

December 10, 2025

Senator Roger Wicker
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services
Russell Senate Building, Room 228
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Full Committee Hearing to Receive Testimony on the Administration’s Deployment of the National Guard Across the United States on December 11, 2025

Dear Chairman Wicker and Members of the Committee,

The undersigned include two former service secretaries and twenty-four retired general and flag officers who collectively served under every president from John F. Kennedy to Joseph R. Biden, Jr. We share the following perspectives based upon our extensive leadership roles promoting the strength of the U.S. military and ensuring the security of the United States.

The deployment of the National Guard in states across the country in the absence of demonstrated need should give any supporter of the military and service members pause. National Guard deployments over the objection of the highest locally elected officials, as were attempted in Chicago and Portland and carried out in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., even more so. These recent events confirm the wisdom of our nation’s longstanding restrictions on the use of military personnel in civilian affairs—and in law enforcement, in particular.

These deployments threaten to undermine the apolitical reputation of the military as an institution, place service members in situations for which they are not specifically trained, and pull the Guard away from its critical missions—thereby undermining morale, harming effectiveness, and compromising public safety and national security.

A. The Politicized Nature of Recent Deployments Harms the Military

i. The Armed Forces Must Remain Nonpartisan

A foundational precept of the U.S. military is that it is apolitical. Indeed, “the widely held view is that a military that is nonpartisan is able to serve the sovereign American people regardless of party and to defend all Americans regardless of their affiliation. This, in turn, protects and enables the process of American democracy to occur without fear of military intervention to shape or mandate a particular political outcome.”¹ The U.S. Supreme Court has observed that the

military as such is insulated from both the reality and appearance of acting as a handmaiden for partisan political causes or candidates. Such a policy is wholly consistent with the American constitutional tradition of a politically neutral military

¹ Kathleen J. McInnis, Cong. Rsch. Serv., IF 11566, *Congress, Civilian Control of the Military, and Nonpartisanship* (June 10, 2020), https://www.congress.gov/crs_external_products/IF/PDF/IF11566/IF11566.1.pdf.

establishment under civilian control. It is a policy that has been reflected in numerous laws and military regulations throughout our history.²

Military institutions and experts have repeatedly emphasized that the military must stand as a nonpartisan institution within American society. Each service branch has policies and directives explaining the importance of political nonpartisanship. For example, an Army primer states: “Nonpartisanship assures the public that our Army will always serve the Constitution and our people loyally and responsively.”³ These prohibitions apply to the National Guard as well.⁴

Respected and high-ranking military leaders agree on the imperative that the military not be politicized. In 2008, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff wrote a letter to all service members stating: “A professional armed force that stays out of the politics that drive the policies it is sworn to enforce is vital to the preservation of the union and to our way of life.”⁵ Moreover, military leaders have recognized that an apolitical military is especially important when it comes to domestic deployments: “[The] employment of military personnel in support of civilian law enforcement is an extremely delicate matter and one fraught with tremendous peril. When not done thoughtfully, it endangers the apolitical reputation of the military.”⁶

ii. The National Guard Has Been Deployed in a Deeply Political Context

Unfortunately, recent deployments have arisen in a highly politicized context, placing the National Guard in an untenable position. Senior members of the administration have repeatedly charged these situations with political invective through social media posts, speeches, and press releases levying partisan attacks, castigating officials from the other party across the country,⁷ and blaming them for unsafe cities that must be “straighten[ed] [] out” through deployment of the military.⁸

In one recent example, on September 30, the President and Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth gave highly partisan speeches in front of high-ranking U.S. military officials flown in from around the world in Quantico, Virginia that included remarks regarding domestic deployments. The

² *Greer v. Spock*, 424 U.S. 828, 839 (1976).

³ U.S. Dep’t of Army, *The Army: A Primer to Our Profession of Arms* at 12 (May 1, 2025), <https://apply.westpoint.edu/www/documents/FM%201%20The%20Army.pdf>; see also U.S. Dep’t of Air Force, Instr. 51-902, Political Activities By Members of the U.S. Air Force sec. 1 (27 Aug. 2014); U.S. Dep’t of Navy, Instr. 5720.44C, Department of the Navy Public Affairs Policy and Navy Regulations § 0103(1) (21 Feb. 2012).

⁴ U.S. Dep’t of Def., Dir. 1344.10, Political Activities by Members of the Armed Forces (19 Feb. 2008), <https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodd/134410p.pdf>.

⁵ Jeremy S. Weber, *Political Speech, the Military, and the Age of Viral Communication*, 69 A.F.L. Rev. 91, 102 (2013).

⁶ Ret. Army Gen. Joseph Votel, *An Apolitical Military is Essential to Maintaining Balance Among American Institutions*, Army Times (June 8, 2020), <https://www.armytimes.com/opinion/commentary/2020/06/08/an-apolitical-military-is-essential-to-maintaining-balance-among-american-institutions/>.

⁷ See, e.g., Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Truth Social (June 15, 2025, at 8:43 ET), <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/114690267066155731> (“Every day, the Brave Men and Women of ICE are subjected to violence, harassment, and even threats from Radical Democrat Politicians.”).

⁸ See The White House, *President Trump Delivers Remarks to the Department of War*, at 45:30 (YouTube, Sept. 30, 2025) (hereinafter Quantico Speech), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKxWz8dyKfU>.

President described cities with leadership of the opposing political party as “very unsafe” and he suggested that Secretary Hegseth “should use some of these dangerous cities as training grounds for our military.”⁹ While presidential disagreement with and criticism of his political opponents is unexceptional, linking such comments to the actual and threatened deployment of the U.S. military is highly unusual—and profoundly concerning.

B. The National Guard Is Not Trained for Law Enforcement

Most National Guard personnel have only limited law enforcement training, which hinders their ability to carry out their mission and carries significant downside risks. The minimal training Guard members receive for these deployments pales in comparison to the in-depth and ongoing education provided to civilian law enforcement officers. Deploying Guardsmen into fraught law enforcement contexts with insufficient training puts troops, law enforcement officers, and civilians in unnecessary risk of physical harm, and strains civil-military relations.

Domestic law enforcement—particularly in emotionally charged situations and instances of civil unrest—requires a specific skill set for which law enforcement officers train extensively and continually, including training in de-escalation and in respecting civilians’ constitutional rights on U.S. soil. Military personnel do not receive that specific training. *See Bissonette v. Haig*, 776 F.2d 1384, 1387 (8th Cir. 1985) (“[M]ilitary enforcement of the civil law leaves the protection of vital Fourth and Fifth Amendment rights in the hands of persons who are not trained to uphold these rights.”), *aff’d on reh’g en banc*, 800 F.2d 812 (8th Cir. 1986), *aff’d*, 485 U.S. 264 (1988); *United States v. McArthur*, 419 F. Supp. 186, 193–94 (D.N.D. 1975) (“It is the nature of their primary mission that military personnel must be trained to operate under circumstances where the protection of constitutional freedoms cannot receive the consideration needed in order to assure their preservation. The posse comitatus statute is intended to meet that danger.”), *aff’d sub nom. United States v. Casper*, 541 F.2d 1275 (8th Cir. 1976).

Indeed, most of the Guard members deployed domestically reportedly lack law enforcement training,¹⁰ inviting confusion and disagreement over what constitutes appropriate conduct in contentious civilian situations and risking miscalculations in the heat of the moment. Nonetheless, Secretary Hegseth signed an order authorizing the Guard members deployed to Washington, D.C. to carry weapons of war and ammunition as part of their mission,¹¹ putting both the troops and the public they are sworn to protect at risk. The weapons training received by the Guard is not applicable to patrolling American streets in peacetime.

⁹ Quantico Speech, *supra* note 8, at 43:11, 44:30.

¹⁰ Greg Jaffe, *Hegseth Authorizes Troops in D.C. to Carry Weapons*, N.Y. Times (Aug. 22, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/22/us/politics/national-guard-weapons.html>.

¹¹ Mosheh Gains & Daniel Arkin, *Hegseth Authorizes National Guard Troops in D.C. to Carry Weapons*, NBC News (Aug. 22, 2025), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/usnews/hegseth-authorizes-national-guard-troops-dc-carry-weapons-rcna226536>.

C. Recent Deployments Harm the Guard’s Readiness

Domestic deployments like those attempted and executed by the administration divert the National Guard from their primary missions and harm their readiness in the event of actual need at home or abroad. Within the United States, the Guard primarily provides domestic civil support, natural disaster relief, border security, and other support as requested by governors and/or the President. According to the National Guard Association of the United States, “[t]he National Guard are a critical component of disaster response across the nation, with members trained to use military expertise and equipment [to] provide fast and effective emergency support in severe weather events such as hurricanes and wildfires, and to conduct search and rescue operations.”¹² For instance, the federalization of the California National Guard in June—against the wishes of the governor of California and the mayor of Los Angeles—to protect federal facilities and personnel in Los Angeles occurred after the state’s National Guard had already been deployed for months for response and recovery operations resulting from the catastrophic January 2025 fires in the area. By the end of the month, the National Guard unit assigned to combatting wildfires was at just 40% of its regular staffing levels.¹³ The diversion of National Guard personnel from these critical missions risks degrading the emergency preparedness across the country.

The proliferation of domestic deployments of the National Guard for missions outside their core duties also threatens long-term military readiness. The National Guard is the primary combat reserve of the U.S. Army and Air Force. Non-emergency deployments—especially lengthy or back-to-back deployments—reduce combat preparedness by cutting into training time and contributing to fatigue and burnout. Most Guard members have families and civilian lives that they put on hold when deployed, as well as employers who may grow frustrated by frequent, months-long absences on politically controversial missions.

D. Recent Deployments Harm the Military’s Reputation and Morale

The overtly political context of the current deployment, the misalignment between the Guard’s mission and these orders, and the strain on overall readiness can cause significant harm to the military’s cohesiveness and reputation, as well as to the morale of the soldiers being deployed. A military that is thrust into adversarial interactions with civilians in a politicized context will, over time, inevitably lose the respect and trust that it has rightly earned.

Unsurprisingly, troops recently deployed domestically have expressed confusion and low morale over their assignments.¹⁴ Internal documents show veterans and active duty troops view these

¹² See, e.g., *Texas Guardsmen Rescue Over 520 Flood Victims*, Nat’l Guard Assoc. of the U.S. (Jul. 8, 2025), <https://www.ngaus.org/newsroom/texas-guardsmen-rescue-over-520-flood-victims>.

¹³ Clara Harter, *150 National Guard troops returned to California command; ‘Trump caved,’ Newsom says*, L.A. Times (June 30, 2025), <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-06-30/military-requests-200-national-guard-troops-return-to-ca-command>.

¹⁴ See, e.g., Shawn Hubler, *Trump’s National Guard Troops Are Questioning Their Mission in L.A.*, N.Y. Times (Jul. 16, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/16/us/trump-national-guard-california.html>.

deployments “with shame and alarm.”¹⁵ The administration has characterized recent domestic deployments as confronting an “enemy from within,”¹⁶ situating the Guard’s mission *against* the American people. Yet, our brave men and women in uniform have chosen this path to serve and protect their fellow citizens, not to be turned against them. This fundamental tension could undermine the effectiveness of any military, even one as professional as the U.S. armed forces.

A politicized military will also struggle to recruit and retain the best talent, regardless of political views. Patriotic individuals eager to serve their country may hesitate to swear an oath that compels them to follow orders driven by political motivations. Others will no doubt worry that their own political views could be a hindrance to their professional success in the military. These challenges could be crippling for our all-volunteer force.

E. Congress Already Established Guardrails to Mitigate These Risks

Federal law wisely seeks to minimize these and other harms by ensuring the deployment of federal military personnel in the context of local law enforcement is a rare and carefully considered occurrence. Enacted by Congress and signed into law in 1878, the Posse Comitatus Act imposes stringent limits on the nature of the activities in which the U.S. armed forces may engage domestically—including a presumptive prohibition on domestic policing unless doing so is “expressly authorized by the Constitution or Act of Congress.” 18 U.S.C. § 1385; *see also* 10 USC § 275. The underlying principle dates back a century further, when the British military’s police state-like presence in pre-Revolutionary War society established an enduring aversion to such practices.

Ongoing litigation around the country has raised important questions about whether recent deployments meet (or violate) these and other applicable standards governing the use of the military on U.S. soil. What is clear is that the pattern of deployments is threatening the general expectation that the military will not engage in domestic civilian law enforcement—a pillar of healthy civil-military relations in the United States. This trend is especially troubling given the absence of clear operational need in the targeted jurisdictions. Local, state, and, when appropriate, federal law enforcement must retain principal responsibility for maintaining public safety in our communities. Only when extraordinary circumstances arise and the statutory requirements are satisfied—e.g., President George H.W. Bush’s federalization of the Guard to aid law enforcement in quelling the 1992 riots in Los Angeles at the request of the governor—should the U.S. military play a role.

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As the Supreme Court has correctly recognized, “a traditional and strong resistance of Americans to any military intrusion into civilian affairs . . . has deep roots in our history.”¹⁷ The laws restricting use of the military in response to domestic civilian disturbances and the infrequent use

¹⁵ Alex Horton, *National Guard documents show public ‘fear,’ veterans’ ‘shame’ over D.C. presence*, Washington Post (Sept. 10, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/09/10/national-guard-trump-dc/>.

¹⁶ Quantico Speech, *supra* note 8, at 43:25, 50:08.

¹⁷ *Laird v. Tatum*, 408 U.S. 1, 15 (1972).

of the narrow exceptions in our history make clear that troops should only be deployed in situations where there is a clear and urgent need that cannot be satisfied by law enforcement. This is for good reason, as deployment of the military on U.S. soil, especially in highly politicized contexts, is not only contrary to core American values, but can also be harmful to the reputation, integrity, and morale of the military.

Throughout our nation's history, domestic deployment of the military has been a last resort. The strict limitations on the use of troops on U.S. soil remain as important today as when they were enacted into law.

Signed,

Former Secretary of the Army Louis E. Caldera
Former Secretary of the Navy Sean C. O'Keefe
Admiral C. Steve Abbot, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Admiral Thad W. Allen, U.S. Coast Guard (Ret.)
General Michael V. Hayden, U.S. Air Force (Ret.)
Admiral Samuel Jones Locklear, III, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Admiral William A. Owens, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Vice Admiral Donald C. Arthur, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Rear Admiral (Upper Half) William D. Baumgartner, U.S. Coast Guard (Ret.)
Major General Richard T. Devereaux, U.S. Air Force (Ret.)
Major General Paul D. Eaton, U.S. Army (Ret.)
Rear Admiral (Upper Half) Donald J. Guter, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Rear Admiral (Upper Half) John D. Hutson, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Major General Steven J. Lepper, U.S. Air Force (Ret.)
Major General Randy E. Manner, U.S. Army (Ret.)
Major General Gale S. Pollock, U.S. Army (Ret.)
Major General Patricia S. Rose, U.S. Air Force (Ret.)
Major General Tammy S. Smith, U.S. Army (Ret.)
Major General F. Andrew Turley, U.S. Air Force (Ret.)
Brigadier General Steven M. Anderson, U.S. Army (Ret.)
Rear Admiral (Lower Half) Michael S. Baker, M.D., F.A.C.S., U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Rear Admiral (Lower Half) James A. Barnett, Jr., U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Rear Admiral (Lower Half) Jay A. DeLoach, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Brigadier General Robert J. Felderman, U.S. Army (Ret.)
Brigadier General David R. Irvine, U.S. Army (Ret.)
Brigadier General Paul G. Smith, U.S. Army (Ret.)
Brigadier General Robin B. Umberg, U.S. Army (Ret.).

Biographies

Former Secretary of the Army Louis E. Caldera graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1978 and served in the Army on active duty from 1978 to 1983. He served in two Senate-confirmed positions in the Clinton Administration, including Secretary of the Army, and as an Assistant to the President and Director of the White House Military Office in the Obama Administration.

Former Secretary of the Navy Sean C. O’Keefe began his public service career in 1978 at the Department of Defense and as U.S. Senate staff until his appointment as the Department of Defense Comptroller and Chief Finance Officer in 1989. President George H.W. Bush later named him the 69th Secretary of the Navy. Secretary O’Keefe also served in President George W. Bush’s Administration as Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget and the 10th Administrator of NASA.

Admiral C. Steve Abbot, U.S. Navy (Ret.), graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1966, after which he was deployed to Vietnam and began a 34-year career with the U.S. Navy. His final active-duty tour was as Deputy Commander-in-Chief, U.S. European Command from 1998 to 2000. Following his retirement, Admiral Abbot served as Deputy Homeland Security Advisor to President George W. Bush from 2001 to 2003.

Admiral Thad W. Allen, U.S. Coast Guard (Ret.), retired in 2010 as the 23rd Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard. Admiral Allen led the federal responses to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. He led Atlantic Coast Guard forces in response to the 9/11 attacks and coordinated the Coast Guard response to the Haitian earthquake of 2010.

General Michael V. Hayden, U.S. Air Force (Ret.), entered active military service in 1969. During his career, he rose to the rank of four-star general and served as Director of the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency. General Hayden also served as Commander of the Air Intelligence Agency and held senior staff positions at the Pentagon, Headquarters U.S. European Command, and the National Security Council.

Admiral Samuel Jones Locklear, III, U.S. Navy (Ret.), graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1977. He served for 39 years and retired as commander of U.S. Pacific Command. His prior commands include Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe, U.S. Naval Forces Africa, and Allied Joint Force Command Naples; Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet; and Commander, Nimitz Strike Group.

Admiral William A. Owens, U.S. Navy (Ret.), retired in 1996 as the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He began his career as a nuclear submariner, spending a total of 4,000 days aboard submarines, including duty in Vietnam. Admiral Owens was a senior military assistant to two Secretaries of Defense and served as commander of the U.S. 6th Fleet during Operation Desert Storm.

Vice Admiral Donald C. Arthur, U.S. Navy (Ret.), served as 35th Surgeon General of the Navy. He was Commander of the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, and the Naval

Hospital in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. He deployed and served with the hospital ship USNS Mercy.

Rear Admiral (Upper Half) William D. Baumgartner, U.S. Coast Guard (Ret.), had a variety of operational and legal assignments during his 33 year career. As a flag officer, he served as the Judge Advocate General (TJAG)/Chief Counsel of the Coast Guard and then as the Commander of the Seventh (Southeast) Coast Guard District. He is a graduate of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and Harvard Law School.

Major General Richard T. Devereaux, U.S. Air Force (Ret.), graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1978 and went on to serve 34 years in the Air Force. During his career he logged more than 3,500 hours piloting the C-5 Galaxy, KC-135 Stratotanker, and several other aircraft, and commanded five organizations from the squadron level to the USAF Expeditionary Center. After retiring from the Air Force in 2012, General Devereaux worked as a defense industry consultant and served on several non-profit boards including Chairman of the National D-Day Memorial, Chairman of the Salvation Army of Asheville, President of the Rotary Club of Asheville, and Chairman of Blue Ridge Public Radio.

Major General Paul D. Eaton, U.S. Army (Ret.), served over thirty years as an Infantry officer, including combat and post combat tours in Somalia, Bosnia and Iraq. He commanded the force to recreate the Iraqi Armed Forces after the fall of Saddam, served as Chief of Infantry for the American Army and helped create the Stryker based Infantry divisions.

Rear Admiral (Upper Half) Donald J. Guter, U.S. Navy (Ret.), served on active duty in the Navy for 29 years, first as a surface warfare officer and then in the Judge Advocate General Corps, ultimately serving as the Judge Advocate General of the Navy from 2000-2002. After retiring from active duty, he served as Dean of Duquesne Law School and subsequently Dean of South Texas College of Law Houston.

Rear Admiral (Upper Half) John D. Hutson, U.S. Navy (Ret.), served in the U.S. Navy for thirty years, including time as the Judge Advocate General of the Navy. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit (with three gold stars), Meritorious Service Medal (with two gold stars), Navy Commendation Medal, and Navy Achievement Medal.

Major General Steven J. Lepper, U.S. Air Force (Ret.), served for 35 years in the United States Air Force as a judge advocate in a variety of roles including Deputy Legal Counsel to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, commander, and military judge. He culminated his service as Deputy Judge Advocate General of the Air Force.

Major General Randy E. Manner, U.S. Army (Ret.), served over 36 years in the U.S. Army in positions such as the Acting Vice Chief of the National Guard Bureau overseeing the readiness and deployment of over 450,000 Guardsmen, the Deputy Commanding General of the U.S. Third Army, responsible for all Army forces in combat in the Middle East, and as the Acting and Deputy Director of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, responsible for overseeing the safety of all U.S. nuclear and chemical weapons and developing DoD procedures to respond to pandemics.

Major General Gale S. Pollock, U.S. Army (Ret.), served as the Commander of the U.S. Army Medical Command and the Acting Surgeon General of the Army (the first woman, non-physician to have this role in any of the military services). General Pollock was the 22nd Chief of the Army Nurse Corps.

Major General Patricia S. Rose, U.S. Air Force (Ret.), served more than three decades in the U.S. Air Force, where she held key leadership roles in logistics, engineering, and security across the Air Force and joint commands. Commissioned in 1984, she began her career as an aircraft maintenance officer and went on to command the 36th Aerial Port Squadron at McChord Air Force Base. She later directed joint logistics in Southwest Asia in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom and served as a senior logistics leader for U.S. Pacific Command and Air Force Materiel Command. Rising to the rank of Major General in 2013, her career was marked by extensive operational experience, global deployments, and contributions to sustainment, readiness, and force protection. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Defense Superior Service Medal and the Legion of Merit.

Major General Tammy S. Smith, U.S. Army (Ret.), served 35 years in the United States Army, culminating her career at the Pentagon as Military Advisor to the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs), where she oversaw quality-of-life programs for more than one million soldiers and families across the Active, Guard, and Reserve force. A logistics officer by training, she held command and staff positions worldwide, including deployments in Panama, Costa Rica, Afghanistan, and South Korea, and served as Deputy Commanding General of the Eighth Army. In 2012 she became the military's first openly LGBT general officer, using her platform to advance inclusion and diversity across the force, earning the Secretary of the Army Diversity in Leadership Award. A decorated combat veteran, her honors include the Distinguished Service Medal, Bronze Star Medal, Legion of Merit, and Combat Action Badge, and she was inducted into the Army ROTC Hall of Fame in 2016.

Major General F. Andrew Turley, U.S. Air Force (Ret.), served in the U.S. Air Force for more than 27 years, in a wide variety of active duty, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard judge advocate positions at the wing, major command and Air Staff levels, culminating in his appointment as the Ninth Air National Guard Assistant to The Judge Advocate General. As a federal civilian lawyer, he held senior level legal positions with several federal agencies, including the Department of Justice, the White House, and Department of the Air Force, and served as the general counsel of a small DoD agency. He is a retired member of the Senior Executive Service.

Brigadier General Steven M. Anderson, U.S. Army (Ret.), served a 31-year career in the U.S. Army, specializing in logistics across key command and staff assignments in Korea, Iraq, Kuwait, Afghanistan, Germany, Hawaii, and the Pentagon. His most significant role was as Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics to General David H. Petraeus during the Multi-National Force in Iraq from 2006 to 2007, where he oversaw critical sustainment operations during the height of the conflict. A 1978 graduate of West Point with a master's degree from the Naval Postgraduate School, Anderson retired in 2010 and was recognized with numerous awards, including the Distinguished Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster and the Bronze Star.

Rear Admiral (Lower Half) Michael S. Baker, M.D., F.A.C.S., U.S. Navy (Ret.), is a retired general and trauma surgeon with a distinguished dual career in medicine and military service. Board certified in General Surgery with fellowship training in cardiovascular surgery, he served as a surgery department chair for more than 20 years and was on the clinical faculty at two medical schools. He has published over 100 peer-reviewed articles, lectured widely at national and international conferences, and taught at U.S. military bases around the world. Dr. Baker has completed 5 tours in Ukraine during the current war to teach Advanced Trauma Life Support to doctors and nurses with the International Medical Corps. In the Navy, he specialized in combat casualty care, triage, trauma, operational medicine, and disaster response, retiring after 30 years with three Legions of Merit, the Marine Corps Combat Action Ribbon, and the Combat Craft River Warfare pin.

Rear Admiral (Lower Half) James A. Barnett, Jr., U.S. Navy (Ret.), was a Surface Warfare Officer and attorney. He served as Deputy Commander of the Naval Expeditionary Warfare Command during the height of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He later served as Chief of the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau of the Federal Communications Commission.

Rear Admiral (Lower Half) Jay A. DeLoach, U.S. Navy (Ret.), graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1978, served on submarines, and retired as a rear admiral. He earned three masters degrees (Management; Nuclear Engineering; and National Security & Strategic Studies) and was an adjunct professor for the Naval War College. As a member of the Senior Executive Service, he served as the 12th Director of the Naval History & Heritage Command.

Brigadier General Robert J. Felderman, U.S. Army (Ret.), served as the United States Deputy Director and Principal Advisor to the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and as the Deputy Director of Plans, Policy, and Strategy Directorate (DJ5) at the U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM).

Brigadier General David R. Irvine, U.S. Army (Ret.), is an attorney in private practice. He previously served four terms as a Republican member of the Utah House of Representatives. He enlisted as a private in the 96th Infantry Division in 1962. He received a direct commission as a strategic intelligence officer in 1967. He retired in 2002 as a BG, and his last assignment was Deputy Commander of the 96th Regional Support Command, U.S. Army Reserve.

Brigadier General Paul G. Smith, U.S. Army (Ret.), is a retired Massachusetts National Guard officer whose more than three-decade career included command at the company, battalion, and brigade levels, culminating as Assistant Adjutant General – Army. He also served as Commander of the Land Component Command and as a Dual-Status Commander, where he led Army force development initiatives in suicide prevention, drug abuse reduction, sexual assault prevention, resiliency, and diversity. General Smith directed the State Partnership Program with the Republic of Paraguay, supporting the development of United Nations peacekeeping forces, and represented Massachusetts on the Military Interstate Children’s Compact Commission as well as the National Guard Bureau Joint Diversity Executive Council. As Commander of Joint Task Force – Massachusetts, he oversaw emergency responses to the Western Massachusetts tornado, Hurricanes Irene and Sandy, severe winter storms, and the Boston Marathon Bombings. A graduate of Fitchburg State College, Anna Maria College, and the U.S. Army War College, his

service is recognized with numerous awards, including the Meritorious Service Medal with four oak leaf clusters and the Army Commendation Medal with four oak leaf clusters.

Brigadier General Robin B. Umberg, U.S. Army (Ret.), began her Army career at 18 and was commissioned in 1977 after earning a nursing scholarship at Walter Reed. Over 36 years of active and reserve service, she held command and staff roles across the U.S. and overseas, including deployments during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, and earned high honors such as the Legion of Merit and the Civilian Humanitarian Service Medal. As Chief of Professional Services for the 3rd Medical Command, she advised on readiness and career management for more than 27,000 medical personnel, and in 2006 was inducted into the Military Order of Medical Merit. Following her military retirement in 2010, she continued serving veterans as Undersecretary of California Department of Veteran Affairs, where she modernized long-term care for aging, disabled, and homeless veterans. Appointed to the board of visitors at West Point, Umberg has dedicated her career to service, leadership, and advocacy for veterans. She earned the Lifetime Achievement Award for her service to veterans.