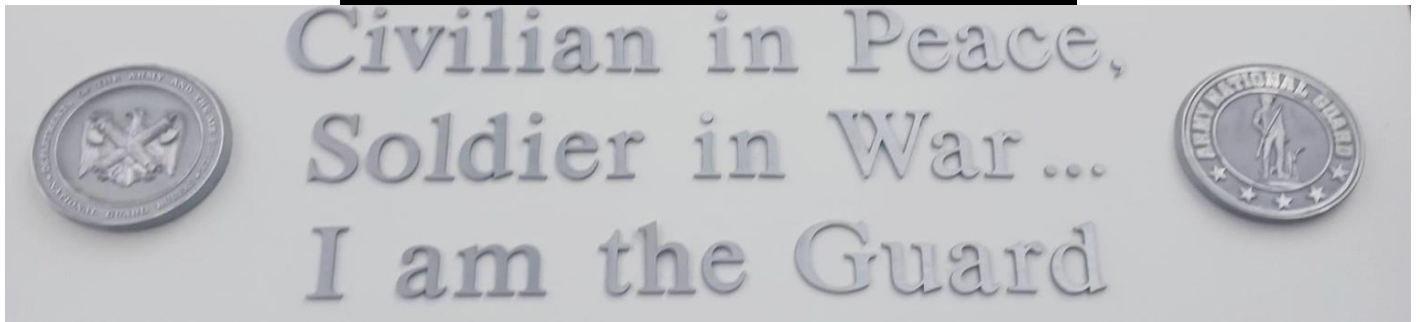
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## Introduction to Paper #3



The above sign greets you at the National Guard Bureau in Arlington, Virginia, and has been the first thing I've seen every day of my time as 22<sup>nd</sup> Director of the Army National Guard. As that time draws to a close, I reflect on our unbroken line of service since 1636.

What does it mean today to be a Citizen Soldier in the era of “persistent competition,” where the lines between peace and war are more obscure? As I depart, our history department is updating *I am the Guard*, a book by Micheal Doubler covering the National Guard's history. It reads, “the National Guard is a dynamic institution that constantly adapts to the political, social, and economic conditions that shape American society.” As the Global War on Terror recedes and the U.S. Army restructures for Large Scale Combat, the ARNG's institutions must reflect who we are, who we have been, and who we need to be to continue to meet the needs of our nation, our states, and our commitment to our Servicemembers.

The primary purpose of these papers has been to facilitate discussion between senior leaders of the ARNG. This series of papers represents an effort to capture and explore where current trends and tensions are taking us, while concurrently using history's lessons to contextualize what brought us to where we are. We will use these lessons, tensions, and trends as the vehicle to create a shared strategic direction for the ARNG beyond 2030.

Two questions led to this effort. First, early in my time as Director I remarked to an audience in Florida that “no one wants to see us go back to being a strategic reserve.” A field grade officer challenged me, replying that my comment may not represent a common sentiment across the force. Second, during the Winter 2022 Senior Leader Offsite, Dr. Eliot Cohen challenged my staff and me to identify and focus on “organizational challenges that cannot be solved by more resources.” These questions highlight how the ARNG's institutions – the rules by which we do business – have repeatedly changed since 1636 and require constant renewal.

I believe **every system is perfectly designed to get the results it currently gets**. If we are strictly a reactive organization, or if we are overly focused on tactical and operational issues, it is because our system – the structures, processes, formal, and informal operating rules – is designed to get that result. Not intentionally, but rather as a reaction to the Nation's numerous “political, social, and economic” conditions, and the changing need this places on the ARNG. The ARNG must mature and adapt the institution to proactively to seize opportunities and mitigate risks in response the changing environment and National needs.

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DARNG Paper 1

**DARNG Paper #1** highlighted how operational demands defined the ARNG's role and employment at the 21st century's onset, in contrast to the Cold War's strategic demands. Subsequently, the ARNG transformed from a "strategic reserve," expected to mobilize less than once a generation – whose size and readiness alone are deterrents – to an "operational reserve," routinely mobilizing to enhance readiness and support worldwide security commitments. Exploring these questions through the four frames of State, Federal, Societal, and Servicemember allowed us to better see the ARNG enterprise, and how it became an integrated reserve, delivering both operational capability and strategic depth to meet the Nation's diverse needs.

After six months of discussions, surveys, and conferences with the TAGs about DARNG Paper #1, **DARNG Paper #2** built on the core questions inherent to seeing the enterprise through these frames. It used both the art and science of enterprise functioning to help us better understand the ARNG. Paper #2's goal was to help the enterprise understand how the ARNG's enduring attributes inform current values, capabilities, and aspirations across the organization. The data shows that common foundations of Army Values and Citizen-Soldier service are constants across the force, but our capabilities and aspirations do not always align. This diversity is a source of strength. It also introduces friction, impairing our collective ability to see and understand common issues.



Did you miss it?  
Scan this code for  
DARNG Paper 2

Another six months of governance events, discussions, and surveys following DARNG Paper #2 further led to this paper. The ARNG Chief Financial Officer succinctly framed the core issue in a memo for the Winter 2023 Senior Leader Offsite: **"Most everyone who controls resources at every level seemingly loses perspective that we are all working toward a common goal and acts in their self-interest without regard for external impacts; not out of malice, but out of a sense of responsibility to their current organization."** This happens throughout NGB, at the states, at unit headquarters, and at every echelon of the organization. This challenge is not unique to the Guard, or even the military. Addressing it is more challenging when there is not a central command over the entirety of the organization.

Because the ARNG does not have a singular command or civilian leader, we cannot address this issue from a central location or via an individual policy. The ARNG is led by Bureau, by committees, and by leaders distributed across 55 elements – the ARNG of the states, territories, and District of Columbia, and the National Guard Bureau. The ARNG enterprise requires these leaders align priorities and interests - not on everything, but on some core issues – and work off common understanding of the organization. The broad options and strategic direction suggested here will be vetted and discussed in another series of governance events, discussions, and surveys. As those discussions explore what it means to be a "Civilian in Peace" and "Soldier in War" today, we must acknowledge the inherent tensions in our formation with candor. We must move toward the friction that threatens our ability to see, understand, and behave as the uniquely American enterprise we are.

To that end, this is for our successors. I hope future TAGs and DARNGs find these products useful. Taken together, they provide a snapshot in time for framing the current environment and options we may use to adapt for success. This is how we honor the unbroken line of Guard service, not just to those who came before us, but for those who will come after us to ensure the American experiment continues for centuries to come, safeguarded by an ARNG which is Always Ready, and Always There.

Jon A. Jensen  
Lieutenant General  
Director, Army National Guard



***Part I***  
***The Shared Strategic Direction***

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# **I. The ARNG – An Enduring American Institution**

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A peace establishment for the United States of America [requires] four [elements]:

First, a regular and standing force.

Second, a well-organized militia [...] similar in their manuevers, exercise, and arms.

Third, arsenals of military stores.

Fourth, Academies for instruction in the military art, particularly engineering and artillery which are essential and difficult to learn.

**-George Washington, Sentiments on a Peace Establishment, 1 May 1783**

---

The Militia, which became the Army National Guard (ARNG), and Regular Army (RA) form the immutable core of America's identity and security, embodying both the state and federal governments' shared responsibility to protect liberty from internal and external threats. [\*I am the Guard\*](#) identified four major themes in our history from 1636 to 2000:<sup>1</sup>

- The ARNG's service to Nation in the context of its constitutionally-defined missions: executing the laws, suppressing insurrections, and repelling invasions
- The ARNG's adaptation to political, social, and economic conditions shaping American society
- The ARNG's complimentary and competitive relationships, between states, components, etc.
- How the ARNG and RA have both succeeded and failed to integrate during national crises throughout history

The ARNG's many enduring attributes provide value to the Nation during crisis, contingency, and conflict. Increasingly, the Nation is leveraging the ARNG to provide additional value in global competition, through avenues like the State Partnership Program and campaigning activities. As the ARNG emerges into an era of strategic competition, it must adapt its institutions to meet current and future national demands as an enterprise.

## **I-I. Unique and Enduring ARNG Attributes**

The ARNG institution has unique and enduring attributes that one must consider the foundation of its strategic identity. Its militia heritage was at the core of American national security philosophy well before the founding. Washington's quote above likewise applies to today's security environment.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nationalguard.mil/portals/31/Documents/About/Publications/Documents/I%20am%20the%20Guard.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/99-01-02-11202>



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Unique ARNG attributes are those inherent in the ARNG's role in the constitution and law, which are unlike other components of the military. Enduring attributes are those that have been present throughout the history of the ARNG based on use and environmental context. These attributes present strengths and weaknesses and create unique opportunities and threats in the current era. Defining these unique and enduring attributes is critical to understanding the ARNG enterprise.

### Unique Attribute: Unique Authorities

The ARNG of a state can function in a law-enforcement capacity and as a force for the Governors when in State Active Duty. These authorities are derived from the constitutional requirement for a militia "to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions". (United States Constitution, Article 1, Section 8.)

### Enduring Attribute: Unique Political Context

Because ARNG servicemembers are reservists and TAGs are state employees, there are considerably fewer restrictions on the political activities of the ARNG. Strategy is inherently political, as it exists where military forces are employed to meet policy ends. Because of the duality in ARNG leadership, ARNG leaders must often balance policy ends. Governors do not always see eye to eye with the President or with each other on the problems the day, and this can present increased tension in the employment of the ARNG.

### Unique Attribute: Parallel Command Structures

The Army National Guard (ARNG) is unique because of its dual status. Guard members belong to both the National Guard of the United States (NGUS) and their state or territory's National Guard. This means they are responsible to both state and federal leaders. This dual allegiance can cause tension when state and federal priorities conflict.

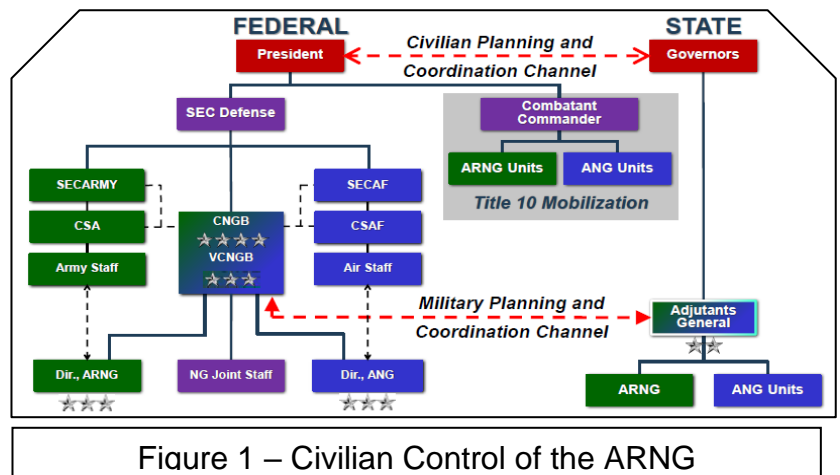


Figure 1 – Civilian Control of the ARNG

When the ARNG performs Operational Support (OS), it can be for either federal or state missions. State missions do not need federal approval or resources and are under state control. Federal missions are entirely under federal control and fully funded by the federal government. When the ARNG operates under Title 32, it needs federal approval and funding but remains under state control with the governor's consent.

Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) and Homeland Defense Activities (HDA) under Title 32 are considered federal missions, even though the governor retains control. When the ARNG is not performing OS, it operates under state control but must follow federal regulations and prepare for federal missions.

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Per DoD Directives, the NG has two distinct DoD-established Joint activities with differing responsibilities, authorities, functions, and staffing: the National Guard Bureau and the Joint Force Headquarters – State. See Figure 2.



Figure 2 – SECDEF delegations of authority to NGB and JFHQ

According to law and DoD policy (DoD Directive 5105.77), the National Guard Bureau (NGB) is a fully federal organization. Its leaders and staff are under federal control. All NGB staff are on federal (Title 10) orders and assigned to a DoD component, but they must belong to a state or territory's National Guard. The state retains significant administrative control over these members. For instance, a state can recall a Title 10 Guard member without federal approval, and promotions must be approved by state leaders. This can cause tension when state and federal priorities differ.

NGB members must follow DoD guidance, which can create conflicts with state leaders. The Chief of the National Guard Bureau (CNGB) mainly has advisory and communication roles. The CNGB advises the Secretary of Defense through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for non-federalized NG matters, and through the Service Secretaries for federal matters. All NGB guidance must align with laws and DoD policies.

<b>COSAC</b> (Chief of Staffs)	<b>MILPAC</b> (G-1 Enterprise)	<b>PORTAG (G-3 Enterprise)</b>
<b>SAAO-AC</b> (Aviation Enterprise)	<b>EAGLE (G-4 Enterprise)</b>	<b>FEAC (G-9 Enterprise)</b>
<b>PECAC</b> (Professional Education Center)	<b>TASSAC</b> (Regional Training Institutes)	<b>USPFO</b>
<b>HRAC (HROs)</b>	<b>CSMAC</b> (CSMs)	<b>WOSAC</b> (CCWOs)

Figure 3 – Self-Organized/Elected Professional Communities (not all communities are listed)

DoD policy (DoDD 5105.83) authorizes each state a Joint Force Headquarters (JFHQ). Guard members in this organization are under state control (Title 32 duty status). This setup can also create tensions. The policy distinguishes between state and federal missions but allows state NG leaders to support state missions. The JFHQ can issue state regulations on NG matters, following state and federal laws and DoD policies.

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The dual nature of the National Guard and Army National Guard (ARNG) creates unique challenges. These organizations face both valid and perceived criticisms from federal leaders. To improve, the NG and ARNG must understand and address these issues.

### **Enduring Attribute: Persistent Partnerships and Relationships**

Most ARNG members remain in the same state or group of units for the majority of their careers. Compared to DoD at-large, this enables ARNG leaders to build more depth in relationships with counterpart leaders. This includes formal partnerships with leaders at the state, federal, and international levels, but especially in terms of the State Partnership Program, Youth Challenge, Counterdrug, and with local emergency management leadership. It also includes informal relationships across communities with industries, academic, and community organizations.

### **Unique Attribute: Geographic Dispersion**

Because ARNG is present in every state and many territories, there are readiness centers in 2,317 communities around the United States. This is considerably more locations than any other DoD component, and consequently deals with a diverse array of communities and environments. This dispersed footprint can create policy and resourcing challenges. It also often leads to ARNG success in many decentralized issues, as smaller groups with more localized authority can develop novel solutions and then export them back to the wider organization.

This diversity of locations creates regional impacts on leadership. For example, 10 states contribute over 50% of NGB's personnel. In many states, headquarters are co-located with state capitols, impacting the manning and political context of their Joint Force Headquarters personnel. It also has implications for force generation and projection, as the ARNG is already there in most American communities.

### **Enduring Attribute: Civilian Acquired Skills**

All reserve components balance civilian and military skills, but because the ARNG often performs civil as well as military missions, Guardsmen exercise their skills more frequently in an official status. The ARNG has a higher percentage of combat arms professionals than other services. As very few civilian careers are like combat arms, the ARNG possesses a higher percentage of Servicemembers with distinct civilian and military skills in comparison to other reserve components, where it is more common to see individuals working in military jobs similar to their civilian career.

### **Enduring Attribute: Stable and Cost-Effective**

The ARNG has provided the Total Army's consistent base of strength for generations. Due to its geographic dispersion and unique political context, the ARNG changes more slowly than the Regular Army. The ARNG's deliberateness enables the Army's rapid expansion and experimentation, while preserving a strong support base of Citizen-Soldiers in the event of a major contingency. It can also create challenges related to assigning force structure.

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The ARNG provides this stable base at an overall lower cost. ARNG units comprise approximately 16% of the DoD Joint Force and execute approximately 30% of the overseas missions, yet the ARNG receives only 4% of the annual budget. In a non-mobilized status, ARNG units cost roughly 20% of an active duty unit, but are generally on par with active duty costs when mobilized. However, these numbers fail to account for the increase in domestic support missions in recent years. When examined in terms of man-days, the ARNG's Fiscal Year 2021

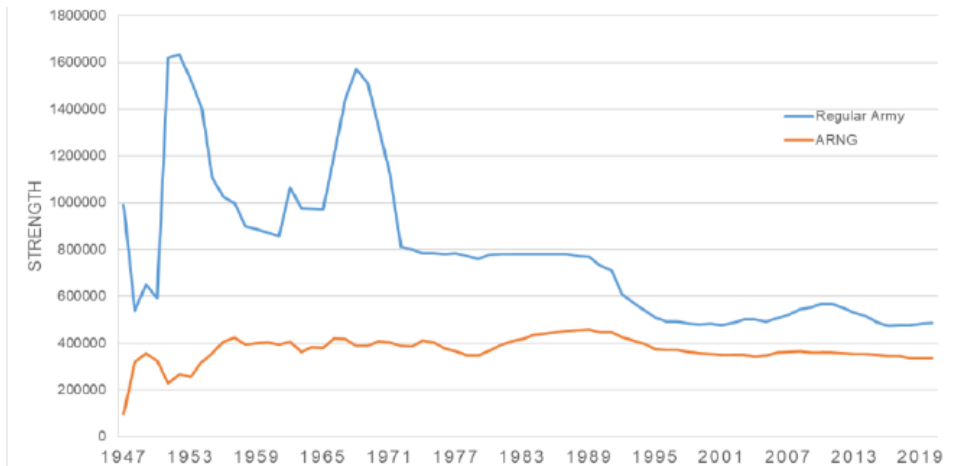


Figure 4 – Relative Stability of ARNG Size

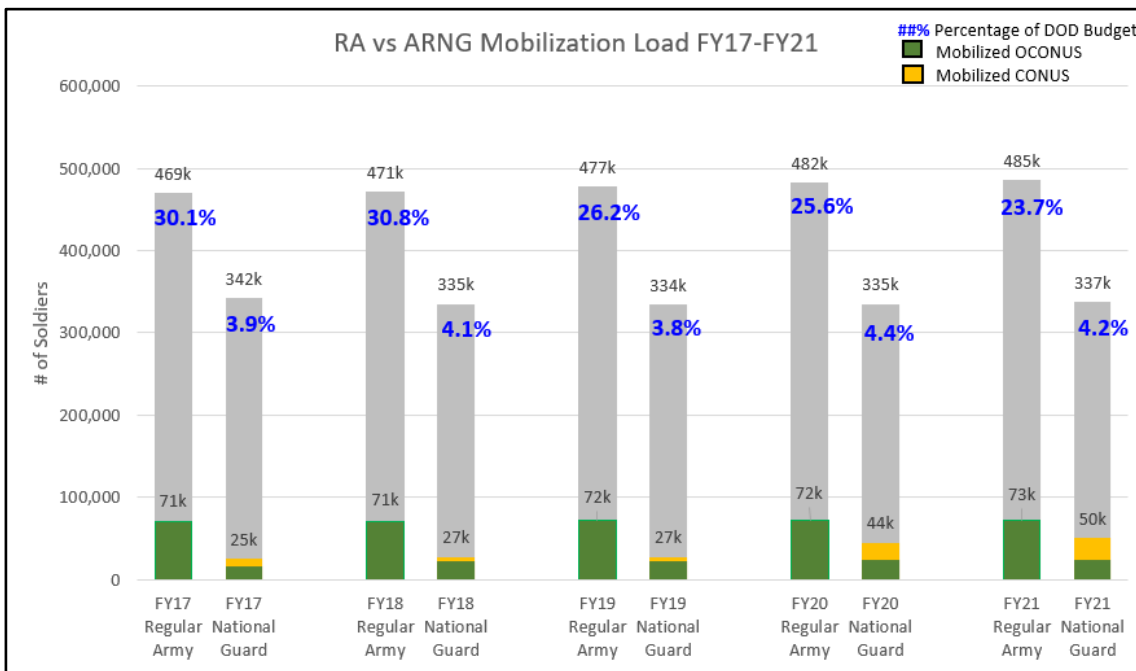


Figure 5 – Relative Stability of ARNG Size

domestic commitments were equivalent in manpower to its overseas missions (see Figure 1).

## Enduring Attribute: Unit-Based

The ARNG is structured for collective training and unit-level deployments more than any other reserve component. In most cases, ARNG units train

together, deploy together, and often develop strong social networks outside of training. The ARNG also has numerous cases of multiple family members, and even multiple generations serving together.

## I-II. The ARNG in the Emerging Competitive Era

“The second type of military institution [...] is based upon the conception of a professional peace establishment (no larger than necessary to meet normal peacetime requirements) to be reinforced in time of emergency by organized units drawn from a citizen army reserve, effectively organized for this purpose in time of peace [...].

Details of military organization change with changes in weapons, modes of transportation, and international relations. But the type of our military institutions was determined in the beginning by the form of our government and has not changed since Washington’s Administration. It will therefore be made the basis for all plans for a post-war peace establishment.

**- War Department Circular No. 347, produced by GEN Marshall’s “Special Planning Division,” August 1944.**

What is a force “no larger than necessary to meet normal peacetime requirements” today? The United States is not at war, but it is not at peace. Guardsmen are still in harm’s way around the world, and continually called to service at home for both federal and state requirements.

There is an emerging international competitive paradigm that transcends peace and war. It is no longer sufficient to divide the ARNG at peace and the ARNG at war. As the ARNG continues to adapt to meet National requirements, it must keep these trends in mind, echoing Doubler’s “The ARNG’s adaptation to political, social, and economic conditions shaping American society.” This competitive paradigm means that the ARNG is no longer a “strategic reserve” or “operational reserve”, but rather an integrated reserve that provides operational capability in competition, and campaigning and strategic depth for contingency and conflict.

The following emerging trends help to further frame this competitive era, to better analyze the opportunities and threats based on the ARNG’s enduring and unique attributes.

### Emerging Trends

#### ***Societal Trends***

- Aging and smaller populations in much of the world; demographic growth in selected regions
- Challenges to the effectiveness and legitimacy of social and governing institutions
- Growing perception of the rule of an oligarchy or kleptocracy; power in society benefits an elite
- Persistently high rates of alienation, anxiety, social stress
- Rising political polarization, domestic fragmentation, and extremism
- Continuing threat of pandemics

#### ***Trends in Global Competition***

- Growing influence for nonstate actors, especially in open societies
- Interdependent supply chain networks
- Integrated, increasingly digital financial networks
- Competition in digital infrastructures (DIs)

#### ***Economy***

- Secular stagnation; long-term decline in growth and productivity rates

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- Rising levels of wealth and income inequality; stagnant intergenerational mobility
- Transition to post-fossil fuel economy; competition to dominate new energy era
- Increasing applications of and threats from biotech
- Growing role for advanced manufacturing
- Pressure of rising public and private debt loads

### **General and contextual**

- Role of artificial intelligence (AI)/machine learning and automation in all economic, social, and military processes
- Fragmenting and corrupted information environments
- Intensifying environmental pressures, disasters, and crises, including water issues
- Rising threats to territorial sovereignty
- Greater multipolarity in geopolitical and geo-economic terms
- Demand for partial national self-sufficiency in critical materials, resources, and technologies
- High levels of uncertainty, driven by recurring, overlapping crises

### **Implications for the ARNG**

These trends all influence the four key environment factors for the ARNG in the Strategic Environment identified in DARNG Paper 2:

- **Increasing competition between autocracy and democracy** resulting in need for the ARNG provide operational capacity and strategic depth as an *integrated reserve*
- **Increasing cost and scale of natural disasters**
- **Increasing political divisiveness and tension**
- **Decreasing resources** in terms of reduced financial resources and labor resources available

According to a recent RAND study, the emerging competitive paradigm is characterized by the following trends:<sup>3</sup>

### **Opportunities and Threats in the Competitive Era:**

<b>Federal</b>		<b>State</b>	
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<i>Persistent partnerships</i> in the ARNG can enhance connections in era of decreasing trust in institutions. <i>Dual-mission</i> of the ARNG can offset impacts of recurring overlapping crises <i>Civilian Acquired Skills</i> can provide warfighters with more flexible thinking in dealing with non-state actors <i>Unit-Based</i> mobilizations at both state and federal level	Political polarization can challenge ability to meet Federal mission if state-level leaders actively oppose Federal strategic direction. Role of AI and Machine Learning threatens to upend current economic, social, and military functioning leading to increased instability. At the NGB level, <i>tunnel vision</i> on the Federal mission can lead to	<i>ARNG political context</i> and <i>geographic dispersion</i> can lend legitimacy to state level institutions and provide connection to communities for state and federal leaders in communities. <i>Dual-mission</i> provides the state governments with avenues for security cooperation and development in a multi-polar world, potentially assisting with friendshoring,	Increasing disconnects between state and federal government, and between state governments, on the strategic priorities and direction of the United States. Lack of shared information environment and political polarization can complicate generating federal readiness.

<sup>3</sup> Mazarr, Michael J., Alexis Dale-Huang, and Matthew Sargent, The Emerging Competitive Paradigm: A Contest of Effective Governance. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2024. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PEA2611-1.html>.



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can build generational readiness <i>Cheaper and reliable</i> strength base for the Army is critical in environment of economic and fiscal instability.	disconnects and loss of trust between JFHQ leaders and leaders at NGB.	and deterring through building resilience	
<u>Societal</u>		<u>Servicemember</u>	
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<i>Unique political context</i> of the ARNG can be a hedge against distrust in institutions; the ARNG's connections to its community can provide a connection to fight against perceptions of rule by an oligarchy.	Domestic fragmentation and extremism can damage trust in ARNG leadership and units, especially if these community trends bleed into formations.	<i>Unit-based nature</i> of the ARNG can insulate servicemembers against alienation and anxiety. <i>Persistent Partnerships</i> can provide servicemembers with connections to their community and unique experiences with partner nations that may become increasingly difficult in economic change. Trend of income inequality can be an opportunity for those able to significantly improve education/economic class through ARNG related education and benefits.	Increasing demands threatens to overwhelm the opportunity cost calculations of servicemembers

# I-III. The Case for Enterprise Functioning

## Getting the Results the Nation Needs and the ARNG Wants

### *A Story of Full-Time Manning*

The ARNG must improve its Enterprise functioning to be effective in the competitive era. The Nation needs the ARNG because its enduring and unique attributes make it a key institution in national security and resilience. **To be most effective, the ARNG must balance its diverse set of interests and priorities around some common goals, while encouraging divergent and critical thought and problem-solving throughout the organization.** Understanding the complexities related to ARNG full-time manning demonstrates why this is the case and sets the stage for the strategic direction and broad options described in this paper.

### ***Problem Blindness***

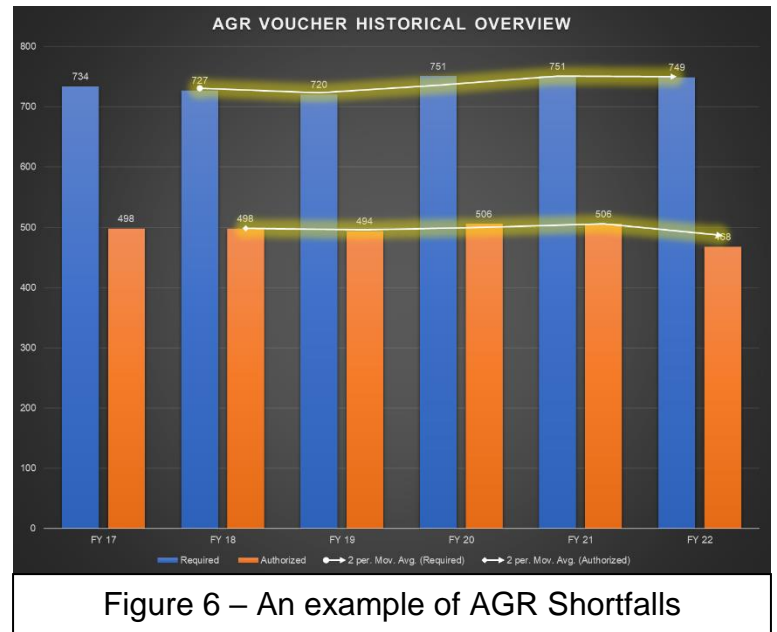
Problem blindness occurs when organizations or individuals become so used to a problem that they no longer understand it as actionable. The ARNG may be experiencing similar problem blindness with regard to full-time manning. A common perception in states is that ARNG units lack the required number of AGR "vouchers" (documents authorizing and funding a full-time Guardsman). This problem has become so ubiquitous that many no longer consider it an actionable issue.

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A famous example of problem blindness comes from Chicago Public Schools, which once had a 51% dropout rate.<sup>4</sup> Interviews with teachers and administrators at the time showed that many came to believe the high dropout rate was “just the way it is,” with so many contributing factors that the school could do nothing about the situation.

Some researchers were not convinced, and conducted a thorough assessment of the students who did not graduate. This review revealed a strong correlation between students’ performance in freshman year and graduation. This led to a hypothesis that improving freshman success might lead to fewer dropouts. This ran contrary to the resourcing strategy of the school district at the time, which placed the most experienced teachers and much of the financial resources in the senior year of high school, based on the belief that this was most critical to success at college.

As a result of this new theory, administrators reassigned the most experienced teachers to freshman year classes and increased 9<sup>th</sup> grade resources. Their approach proved successful, significantly improving graduation rates. As of 2023, the high school dropout rate in Chicago Public Schools is now just 17%.<sup>5</sup>



### Lack of Ownership, Time Scarcity, and Tunnel Vision

“When we create organizations, we’re doing it to give people focus. We’re essentially giving them a license to be myopic.”

-Mark Okerstrom, CEO of Expedia, as quoted in Upstream by Dan Heath

Who owns the problem of reduced full-time manning for the ARNG? How do we know it *is* a *problem*? Another perception, common within the National Guard Bureau, is that the ARNG has sufficient manning, and does not allocate it appropriate to producing readiness. Ownership of issues like resource management and execution is complex. The ARNG CFO and USPFOs share some responsibilities, as do the DARNG and TAGs. However, no single element has total ownership, so trust and agility can only be cultivated through enterprise functioning.

Another example for the ARNG to consider comes from private industry. In 2012, a customer service leader at Expedia found that 58% of users placed calls to customer service after booking their trip online. Expedia initially missed this data point because it was not a key metric for any individual

<sup>4</sup> Heath, Dan. Upstream: How to Solve Problems Before They Happen, 2024.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.chalkbeat.org/chicago/2023/10/31/23940755/chicago-public-schools-graduation-rates-class-of-2023/>



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department. The online department focused on website booking speed, password issues, and other similar issues. The customer service line focused on the number of customers who called the line more than once, and how quickly they resolved calls.

No one owned the space in between these departments. After reviewing the data, Expedia found that most customers called to have their itinerary re-sent, as it was originally sent to their spam folder, or the customer incorrectly typed their email address. Identifying this problem and taking ownership of it resulted in significant call reduction and saved Expedia over \$100 million.

Inherent ARNG duality and divisions lead to many spaces where problem ownership is unclear. The ARNG Directorate and state JFHQ each own pieces of shared challenges related to delivering combat-ready formations, strengthening the profession, and continuous transformation. This challenge of ownership must be addressed.

Lack of resources can exacerbate lack of ownership. Without sufficient time or money, organizations tend to focus on survival, where stepping back to consider at the bigger picture becomes more difficult, if not impossible. A state-level G3 shop juggling multiple individual training requirements, collective training requirements, state missions, SPP missions, overseas deployment training, and exercises is unlikely to have sufficient resources required to map out these processes to find efficiencies. Ironically, the busiest organizations are those that would benefit most from doing so. However, tunnel vision solely focused on surviving current challenges becomes inevitable when coupled with insufficient resources.

Amazon has a model for defeating this tendency. Amazon does not use PowerPoint for meetings, but instead uses a standardized, six-page information paper format. Each meeting begins with 20 minutes of silence for all attendees to read the paper. This ensures everyone in the meeting has the same information, and that time conflicts do not prevent individuals from adequate meeting preparation. While this solution may not be universally applicable, it demonstrates that only leadership can create the space to challenge such issues and must codify the mechanisms within organizational institutions.

### ***Applying Enterprise Thinking***

DARNG Paper 2 described complex, complicated, and simple challenges to the ARNG. Returning to the example of full-time manning; why has the ARNG been generally unsuccessful in arguing for full-time manning on par with that of other reserve components? A large portion of this is the ARNG has not been able to successfully link lack of full-time resources to reduced readiness in Unit Status Reporting, and no individual part of the organization is incentivized to do so.

Typically, a key metric for success for Battalion Commanders is Unit Status Reporting (USR). This series of metrics is both qualitative and quantitative, subjective and objective. For most Battalion Commanders, readiness data is a key element on their Officer Evaluation Report (OER), a document which significantly impacts an officer's ability to promote. Commanders are heavily incentivized to overcome resourcing challenges and accomplish their mission of producing readiness. Because the requirements on a Battalion's time exceed the available time to accomplish it, Commanders inherently accept risk on some required tasks either by shortening them, choosing not to apply resources to them, or modifying the way those tasks are assessed.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/monographs/466/>

This leads to a problem. When the JFHQ level or NGB level attempts to show that reduced manning has reduced readiness, it cannot do so using USR. No one in the system is doing the wrong thing; Commanders are overcoming their shortfalls and accepting risk the way that they should, and the higher organizations are looking to data to support resourcing decisions, but the overall impact on the organization is negative.

Consider the famous game theory example of the Prisoner's Dilemma (figure 7). In this example, two bank robbers are being questioned, and both have the option to testify against the other party. If they both cooperate (remain silent), then both will receive 1 year in prison. If both confess, they will receive 5 years in prison. If *only one* confesses, that one will receive immunity and the other will receive 20 years in prison. The two parties cannot communicate with each other to formulate a strategy and must choose individually.

A similar dynamic plays out among Commanders dealing with insufficient resources. If one chooses to be honest about the impacts on readiness and allow their metrics to decrease, they may be punished. If all commanders in a state do so, the organization can identify root causes and solve the problems. If none of them do, the organization continues to limp along with reduced effectiveness.

This example is an oversimplification. It demonstrates how complexity within the ARNG can create situations where each individual element doing the "right thing" for their echelon can negatively impact the whole. The inability to communicate is a key element of the prisoner's dilemma and does not apply to the ARNG. As the ARNG continues to operate in an environment of decreasing resources and increased demand, that ability to communicate and work together forms the bedrock of enterprise functioning, along with shared identification of priorities, measurements of success, and incentivization of enterprise or collective functioning.

Prisoners' dilemma













		prisoner B	
		confess 	remain silent 
prisoner A	confess 	  5 years    5 years	  0 year    20 years
	remain silent 	  20 years    0 year	  1 year    1 year

Figure 7 – Prisoner's Dilemma

## **I-IV. A Shared Strategic Direction**

The problem statement identified in DARNG Paper #2 is:

*“The ARNG must see, understand, and behave as an enterprise to successfully shape the ARNG beyond 2030 by developing enterprise-level professionals and processes, creating a sustainable strategic narrative, and enhancing transparency and accountability.”*

To meet this new competitive era’s demands, the ARNG must adapt its governance and institution to enable communication, identification of shared interests, and strategies grounded in the commitment to nation, state, and Citizen-Soldiers. Our shared strategic direction is:

**The ARNG beyond 2030 is an institution that draws on its unique lineage and identity to adapt and function as an enterprise for dual national security and domestic resilience missions in an era of persistent competition and conflict.**



***Part II***  
***The Shared Strategic Direction***

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## II. The Broad Options

The shared strategic direction in Part I is critical to leveraging ARNG attributes to seize opportunities and mitigate threats in the emerging competitive era. The ARNG must build commitment to the goal across the DARNG and TAGs while adapting institutions at both NGB and the states to see, understand, and behave as an enterprise. This involves sustaining and building trust across NGB and the states, as well as between the states to design effective governance and institutions for the era. Part II of this paper outlines broad options to better align to this strategic direction.

Every member of the ARNG can contribute to this vision. Senior leaders can coordinate to identify shared strategic priorities and align messaging to political and interagency partners. Mid-level professionals can identify metrics, and reach across their regional professional communities to share or identify best practices. Every soldier can engage in critical and reflective thought, innovation, and professional writing from their perspectives, helping both the ARNG and Army enterprises succeed in a complex and competitive environment.

Members across the ARNG were involved in producing the broad options identified here. The methodology is described in [Annex A](#), which also identifies the “means” of ARNG institutional strategy.

These options were developed with constraints. First, the options must be actionable only within the span of control of the ARNG Directorate and NGB, or the Joint Force Headquarters of the state. To that end, the second constraint was that the options could not require additional resources or manning beyond what is currently available. Third, the options must be measurable in some way. Finally, the options must improve the functioning of the ARNG enterprise, meaning how the ARNG collectively sees, understands, and acts on shared problems that impact the totality of the organization.

Note: None of these broad options represent current policy. Rather, these are options that future DARNGs/TAGs may use to address/improve enterprise functioning. Specificity on the broad options varies; where appropriate, the Army Business Process Re-engineering “five lenses” further refine the option. Each of these broad options would require additional staff development prior to implementation.

### Enterprise Theory of Success

Resolving issues in complexity does not allow for a single, all-encompassing solution. Instead, multiple hypotheses must be generated, implemented, and evaluated. The broad options in this paper collectively target enterprise functioning by acting on the ARNG as a system at multiple touchpoints to see, understand, and behave as an enterprise by producing enterprise level professionals and processes, enhancing transparency and accountability, and delivering the shared strategic direction identified in part 1. That approach is:

- The ARNG can collectively **see** common challenges through:
  - Developing shared metrics and dashboards
  - Broadening perspectives and encouraging candor
  - Supporting internal and external inspections

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- The ARNG can turn what it sees into information to **understand** the enterprise by:
  - Identifying diverse and shared priorities
  - Managing knowledge and leveraging historical perspectives
  - Leveraging AI/ML
- Then it can **behave** as an enterprise to:
  - *Strengthen the profession* by
    - Encouraging critical thought and reflection through professional writing
    - Enhancing permeable talent management
    - Making continuing education and knowledge enhancement tools available to senior leaders
  - *Transform Continuously* by
    - Better aligning resources to priorities through a transformed resource management enterprise
    - Encouraging centralization of administrative requirements and decentralization of innovation
    - Adopting a Culture of Innovation
  - Ultimately *delivering combat ready formations* by
    - Adopting a five-year planning model
    - Engineering for candor in reporting
    - Freeing time through central availability of some training resources
    - Overseeing transformation through a robust governance model

This theory of success is a hypothesis, and should be rigorously tested against the objectives and evaluation criteria identified by the DARNG and CNGB.

## **II-I. Broad Options for Better Seeing the ARNG Enterprise**

### **Broad Option: Identify Metrics, Visualized on Common Operating Pictures or Dashboards on a Centralized Platform**

#### **What:**

The ARNG Directorate and regional communities of practice will identify the data and authoritative data sources most relevant to decision-making, and host a public-facing (based on appropriate security level) central common operating picture (COP) platform with real- or near-real time data. <sup>7</sup>

#### **Why:**

Coherence in a complex system requires better seeing and measuring common goals. Relying on the regional professional communities and ARNG Staff directorates to identify most relevant data assists in generating trust, transparency, and accountability, while also allowing for shifting of the evaluated metrics based on improved understanding of the environment and relationships of elements in the system.

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<sup>7</sup> Decision-making here referring to Enterprise Decision making, as well as both the ARNG Directorate and JFHQ levels of decision-making.



Some considerations and limitations include:

- Metrics and rankings can create new incentives and power dynamics and can be used as a weapon by those dissatisfied with specific outcomes or desiring change.
- Rankings can generate intense competition among those being evaluated, which can make their effects easier to see.
- Rankings can override the strategies organizations normally use to manage external pressures, making symbolic compliance harder to achieve.
- Rankings can transform the cognitive map of a field, making organizations more likely to behave in accordance with their rank.
- Rankings can drive changes in sense making, especially for those in charge of managing the numbers, through pressures to reverse-engineer the rankings formula.

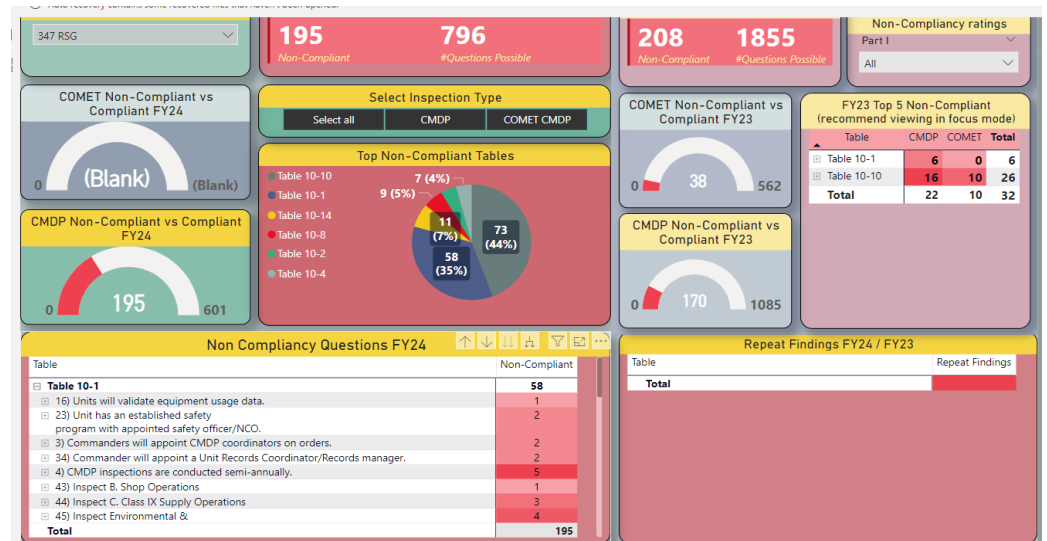


Figure 2-1 – An example of a Dashboard using PowerBI

These can be mitigated by constant evaluation and changes to metrics, and by using the metrics to resolve problems, not punish individuals or organizations.

### Related Army Campaign Plan Objectives:

- CO 2: Develop Leaders
- CO 3: Build a Positive Command Climate
- CO 26: Generate Strategic Readiness
- CO 27: Data-Centric Army
- Potentially other campaign objectives based on data identified by communities

Business Process Re-Engineering Lenses				
People	Process	Policy	Technology	Information
<p>Involving the right people means engaging ARNG Assistant Directors and Regional Professional Communities (MILPAC, PORTAG, EAGLE, IMAC, etc).</p> <p>Training may be required on</p>	<p>Process for creating COP/Dashboard should be established, documented, and communicated via NG PAM Task Management Tool used to communicate</p>	<p>Requirement will be communicated in National Guard Regulation (NGR).</p> <p>Candor should be encouraged in both policy and process, by ensuring these</p>	<p>Existing resources in A365 empowered by training available in the community through the A365 Champions network and local experts.</p>	<p>Data storage and communication must be in accordance with relevant security and transparency requirements. Metrics identification is critical, and should be identified by the following criteria:</p>

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<p>PowerBI and how to properly build dashboards/COPs. This is widely available through existing DoD resources, including the A365 Champions community, CDAO, and many state and NGB leaders.</p> <p>Early adopters to this process should be the G-8/CFO, PORTAG, and COSAC, as linking resources to requirements repeatedly appears in sensing data as a critical area for improvement.</p>	<p>and identify key metrics in ARNG staff directorates</p>	<p>self-identified metrics are not directly linked to professional or organizational consequences. Instead, they should drive discussion about resourcing and policy changes needed to solve common problems.</p>		<p>-Informs decision-making at both NGB and JFHQ levels -Enables holistic view of the ARNG Enterprise, specifically how the elements of the ARNG enterprise influence and impact each other.</p>
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## Broad Option: The “Digital Smoke Pit”

### What:

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“Social media is the new war college seminar room, military journal, and officers' club barroom rolled into one. Mixed in with jokes and snark, some of the most important issues of the military profession are being hashed out online, often under the hashtag #miltwitter.” -Peter Singer, Task and Purpose

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The ARNG harnesses social media’s informal mentorship and forward-sensing capabilities through organizational accounts. An NGB-PAO or NGB Reddit account can dispel misinformation at the source, and would be a critical listening tool to identify upcoming problems or adapt messages and narratives to best connect with an audience. ARNG-SPI, DARNG-SIG, or PAO could manage the account. The amount of work this requires could be reduced by leveraging those in the formation who already regularly use these platforms.

### Why:

Formal data collection methods are critical, but direct communication and informal sources must still supplement them where appropriate. Drawing inspiration from Eisenhower’s philosophy, the ARNG codifies a "Leadership by Walking Around [Online]" approach, which involves active participation in social media communities where ARNG Servicemembers engage. This is not a departure from tradition, but an expansion. By engaging on platforms like Reddit as active participants, not passive observers, leaders have shown they can combat misinformation and rebuild trust. Authentic two-way communication – where people are heard and validated – will improve the



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ARNG's brand perception and allow senior leaders at JFHQs and the ARNG Directorate to better identify issues impacting the force.

Social media has become the principal domain for identifying Servicemember and family issues. Peter Singer referred to social media as a “new war college seminar room, military journal, and officers' club barroom [sic] rolled into one.” A more appropriate analogy might be the enlisted Soldiers' smoke pit, where daily posts to X (formerly known as Twitter) and Reddit highlight challenges impacting morale.

During SMA Grinston's tenure, the SMA-PAO Reddit account engaged in thousands of posts, disputing misinformation, engaging in performative leadership, and messaging strategic priorities. Most critical among these functions was providing a somewhat curated, but direct line of communication between Servicemembers and Army Senior Leaders. Using lessons learned from this approach, tying forward social media presence less to specific leaders and more to the organization at-large (for example, the ARNG Directorate, or the integrated prevention teams) enables forward engagement and sensing without challenging existing command structures.

### ***Related Army Campaign Plan Objectives:***

- CO 2: Develop Leaders
- CO 3: Build a Positive Command Climate
- CO 27: Data-Centric Army

<b>Business Process Re-Engineering Lenses</b>				
<b>People</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Policy</b>	<b>Technology</b>	<b>Information</b>
There are generational differences on the view and comfort with social media platforms.  Training may be required to bridge these gaps if this broad option is to be developed.	Ownership or rotating ownership would need to be assigned along with general guidelines for handling sensitive issues such as abuse, suicide, sexual assault, etc.	Forward-leaning social media presence can provide opportunity to educate on new and emerging policy issues.	Emerging technology including artificial intelligence can generate content for social media which could present security and disinformation concerns.	Data stewardship/records keeping requirements apply to social media.

## **Broad Option: Organizational Inspection Programs – Starting with NGB**

### ***What:***

The ARNG Directorate will update its organizational inspection program (OIP) following the publication of this paper and will share the documents and findings with the ARNG enterprise (except where doing so reveals personally identifiable information or causes harm), to set an example for the utility of internal inspections and communicating on key issues with candor.

### ***Why:***

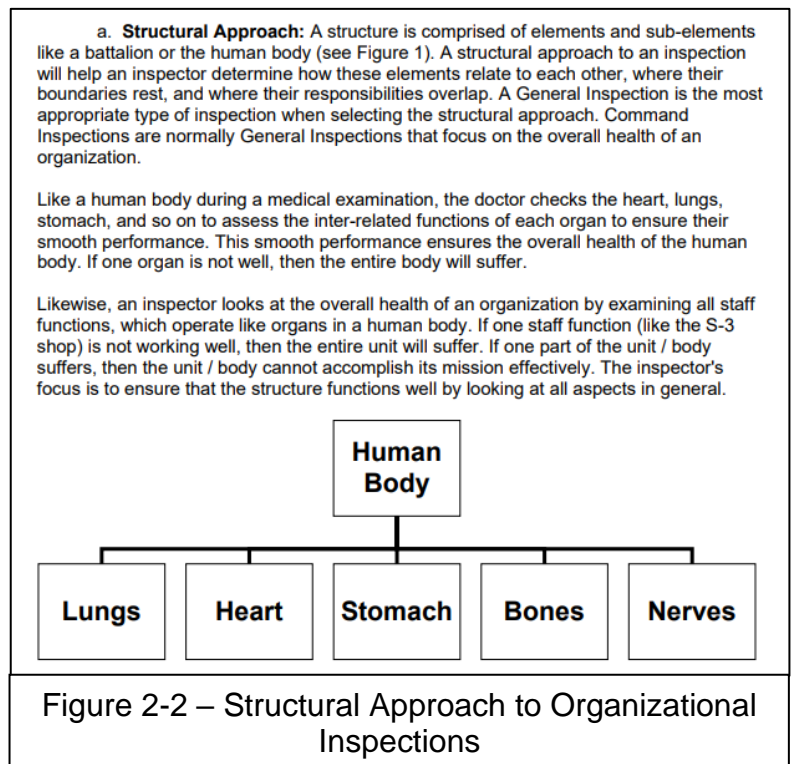
The Sustainment Readiness Advisory Council's Maintenance OPT recently identified the critical role of organizational inspection programs in creating visibility and transparency. In the Minnesota model for organizational inspection, all program discipline inspections related to equipment at echelon are rolled up and monitored by the J4 DRT (Deployment Readiness Team) on a state-managed server. Units can either drop the files in a drop box or email with each of the discipline program managers. Program results are computed by using Power BI. Each Discipline program has a dashboard that gives the current state status and trends.

Per AR 1-201, the OIP is a requirement for commanders at the Battalion level and above. OIP involves General Inspections, Command Inspections, and mandates that the inspections be purposeful, coordinated, focused on feedback, and instructive. While the Minnesota example above refers to their inspections related to maintenance/readiness, the program is considerably more flexible and can be applied across disciplines. A broad option for improving Seeing the Enterprise is to better incentivize and prioritize OIPs, beginning with the ARNG Directorate at NGB.

NGB OIP will be conducted in using the structural approach identified in the Army Organizational Inspection model (see right)

**Related Army Campaign Plan Objectives:**

- CO 4: Prevent / Reduce Harmful Behaviors
- CO 5: Deliver Installations & Services for Army 2030
- CO 27: Data-Centric Army



Business Process Re-Engineering Lenses				
People	Process	Policy	Technology	Information
Organizational resistance to this concept is possible, and inspections encourage perspective and condor.	ARNG CoS leads ARNG Directorate organizational inspection, using the Structural Approach identified in the Army OIP Commander's Guidance	No policy changes required, but inspection may identify some.	Publish OIP results will via SharePoint or SUPGUID as example for JFHQs.	Tie messaging and information to transparency and accountability.

## II-II. Broad Options for Better Understanding the ARNG Enterprise

Alignment to priorities turns data into metrics, and analysis turns data into information. Understanding the enterprise refers to the ability to analyze data, contextualize it, and use it to inform decision-making.

Understanding the enterprise refers to the ability to analyze information, contextualize it, and use it to inform decision-making. Quality analysis must consider the enterprise in both breadth and depth. Breadth of analysis refers to seeing the ARNG system's adjacent elements, including the Total Army, state governments, industry partners, communities, etc.

Depth of analysis refers to thinking of the organization in the context of time, both history and anticipated future. How will decisions impact stakeholders now, and the organization in the future? This type of understanding does not come naturally and must consider the art and science of enterprise functioning, including understanding the simple, complicated, complex, and chaotic challenges to the organization outlined in DARNG Paper 2.

### Broad Option: Sharing and Visualizing Strategic Priorities

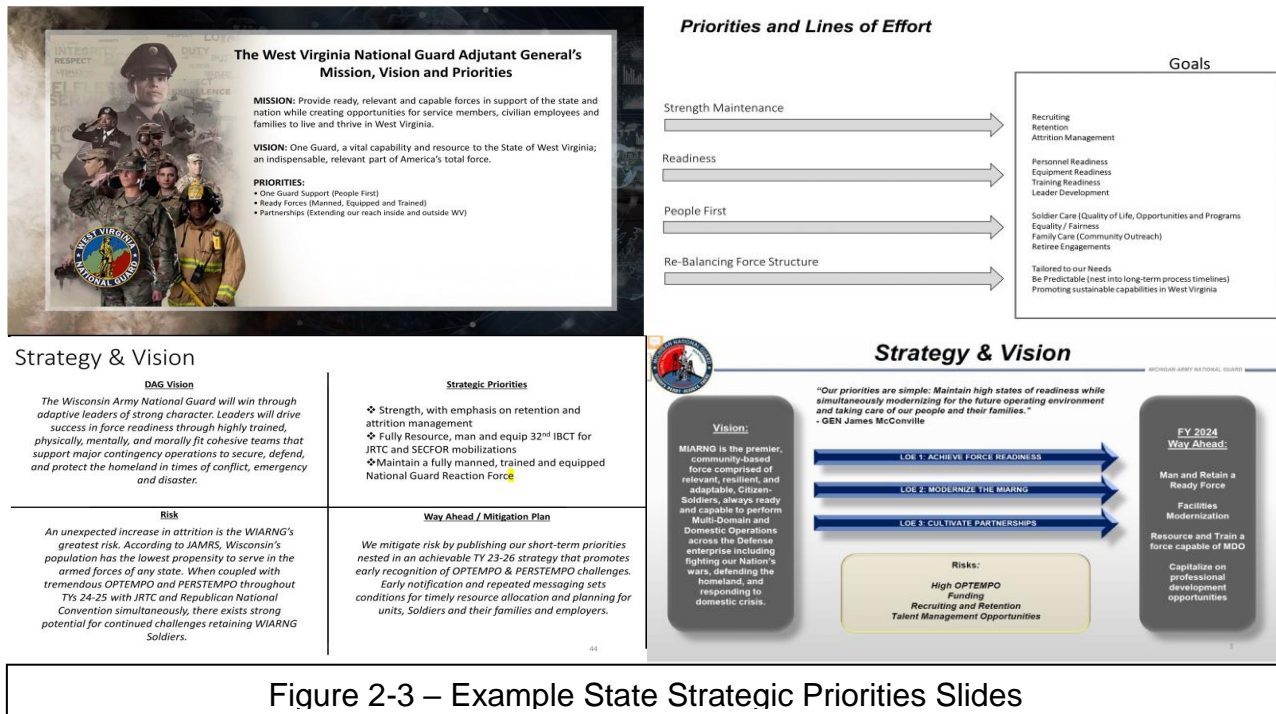


Figure 2-3 – Example State Strategic Priorities Slides

#### What:

ARNG G5-SPI establishes a "State Strategic Priorities" portal, informed by the ARNG G5/J5 network, identifying long-range goals of each state or territory. This portal allows states to see the goals of states similar in size, geographically adjacent, or with similar challenges to allow for better

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information sharing and collaboration across the 54. States currently communicate this information to NGB through State-of-the-State briefings, and this information is not currently centrally available to the enterprise. These priorities are displayed alongside the ARNG, HQDA, DoD, and National Strategic documents to allow rapid analysis and understanding of the organization.

### **Why:**

The ARNG has some common interests and priorities, and many divergent ones. Alignment and understanding information requires identifying those shared and diverse equities. A central repository streamlines access to those priorities, allowing better nesting and identification of areas of mutual benefit.

### **Related Army Campaign Plan Objectives:**

- CO 2: Develop Leaders
- CO 3: Build a Positive Command Climate
- CO 26: Generate Strategic Readiness
- CO 27: Data-Centric Army

Business Process Re-Engineering Lenses				
People	Process	Policy	Technology	Information
Communication between DARNG and TAGs about mutually supporting strategic goals and alignment is facilitated through ongoing strategic engagements at SLOS, ASEC, GOAC, etc.	ARNG-SPI initiates effort by coordinating with ARNG Protocol for recently submitted State of the State briefings, and shared slides related to strategic or operational goals/priorities of the states, alongside current DARNG and HQDA priorities.	No policy changes required.	Portal leverages SharePoint and A365 for housing and sharing data.	TAGs, ATAGs, CoS, and G-5/J-5s are made aware of the portal through a concerted effort over the first year through SUPPGUID, G-5/J-5 Newsletter, and Governance 101 briefings/classes.

## **Broad Option: Improved Knowledge Management and Best Practices Portals**

### **What:**

Per ATP 6-01.1, "Knowledge management is the process of enabling knowledge flow to enhance shared understanding." Knowledge management (KM) is a doctrinal and regulatory requirement that leaders at echelon often accept risk on. This broad option involves collectively energizing KM efforts through creation of shared KM communities, portals, and incorporation into Enterprise decision-making. This begins with a linkage between the KM community and the formal and informal Governance community to review best practices for Enterprise decision-making, as well

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as establishing best-practice portals for each of the ARNG professional communities (something many already do).

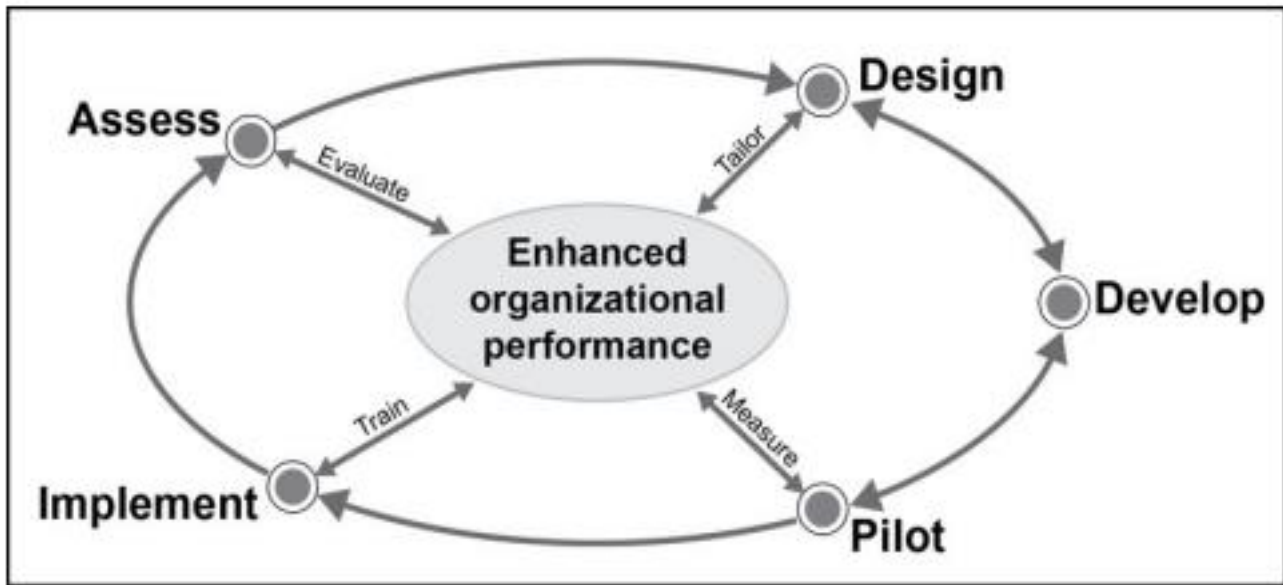


Figure 2-4 – Knowledge Management Linked to Organizational Performance

### **Why:**

Knowledge management (KM) across the ARNG enterprise is a critical element of enterprise functioning. The ARNG Directorate and JFHQs should work together to review current KM successes, failures, and gaps. Additionally, best practices currently reside in a variety of locations across MilSuite, SharePoint, Microsoft Teams, and others. Centralizing the location for ARNG best practices (for example, a COSAC-designated location with MILPAC, EAGLE, IMAC, etc. concurrence) significantly streamlines organizational learning and enterprise functioning.

Knowledge management also helps to provide more “clean” and consistent data sets that can be used to leverage new technologies (see: Leveraging AI).

### **Related Army Campaign Plan Objectives:**

- CO 2: Develop Leaders
- CO 3: Build a Positive Command Climate
- CO 27: Data-Centric Army

## **Broad Option: Better Align and Leverage Historian Resources**

### **What:**

The previous two options allow the ARNG to better understand itself in breadth, while this option allows it to better understand itself in depth. The ARNG will leverage existing historian resources, authorizations, and organizations to archive, share, and analyze unit, state, and ARNG-wide information, and better incorporate representatives from the NGB history office in Director’s Decision Forum processes to identify historical analogy and context for current and proposed policy.

### **Why:**

This effort is critical for two major reasons. First, ARNG perspective on major historical events from 2000-2024 is at risk, as efforts to consolidate these perspectives have been limited, and Army



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historical databases and sources are fragmented across multiple entities. Second, because states do not uniformly apply resources to history, there is significant risk of disproportionate representation in the history of specific states and perspectives, when compared across the ARNG enterprise. Finally, there are many challenges that occur repeatedly for the ARNG. For example, there are many lessons learned from the “enhanced brigade” effort that can apply to “focused readiness unit” efforts, or the Associated Units Program with the round-out/round-up concepts.

These examples played out in very similar ways, decades apart from each other. While Army and military history is a key section of Army Professional Military Education, understanding the history of the ARNG is not specifically required. The ARNG benefits from consideration of its history more than most DoD components.

Military history and heritage program practices vary greatly from state to state, as do the unique historical and cultural identity of each of those states’ ARNG. Unfortunately, only about fifteen states have identified historians, which means those states disproportionately influence the ARNG’s historical archive. Without adding new resourcing, states without designated historians can rely on centrally available history resources at the NGB history office, the Center for Military History, and other private and academic institutions to better identify, archive, and inform decision-making in the context of time. The forthcoming update to *I Am the Guard* provides opportunities for enterprise-wide engagement and education on ARNG history.

### ***Related Army Campaign Plan Objectives:***

- CO 2: Develop Leaders
- CO 3: Build a Positive Command Climate
- CO 27: Data-Centric Army

## **A Note on Broad Options Related to AI and Machine Learning – What is AI?<sup>8</sup>**

Working groups identified many options reliant on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML). Because they reflect new technology and many new concepts, it is worth reviewing what AI and ML are before identifying broad options using these new and emerging capabilities. In a chapter in *New Makers of Modern Strategy*, Dr. Joshua Rovner identified a cyclical pattern of response by senior leaders and strategists to new technologies:

- Fantasy, in which the new domain or technology is identified as the solution to many, possibly all, problems
- Fear, in which realities and capabilities of the new domain or technology lead to attempts to control or protect against it
- Resignation, in which leaders identify that while impactful, the new domain or technology has limitations and cannot alone overcome bureaucratic, resourcing, and/or organization culture issues

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<sup>8</sup> Note, this option was discussed and may be approved by the ARNG cybersecurity office, pending further review by ARNG G-2/6/AV, DARNG, and others.

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Leaders across the DoD are at various stages of the above process. Understanding the technology behind can assist in better imagining use cases, mitigating risks, and implement AI/ML strategies. To that end, this note is included to introduce these options.

### Statistics at Scale

AI/ML are essentially “applied statistics at scale.” ML tools have existed for generations, but computing power growth and data access have led to

recent explosive growth in use within industry, academic, and social circles. They are excellent tools for enhancing enterprise functioning, but only if properly understood in their full context, including their limitations, security concerns, and best use cases.<sup>9</sup>

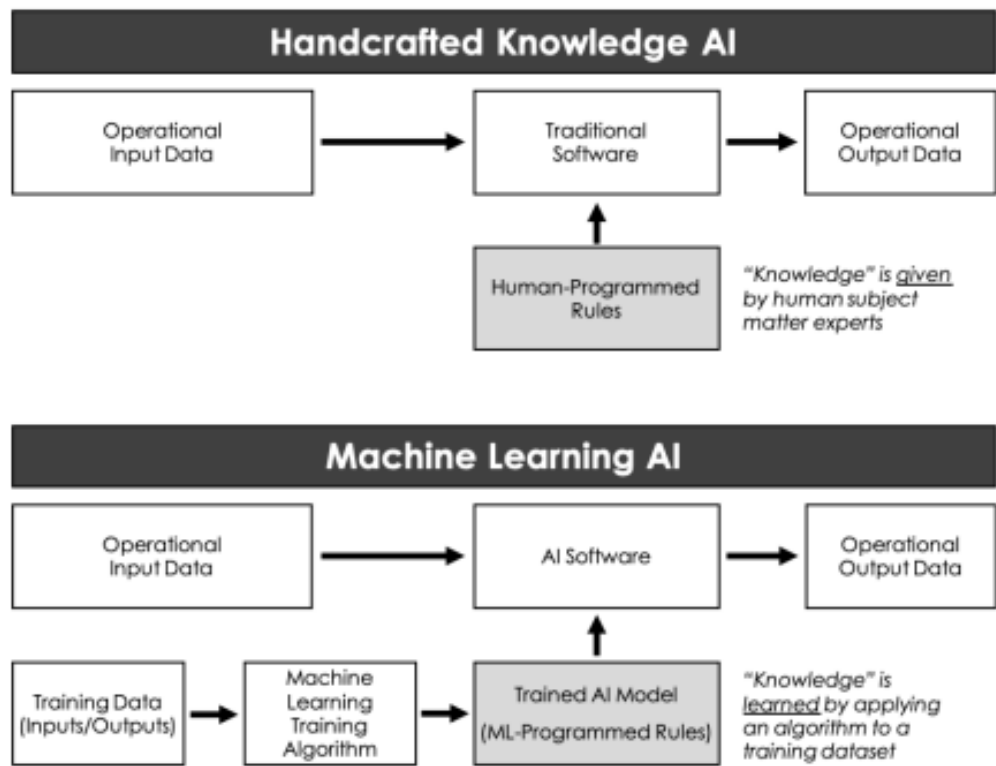


Figure 2-4 – Understanding Machine Learning AI vs Handcrafted Knowledge AI (Traditional Software)

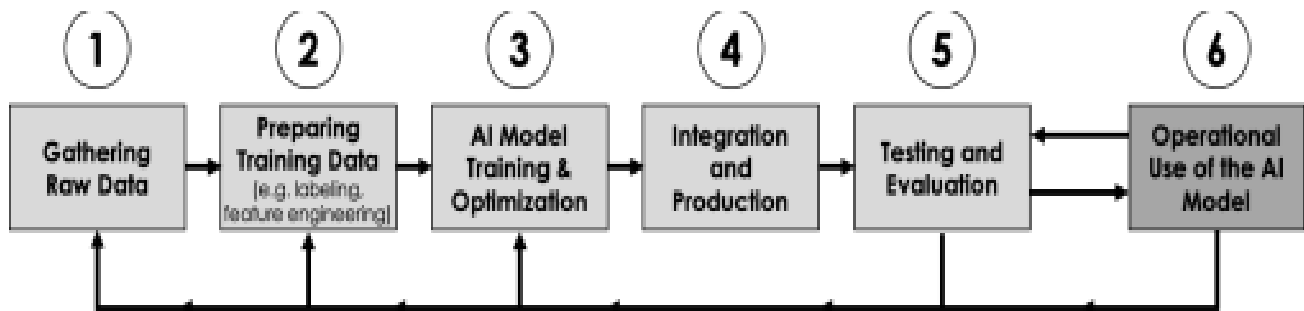


Figure 2-4 – Developing AI/ML Solutions

In simplest explanation, AI makes predictions about things based on vast amounts of information. For example, in a large language model, words are “tokenized” (converted to numbers), and the model predicts which word is most likely to come next based on analysis of billions of word combinations. Those billions of word combinations are usually based on social media, traditional media, and other sources that reflect human language. Statistical analysis of likely co-occurrent words leads to “weights.” For example, the most common next word following “what is the capital of

<sup>9</sup> Figures in this section are credited to “Understanding Artificial Intelligence Technology,” a publication of the Joint Artificial Intelligence Center

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France” is almost certainly “Paris.” A collection of “weights” applied to a new set of data is the “**model**.”

Purely following statistical likelihood does not actually work, though, as it ends up sounding too robotic. To keep things human-sounding, the results are *slightly* randomized. This slight randomization is called the “**temperature**,” recreating humans speech tendencies.

It is important to note that the model has no way of knowing if its predictions are correct, as correctness is a human interpretation. Programmers “train” the model through reinforcing and adjusting the weights, thus providing the general framework for predictions, so the model is a system of weights for evaluating data. When this model is exposed to new data, that new data is called the “**context**.”

Because this simulates what human beings do, but with perfect memory, these models can produce effective insights, shorten decision-making, and reduce manpower required for certain tasks.

Unfortunately, they are not without limitations and downsides. Training data transfers inherent biases to the model. Additionally, there are significant security concerns for DoD users. The DoD Information Network (DoDIN) currently blocks most generative AI tools due to concerns about data being collected and used to reinforce models. This includes not only the data users intentionally feed to models, but also the metadata about users (location, IP address, etc.) that can be collected and potentially exploited.

The ARNG Cybersecurity Office is the authorizing official/designated representative for National Guard DoDIN access and has authority to grant exceptions to policy to this ban for certain use cases. This office is interested in hearing how the ARNG uses AI/ML across the force so it can best tailor exceptions and possible solutions. To illustrate use cases with varying security implications, consider the following broad options, one that is higher risk and another with lower risk.

Multiple broad options proposed in this paper recommend AI/ML use. Those options are labeled “Leverage AI” for easy identification. Of note, the generally established best use cases for AI/ML are for **dull, dirty, or dangerous tasks**. When combined with robotics, there are many operational possible use cases for AI/ML in warfighting. When combined with automation, there are many administrative uses for AI/ML in improving the speed and accuracy of processing and handling large volumes of information.

As these papers are primarily a work of institutional strategy, not operational strategy, options focus on building enterprise understanding, enabling decision-making, and automating dull work. The best type of AI/ML model for this type of work is retrieval-augmented generation (RAG). These models identify the specific data source used to generate an answer, allowing for better assessment of the model’s answers to user prompts.

Business Process Re-Engineering Lenses				
People	Process	Policy	Technology	Information
Training and education are required to mitigate risks of ML/AI related to aggregation of resources.	Traditional process improvement must be applied to processes prior to automation or linkage to AI/ML.	Policy related to AI/ML is rapidly being developed and implemented, creating potential for gaps.	Numerous and competing AI/ML solutions are emerging and fading, introducing perpetual opportunities and risk.	For the ARNG, the Information Technology Oversight Council-Guard centralizes information and policy on AI/ML



## Leverage AI: After Action Review Chatbot (High Risk)

### **What:**

This broad option involves creating a library of all After Action Reports/Reviews conducted by National Guard forces, including those from real-world missions and Combat Training Center (CTC) rotations. The benefit of AI/ML in processing this level of data is that users can rapidly identify lessons learned applicable to their own units and challenges

### **Why:**

While lessons learned are often captured, they are just as often lost or not effectively leveraged. For example, a user could prompt AARGPT: “I’m taking a Battalion from a Stryker Brigade Combat Team to NTC this summer. What are the recent experiences of using base cluster versus consolidated battalion support areas?” The user will receive a readable, evidence-based series of recommendations.

**This type of use case is fairly high risk.** The data provided could rapidly aggregate to a classified nature, especially when discussing gaps and vulnerabilities that CTC white cells experimented with. Introducing this data into an unsecured commercial network could rapidly expose the enterprise to significant risk.

This type of capability is coming, as the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) is currently developing models for DoD costumers that will theoretically secure data while allowing for model adjustments.

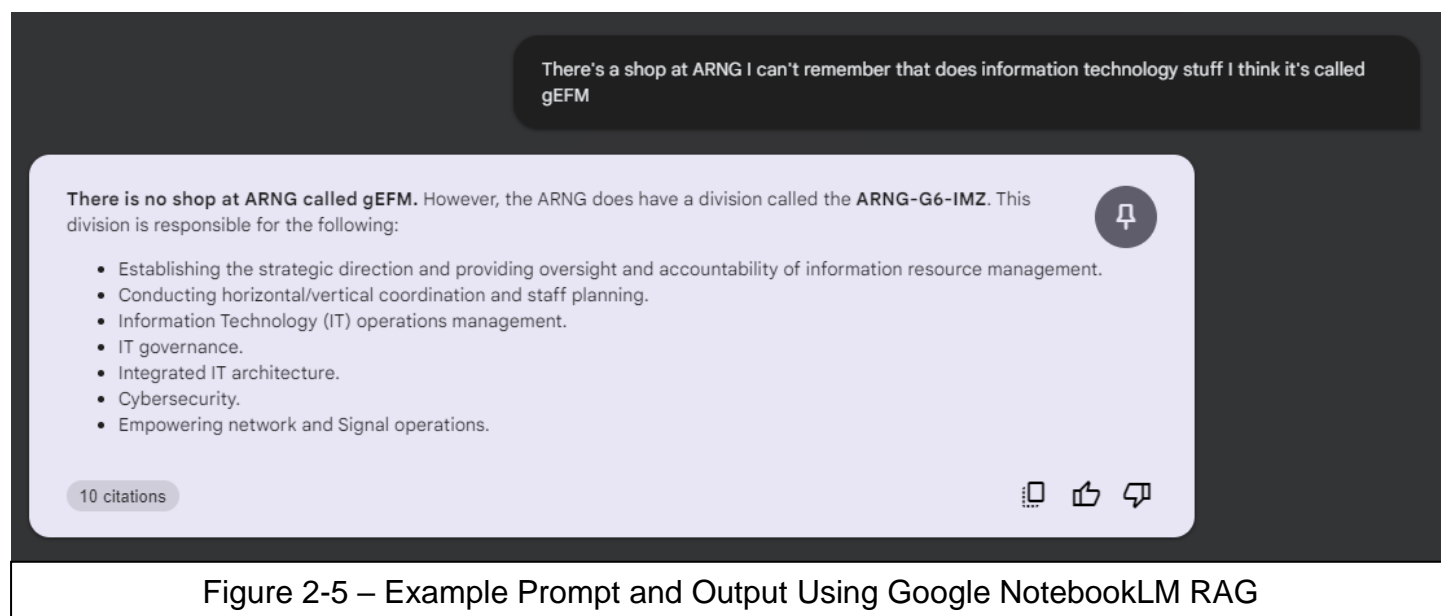
## Leverage AI: 1-800-CALL-NGB Chatbot (Lower Risk)

### **What:**

Use the ARNG Equities Guide and relevant NGB regulations, policies, and instructions to create a RAG allowing users across the ARNG to rapidly identify answers to common questions, and office/organizational inboxes to resolve their more complex challenges.

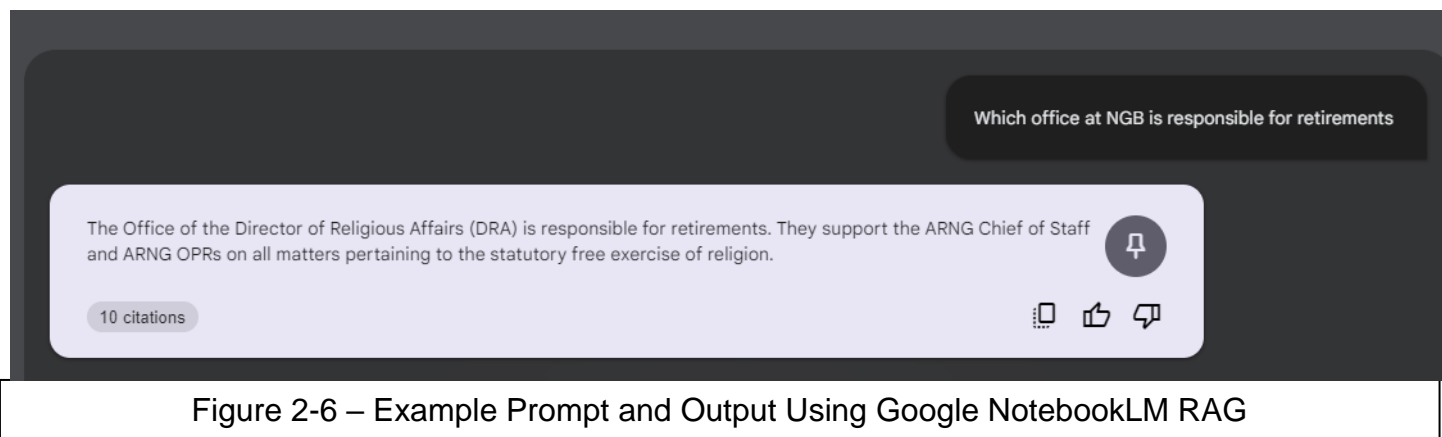
### **Why**

In contrast to the previous example, another use case with considerably more localized, yet potentially beneficial impact to the organization is creating a live, customer-facing chatbot for the ARNG Directorate. One frequent complaint from JFHQ leaders is that contacting the appropriate ARNG Directorate office for a question is frequently problematic; AGRs rotate, numbers change, and organizational inboxes shift. While each of those problems require addressing individually, loading the current ARNG Equity Guide with the office symbols, descriptions, equities, and general contact information for each ARNG staff directorate and office (without any personally identifying information) is an ideal and generally low-risk use case. Generative AI could allow a user to enter a prompt like “Who handles IT questions at the ARNG” and receive an up-to-date organizational email inbox address or phone number. An example using the ARNG equities guide and Google NotebookLM is shown in figures 2-5 and 2-6.



Future developments may include a library of DoD Directives, Army Regulations, and National Guard policy documents to allow users to rapidly query information about ARNG authorities, duty statuses, etc.

**This risk of this type of use case is fairly low.** All information being indexed is intended for public consumption, and there is minimal risk of aggregation for office and organizational inboxes. However, AI/ML is not perfect and can result in misfires, as shown below.



## **II-III. Behaving as an Enterprise to Strengthen the Profession**

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“We all know that our profession is huge. It is made up of countless units, teams, offices, and departments that are manned with people from all walks of life. I encourage every soldier and Army civilian to take responsibility for their piece of the profession. Each of us — no matter our rank, mission occupational specialty, or assignment — can strengthen the whole by strengthening its parts.”

-GEN Gary Brito, Commander, Training and Doctrine Command

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As the stable base of the United States Army, the ARNG must strengthen its part of the Army profession. This involves understanding the unique attributes, authorities, and legal structure of the ARNG, thinking critically about its role in the Army and Defense enterprises, and joining professional discourse on these topics. It also means carrying our weight to assist in reviewing, editing, contributing to Army professional journals, intentionally building diverse experiences

### **Broad Option: Guide and Incentivize Professional Writing<sup>10</sup>**

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Today our Army finds itself in an interwar period. We do not know when it will end, and so the work we must do is urgent work. We must modernize our equipment and doctrine, we must train hard, and we must reinvest in our profession. To do this work well, we cannot solely depend on the thoughts and voices of senior leaders in high command, as we can assure you: we do not have all the answers. Instead, we must strengthen our profession from top to bottom by building expertise through written discourse. We must also train hard on mission essential tasks and individual warfighting skills. This will ensure that when called, our Army is ready.

GEN Randy George, Chief of Staff of the Army

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#### **What:**

The DARNG and TAGs should join the Chief of Staff in the Army in encouraging, incentivizing, and facilitating professional writing. The intent of this broad option is to increase ARNG writer representation in Army University Press journals, including *Military Review*, the *Journal of Military Learning*, and the branch journals. Concurrently, ARNG staff members will work with Army University Press to ensure ARNG Subject Matter Expert (SMEs) editorial staff representation to identify and address potential history or policy disconnects in professional writing.

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<sup>10</sup> Draft note: the Army University Press director at USACAC and Strategic Leader Development Institute at PEC have discussed these options and tentatively approved them as of 24 FEB 2024, but this remains pre-decisional until approved as part of DARNG Paper #3. These options are currently on track for concurrent launch with DARNG Paper #3. The CSA's Project Harding staff supported development of this option.

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Roll-out: In phase 1 the ARNG Strategic Leader Development Institute (SLDI) will launch a public-facing portal available with the following elements, developed in collaboration with the DARNG SIG and DARNG Papers writing team.

1. DARNG writing project/research priorities (provided by DARNG SIG, possibly ARNG-SPI for GOAC priorities)
2. Professional writing resources currently available to ARNG members, including those developed by Professional Education Center (PEC), ARNG faculty at the Defense Strategy Course, the ARNG History Office, ARNG-SPI, and others
3. Listings of, and linkage to Army University Press professional publications, including submission criteria, focus, and current POCs
4. Short videos (either others' content linked through YouTube, or self-generated content from those teaching writing around the ARNG/Army)
5. Linkage to Project Harding guides, CSA featured articles, and resources through Substack

Concurrently, build an A365 Teams community of writers interested in the ARNG, which allows for collaborative writing, editing, and resource sharing. ARNG-SPI and PEC will moderate this community as appropriate.

Additionally, Army University Press will establish a permanent ARNG editor on the *Military Review* board, and establish an ARNG Non-Resident Writing Fellowship, where a promising ARNG writer is selected and develops an article with Army University Press support over the course of a year.

### **Why:**

Writing is thinking. The most effective way to encourage critical reflection on the ARNG as an enterprise is through encouraging writing on the topic. Aside from being a Chief of Staff of the Army priority, the ARNG has long been under-represented in professional writing, thinking, and research. By engaging with the Army's official professional publications, ARNG professionals can better link and nest with the Total Army. Other benefits of engaging with Army University Press include the ability to identify, redact, and correct false ARNG-related information that may be cited later if not appropriately linked to SMEs. Finally, Army University Press archives are more enduring than many popular contemporary defense websites and journals, ensuring that future researchers will benefit from today's writing.

## **Broad Option: Enhancing Trust in ARNG Talent Management – T10/T32 Swaps, Accountability**

### **What:**

Build trust across the ARNG in full-time staff (FTS) talent management, through better incentivizing or requiring T10/T32 swaps, and evaluating AGR personnel career status changes.

### **Why:**

One challenge to ARNG enterprise functioning is T10/T32 force permeability. AGR forces typically work in one world or the other, leading to decreased visibility and operational understanding at each end of the organization.

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A broad option for improvement is mandating that all T10 AGRs have a minimum of one T32 AGR tour or swap prior to O6 selection, or some similar incentivization method. This may help overcome one obstacle to enterprise functioning – the increasing competition for talent – by assuring if a state sends a high-performing AGR to the ARNG Directorate, the state can count on that Soldier returning for at least one additional T32 rotation, ideally bringing back the knowledge and experience gained from their T10 time.

Another option is introducing an internship/exchange program where mid-career T32 AGRs can spend time at NGB working in an OPR, and a mid-career T10 AGRs can spend time at a state JFHQ for a smaller time commitment than a standard tour, and without changing the pay status of the servicemember.

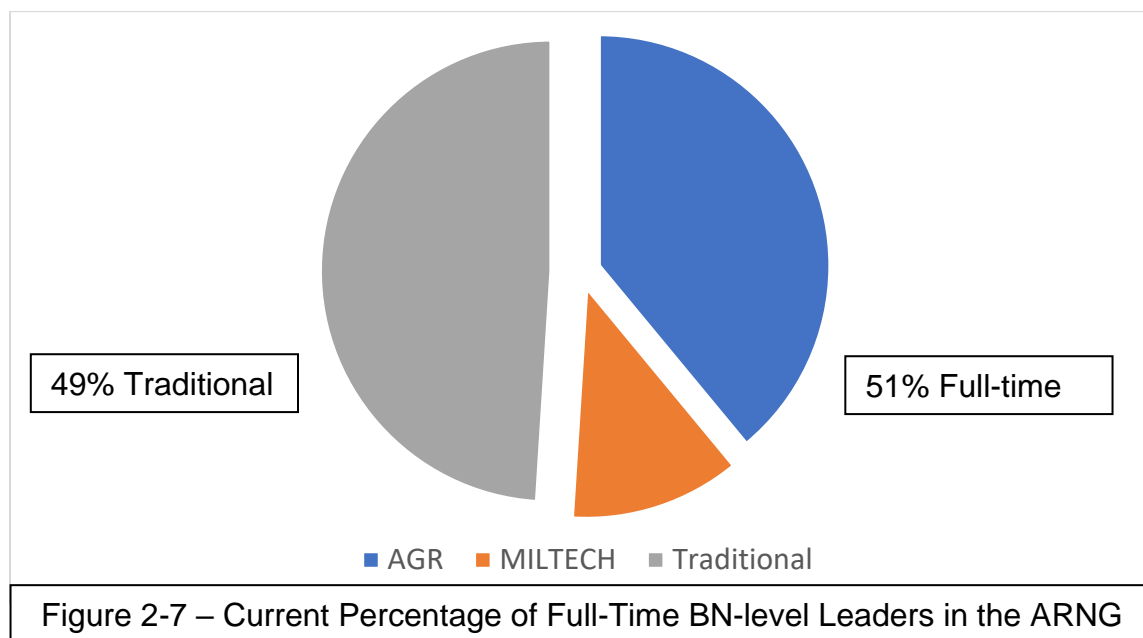
Finally, a recurring issue identified during surveys and working groups is the perception that the organization does not hold poor-performing AGR personnel accountable. The Air Force recently addressed this issue, changing how AGRs transition to career status, and converting the majority of its AGR force to term positions. The Army has the advantage of evaluating this program's effectiveness prior to implementing similar changes.

### **Broad Option: Conduct Internal Study of the Command Leadership and Staff Assignment Policy (CLASP) and the Realities of Command in an Integrated Reserve**

#### ***What:***

The ARNG Enterprise should critically review the Command Leadership and Staff Assignment Policy through formal study, professional writing, or internal audit, and update the policy in future versions of NGR 600-5.

#### ***Why:***



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Currently no states comply with NGR 600-5 policies regulating the percentage of AGRs in Key Development billets. The policy only applies to AGRs, but is identified as having a goal of no more than 10%, but currently 51% of battalion commanders are AGR or Military Technicians (MILTECH). ARNG leaders should review this policy to determine if it is in the best interest of the ARNG, traditional ARNG Servicemembers, and readiness/training requirements. The CLASP policy's stated intent to prevent AGRs from crowding out traditional Servicemembers and impairing their career progression. Surveys of the traditional population can answer whether this is occurring. Additionally, leaders must consider command quality in evaluating the CLASP policy.

The focus of the study should be to determine why this disconnect is occurring. Have requirements for becoming and performing as a battalion commander exceeded traditional Citizen-Soldier capacities in an era of persistent connectivity? Is trust higher among full-time staff because senior leaders are more familiar with them, making them more likely to select them for leadership? Options include internal review, formal study through the National Guard Studies Program, or simply cross-referencing units with AGR commanders against questions on Unit Risk Inventories relating to "trust in the unit commander to resolve issues." This is an example where the see-understand-behave paradigm can be applied to a specific area of functioning between states and across federal/state lines.

## **II-IV. Behaving as an Enterprise to Enable Continuous Transformation**

Strategic thinking involves critically evaluating information about the organization and developing theories of success. Strategic planning involves committing resources to put those theories in practice. Being adaptive means being willing to re-evaluate those theories in progress by establishing measurement tools, and then adjusting either the approach, the measurement tool, or the goals based on interaction between the organization and its environment.

The ARNG is not currently well structured to engage in continuous transformation because of a combination of factors.

- Strategic thinking requires free time, a resource that very few ARNG leaders have
- Distribution of authorities reduces the span of control of leaders in the ARNG
- The organization does not incentivize diverse and innovative thinking as well as it does success within established parameters

Behaving as an enterprise to enable continuous transformation begins with having examples to follow. Pilot programs in reforming resource management, centralization and decentralization efforts, and adapting cultural practices can set the tone and help the ARNG enterprise become more adaptive. Both of the options presented here are partially in-progress at NGB.

### **Broad Option: Transform the Resource Management Enterprise**

#### ***What:***

1. Design, implement, and inculcate collaborative, streamlined resource management decision forums and processes.
2. Develop tools to provide shared situational awareness concerning funding to foster transparency and facilitate an enterprise approach to resource management.

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3. Further develop a culture of good fiscal stewardship through training, improved management controls, and enhanced leadership understanding of resourcing.
4. Work to develop a whole of ARNG enterprise mindset concerning funding (a culture of “our money” versus “my money”).

### **Why:**

The vision for resource management in the ARNG centers on being proactive and not reactive, and through resourcing decisions shaping the future of the ARNG. This future state requires the ARNG to establish mechanisms and put processes in place to continually review programs for current and future applicability, identify areas for efficiencies, to identify reallocation from underperforming programs to programs that are critical to mission success and DARNG priorities, and balance risk.

The end state is an agile RM enterprise that is totally synchronized and integrated across the PPBE spectrum not only in time, but at echelon (e.g. NGB, PMs, states, etc.) all working toward a common goal.

### **Related Army Campaign Plan Objectives:**

- CO 2: Develop Leaders
- CO 3: Build a Positive Command Climate
- CO 27: Data-Centric Army

## **Broad Option: Centralize Pay and Benefits**

### **What:**

Building on pilot programs already occurring between ARNG G1, Nebraska, and New Mexico, build a centralized system for paying IDT training, bonuses, and other pay and allowances.

### **Why:**

Historical resource inefficiencies from the current decentralized environment compounded by multiple financial systems limitations, requires a need to explore a new process. Centralization postures ARNG for future Soldier pay transactions through the Integrated Personnel and Pay System – Army (IPPS-A).

Central management of the program eliminates allotment challenges experienced when operating under a continuing resolution authority (CRA). Incorrect funding distributions, cause IDT resources to be misaligned to the wrong state. It provides greater decision space for the DARNG throughout the FY by allowing he or she to assume risk within IDT to realign resources to other manning and training programs. It eliminates the habitual concern at the state level whether they will be adequately resourced for September UTAs. It allows for financial system efficiencies by removing process steps that result in frivolous obligations and lagging disbursements, which will result in more accurate program estimates and forecasts. Central management will better enable resourcing of lower priority items (regulatory UTAs and IDT Travel). Finally, it will result in manpower efficiencies within state G3 and USPFO offices by eliminating those required functions at the state level.

This process eliminates half of the bureaucracy required to process Soldiers pay and can improve overall enterprise functioning.



## **Broad Option: ARNG Innovation and Process Improvement Portal**

***What:***

Alongside the best practices portal identified in previous section, identify portal to identify common organizational problems, currently existing innovation resources between state, ARNG, and NGB Joint Staff levels, and highlight successes in innovation.

***Why:***

Innovation efforts are currently fragmented across numerous shops without a consistent central ARNG governance forum or visibility. Creating a centralized portal can assist in identifying novel approaches, common problems, and creative solutions across the ARNG enterprise.

## **II-V. Behaving as an Enterprise to Deliver Combat-Ready Formations**

### **Broad Option: Five Year Planning Model and Aggregated Common Operating Picture of Taskings**

***What:***

Using a central system of record, adapt a five-year planning model as the standard across the JFHQ and ARNG Directorate. This includes recording all known taskings/scheduling in a central repository, such as the Army Synchronization Tool, for routine and predictable tasks.

***Why:***

Routine and predictable tasks for ARNG units include: Combat Training Centers (CTCs), eXportable Combat Training Centers (xCTCs), State Partnership Program Events (SPP), Overseas Deployment Training (ODTs), Command Post Exercises (CPX), New Equipment Training/New Equipment Fielding (NET/NEF), Observer Controller/Trainer (OC/T) provider, National Guard Response Force (NGRF), Homeland Response Force Evaluation Exercises, and mobilizations. Most of these requirements flow through the National Guard Bureau. Routine and predictable tasks originating at the JFHQ level include: state-level exercises, inspections, trainings (including support to regional training institute events), annual trainings, state-identified and resourced training requirements, event security and response, and others.

Working groups identified that some of these taskings – at all echelons – are given with less notice than is possible, and there is not a shared common operating picture of these taskings across levels of the organization. Incentivizing the organization to use a common system of record and establish a five-year planning horizon as the norm can improve visibility and predictability across the enterprise. The strongest candidate system for this would be the Army Synchronization Tool, which is currently used by many state staff elements use to consolidate and deconflict taskings. Further encouraging and developing use of this tool, and inputting more state- and unit-based information, will assist in aligning resources to requirements and reduce overtasking or conflicting taskings.



## Broad Option: Incentivizing and Engineering for Honest Unit Status Reporting

The first time that officers sign an OER support form authenticating a counseling session that never happened or check a box saying, “I have read the above requirements” when they really only glanced at the 1,800-word IA acceptable use policy, they might feel a tinge of ethical concern [...] Even the Army’s ubiquitous PowerPoint charts provide briefers the ability to focus on intricate color coded metrics and thus distance themselves from the inaccurate or ambiguous information the metrics may be conveying.

-Dr. Wong and Dr. Gerras, [Lying to Ourselves](#), Army War College Publication, 2015

### What:

Create a working group focused on building candor in official reporting. This should be informed by research on psychological safety and candor in organizations, and how to ensure that changing metrics are used to generate solutions for the organization, not only to punish or reward individuals.

### Why:

This broad option may be one of the most critical, most complex, and most difficult to accomplish. As Wong and Gerras identified in 2015, the volume of information Army leaders contend with today creates an uncomfortable increase in dishonesty. Furthermore, poor data quality creates “gray areas” for dishonest reporting. An example is the Unit Status Report (USR) R-rating, where vehicles without recent Preventive Maintenance Checks and Services (PMCS) generally retain their last equipment readiness status, which actively disincentivizes PMCS or appropriately dispatching those vehicles, for fear of negatively changing that equipment’s readiness status.



Every system is perfectly designed for the results it is getting. ARNG leaders should apply a combination of Policy, Process, People, and Technology solutions – the Army Business Process Re-Engineering framework – to USR reporting to pursue all avenues for increasing accurate reporting across the enterprise.

Figure 2-8 – Army BPR lenses

This could be a key topic for a six-month decision cycle across the Readiness Advisory Councils, which include representation from all warfighting functions, and could provide key insights on the impacts and tensions related to honest and accurate reporting.

## Broad Option: Centralize SME-provided 350-1 Training

### What

As an additional touchpoint between NGB and the JFHQs, offer convenient subject matter expert-led virtual training to meet AR 350-1 requirements to the states.

### Why

AR 350-1 and NGR 350-1 outline numerous annual training requirements. Many of these allow a live subject-matter expert to provide the training. A service the ARNG Directorate could provide the

states is offering some of these trainings via live stream, which has the added benefit of being able to add a small bit of education on the ARNG enterprise, role of NGB, etc. This could make progress toward incremental exposure to ARNG enterprise functioning across an ARNG Servicemember's career.

## Way Ahead

### ARNG Enterprise Governance and Decision-Making

The DARNG Papers are a work of institutional strategy, communicated through advice and guidance, and manifested in policy, processes, programming decisions. These papers are not all-inclusive and represent only a part of this effort. ARNG leaders will share and validate the concepts in this paper in senior leader conferences and meetings, ARNG governance forums, Readiness Advisory Councils, and through surveys and sensing sessions across the total force, including our AC and USAR teammates. Enhanced communication and transparency through these governance forums and outreach efforts will provide enterprise-level visibility and understanding. They will also provide a venue for the 54 to share best practices and resolve problems.

### The ARNG Enterprise Decision-Making Process

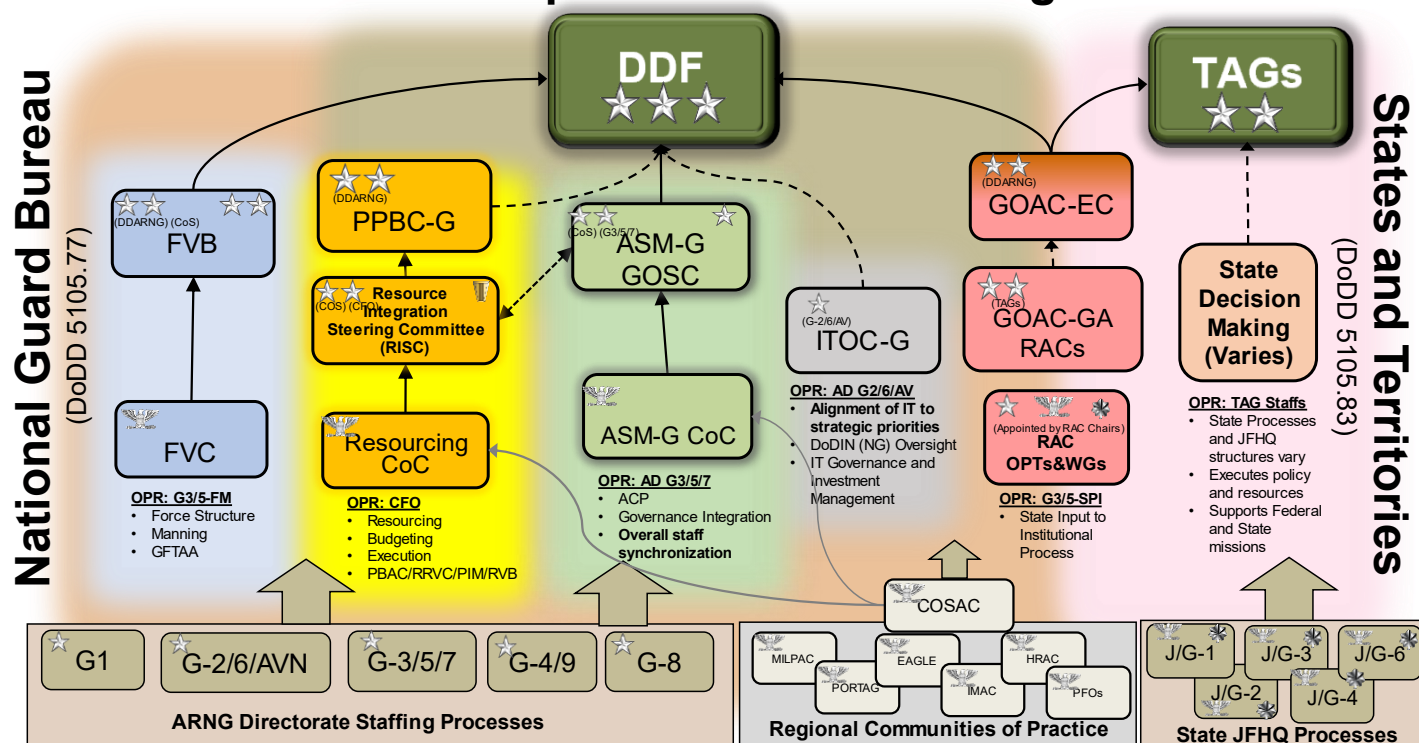


Figure 2-9 – Pre-Decisional ARNG Enterprise Decision-Making Process

The ARNG Directorate has adapted its governance processes numerous times over the last few years with the intent of providing better transparency and accountability while providing ARNG senior leaders with relevant perspectives from across the enterprise. Figure 2-9 proposes an enterprise-wide decision making process grounded in the parallel command structures of the ARNG.

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Many states have elected to adopt similar decision-making processes to the NGB processes, including a Council of Colonels/General Officer Steering Committee mechanism. An advantage of this is easier communication and collaboration across decision-making platforms.

This also includes the proposal to nest the COSAC formally into the Resourcing Council of Colonels and Army Synchronization Meeting-Guard Council of Colonels to represent state interests, including representing concerns identified by the regional communities of practice (MILPAC, PORTAG, EAGLE, IMAC, HRAC, etc.). This input is at the discretion of the regional communities, who do not formally report to the ARNG Directorate at NGB as self-organized regional bodies.

## Professional Writing Topics

Similarly, professional writing is a key way to ensure we consider diverse viewpoints, allowing us to see and understand the enterprise from multiple perspectives, and enabling enterprise-level behavior. This conversation must occur as part of the Total Army. To meet this goal, the ARNG must engage in a higher level of professional discourse in Army forums and professional journals, beginning with Army University Press publications. As part of the broad option above to encourage these discussions, I am announcing the first DARNG Call for Papers, which will help us identify and develop discussions reflecting the ARNG's diversity of voices.

DARNG Paper #1 raised many questions worth continued exploration, and we did not explore all of them in the subsequent papers. Any of those questions is worthy of continued exploration by thinkers across 54, so I invite the ARNG to review the writing resources available on PEC's new site and join the conversation in Army University Press.

Specifically, my office is soliciting continued writing on the following topics:

- Questions identified in DARNG Paper 1 (Asking the Right Questions)
- ARNG service in interwar periods (current and historical)
- Generational Readiness that ensures an integrated reserve
- Applying lessons of history to current challenges in the Army/ARNG
- How to leverage our federalist model of the ARNG for continuous transformation
- The organizational culture of ARNG of a state/territory
- Methods of engaging/hearing traditional Soldiers' views on strategic institutional issues


Papers submitted will be considered for publication in a forthcoming special edition of Military Review (FY 2025), and authors will have the opportunity to present their papers at AUSA. I encourage writers to challenge our current assumptions and ways of doing business, and to help identify historical or social context through the four lenses identified in DARNG Paper #1.

I encourage Servicemembers across the Total Army to join us in sharing thoughts on this paper series, and on how the ARNG fits into an evolving Total Army through the Harding Project's shared efforts on professional writing with Army University Press.

Concurrently, the ARNG will review National Guard Regulations and Pamphlets for gaps and opportunities to better formalize enterprise-level processes or professional standards. Some of these include NGR 600-5, NGR 350-1, and NG PAMs related to managing knowledge and data sharing.

## Conclusion

It is my sincere hope that my time as DARNG helped move the ball forward on some of our most critical issues. Leaders and administrators at every ARNG echelon have the honor of carrying forth the legacy of several hundred years of service and leaving our organizations better than how we found them. One of the key differences in ARNG service is our unit-based nature. This means some units have members serving for multiple decades in the same formation. The strength and connection this creates is beyond compare. It also requires professionals be willing to step back and routinely reassess how their part plays into the greater whole. Through writing, discussion, and intentional engagement, I am confident the next generation of Guardsmen will continue to honor that commitment, keeping the ARNG Always Ready, Always There, and always adapting.



Jon A. Jensen  
Lieutenant General  
Director, Army National Guard

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# ANNEX A – Methodology

DARNG paper 1 outlined systemic tensions, and DARNG paper 2 outlined obstacles and defined a problem statement. DARNG paper 3's key deliverable is a shared strategic direction (part I) broad options for TAGs and future DARNGs based on current and expected changes in the environment (part II). The broad options are presented can be thought of as strategic “ways,” or approaches to solving problems outlined in paper 2. They are presented here in the context of enterprise-level objectives related to the End State and limited to currently available “means” (authorities, resources, documents, forums, processes, systems, and groups).

To develop these broad options as an enterprise, the writing team convened multiple working groups of 8-12 individuals throughout the ARNG, both virtually and in-person. These groups explored the current “means” by identifying documents, forums, relevant to key areas of functioning. The groups brainstormed new ways to use existing means and elements of the organization to enhance enterprise functioning. Almost 100 individuals were involved in this process over two months, and concurrent engagements with Senior leaders at the Senior Leader offsite in Winter of 2023 and General Officer Advisory Council in Spring of 2024 further developed some concepts.

These options **do not** reflect current policy of the DARNG or TAGs and are not courses of action. Broad options are presented in this paper without prioritization and are intended to continue to drive discussion and thought across the ARNG, in professional writing, and in the next series of Governance events.

These broad options were developed with the following constraints:

- Options are limited to policy, process, or resourcing changes within the control of JFHQ or ARNG Directorate at NGB
- Options may only rely on existing resources, IT systems, and manning
- Options are focused first and foremost on improving the enterprise functioning and governance of the ARNG

The working groups included representatives of all ranks and from multiple states and directorates at NGB. The options are grouped into the following categories:

- Better Seeing and Understanding the ARNG Enterprise, and
- Behaving as an Enterprise to:
  - Strengthen the Profession
  - Continuously Transform
  - Deliver Combat Ready Formations

These options are proposed in addition to current initiatives underway at NGB to improve the organization, including:

- NGB Cyber Strategy
- ARNG Digital Reform Strategy
- ARNG Intelligence Modernization Plan



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- ARNG Resource Management Redesign
- ARNG G-1 IDT Centralization Pilot
- ARNG Governance 3.0

