



# WASHINGTON ARMY NATIONAL GUARD STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2035





**The Mission of the Washington Army National Guard is:**

The WAARNG delivers Combat-Ready forces ISO Federal Missions. On Order provides prepared teams to Civil Authorities to protect the lives, rights, and property of our communities.

**The WAARNG Vision – our future End State – is as follows:**

By 2035, the WAARNG is a learning organization that champions creativity and continuous adaptation in conditions of uncertainty and constraint. We are ready to fight and win our nation’s wars and protect the citizens of Washington. Our readiness and confidence in our Soldiers, equipment, and mission allows us to deploy, fight, and prevail in the current and emerging operational environments. Our combination of capabilities and 8,100 Soldiers postures us to meet the evolving needs of our state and nation, and international partners, while providing opportunities to expand our relevance in a changing operational environment. The WAARNG is a premier place to serve, trusted by Soldiers, the community, and the Army.

The Washington Army National Guard (WAARNG) Strategic Plan is a concept for how the WAARNG will achieve its organizational change goals over the next ten years.

This document provides a point of aim for the organization. It outlines the desired strategic “ends” of the organization in support of our Mission and general “ways” to pursue them.

The strategic plan is informed by the National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, National Military Strategy, “The 23rd DARNGs [Director of the Army National Guard] ‘Quick-Hitter,’” The Army Strategy, and the Washington Military Department (WMD) Strategy.

However, this strategy is principally the product of the 2024 Strategic Planning Conference conducted on 23-24 October, and follow-up meetings of the Ways and Means Working Group.

This Strategic Plan generally refers to the Business and Organizational Strategy of the WAARNG, and as such, takes many elements from civilian strategic organizational change endeavors.

*Carter W. Richardson*  
Carter W. Richardson  
Command Sergeant Major  
Washington ARNG  
Rainier 7

*Paul T. Sellars*  
Paul T. Sellars  
Brigadier General  
Commanding  
Rainier 6

**OUR  
REPUTATION,  
READINESS,  
AND  
RELEVANCE  
SET THE  
CONDITIONS  
FOR  
SUSTAINED  
EXCELLENCE.**



## SOLDIER FIRST

Soldier First is what you do. We are Soldiers First, and must be competent in our individual Soldier requirements and skills. As our touchstone, this requires the belief in individual readiness and the connection of each Soldier to the powerful tradition of service in the U.S. Army and our National Guard. Soldier First requires a steadfast commitment to Army Values, standards, and toughness.

## SOLDIER CENTRIC

Soldier Centric is what the organization does. Everything we do as Command Teams, Staffs, or Leaders must be framed by the critical question, "What does this mean to the Soldier and his or her Family?" Everything from planning to execution is through the lens of the Soldier. When we get this right, we will build trust.

## BRILLIANCE IN THE BASICS

Brilliance in the Basics is our approach to training. We train tough, ethical, and professionally competent Soldiers. We identify and prioritize the basic tasks we choose to execute and then master them. Officers produce orders, NCO's prepare, rehearse and execute.

## LEADER DEVELOPMENT

We train Leadership at echelon. We develop leaders by trusting and empowering them to execute consequential missions. We instill authority, ownership, and decision making back at all echelons down to the lowest level possible. Diversity in leadership strengthens our Guard.

Developing leaders includes ensuring the value of fair competition for key assignments, opportunities, and promotions.

## DISCIPLINED INITIATIVE WITHIN INTENT

We enable this by communicating precisely through echelon and by building mutual trust & shared understanding of Commander's Intent. This forms the foundation of Mission Command, which enables us to accomplish all missions and capitalize on emerging opportunities.

## BUILD WINNING UNITS

Our units are built with Guardsmen who are Soldiers First, and their units have such a powerful Army identity that Soldiers are proud to serve here. Winning units are technically, tactically, and operationally proficient while remaining ready to execute our mission. Winning is measured with science by performance in key metrics and assessed in art by the command.



*"All organizations start with WHY, but only the great ones keep their WHY clear year after year." – Simon Sinek*

**We want to win, and winning requires a deliberate plan.**

**Strategy** is primarily concerned with connecting ends to ways and means. This strategic document lays out ends and ways, while the Army Campaign Plan outlines our prioritized ways and means. Together, they constitute the overall strategy for the Washington Army National Guard.

**Ends** are objectives or desired outcomes for a given strategy. The terms "end state" and "goals" are synonymous with ends. Ways are the actions, methods, or processes executed to achieve the ends. Means are the resources required to execute ways.

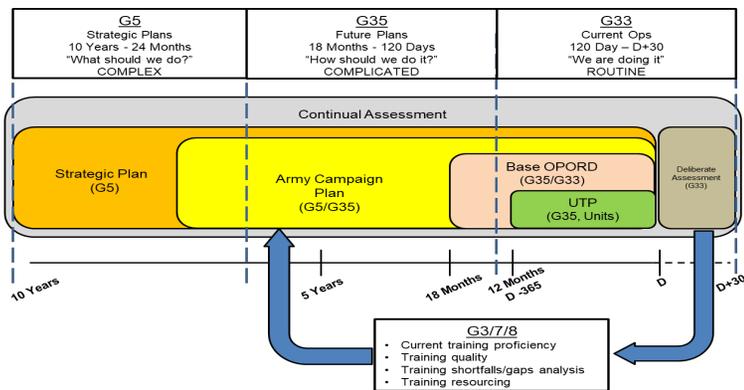
**Means** include manpower, time, and financial resources. As means are inherently finite, prioritization of these resources toward ends is required.

The Strategic Plan is a living document and is meant to outline the ends and ways of the WAARNG strategy. It is reviewed annually or when conditions warrant revision.

Strategy is assessed through quantifiable metrics to determine effectiveness and shape future revisions. This assessment takes place through monthly and yearly review of metrics by the core strategy team.

The out-product of these assessments is revision to this Strategic Plan and generation of the Army Campaign Plan (ACP), which prioritizes ends and highlights ways for a 3-5 year window. The execution of this strategy is then operationalized and connected to specific means via the yearly Base Operations Order (BOO).

The proponent for the Strategic Plan is the G5. The proponent for the Army Campaign Plan is the G5 supported by the G3 (G35). The proponent for the Base Operations Order and the Commander's Training Guidance is the G3 (G35/G33). The CG approves the overall WAARNG strategy.



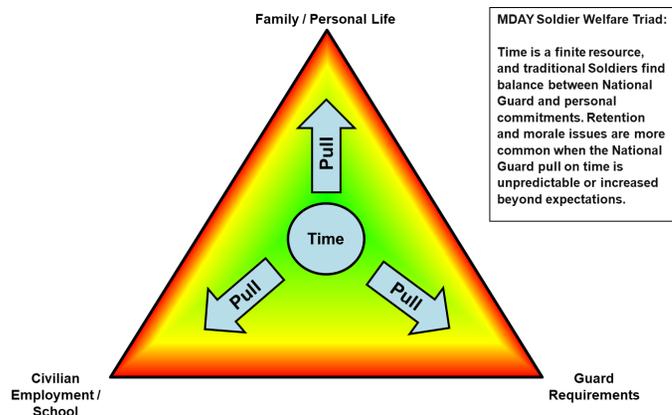
*By traveling into the past, I enhance my grasp of the present."*

- Gen. (Ret.) Jim Mattis, Former Sec. of Defense

**Past** - The WAARNG's reputation and readiness are trusted and valued by our Soldiers, our community, the Army and our elected officials allowing us to benefit from new opportunities. It is regionally aligned within Washington state to maximize mission command, with a force structure optimized for strategic opportunities. It capitalizes on our unique differences, becoming an organization of choice for our Soldiers and Civilians and is a key influencer of the strategic direction of the National Guard.

**Current** - The COE continues to be characterized by great-power competition and the specter of that competition turning into crisis and then conflict. The National Guard remains an operational reserve that is employed as part of campaigning and is programed into national contingency plans. What has changed is that for the first time in generations, the national homeland is a serious target for adversaries, and that presents additional challenges for the National Guard. Simultaneously, budgetary pressures grow yearly, despite nominal growth in the National Defense Authorization Act. As challenges grow and budgets remain flat or shrink, there is opportunity if we can demonstrate superior readiness, relevance, and reputation. We have the opportunity to shape our own future; failure to do so will leave us at the whims of National Guard Bureau and Forces Command.

However, opportunity needs to be carefully managed since mishandling could leave us unprepared for the future. Our Soldiers are our ultimate asset and being an operational reserve places considerable strain on the triad of Soldier welfare, family support, and employer commitment (Figure 2). Some units will require commitment beyond the statutory 48 Unit Training Assembly (UTA) periods and 15 days of Annual Training (AT) per year. This strain is felt more acutely by the traditional (MDAY) Soldiers in the WAARNG.



**Future** - Over the next ten years, the WAARNG wants to complete the shift to a predominant focus on supporting the Indopacific area of responsibility, while growing end strength to 8,100. However, the FOE is not expected to be easier than the COE. Russia will likely recover from its disastrous initial performance in the Russia-Ukraine War. China continues its alarming military buildup that is supposed to make it capable of successfully invading Taiwan by 2027, with a military equal to or superior to the United States by 2049. Simultaneously, China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea will likely continue at least partial coordination as part of the 'axis of upheaval.' This will increase the importance of exercises with foreign partners for diplomatic and interoperability issues.

Simultaneously, the National Guard may be called upon for domestic operations such as border security and infrastructure defense. Despite these increased foreign and domestic demands, we anticipate the budget to remain flat or on a slight downtrend over time, once inflation and pay raises are accounted for.

### COMMANDING GENERAL'S INTENT

The WAARNG becomes deliberate in planning, processes, and actions to instill organizational values and meet Federal and domestic mission requirements, while enhancing internal and external reputation, providing stability for Soldiers, Families, and employers, maximizing strength, reducing threats, seizing beneficial opportunities, and building trust.

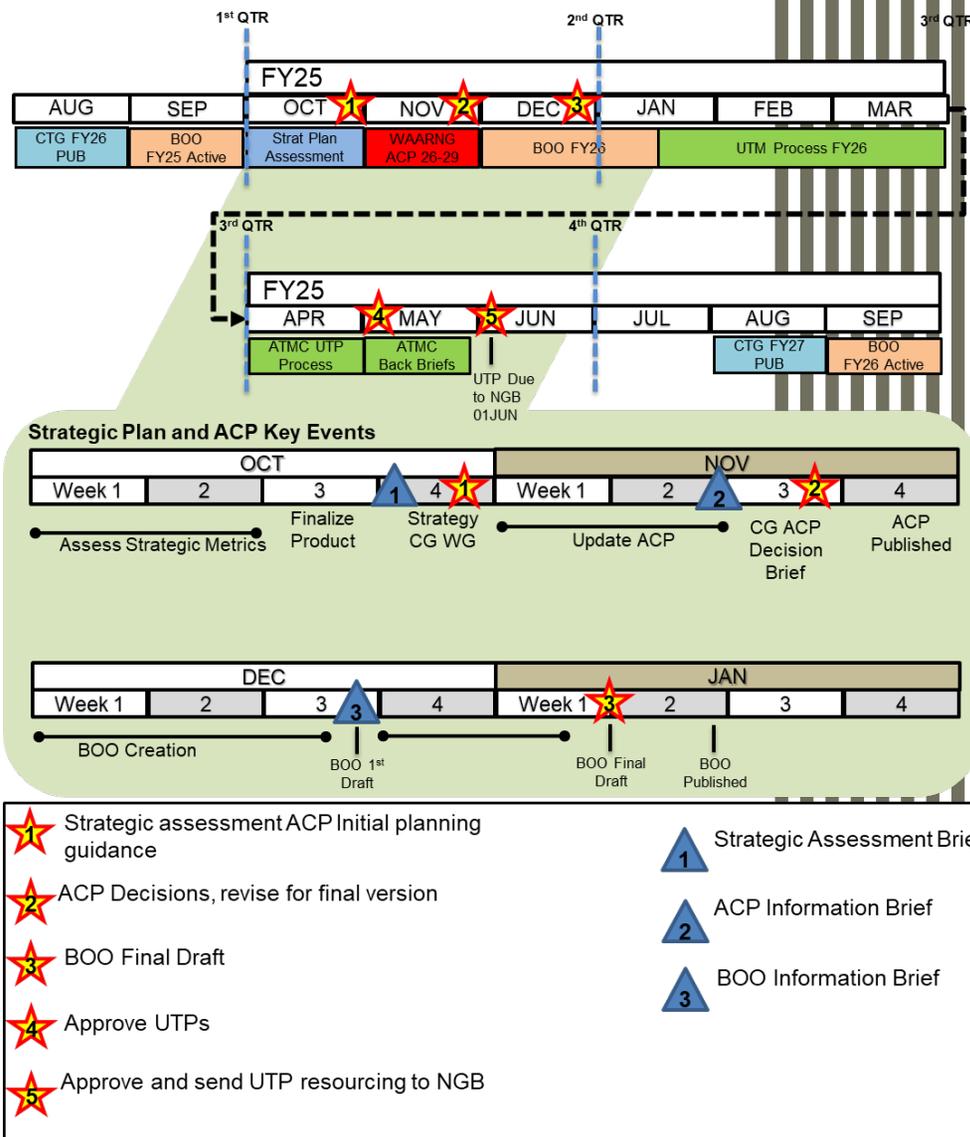
### STRATEGIC APPROACH

The WAARNG's central challenge is how to prioritize resources to remain ready while modernizing and preparing for a different future to achieve the WAARNG end state (See Figure 4). The WAARNG Strategy establishes four lines of effort (LOE) with specific objectives to affect organizational change by 2035 or earlier. These lines of effort are People and Talent Management, Winning Units, Innovation and Transformation, and Reputation.

The prioritization of LOEs and connection to resources (means) occurs in the Army Campaign Plan (ACP) and is operationalized in the yearly Base Operations Order (BOO). The WAARNG Strategy requires steadfast commitment from every Leader at all echelons.

### BATTLE RHYTHM/PROCESS FLOW

Strategic planning is a process that is cyclical and deliberate. To this end, there are several time-sequenced events that require staff and leader input to shape changes to the plan. This process also provides a feedback to Joint Staff domestic operations planning to help shape future Army plans. The yearly battle rhythm for the WAARNG strategic plan staff actions is:

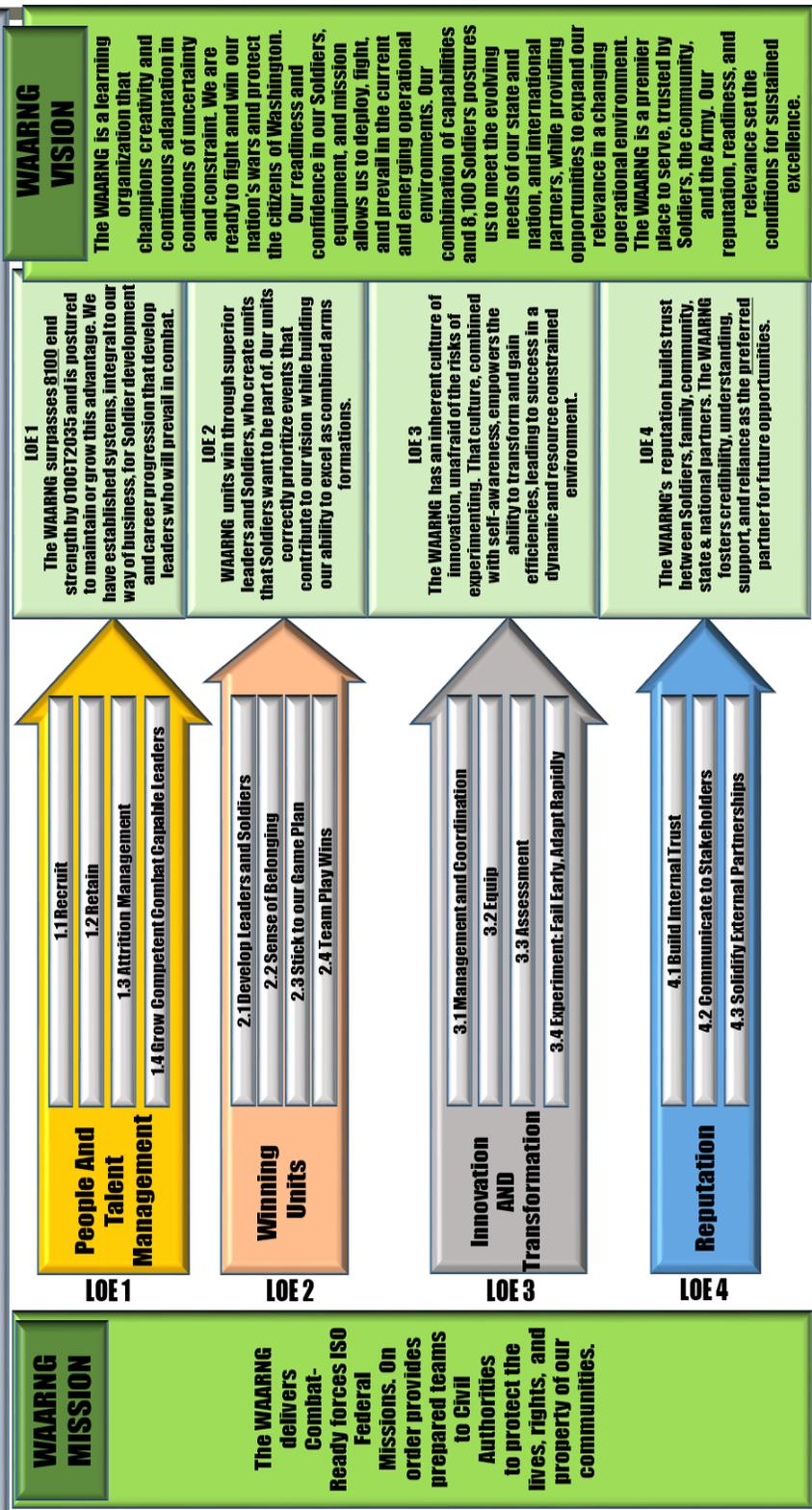


# PLANNING EVENTS & LINES OF EFFORT

Staff planning events are outlined in the following table. Note that these dates are not rigid, but better outline an approach and rough timeline.

When	Event	What	Who	Input	Output
October of FY	Strat Plan Review / Assessment Phase	Detailed review of MOP/MOE of current (FY+0) strategic plan. Review of WAARNG FY+0 End State.	Lead: G5, Members: G5 Strat plan core team, G5 Data/Metrics team, CoS.	Key Performance Indicators from SMS	Information Brief, Strategic Plan Assessment
3-4th Week of October of FY	Strategic Planning Workshop	Information Brief of Assessment and Planning Guidance for Campaign Plan	Lead: G5, Members: Directorates, CG, G5 Core and Metrics Teams	Strategic Plan assessment comments, CoS input	Changes to Strategic Plan (if needed) and Army Campaign Planning Priorities
November of FY	Army Campaign Plan Development Phase	Assessment and development of the FY+4 Campaign Plan. Connection of Strategic Plan Ends to Ways and Means.	Lead: G5, Members: Directorates, G5 Core and Metrics Teams.	Strategic Planning Workshop out products	Revised Army Campaign Plan Information Brief
3rd Week of November of FY	ACP Information Brief	Brief of the assessment and planning considerations for FY+4 Campaign Plan	Lead: G5, For: CG, Attendees: Directorates, Strategic Planning Core Team, Data/Metrics Team, MSC leadership	Revised Army Campaign Plan Information Brief, Stakeholder Feedback	CG's Guidance to Army Campaign Plan
December of FY	Base Operations Order Development Phase	Translating priorities from Army Campaign Plan to Base Operations Order for FY+1	Lead: G3, Members: Directorates, CoS, MSC leadership	CG's Guidance to Army Campaign Plan	Information Brief on Base Operations Order for FY+1
1-2nd Week of January of FY	Base Operations Order Information Brief	Brief of the Assessment of the Campaign Plan Priorities and Connection to Base Operations Order	Lead: G3, For: CG, Members: Directorates, CoS.	Army Campaign Plan Priorities, Strategic Planning metrics review	CG's Guidance to Base Operations Order for FY+1
Jan-Apr of FY	ATMC UTP process for FY+1	Army Training Management Conference to develop unit training plans IAW FM 7-0	Lead: G3, Members: Unit Commanders	Army Campaign Plan, Base Operations Order WARNO	Unit Training Plans

## WAARNG LINES OF EFFORT FY2025 ONWARD



## PEOPLE AND TALENT MANAGEMENT

*"The Soldier is the Army. No army is better than its Soldiers."  
- General George Patton*

**Why people and talent management matters:** The Army's source of power is its people, which includes both quantity and quality. End Strength (quantity) is strategic currency. Civilian organizations' agility comes from their profitability, the Army's agility comes from manned organizations that develop and retain talent.

Quantity and quality are linked: opportunities for development create organizations that Soldiers want to remain in and that outsiders want to join. High end strength allows the WAARNG to take high payoff risks and reinvest in the organization, and will position us to gain relevant force structure, such as a Multi-Domain Task Force or Division HQ.

### LINE OF EFFORT 1 - END STATE

The WAARNG surpasses 8100 end strength by 01OCT2035 and is postured to maintain or grow this advantage. We have established systems, integral to our way of business, for Soldier development and career progression that develop leaders who will prevail in combat.

**1.1 Recruit.** Potential Ways: We will maintain our increased recruiting posture, employ novel recruiting methods, and continue to develop incentives for successful recruiting.

**Objective Goal:** Build to 8,100 end strength by 2035.

**1.2 Retain.** Potential Ways: We will actively seek to improve command climates, reduce administrative misfires (pay, benefits, etc.), and target Soldiers at risk for retention failure or preventable separation.

**Objective Goal:** Retain Soldiers above the national average.

**1.3 Manage Talent.** Potential Ways: Provide opportunities for talent growth through clear career pipeline, sharing unit lifecycles, and promotion management, transfers, and professional military education.

**Objective Goal:** Soldiers are generally able to plan for at least the next three years and understand possible career arcs. Talent management drives retention.

**1.4 Grow Competent Combat Capable Leaders.** Potential Ways: Seeking participation in the Minuteman program for the force-on-force portion of NTC/JRTC rotations – either as formations, or leaders augmenting other units. LPD sessions focused on tactical problems, with an emphasis on winning on the emerging battlefield.

**Objective Goal:** Every MSC deliberately prioritizes understanding the modern operational environment and develops training plans to grow leaders who can prevail. Growing leaders is not left to PME but is forefront in unit culture.



LINE OF EFFORT #2  
WINNING TEAMS

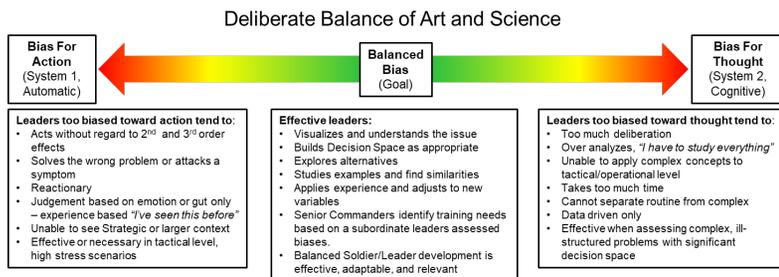
WINNING TEAMS

*“Winning is not a sometime thing...it’s an all the time thing. You don’t win once in a while...you don’t do the right thing once in a while...you do them right all the time. Winning is a habit.”*

- Vince Lombardi, former Head Coach of Green Bay Packers

**Why winning units matter:** This is a competitive sport and we are in competition with other states, components, and services to be the organization of choice for our Soldiers, Stakeholders, State, and Nation. Winning feels good, and teams that win become addicted to winning. They seek victory when victory seems impossible.

Winning units know what to do and why they do it. They understand their basic technical skills, but also are students of the profession of arms. Winning units win on the home front, during training, and on the battlefield. Winning doesn’t happen by chance; it is a deliberate process which marries the science of professional development, collective training, and healthy competition with the art of leadership (see figure 5).



LINE OF EFFORT 2 - END STATE

WAARNG units win through superior leaders and Soldiers, who create units that Soldiers want to be part of. Our units correctly prioritize events that contribute to our vision while building our ability to excel as combined arms formations.

**2.1 Develop Leaders and Soldiers.** Potential Ways: Campaign plans, which account for leader and Soldier development, drive unit training plans (UTPs), and provide clear resourcing. Leadership development programs (LDPs) with clear goals and sound approaches. Prepare leaders to exercise mission command through echelon to win. Meaningful overseas duty training and other events that build our formations and provide aiming points.

**Objective Goal:** UTPs both deliberately incorporate development opportunities and support the philosophy of mission command. LDPs that are deliberate and prioritized, with continuity over leadership turnover. Targeted major training events that align with our development goals.

**2.2 Sense of Belonging.** Potential Ways: Leaders broadcast their unit culture in a mix of idea sharing and healthy competition. Soldiers in each unit have ways to meaningfully contribute and be recognized for it.

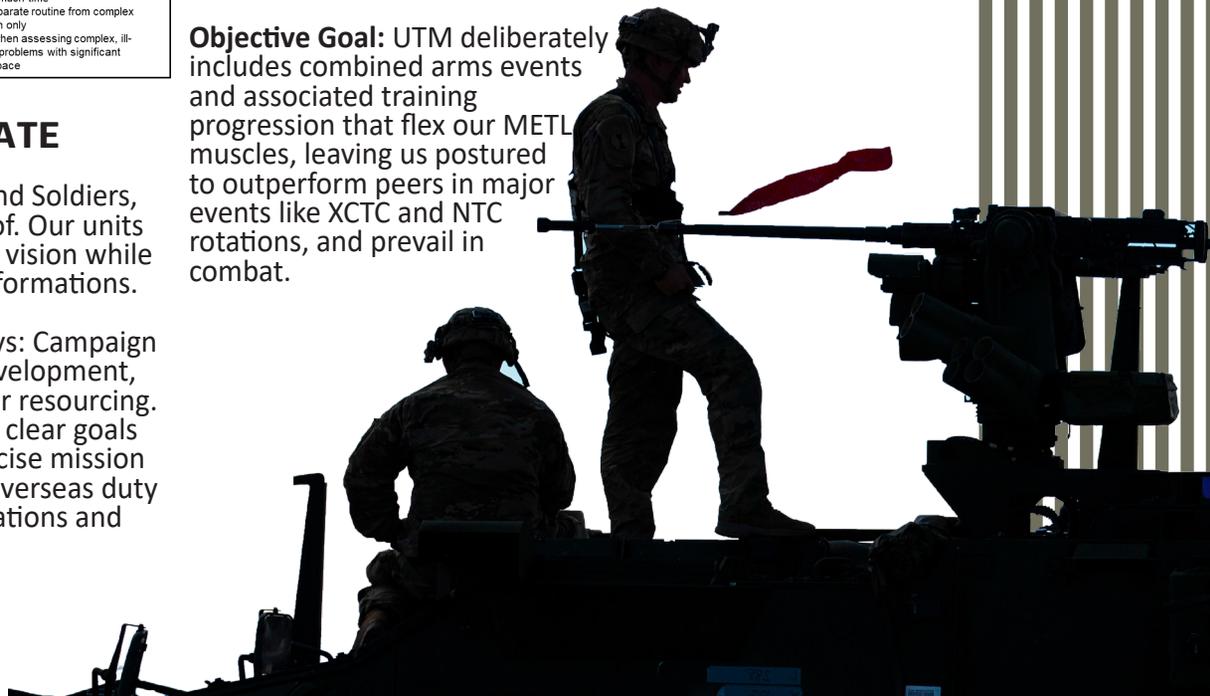
**Objective Goal:** Culture is apparent in each unit and actively cultivated by both leaders and Soldiers. Our buildings celebrate our past and provide a vision of our future, rather than appearing relics of history.

**2.3 Stick to our Game Plan.** Potential Ways: MSC campaign plans, with clear vision statements, that are nested under the State’s campaign plan.

**Objective Goal:** UTPs have minimal changes between command teams. Units have a vision of their desired future state that they actively focus on achieving and that vision guides their decision making.

**2.4 Team Play Wins.** Potential Ways: Conduct UTM in collaboration with partners. Campaign plans establish conditions for team play by subordinate units as well as laying out higher headquarters crucible style events. LDPs support team play.

**Objective Goal:** UTM deliberately includes combined arms events and associated training progression that flex our METL muscles, leaving us postured to outperform peers in major events like XCTC and NTC rotations, and prevail in combat.



## INNOVATION AND TRANSFORMATION

*“Organizations exist to make people’s strengths effective and their weaknesses irrelevant. And this is the work of effective leaders.”*

*- Frances Hesselbein, Author of Hesselbein on Leadership*

**Why innovation and transformation matters:** Winning teams are agile and flexible. The profession of arms has never been more complex than it is today. Simple things are hard. Advances in technology, reduction in manpower, and increased requirements make our profession the most difficult in the world.

Change is hard and necessary. To adapt our systems to meet the needs of our partners, Soldiers, and Nation requires deliberate effort and internal reflection on how we do business. It requires sustained action toward gaining efficiencies and shifting towards data-driven, performance-based results balanced with experienced leadership. We ask this of our Soldiers; we must ask it of our staffs and processes.

We will innovate, adapt, and build decision spaces to exploit opportunity and establish streamlined Soldier Centric processes. We must posture ourselves to develop the agility to turn threats into opportunities.

### LINE OF EFFORT 3 - END STATE

The WAARNG has an inherent culture of innovation. That culture, combined with self-awareness, empowers the ability to transform and gain efficiencies, leading to success in a dynamic and resource constrained environment.

**3.1 Management and Coordination.** Potential Ways: Clear communication of prioritization. Process improvement like Lean Six Sigma. Utilize available systems to gain efficiencies, including robotic process automation and big data analytics. Focus on current, emerging, and potential operational environment (OE) and battlefield changes so we have relevance to win in modern large scale combat operations; fostered through internal dialogue and external engagement.

**Objective Goal:** The WAARNG balances leadership and management to generate internal efficiencies through clear prioritization, including cutting efforts that do not contribute to our strategy. Our formations continually adapt to OE and battlefield changes without having to be told to do so. The WAARNG is lean but healthy, and efficiency gains power transformation.

**3.2 Equip.** Potential Ways: Provide Soldiers with the equipment that most enables mission success, even if that equipment is commercial and not yet an official program of record. Align fieldings and equipment procurement to mission requirements and the Unit Readiness Cycle (URC). Outfit Soldiers and units to build uniformity and pride. Deliver weapons, combat vehicles, sustainment systems, and equipment that Soldiers need when they need it. Better manage our equipment through quality inventories so we can reduce losses that hold back our transformation. Promote activities that make our facilities great, like working groups to share best practices, awards for exceptional facilities, and dedicating work time for facility improvement.

**Objective Goal:** Soldiers and units have the best equipment for their missions, and our equipment losses are manageable and do not endanger other priorities. We have prioritized our facilities as investments in the future, not relics of our past. We maintain our facilities as places Soldiers want to serve, that build unit culture, promote individual and collective skills, and allow us to maximize home station training opportunities.

**3.3 Assessment.** Potential Ways: An easily understandable dashboard, with results displayed and reviewed at important functions like the Quarterly Readiness Review, and Commanding General Dialogue sessions. Surveys, with supporting analytics, to enable units to see themselves. Aggressively review existing policies to flatten bureaucracy, understand processes, and gain efficiencies utilizing process improvement models (Business Process Re-engineering, Lean Six Sigma, Baldrige Organizational Assessment, or new tools as they become available.)

**Objective Goal:** We have the right information to enable decision making and propel our strategy. Staff processes are self-reflective in nature through constant assessment and review. The most important metrics are accurate and highly visible and spur action, not excuses.

**3.4 Experiment:** Fail Early, Adapt Rapidly. Potential Ways: Help pilot initiatives, tactics, technologies, and operating concepts that are still in testing. Lean into newly adopted operating concepts and warfighting concepts, including Multi-Domain Operations and Continuous Transformation. Integrate with sister components/services. Be students of trends and opportunities within the total Army, foreign militaries, and private industry, as well as both current events and history. Reward innovation and experimentation. Embrace the use of Army Design Methodology as a way to unleash creativity.

**Objective Goal:** Experimentation is part of organizational culture, not forced, and is not dependent on having the right command team. We have partnerships to keep us relevant and ready for LSCO. We can point to real examples of both unit sponsored and individual examples experimentation.

## REPUTATION

*“In this age, I don’t care how tactically or operationally brilliant you are: if you cannot create harmony - even vicious harmony - on the battlefield based on trust across service lines, across coalition and national lines, and across civilian/military lines, you need to go home, because your leadership is obsolete.”*

-Gen. (Ret.) Jim Mattis

**Why reputation matters:** Nobody wins alone; we need partners. The success of the Washington Army National Guard means the success of the State. As much as our society needs us in times of crisis, we need the Families, employers, and leaders of Washington State at all times. We need strong partners who understand our unique capabilities and our shortfalls who can advocate for us in society and in the family.

Partnership requires mutual trust. It must be nourished if it is to thrive. We must build trust with our Soldiers, our communities, and our external partners through our actions. Actions that are not aligned with our words break trust. When partners ask hard things of us, we build trust by winning and consistently producing positive results. We become trusted partners when we succeed in meeting their needs. In turn, they help us meet ours. We must also trust ourselves by behaving in a manner worthy of trust, and in accordance with our **Organizational Values**.

### LINE OF EFFORT 4 - END STATE

The WAARNG’s reputation builds trust between Soldiers, family, community, state & national partners. The WAARNG fosters credibility, understanding, support, and reliance as the preferred partner for future opportunities.

**4.1 Communication.** Potential Ways: Communicate up and down through echelon via a comprehensive system of information distribution utilizing traditional and emergent media in order to reach target audiences.

**Objective Goal:** Improve communication methodologies and systems to enable rapid and accurate shared understanding.

**4.2 External Engagement.** Potential Ways: Positively influence external actors to become stakeholders that support WAARNG priorities and objectives. Increase engagement with NGB. Increase engagement with local media through the PAO to positively shape perception of the WAARNG. Interface with local leadership in our communities including employers, chambers of commerce, military and civic oriented organizations (E.g.,

WDVA, WSMTRC, VFW, NGAU, NGAUS, Civil Air Patrol, JROTC, SF Association, Order of St. George/St. Barbara) and recognize their support.

**Objective Goal:** WAARNG Leaders and Soldiers actively and routinely engage with external actors at echelon to create new stakeholders for the WAARNG.

**4.3 Internal Engagement.** Potential Ways: Develop strong commitment to and from our Soldiers, full-time employees, Families, and communities enabling life-long commitment to WAARNG service. Include family programs in planning processes to utilize Soldier and Family advocacy program resources effectively to understand, resource, and address concerns from our internal stakeholders and maximize diversity. Use sensing sessions, town halls, and social media engagement to identify trends. Communicate intent at echelon via regular and timely correspondence. Generate feedback loops with internal stakeholders to facilitate dialogue.

**Objective Goal:** WAARNG actively and routinely engages with internal stakeholders to reinforce trust and build commitment. WAARNG is lean but healthy, and efficiency gains power transformation.





# WASHINGTON ARMY NATIONAL GUARD STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2035