

Georgia Department of Defense

Did you know that the State of Georgia has a Department of Defense? If so, do you know what components make up this state agency?

With more than 15,000 members and a budget of over \$530 million, the business of conducting operations in the Georgia Department of Defense is complex. As one of the larger National Guard organizations, the Ga. DoD competes annually for resources and funding with 53 other states and territories. For the past six years, the Ga. DoD has been recognized as one of the top three performing National Guard organizations in the nation by the National Guard Bureau. Our business practices ensure that as funds and resources become scarcer, Georgia is postured by efficiency and stewardship to continue operations.

The motto of the Georgia Department of Defense: “always ready, always there, always on target!” An accurate portrait of what this organization offers the state of Georgia and the nation. In meeting the requirement to provide ready and relevant forces to combatant commanders and homeland defense and defense support to civil authorities, the Georgia Army and Air National Guard has a significant economic impact on the economy of the state of Georgia.

With a 15 percent increase in personnel since 2005, more than 13,000 men and women make up the Ga. DoD, hailing from each of the 159 counties across the Peach State – making our service members and civilian staff truly “home grown.”

With a federal budget of \$517 million and state budget of over \$9 million, the Ga. DoD produces lasting results in the state with flourishing youth programs, an outstanding military readiness capability, and ingenuity in military construction programs – which at present are injecting almost \$61 million into the Georgia economy.

Despite our large presence in the state, the Ga. DoD and its operations account for only .001 percent of the state budget in 2014 – just over \$9 million.

Overall, the Ga. DoD annually injects almost \$1 billion into the Georgia economy, making it a vital part of our thriving economy. This is accomplished through payroll, logistics, maintenance and service contracts, construction and many other ways. As such, the Ga. DoD is one of the largest employers in Georgia and significantly impacts our economy. Additionally, the fact that 150 of the 159 counties either have a National Guard armory or are immediately adjacent to a county with one, demonstrates our statewide economic presence and impact.

While our economic impact in Georgia is significant, the most important asset we have is our service members. The Ga. DoD service members are not just the protectors of your communities; we are your brothers and sisters, your neighbors and friends. In times of peace, we live side-by-side by with you, working to make this state great. And in times of war and peril, know that your Ga. DoD will answer the call, as we are always ready, always there, always on target!

Georgia Army National Guard

The Georgia Army National Guard (GAARNG) consists of more than 11,100 Citizen-Soldiers training in 54 hometown armories and readiness centers across the state. Georgia's Army Guard has the eighth largest authorized end strength allocation in the nation and is comprised of combat, combat support and combat service support units. The GAARNG is organized into six major subordinate commands: the 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) in Macon; the 560th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade in Cumming; the 648th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade at Fort Benning; the 78th Troop Command, the 201st Regional Support Group / Region 4 Homeland Response Force, and the 78th Aviation Troop Command at Clay National Guard Center in Marietta.

Georgia Air National Guard

The Georgia Air National Guard consists of more than 2,800 Airmen. Several of the Georgia Air Guard's operational units deployed personnel and equipment throughout the year in support of global operations in addition to the units' Air Expeditionary Force taskings. The Georgia Air Guard's core missions are still in high-demand.

The Georgia Air Guard's largest unit, the 116th Air Control Wing (ACW) based at Robins Air Force Base, flies the E-8C Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS) aircraft. The 116th ACW has continuously deployed aircraft and personnel in Southwest Asia for the last 12 years, amassing more than 100,000 flying hours in support of combatant commanders, with 4,900 hours flown in 2014. The 116 ACW also received its 17th Air Force Outstanding Unit Award in 2014, the most of any Air National Guard Unit.

The 165th Airlift Wing based in Savannah, flies the C-130H aircraft, and has deployed aircraft and personnel to Iraq and Afghanistan, on average, every 18 months. In 2014, the unit flew more than 2,000 hours, including combat operations in the Middle East. In February, C-130 aircraft returned from a four-month deployment for the eleventh time in support of the Global War on Terror. The unit received its tenth Air Force Outstanding Unit Award during a ceremony in September.

Our geographically separated units also contributed their support to the Global War on Terror in 2014. Twenty four members of the 202nd Engineering Installation Squadron returned home after a six month deployment in support of forward operating locations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Forty-four percent of Brunswick's 224th Joint Communications Support Squadron mobilized for two six-month rotational deployments to support operational requirements in the Central Command area of responsibility while simultaneously performing two five month humanitarian missions. The 224th was awarded its seventh Air Force Outstanding Unit Award in 2014. While 80 members of the 117th Air Control Squadron were deployed to Southwest Asia, the unit additionally supported the citizens of Georgia during winter storms in January and February. Two members of the 165th Air Support Operations Squadron are deployed and four others supported the 70th Anniversary of Operation Market Garden. The 165th ASOS was also awarded its fifth Air Force Outstanding Unit Award in 2014. Twenty-two Airmen of the 283rd Combat Communications Squadron returned home from joint expeditionary tasking at Shindand Airbase,

Afghanistan in 2014 and ten personnel deployed in support of Black Dart 2014, a joint DoD exercise. The 139th Intelligence Squadron activated 30 percent of its personnel to support the United States Air Force and national intelligence missions. After manning reductions, the Combat Readiness Training Center set its focus on two distinct areas – combat training for fighter pilots and the Cyber Training Center. Sentry Savannah 2014, an inaugural air training exercise designed by fighter pilots for fighter pilots received great reviews from participants. Townsend Bombing Range continued forward movement with its \$100 million expansion, funded by the United States Marine Corps. Three active duty Air Force instructors joined the CTC staff to help meet the emerging cyber threat.

Georgia State Defense Force

When ordered by the Adjutant General, the Georgia State Defense Force (GSDF) provides an organized, trained, disciplined, rapid-response, uniformed force. GSDF volunteers respond to needs and emergency situations as defined by the Adjutant General and the Governor, and assist local authorities where such missions do not conflict, as authorized under the Official Code of Georgia, Title 38

Almost 400 GSDF volunteers participated in annual training at the Georgia Air National Guard's Combat Readiness Training Center in Savannah. Georgia State Defense Force members, along with units of the Georgia Air National Guard, performed a mass-casualty triage and transport field training exercise to maintain readiness to respond to natural disasters.

Prior-service veterans comprise approximately 33 percent of the GSDF force. State Defense Force members act as a force-multiplier to the Ga. DoD, capable of immediate response whenever they may be needed, assisting with everything from search and rescue missions, to disaster relief efforts, to helping reunite redeploying Guardsmen with their families. When called upon, the GSDF volunteers also provide a variety of support functions for the Georgia National Guard including family support, legal assistance, medical and chaplaincy support, and technical assistance in a variety of other areas. The GSDF also performs defense support to civil authority missions such as evacuation and control during natural disasters, perimeter safety, and medical assistance at major public events.

The Georgia State Defense Force provides a wide variety of training and educational opportunities – from military operations to Community Emergency Response Team training for its own personnel as well as the personnel of the Georgia National Guard. The strong working relationship with the Georgia National Guard allows the GSDF to remain relevant and ready to serve the state and its citizens, now and long into the future.

Defense Support of Civil Authorities

The Georgia Department of Defense is always ready to provide support to the Georgia Emergency Management Agency and the citizens of Georgia in the event of natural and/or manmade disasters. To achieve a high level of readiness, the Ga. DoD maintains relationships with state and local agencies, refines written plans and procedures, conducts and participates in exercises, and responds to actual emergency events.

During 2014, the Ga. DoD provided defense support to civil authorities for state emergencies. In January, during Winter Storm Leon, approximately 200 Guardsmen provided immediate relief to suffering citizens stuck on roadways. Units that were activated reported to armories and began executing mission within two hours of notification. During the response, Guardsmen rescued children from 31 stranded school buses and transported them to safety. Guardsmen assisted almost 5,000 stranded vehicle drivers and completed approximately 300 vehicle recoveries. The Guard also provided food, water, and blankets to stranded motorists and Georgia Guard armories served as warming shelters and staging areas for emergency and first responder activities.

Winter Storm Pax struck in February and a state declaration of emergency was issued ahead of the expected conditions. Approximately 640 Guardsmen responded to the Governor's activation. Guardsmen delivered food and water and again opened armories to serve as warming stations and staging areas. The Guard's vehicles, capable of traversing degraded roadways, made possible the transportation of critical care patients and workers and allowed Guardsmen to reach areas to remove debris in support of Georgia Power's restoration efforts. The Guard also provided aviation support to the Governor's office, and logistical assets for our interagency partners.

Counterdrug Task Force

The Georgia National Guard Counterdrug Task Force (CDTF) conducts full spectrum law enforcement support operations which bridge the gap between Department of Defense and civil authorities in the fight against illicit drugs and transnational threats to the homeland. The CDTF contributes military support for local, state and federal law enforcement agencies and community based organizations in addition to their parent combatant commanders. The CDTF's mission is to reduce the supply and demand for illegal drugs by fostering relationships and partnering with law enforcement, community organizations, and school districts. The CDTF is comprised of over 40 members of both the Ga. Army National Guard and Ga. Air National Guard, who assist law enforcement agencies specifically through illegal narcotic and property seizure operations, marijuana eradication missions, information analysis, trend analysis, case support and anti-drug classroom instruction.

The CDTF assisted in the seizure of \$304,113,139 worth of drugs, \$21,697,508 in currency, \$735,311 in property and \$18,519,898 in aircraft seizures. Notably, in one operation 1.6 metric tons of cocaine, valued over \$55 million, was seized in a case worked by the CDTF in support of the Federal Aviation Administration's Law Enforcement Assistance Program (LEAP). The task force assisted LEAP with an additional major narcotics seizure totaling over \$24

million. Marijuana eradication efforts in FY 2014 resulted in the detection and destruction of over 16,461 plants valued in excess of \$32.9 million. The CDTF continues to perform as one of the most successful Counter Drug Task Forces in the country assisting in nearly \$345 million in drug related seizures and arrest of 1,651 drug related suspects in FY 2014.

Youth Challenge Academy

The Georgia National Guard Youth Challenge Academies add solid value to the state and to local communities. With locations at Fort Stewart in Hinesville and Fort Gordon in Augusta, YCA has received outstanding support from the governor and the state legislature since its inception. The value of the program is such that a third academy will soon be established in Milledgeville.

The program began in September 1993 and has since graduated more than 13,000 at-risk youth into the work force, the military or further educational efforts. This number is more impressive when one considers that it represents 10 percent of the total YCA graduates for the entire country and that Georgia was just the third state in the country to hit the 12,000 graduate mark.

The academies are designed for 16-18 year-olds who have dropped out of high school. Candidates who become residential cadets in the program enter a challenging 22-week intensive general educational development preparation program, receive thorough training in military discipline and structure, receive understanding of the U.S. Constitution and civic responsibilities, complete service learning projects and a multitude of life skills classes.

Each academy campus is funded for a yearly target of 425 graduates. Each academy regularly exceeds its target of two classes each year, graduating four classes for a total of 850 graduates. The overall rate for obtaining a GED or for high school graduation is above 70 percent, a phenomenal rate given that each class is completely comprised of high school dropouts. This percentage is almost double what this age group is able to achieve outside of YCA.

More than 55 percent of YCA graduates go on to enter the work force. About 25 percent seek further education, and almost 20 percent enter some branch of military service. Georgia YCA graduates have attended some prestigious schools including Emory University, The Citadel, The Law School of Charleston, Georgia State University; Georgia Southern University, East Georgia College, Georgia Military College, Paine College, Augusta Technical College, Savannah Technical College, and Brewton-Parker College among others. Graduates have become pilots, top non-commissioned and commissioned officers in the military, and many entered law enforcement with one becoming a chief. The YCA has also produced a medical doctor and one attorney.

The added value to Georgia and local communities is threefold: Thousands of graduates go on to lead productive lives as participatory citizens. The value of the community service performed by YCA cadets in Georgia averages over half a million dollars per year. Finally, and most impressively, a cost analysis conducted by the Rand Corporation concluded for every dollar invested in the program, there was a return of two dollars and sixty cents.

Starbase

The Georgia Department of Defense's Peach State STARBASE program seeks to raise the interest and improve the knowledge and skills of at-risk youth in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects. This program exposes students and their teachers to real world applications of STEM disciplines through experiential learning, simulations, and application exercises. The program also emphasizes real-world applications of group communications and cooperative learning skills, while providing a dynamic learning environment to help motivate the students to stay in and engage further with their own schools.

Georgia's STARBASE serves approximately 900 nine to eleven year old fifth graders annually, providing a fast paced course of instruction that results in quantifiable improvement in student STEM testing scores. Before participation in the program, students averaged 45 percent on a standardized STEM based test. After participation in Georgia's STARBASE, a repeat of this same test shows that average student scores improved by more than 33 percentage points to a 79 percent average score.

At STARBASE, students participate in challenging "hands-on, minds-on" activities related to aviation and STEM careers. They interact with military personnel and see application of their academic studies in the real world at the Clay National Guard Center and Dobbins Air Reserve Base. This program provides students with 25 contact hours of stimulating instructional and inspirational experiences, and exposes participating students to the technological environments and positive role models found within the Georgia National Guard.

Quick Facts:

- 13,843 Georgia Guardsmen (11,037 Army Guard, 2,806 Air Guard)
- \$2.6M in state fund cost avoidance saved by all volunteer State Defense Force
- \$517M in Federal Funds brought into the State of Georgia
- \$9M in state funds utilized
- \$345M in drug related seizures.
- 13,071 Youth Challenge Academy graduates
- Guard units based in 55 of Georgia's counties
- \$26M in state and federal income tax from Guard payroll.
- More than 18,000 Georgia Guardsmen have deployed since 9/11/2001