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**DWG:** I want to say thank you Lieutenant General Luckey, Chief of the Army Reserve and Commanding General of the U.S. Army Reserve Command. A third-time visitor to the Defense Writers Group, so we appreciate --

**Lt. Gen. Luckey:** Almost a veteran, right?

**DWG:** I wanted to ask you about the effect of the federal government shutdown on the Army Reserve, since your command is populated by people who in most cases have other jobs besides being soldiers. What impact did the shutdown of the government have on your workforce to the extent that you can get into that?

**Lt. Gen. Luckey:** It's certainly something I'm more than happy to talk about, but frankly, I don't have any better insight probably than anybody else here. And the reason for that is, as most of you know, 92 percent of our work force the soldiers in America's Army Reserve have jobs that are outside of the Department of Defense, or at least outside of the uniformed services of the United States.

What I mean by that is our soldiers are, frankly, no different than any other civilian employee of the federal government or in the private sector who may have benefited from programs that were disrupted or degraded by virtue of the shutdown.

I know inside DoD we had an appropriation, so from a direct impact, from a readiness perspective, from soldiers not having, whatever, whether it's pay or opportunity to go to battle assembly, those sorts of things. I'd say essentially zero impact

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to the readiness of the force.

But one thing, and I have said this before, I think in this group as a matter of fact, one of the things we keep a very close eye on, on the impacts from a stress perspective on our soldiers and their families based on sort of three things that I'm expecting them to do, one of which is be individually, personally ready to accomplish whatever military task they're given pursuant to lawful authority on behalf of the American people and the warfighters. So there's an individual military readiness aspect to their lives. There's a family requirement, my view, and I articulate it as our responsibility and our challenge is to be ready enough to be relevant, but not so ready that we can't keep meaningful, enjoyable employment -- enjoyable being sort of a loose term -- and healthy, sustaining family lives.

So one of the things I do keep a very close eye on is when we get to the civilian, the soldiers' relationship with their employer, whether there are stressors there, stressors potentially with their family, stressors that we're putting on them by pushing for readiness, that create a degree of stress in their lives that leads to potentially unhealthy or self-destructive behavior. Any time there's additional financial stress on the family, I heighten my concern about the impact on the soldiers' psyche, emotional well being goes up.

A little statistic that I think is fair, is about 50 percent of the soldiers that we have identified as exhibiting some sort of self-destructive or potentially self-destructive behavior are either unemployed or underemployed. So that's something we watch very carefully. In fact we pay more attention to those soldiers and their families with certain programs that are targeted to help them find jobs and find meaningful, sustainable employment.

So that's a very long-winded way of saying I don't think there's anything particularly unique about my work force as opposed to any other citizen in America, other than I'm responsible for it and we keep a very close eye on it, and anything that induces additional financial stress is of significant concern to us.

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That's sort of where we are.

We're very happy, I hope everybody is, that folks are getting back to work. I'm sure you've all seen the same thing, I'm not the best at talking to TSA employees when I'm going through lines, and being searched. I'm not abusive, but I'm not necessarily chatty. I've gotten very chatty with them over the last month. And I have really taken to heart. I asked a gal the other day, I shouldn't say gal. A TSA employee in Wilmington, North Carolina as I was going through the initial check there. I said, how's morale? This was about a week ago. She said it's getting worse every day. So I talked to every TSA officer in that line. I asked them about how they're doing, how their families are doing, that kind of stuff, and it's good that they're now able to pay bills again.

**DWG:** We'll start with Meghan Meyers, Army Times, and then it will be Matthew.

**DWG:** Meghan Meyers, Army Times. Nice to meet you.

The total Army has been trying to grow end strength and having some challenges. As I understand it, the Reserves probably have the biggest challenge, largely because when you're trying to grow the active Army, fewer people are joining the Reserves, people are activating from the Reserves.

So what is your end strength like now, and what is that in comparison to what you're authorized for and what kind of challenges is that creating for you?

**Lt. Gen. Luckey:** We're below the authorized end strength, as you probably know. We're doing better now than we were four or five months ago based on the number of different programs and incentives we've put into place for reenlistments and those sorts of things.

From a recruiting perspective I would tell you, from an accession's perspective, we're actually right about on the mark.

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In fact I just checked the figures for last month. We're within plus or minus ten, and don't hold me to the ten but it's very very close to exactly where we should be to meet the marks as far as recruiting for the next year.

That said, I agree with the implicit assumption in your question which is there is a tension point, and let me explain where it is, in my view, between trying to grow the COMPO 1 and -- the active component. As you know, the active component of the Army and COMPO 3, the Army Reserve, recruit together. The National Guard has their own program, and that sort of thing.

The big challenge for us in our mid-grade, non-commissioned officers and commissioned officers, and I think I've said this to some of you before, where we have, from an initial accessions perspective we're doing okay. From a retention perspective we're actually doing better than we've done in years. Somebody told me yesterday, we're at an all-time high for the last 18 years in terms of retention inside the Army Reserve.

That said, the trend over the years, and this is anecdotal but I think it's fair, has been in many cases the Army Reserve captures its talent coming off active duty. My guess is if you look around this room at the officers that are sitting here, all of them had active component, active duty experience, and at some point made a decision in their lives to come into the Army Reserve for any number of reasons. And I'm an example of that.

So my, I won't say concern, but I'd say the tension point is if you're, as you try to grow the active force, to the extent that part of how you grow the active force is by keeping more soldiers on active duty, it just creates an additional tension point between trying to retain that talent in the active force and having that flow of talent that's sort of ready, willing and able to come over to the reserve component of the United States Army.

I don't regard it as anything more than just an observation, frankly. I think it's a healthy tension. I think it's a good tension. I think all of us across the total Army want to provide

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our soldiers with opportunities that are good for them and their families, and again, I'm very encouraged by the trend lines as far as our accessions go. I'm very encouraged by what we're seeing in terms of our retention. And I'm very encouraged by a new capability that I think we're going to have fielded probably in the next, I don't know, six to twelve weeks, something like that, to begin to essentially give every soldier an opportunity to have an application on their iPhone or their Droid or whatever, to be able to essentially, among other things, recruit at the point of contact, and I'll give you a specific example, then I'll be quiet because I know we've got to go around the table.

I meet a potential soldier at a meat counter in Greensboro, North Carolina and in passing find out this is a young college student who's actually interested in joining the Army. They don't know whether they want to join the Army Reserve, they don't know whether they want to join the National Guard, they don't know if they want to join the active force. They're not sure. So I talk to them, I encourage them, I give them my card. The one thing I haven't been able to do until now, we're going to get to this soon, is put information in, load it literally in -- obviously with their consent -- load it into the app and send it to U.S. Army Recruiting Command. So it goes into the backbone architecture of the Recruiting Command. So now that lead has been essentially vetted by at least one soldier putting eyes on that potential candidate and is now brought into the milieu of potential candidates to become soldiers in the United States Army.

I'm very excited about our ability to really take about 190,000 soldiers and turn them into potential recruiters for the total force.

**DWG:** Speaking of recruiting, the Army has all kinds of new recruiting plans. Marketing, strategy, messaging, all of that. Is there anything that's particular to the Reserve or something that you guys are doing a little bit differently because of the kind of package that you present to someone who joins the

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Reserves?

**Lt. Gen. Luckey:** I would say nothing really unique in terms of -  
- I mean unique obviously in the sense that if you're going to be  
accessed into the Army Reserve, you have I think identified or  
have decided that you're interested in a different sort of  
military career than somebody who decides they want to go on  
active duty.

So I wouldn't say that there's a difference so much in terms of  
incentives. There may be some new [offers] here and there,  
different scholarships and that sort of stuff. But I would say  
all the problems -- I don't mean to be dismissive of the  
difference, but I'm saying by and large we're all, they're all  
benefits and they're all challenges with each component depending  
on what you want to do and do you want to do it full time, part  
time, you're in school, you're out of school, that kind of stuff.

To me, the big idea and the reason I'm really excited about this  
ability to basically do vetting at the point of contact at the  
fish counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, is not only does it  
give us a new ability to do that, it also I think helps soldiers  
remember that they're all recruiters. They're all recruiters.  
So we can only get so far, in my opinion, with having all these  
full-time recruiters out there, going to high schools, whatever,  
talking. It's all important. It's all good. But if we can  
leverage those soldiers that are in America's Army Reserve that  
are fired up and excited about what they're doing, they want to  
talk to their peers about it and be able to help essentially the  
Army sort through who might really be interested and have the  
game to do this, I think that gives us a huge advantage. Because  
we're everywhere. You know this. Unlike the active component,  
America's Army Reserve is plus or minus 195,000 soldiers across  
200 time zones and 350,000 family members. So our presence  
around the globe is huge. And we're finally going to start  
leveraging that point of presence in hometown USA.

**DWG:** Matthew, then Gina.

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**DWG:** I'm sure you know the Army's well into its pilot for the Army Combat Fitness Test and the test of record is coming soon for all soldiers. Could you talk about how, what concerns you have about it, how the Army Reserves are preparing soldiers? And also have you taken the ACFT yet?

**Lt. Gen. Luckey:** Last question first. Yes and no. I've taken parts of it. What I haven't done is gone through the entire thing because candidly, I'm still working on -- I had a complete rotator cuff repair about five years ago and a bicep tendon that was severed, I fell running in the woods in New Hampshire. So I'm still working on being able to get to the point where I can now pull up and do -- I don't know if you've seen it. A piece of it. I'm going to get there. But before I do it for record, I want to make sure that I'm actually able to do it. As the oldest Joe in the Army I'm regarded it's my responsibility to be able to pass this.

Now I have to brag --

**DWG:** How old are you, sir?

**Lt. Gen. Luckey:** Sixty-four. [Laughter]. It's a senior moment, I'm allowed to do that.

So I don't know if you've seen, we did a little video in Austin, Texas. I went down with about 100 soldiers from all three components of the Army. So from Army Reserve, the National Guard, Army Guard in Texas, there were a couple of soldiers there from Army Futures Command, and we had a cadre from the different ROTC programs in that part of the state of Texas. We went through the whole thing. I talked to all the soldiers about it, about executing it at scale being a challenge for us, which I'll about here in a second. I'm on the record, so I'm going to acknowledge this on the record.

In a moment of hyperbole and bravado, I said in 30 days I'm going to max this thing. And this captain came over to me and he said he sir -- yeah, it was like that only worse. [Laughter]. Sir,

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there's only three soldiers in the Army that have maxed this thing so far. Okay, so I'm number four. So he's like yeah, right. He says, you know it's age neutral, right? Whatever that means. And it's gender -- so gender and age don't play into the scoring of this thing.

So my assessment. The challenge for us in the Army Reserve to execute this at scale is really just, it's just a function of the time. In other words, given all of the activities that I'm expecting my soldiers to accomplish on any battle assembly weekend, anything that's going to take a significant amount of manpower or time across, again, 20 time zones, in all kinds of climatic conditions, on any given Saturday whether it's in Fargo, North Dakota or Miami, Florida or Saipan or Guam or American Samoa or Korea or Japan or whatever. That's, at scale it becomes a challenge in terms of time management.

That said, a couple of thoughts. One, I'm very excited about it because I think it will be a fantastic forcing function for us in the Army Reserve as we rebalance roles, missions and responsibilities between functional commands and geographic commands.

So as an example, that Army Reserve Center in Austin, Texas, I'm not going to issue the equipment to a specific unit, I'm going to issue it to a location and they're going to have to learn how to share and manage together, and this is a good thing. This breaks down somewhat I would regard as functional, artificial barriers that have existed in the Army Reserve for a long time and we've been in the process of trying to essentially mitigate for the last couple of years. So I think there's a lot of goodness in terms of collaboration that comes with this test.

The other thing I'd say about it is, and this was said to me by a non-commissioned officer out of the Army Guard in Texas when we were down there.

I pulled the sled, which is a really good task, by the way. And if you haven't done it, it looks real easy to pull this sled with



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all this weight on it. How bad can it be, right? It's 50 yards down, it's 50 yards back, whatever it is. It can't be that hard, right? After about halfway through, it's a pretty good exercise. And then you've got to carry the kettle bells and do all this other jazz.

Anyway, I asked him, I said what do you think about this? Asking a staff sergeant. What do you think about doing this in battle assembly weekends inside the Texas Guard? He said you know, sir, of all the things that we do, this is probably one of the coolest things that I've seen that we would have to do on any battle assembly weekend, compared to the stuff we've been doing currently.

So the opportunity for us to model fitness, to get after this from essentially mastering these new tasks, I think culturally it's going to be a great thing for the Army and for the Army Reserve.

In terms of time line, because you talked about it becoming a test of record soon, what I've promised the Chief of Staff of the United States Army is I will give him my best assessment of when I think, I'll just say the word, fair. I know that's a little bit loaded, but fair to execute this at scale as a test of record to decide whether or not this soldier can or cannot go to school, can or cannot get promoted. I want to make sure that we give ourselves the time to be able to really kick the tires on this.

**DWG:** Does that mean you may go past October 2020?

**Lt. Gen. Luckey:** No. What it means -- well, I'll do whatever the Chief directs. My point is, I think since we're -- we're implementing as we pilot or piloting as we implement. I just think, I'm very confident that as we do our analytics inside the Army Reserve, if we get to a place based on how quickly the equipment is distributed -- I have seven sets right now across the United States as part of this pilot. Obviously we're talking 857 what I call micro-installations or Army Reserve Centers just across the continental United States and Alaska alone. The

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amount of time it's going to take to get all those places out, I just, it would be inappropriate for me to tell you today sitting here when I'm confident we will be able to fully execute this test fairly at scale. I don't even have all the stuff yet, and it's a fair amount of stuff.

**DWG:** You mentioned your age, yourself. You're going to max it out very soon.

**Lt. Gen. Luckey:** I admit, there's a little hyperbole there, but yeah.

**DWG:** Your concerns for older soldiers, older NCOs and officers about it because of their age?

**Lt. Gen. Luckey:** I'm sure there are people who have trepidation because of their age, but they don't talk to me. [Laughter]. I'm the oldest Green Beret in the Army. Nobody's going to say I can't do it, I'm too old. Get out of here. Are you kidding me?

So I'm sure that may be out there, I shouldn't say I'm sure. It may be out there, but nobody's going to -- I regard myself as the wind dummy for the Army. In other words, since I can speak truthfully here, I think the likelihood of my maxing this, don't tell those soldiers in Texas, but I think it's probably pretty low. The likelihood of me not -- so are you relieved by the fact that -- [Laughter].

But I think the likelihood of my not being able to execute this task and pass it is close to zero. But I've got to work on my shoulder. Come back and see me in six months.

**DWG:** Gina, then Ashley.

**DWG:** Ready Force X. I'd like you to talk about what kinds of units have been identified, because that's kind of been something that's been in progress. And how you measure the readiness. And have you had issues with the extra training days required in those units and how has it, have the problems that have

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inevitably been popping up with some soldiers been dealt with?

Related to that, you talked about your accessions are a lot of people come in from active duty. Are you accessing younger soldiers for whom this will become the norm? Extra training days, as I've heard the Guard is sort of seeing that trend. That the younger guys love the extra training, they love the deployments, but is the Reserve an older set? Older meaning mid to older. Well, not starting with you --

The problems with extra training days, has that caused problems with retention.

**Lt. Gen. Luckey:** You've got a lot of questions packed in there.

RFX. Most of you have heard me talk about this before, or hopefully you've read a little bit about it. We've been doing this now for about 2.5 years. It's just Ready Force X, and the reason it's an X is because it keeps changing. It's basically focusing on our ability to deploy capabilities to meet the requirements of essentially one of two war plans. One primarily for the European Theater of Operations and the other for the Pacific.

The capabilities that are packed in there, and I think you know this because we've talked about some of them before. A lot of different enablers are opening things, everything from engineers to fuel distribution to operating essentially transportation networks, moving commodities. There's a civil affairs aspect to it. There's a psychological operations aspect to it. Obviously aviation. All kinds of different -- and then smaller, lesser includes, like chaplains detachments and legal detachments and stuff like that.

Without getting into the specifics because they are classified in the sense of sensitivities based on war plans, it's over 600 different units of action, types of formations, capability sets that are packed into RFX.

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Now what I tell my soldiers, what I tell this force is, RFX is a verb until it becomes a noun. What I mean by that is, what it really does is it helps us see the readiness of our different formations and figure out where we need to go to aggregate capability to deliver that fully capable unit, which may not be a full high state of readiness from a manning perspective today, and the reason for that, as you well know, is because we don't move soldiers to structure. We move structure to where people live and work because we can't, I don't have the authority to order people unless they're an AGR full time person, which is a relatively small portion of our force. I don't have the authority to order them to go more than X number of miles from their home to go to a unit. So they've got to volunteer, so I've got to have the structure there that's approximately to them, where they live and work, so they can join the Army Reserve and maintain a meaningful civilian job and stay in the Army Reserve.

What that means, a lot of critical capabilities inside the Army Reserve, and a lot of them have to go quickly because the reality is many of the things that the Army needs, that the warfighter needs across the joint force to conduct sustained ground combat operations requires the Army Reserve's presence early on in the deployment time line to increase from a capabilities perspective the Army's ability to fight and win.

If I had to juxtapose fundamentally, and this is probably an overly broad statement, but I think it's essentially an accurate one so I would encourage you to think about that. COMPO 2, that's the National Guard, I would say because it's very much a combat arms centric set of capabilities. They BCTs, ABCTs, IBCTs -- Brigade Combat Teams. The Guard massively increases the capacity of the Army from a combat arms perspective.

The Army Reserve, which is much more of a combat support, combat service support set of skills from a capabilities perspective increases the capability of the Army. In other words, it's actually integral to the capability of the Army.

Put another way, inside RFX there are forces which we call

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stressed and unique, and what those forces are is capabilities that at least half of what's in the Army Reserve inventory has to go within the first 90 days of large-scale combat operations; and at least 70 percent of the entire capacity of the Army in that particular skill set resides in the Army Reserve. Exclusively in some cases in the Army Reserve.

So inside RFX what we have to do is build the capabilities to meet the time lines to deploy when the command in the field needs those capabilities to be able to conduct combat operations and win.

So that's a readiness imperative that frankly we haven't had until we started down this path a couple of years ago. We've been looking at readiness and a generation of capability in terms of progressive. So prepare your one, prepare your two, prepare your three, prepare your four to deploy. Conduct some sort of operation in the CENTCOM Theater of Operations primarily, whether it was in Iraq or Afghanistan, then come back to the States.

This is a different conflict, as you well know. It requires a higher level of training to some extent for our soldiers. The key for us, again, is to make sure we're amping up our readiness enough to cut down on the amount of time it takes us to deploy. But also at the same time not put so much stress on the force that our soldiers can't stay with us.

Frankly, this is one where I've had to be pretty aggressive about making sure we level the bubbles or manage expectations from a readiness perspective. I've gone out on the record and said I don't want one quality soldier to have to leave the Army Reserve because we made it too hard to stay. Because I'm every bit as concerned about risk to my force as I am concerned about risk to mission.

**DWG:** But is that happening?

**Lt. Gen. Luckey:** Is what happening?

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**DWG:** Retention --

**Lt. Gen. Luckey:** Yeah, I mean again, we're at 118 percent of our retention goal for this past year. As I said, from an attrition perspective, this is the lowest we've been at in 18 years. That's a fact that was put in my head yesterday morning before I went into a briefing so I think it's probably current.

I don't want to sound dismissive of your question, and I don't want to act as if I don't pay really close attention to this, because anecdotally, I'll tell you, I am still concerned that out there, again 200,000 plus or minus soldiers everywhere, not everybody gets the word. [Joe] and I were just talking about this in terms of messaging earlier today.

I am concerned that there may be commands out there that still are telling soldiers hey, you've got to be ready to go in 72 hours and if you can't put in the extra time then you can't stay in -- no. Stop. Stop. That is not what we're doing.

RFX is not about having everybody able to go in 18 hours. It's about understanding we all have to be ready physically to be able to perform because we may be asked to go into a different unit, or directed once legal authority kicks in, to go to a different unit to meet, to bring the readiness of that unit up to a place where we can deploy into combat fairly quickly.

On orders of magnitude we're talking tens of thousands of soldiers in less than 100 days. So it is a very different requirement that what we've seen for the last 15 or 20 years of war.

**DWG:** And are you bringing in younger soldiers to the Reserve?

**Lt. Gen. Luckey:** I heard that part of your question. I would say yes in the sense that I think last year we were at about -- and I am sort of going to be a little loose here, but I would say 110, 115 percent strength in our initial entry from both an officer and enlisted perspective. So I'd say yeah, younger. But

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I don't disagree with your observation that traditionally our force and our force structure's been a little bit more senior and a little bit more mature than perhaps COMPOs 1 or 2. I don't see that changing.

So I would say to the extent you're asking me to tell you whether or not we sort of changed how we're doing business or who we're recruiting or retaining, I'd say I don't think so.

I still think we create opportunity space for soldiers from both the active component and from the Guard who are looking for opportunities to continue to develop and get promoted in a component of the Army that has -- and I don't mean to be beating our chest about this, but our quality marks are better than any other component of the Army. I would agree with you that we have, by and large, a slightly more mature force in terms of age and grade. And that creates some opportunity for leaders, for soldiers. That hasn't changed.

**DWG:** Both Ashley's next.

**DWG:** Ashley [Inaudible].

How does Multi-Domain Operations affect [inaudible], and now that the concept is out does that change any of your processes or the way that you're going about these initiatives? Or have they already been kind of informed about that?

**Lt. Gen. Luckey:** Let me take a stab at it and then if you need to redirect me, feel free to do so.

First of all, I'm very comfortable with the whole concept of Multi-Domain Operations, Cross-Domain Operations. As you probably know I spent four years as Chief of Staff in NORAD, U.S. Northern Command. So I'm wicked paranoid, to use the Yankee term. And I'm very cognizant of some of our potential adversaries' ability and in my opinion proclivity to work across the entire spectrum from non-kinetic information operations in different domains to include social media, to the ultimate sort

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of kinetic domain which is thermonuclear war and everything in between. So what we did a couple of years ago is we took a look at who was watching the future and who was essentially going after and helping identify [counting] America that can be brought into the Department of Defense or retained inside the Army but is working in the private sector most of the time?

Case in point, I have soldiers who are employed at Tesla Motor Corporation, at SpaceX, Army Research Laboratory, Google, Microsoft, et cetera. So about two years ago we began the process of remissioning what was the 75<sup>th</sup> Training Command down in Houston, Texas. Initially we were going to call it the 75<sup>th</sup> Futures Command, and then all of a sudden Army Futures Command showed up. I was like okay, all right, now we're going to get -- so we said okay, let's go with Innovation Command because it's really about innovation from our perspective.

So that command, a two-star command in Houston, Texas is in direct support of Army Futures Command in Austin. There's a very close working relationship there. Army Futures Command has been extraordinarily helpful in making sure that I am paying attention to those things that we, the Army Reserve, can really help the Army do by going after and retaining talent. And in some cases, accessing talent into the Army Reserve that then becomes what I call scouts or a screening force in the Army.

Let me give you an example. Just take cyber, and this is not limited to cyber or artificial intelligence or quantum computing or biomedical enhancement or anything else. It's sort of all the above and more.

But I looked at where we were positioning structure inside the Army Reserve, and in one case, for instance, we're looking at putting a cyber node, actually two, at Fort Gordon. I'm like why are you going to Fort Gordon? Well, that's where the Army Cyber Brigade's going to be. Why would we go there? Let's go where the Army Cyber Brigade's not going to be, when everybody who's in the Army Cyber Brigade has met their mandatory service obligation and decides they can make five times as much money going to



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Mountainview, California as they can if they stay in Augusta, Georgia?

So we have moved force structure, created force structure which to me is creating opportunity. This goes back to what I said earlier. We recruit our soldiers where they live and work. So we're creating an opportunity space in California and in Massachusetts and other places. In fact I'm going later this week to look at another venue where we're going to think our way through, are there other places we should put some force structure to capture talent, to get after exactly what you're talking about which is a very fast-moving from a rate of change perspective part of our economy, part of the commercial sector, on the global economy and make sure we're capturing that talent and we aren't falling further behind.

I don't have the time here right now because I don't want to step on anybody else's questions, but to talk to you sort of, the vignettes, places where I've been, where I've been shamed by the private sector in terms of how far behind we may be in certain technologies. We being, at least in my case, the Army Reserve. So we're really trying to get after that and leverage our touch points, points of presence in the private sector or the commercial sector to make sure we're retaining and in many cases accessing talent that might not want to ever come into the Army or the Department of Defense on a full-time basis for financial reasons, but would love to be able to participate to some extent in this collaborative opportunity to serve the nation.

We go back to our roots in 1908. The Army Reserve started with essentially leveraging medicine that was, so high-end, very technical, very competent capabilities out there that were grown and retained in the private sector. Whether it was in Mass General Hospital in Boston or Columbia Presbyterian in New York City or wherever. So all kinds of world-class physicians, medical professionals in general. Bring them into the Army through the Army Reserve. Some very rudimentary basics on soldier skills, but you're hiring that talent and the capability's being retained at a high level of capability outside

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of the public sector and the private sector at no cost to the taxpayer. So we massively increased the Army from a combat medicine perspective prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> World War.

We are looking at this domain, what I would call high tech, as somewhat analogous to medicine and we're taking it on that way.

**DWG:** To follow up, with all the budget shift going towards modernization priorities, do you feel that your priorities are still protected as the Chief of the Reserve? Or have those priorities shifted at all?

**Lt. Gen. Luckey:** Actually I think this, I'm very supportive of where we're going in terms of modernization. And part of that, frankly, is because again, having spent four years at NORTHCOMM, as I said, I'm wicked paranoid. Which is a somewhat self-effacing way of saying I guess because it sounds like I'm crazy, but I'm very cognizant of what our potential adversaries have done and are doing in terms of their capability and propensity. So I think modernization is something we really need to take on from an Army perspective.

I think the Army Reserve's responsibility, my responsibility as a leader of this component of the Army in that regard is to make sure I'm really thinking through and helping inform and shape the conversation about okay, so where do you want your -- it goes back to your question about Multi-Domain Operations, right? What's the sweet spot for the Army Reserve in 21<sup>st</sup> century warfare against a peer competitor? How does our tie-in, our networks, our link-in, our points of presence across the U.S. economy and the global economy, how do we leverage that connectivity to basically bring in massive capability talent and I would say technical readiness at a significant if not massive cost savings to the taxpayer to increase the lethality of the military, of the Army, in 21<sup>st</sup> century warfare. And I think we're, I won't say scratching the surface, because we've been working it harder than that. So don't take that as a quote. But I would say we are not as good as I want us to be, and we're really pushing hard on talent management inside this component of

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the Army.

**DWG:** So you think [inaudible] funding [inaudible]?

**Lt. Gen. Luckey:** From a -- if the question is do I think the Army Reserve gets the short end of the stick in any of this stuff? The answer is no. Absolutely not.

**DWG:** Ashley, then Tom.

**DWG:** You were talking about peer competitors. Since you were here last year, the department or the Pentagon has sort of moved forward looking at what it would take to get after a competitor such as Russia and China.

You also mentioned increasing training in the Reserve for machine gun and automatic grenade --

**Lt. Gen. Luckey:** Cold steel. Yes.

**DWG:** What's going on with increasing training there? And are there other areas that you're looking to boost training as well to get [at] a near peer competitor?

**Lt. Gen. Luckey:** Cold steel. We've talked about this before. Let me just be real clear about this.

First of all, we have fired more weapons, we've done more crew-served weapons training, we've done more of the sort of lethality building stuff at the soldier level, the individual soldier level, at the non-commissioned officer level, than we've ever done in the history of the Army Reserve. That activity, as important as it is, and as helpful as it would be for any one of those soldiers in a combat environment if they had to actually use those weapons. Part of why we did that, part of why we were doing that and we're doing it right now as speak. In fact I'm going to Fort McCoy here in a couple of weeks to see how we're going on that. And some other stuff. We're about to start getting some JLTVs into the force.

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Part of what we're doing, really is making sure we're messaging to the entire force that this is a cultural change in who we are as a component of the Army. And that while it may or may not be helpful for this particular soldier to be able to employ this weapon system, what's really important is for every other soldier in the Army to know that what we're going to do is we're going to make sure every one of us lives and breathes this ethos of readiness and lethality. So if we ever actually had to have a major conflict with a peer competitor, you are not calling upon a component of the Army that doesn't have its head in the game, so to speak.

So this is about driving cultural change in a component of the Army that frankly saw itself several years ago, and I'm not picking on anybody else, but the phrase was life-saving, life-sustaining force for the nation. And one of my messages from the first day I took command was well, we do those things and we know we supported Harvey or Maria or Florence, but everybody supported, but I mean nobody was more ready and more helpful in some cases than the Army Reserve.

But our core competency is, that's not our core competency. We've been given these tremendous capabilities, exquisitely superb capabilities by the American people. And yes, on a bad day will we use them to support our people in their time of greatest need? Absolutely we will. But the reason we have it is to win the nation's wars.

So what I wanted to do is make sure we are focusing on this set of capabilities from just lifesaving, life-sustaining perspective on a bad day from the homeland, you know, disaster assistance perspective. But we're really looking at this in terms of what do we have to be able to do to support the total Army and the total force across all domains against a peer competitor? And the answer is we have to be able to have the combat readiness, the capability and the lethality to win. So that's, so cold steel, and what you're asking about, is really about driving cultural change. It's really about strategic messaging to this

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force about where we're going and why we have to go there. And changing the paradigm, changing the culture of the force.

So are we doing additional training? Absolutely. Are we doing more rotations in the combat training centers, whether it's the National Training Center or the JRTC, Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, yes. Are we taking a more integrated approach to how we participate in those exercises to support the total Army? Yes, we are. In fact I was out there two weeks ago at NTC and I'm still pushing harder for us to get more cohesion into our formations prior to going into these very rigorous, very stressful training opportunities for the Army Reserve.

So every place we turn we are constantly looking at okay, how do we get better here? How do we create more readiness? What capabilities, just from an equipping perspective, what things do we have that we probably aren't going to need again?

If I have equipment sitting out there in different concentration storage sites or motor pools that are essentially legacy capabilities that were really helpful and good for combat operations in Iraq or Afghanistan but will have like zero efficacy against a peer competitor or very close to zero efficacy, then the question becomes okay, do we mothball it? Do we get rid of it? It goes back to the question about modernization. What are the tradeoffs here?

I don't have the answers to all those questions but again, those are the questions I ask every day. And the reason I ask those questions every day is because I want my force, my responsibility to this component of the Army and to the Army, I want them to be infused with a sense of hey, where we're going is not where we've been.

Part of my challenge as a leader of this organization is essentially to lead a group of soldiers by and large who have only known one type of warfare for the last 15 to 20 years, and help them understand that's not where we're going. That is not the challenge of tomorrow. The challenge of tomorrow is very

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different than the challenge of four years ago. And as the leader of this team, my responsibility is to help make sure I'm informing every day as best I can why we have to be different than we were. And cold steel's a huge part of that.

**DWG:** The National Defense Strategy Commission came out, one of their findings within the report was that it's not quite clear if leadership understands the tradeoffs between what counterinsurgency operations and moving towards a near peer competitor, and sort of leaving a gap here. How are you approaching that as you're sort of fitting the getting the training towards a near competitor threat? Or are you in a different position?

**Lt. Gen. Luckey:** Let me make sure I understand your question, because I don't want to miss it.

Are you asking me am I concerned about our ability to train for both types of operations?

I'm going to give you a certain nuanced answer because it's something I think about a lot. Yes and no. I did tell you I was a lawyer once, right? I'm allowed to say yes and no.

No, I'm not concerned in the sense that I do believe if we are capable in terms of a readiness perspective and in terms of an overarching sense of capabilities. If we're capable of defeating a peer competitor who will try to disrupt us in every domain simultaneously, so whether space, cyber, hypersonic weapons on the high seas, et cetera. If we're able to defeat that threat, then everything lesser than that is, in my opinion, less of a challenge. To me, that's existential. That's an existential challenge. So anything below that is something easier to do than that.

And my message to my soldiers is, if we're up against somebody who can sink an aircraft carrier with a hypersonic weapon going Mach 15 to 20, then that's a different thing than an asymmetric threat from some Jihadist organization. So let's first of all

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acknowledge that there is no tension in my mind in the sense that if you can do the really hard thing, then everything else is lower risk. I'll leave it at that.

On the other hand, here's the challenge I have as a leader. Okay? And this is not unique to me, by the way. I'm just the one having breakfast with you.

The challenge is, again, it goes back to culture. What I have to be careful of as the leader of this organization, and I would submit all of us need to be careful of is inadvertently confusing our soldiers or any of our servicemen about the magnitude of that high-end existential threat, because we're also still training for all the lesser-included threats. My personal view of it is we're much more comfortable, based on 15 or 20 years of conducting combat operations in sort of the lower end of the spectrum. We tended to fall to that end of the spectrum if we don't continuously, rigorously align ourselves with the fact that having to deal with somebody who can sink an aircraft carrier is a very different problem set than having to deal with somebody who's exquisitely good at blowing up convoys with IEDs and that sort of thing.

I do not mean to be in any way dismissive of the lower end threats in terms of lethality, all the challenges presented to our soldiers, sailors, airman and marines, their families in terms of lost lives and limbs and everything else. I'm not being dismissive. I'm just saying from a cultural perspective, from making sure everybody understands the scope of the challenge. My concern is that we are possibly blurring the line between essentially, well, I'll call it existential warfare and something that is, from the national security perspective on my opinion, a lesser threat to the sovereign integrity of the United States of America.

**DWG:** Tom?

**DWG:** General, thanks for your time.

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One issue of making the force more lethal is the medical corps. There is an initiative that I understand is going to appear in the 2020 budget to dramatically reduce medical personnel throughout the military, including in the Army Reserve, from what I understand, about 18,000 personnel have been cut. And the idea is to use those billets to repurpose those billets to be warfighters.

Are you engaged in that initiative? And can you talk about how that is impacting your medical force community for readiness?

**Lt. Gen. Luckey:** Yes. Thanks for the question.

First of all, as to the Army Reserve, relatively small impact, I would say in terms of capability, probably zero. Relatively small impact in terms of actually implications from a restructuring perspective.

Here's what I think is probably going to happen, and I'm going to couch this in terms of what's probably going to happen because I don't think this has been finalized yet, but I am looking at -- I don't think it is. I mean I am still in the process of looking at where would I re-task, probably keeping it in the medical domain. So I heard your question. I'm not looking aggressively at taking what are current billets inside the medical domain and re-tasking them to do something outside the medical domain.

What I am looking at is taking billets that are in the medical domain that don't have anybody sitting, there's nobody in them so I haven't been able to fill out that force structure. And is there a place where I could better optimize that force structure to capture and retain the medical talent that I need?

So yes, you are right, I am looking at reorganizing force structure inside the Army Reserve. I am looking at re-tasking or re-missioning some force structure that's right now what we call our medical backfill battalions to possibly better optimize that force structure to capture talent. But I am not aggressively looking at predesignating that as something outside of the



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medical domain.

So to be sort of blunt. It's not like I've got to take a medical backfill battalion and say let's rebrand it as an Army Infantry battalion. I'm not looking at doing that.

As to your question outside of the Army Reserve, I'm going to be, I'm not being guarded, I'm just being candid. I am not tracking all aspects of what the Defense Health Agency is going to look like and where is it going, and what the implications are for Army medicine or for military medicine in general. So I acknowledge your question and I appreciate it, but what I want to assure you of is inside my component of the Army, which as you well know since 1908 as I said, been a significant contributor to Army medicine. I don't see anything changing in terms of the core competencies of the Army Reserve's medical community as a force provider to the Army.

**DWG:** One concern, just to follow up. One concern, and [Craig's] raised this effort, is that in time of war one of the major conflicts that could break out in a war, whether you have enough capability here back in the United States where the 13 percent uniformed medical billets are, to care for the troops that are injured in a conflict. Is that part of the debate? Is that also not a concern for you right now?

**Lt. Gen. Luckey:** First of all, I'm not exactly sure what the debate is so I'm not going to address any debate.

I'll tell you, I'm going to paint it with a broader brush, and I'm going to go back to what I said earlier about hypersonics.

From the casualty perspective, and not just from a casualty perspective, from just from the what things do we rely on today that may not work in a big war? Okay? So I'm going to just expand the aperture of your question a little bit. I think your point about casualties and a load on a system from the medical perspective is a fair question. Again, I go back to I think we need to think through what does it mean to be fighting an

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adversary that can sink an aircraft carrier or two in the span of 20 minutes? I mean that -- Just start pulling that thread. If you can sink an aircraft carrier or two in 20 minutes, what else can you do? Then how can you disrupt my ability, even if I had the capacity from a medical perspective, what would be your opportunity, Mr. Adversary to disrupt my ability to generate sort of an effective response based on frustrating other things that I rely on to make things happen?

I would take you to the potential challenges in the non-kinetic domain that could frustrate our ability to do all kinds of things like communicate, like lose timing for some period of time -- no pun intended -- where all kinds of things would be frustrated. And systems that we rely on to give us data quickly would not work. So I think in a major conflict that you're talking about that generates the kind of casualties on the battlefield that you're talking about, I think the likelihood that it wouldn't have implications all the way back to the homeland and disrupting all kinds of other things that we do day in and day out I think is very low. I think the likelihood goes back to the question I was asked about Multi-Domain or All-Domain Operations. I think the adversary in an exercise of war is going to try to disrupt us across the entire spectrum, and I think it will start at the gas pump when you put your credit card in there to get gas and it doesn't work. And the power's gone.

In other words, I'm not marginalizing your question. I'm just saying we get into that kind of war, I think it's game on across the entire spectrum of disruption, and I don't think there's any place on the globe that's at least tied into the internet that's not likely to have problems.

So I'm as concerned about our ability to respond at all as I am concerned about do we have enough doctors in uniform to be able to take care of casualties.

**DWG:** We have three minutes remaining and we're going to finish up with Scott down on the far right.

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**DWG:** I actually wanted to follow up on that. You talked about reorganizing the force in order to recruit better talent. What does something like that look like in the medical field? How would you recruit better talent and what --

**Lt. Gen. Luckey:** You're not suggesting that I don't recruit magnificently exquisite talent today, are you?

**DWG:** I mean I'm sure you do.

**Lt. Gen. Luckey:** You missed my earlier comments about recruiting.

No, I think we're doing very well. The difference I would point to is not so much, it's not all that novel, it's just open the aperture. In other words, you missed my whole speech on me being the oldest general in the Army, I'm going to max the ACFT and all this other jazz.

I think part of what we're looking at is what we call irregular sessions. We're going after, I say going after. I'm more interested in looking at places to access talent into the force than the good old days, for a couple of reasons.

First of all, since you don't know this I'm going to disclose this to you -- Federal News Radio -- I'm the oldest general in the Army. I'm 64. So to me, 64 is the new 30. Okay?

So first of all, I want to open our minds about where should we be going for talent?

So in the medical domain as an example, I've said this to this group before. My view of it, and this is anecdotal, but I get this from docs. My view of it is, we may be in some cases going after doctors or potential doctors too young in their medical careers. In some cases we get great talent there, but in some cases they would love to serve but financially this isn't the right time for them to do it in their lives. They want to build their practice. They have to put kids through college. All

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kinds of financial tugs on them to develop their practice and be able to be very proficient and take care of financial responsibilities, that maybe creates a significant pressure on them in their 30s, but maybe not so much in their 60s or their 50s or late 40s.

So A, we may be able to rethink where we're going to get talent.

B, since we are moving into a blended retirement system as opposed to what I would refer to as a defined benefits program across the entire Department of Defense, gives you significant flexibility in terms of the labor market.

We have traditionally essentially expected anybody who's going to be accessed into the U.S. military to be able to have at least 20 years of credible service for retirement before they could even join the Army or the Navy, the Marine Corps or the Air Force.

Now with BRS, where we're going to go is, it's essentially a 401K, right? You may show up with a 401K from some other place and you've got this bag of cash in your 401K, and now you're in the Army Blended Retirement System, so all you're doing is contributing more to your bag of cash. It is no longer a defined benefit program from a retirement perspective.

So I think that changes, will change here in fairly short order how we look at retention and retainability. I think it's going to give us more flexibility on the back side, because there's not going to be an expectation necessarily that he has to serve 20 or 25 or 30 years to have a successful career. He may just want to come in for five years. If he's got a capability that we need and we can see that and we can access that, and he can pass the ACFT, then he's part of the team. He may only be part of the team for five years. But that's okay. That's okay. Because when he leaves he's going to leave with a 401K and whatever contribution he made to the BRS and he's going to go on. That's a different paradigm than we've lived with, frankly, for I don't know, 100 years.

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**DWG:** I just wanted to ask, they were talking about yesterday that the Reserve, federal workers in the Reserve can now get [Inaudible] their Reserve Select. Something that's pretty interesting for personnel.

What do you see as kind of the top Reserve personnel issues that are very, within your Reserve domain compared to the active duty or Guard, what are the things that you're hearing from people?

**Lt. Gen. Luckey:** I think the biggest thing, and I talked about this earlier, the biggest challenge we have in the Army Reserve is this fundamental imperative to be ready enough to be relevant for the next fight. So that's the risk to mission piece. Ready enough to be relevant for whatever we've got to do next, but not so ready that we can't keep good, meaningful civilian jobs and healthy, sustaining family lives.

I've spent a lot of time as Commanding General of this component of the Army. Not just going out there talking to soldiers and families, although I do that. But really assessing as a senior leader where, am I creating too much stress on the force by driving readiness to a point that's unsustainable for the force based on its responsibilities to its employers and its families?

The answer in the main is no, I think we've got it about right. As I said earlier, when you weren't here, statistically our retention is, we're over 100 percent of our goals. And from a retention long term of the force in terms of attrition out soldiers, we are at the lowest we've been in 18 years.

I don't want to sound like we're sitting on our laurels here because I watch this very carefully every month to make sure that we aren't sort of over-revving this force in terms of trying to drive up readiness to the point where our soldiers can't balance those three aspects of their lives.

I think we've made tremendous headway, doing everything we can as best we can with the resources we have to take care of our soldiers and their families, but I'm not complacent about that.

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Change is the constant, so we've got to keep a very close eye on it.

**DWG:** I wish we had more time, but unfortunately we don't. It's been a pleasure as always, though.

**Lt. Gen. Luckey:** Thanks for having me. Again, I appreciate the opportunity to do this. I really do enjoy meeting with all of you, and hopefully if you get nothing else out of this, from my perspective, anything you can do to help, and I mean this sincerely, anything you can do to help me help us message to the American people -- that's the key, right? Part of my job as a strategic leader is helping my soldiers, going back right to your question, helping my soldiers and their families manage these tension points between readiness, responsibility to employers, and responsibility to their families. Making sure that that middle one, the employers, which I regard as essentially the American people, acknowledge that they're sharing the best talent in the world with the leadership of America's Army Reserve.

What we have is soldiers out there every day that are committed to something larger than themselves, selfless service, support and defend the constitution of the United States of America against all enemies foreign and domestic and bear true faith and allegiance to the same. They're doing it every day, and that talent, that capability. We continue to share it as part of the fabric of the national security of the United States. So anything you can do to help message to employers out there, to message to the influencers of America that this is, in my opinion, a national imperative to continue to share this talent and encourage and incentivize our soldiers to continue to serve the nation. That's, I need your help on that.

It goes back to exactly the question you just asked me which is, so when I say I watch this every day. Literally, once a month I'm looking at all the stats. I'm trying to make sure that I'm doing everything I can to support our soldiers out there balance these three aspects of their lives. And part of this is making sure the strategic message that's going out to the employers of

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the world, going out to the influencers of the world, is that service in the U.S. military is important for the nation and supporting soldiers who are willing to be both citizens out there daily, working in the private sector, the commercial sector of the United States, but also serve their nation in the Reserve forces of the United States is critical to the national security of the United States. That message is something I keep a very close on and do everything I can to make sure we keep pounding at that.

I don't want the sense of urgency about supporting our soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines or their families, I don't want that to atrophy with sort of how long are we going to do this? The answer is, I don't know. We keep doing it. Right?

End of speech.

**DWG:** Thank you.

**Lt. Gen. Luckey:** Thank you.

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