

Sound Bites

“A decade of war has honed the Guard into an effective, lethal, fighting force, and it would be a tremendous mistake, in my view, to put that capability back on the shelf;”

— Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, speaking at the National Guard’s Joint Senior Leaders Convention on Nov. 8.



Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta talks with Air Force Gen. Craig McKinley, the chief of the National Guard Bureau, at the National Guard 2011 Joint Senior Leadership Conference in National Harbor, Md., Nov. 8. Photo by Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill

“Today’s Army Reserve is now an enduring and indispensable part of the operational force.

Our Soldiers stand alongside all Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coastguardsmen — brave men and women who preserve our country’s freedom and are a true national treasure. Without question, we are eternally indebted to the generations of service members who have — and continue to — put their lives on the line for current and future generations. Those serving today are ‘the greatest generation’ for our time, and stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before.”

— Lt. Gen. Jack Stultz, Chief of the Army Reserve, in his 2011 Veteran’s Day message.

“The Guard today is not your father’s Army National Guard. It is a ready, younger force willing and capable of handling local, state and national missions... [Leadership and meaningful training] are huge factors when someone is deciding whether or not to continue their commitment. Sure, we’ve lost a few because of current [operational] tempos, but those soldiers that are in want to serve.”

— Army Col. Rob Porter, chief of the Army National Guard strength directorate, speaking recently after the Defense Department announced recruiting and retention numbers for the 2011 fiscal year. The Army National Guard intentionally achieved only 95 percent of its recruiting goal in order to stay within its authorized end-strength, based in large part, said Porter, on better-than-anticipated retention rates, and a very low attrition rate. For more information on the National Guard’s FY 2011 recruiting and retention, see the briefs on page 32.

“We in the National Guard should look at [looming defense cuts] as an opportunity. We will evolve the National Guard further by focusing on missions that are well-suited for us and our unique capabilities ...Most importantly though, we want to have the best National Guard that we can in order to support those who rely on us the most — our citizens in our communities.”

— Air Force Gen. Craig McKinley, the chief of the National Guard Bureau, speaking at the National Guard 2011 Joint Senior Leadership Conference in National Harbor, Md., on Nov. 8.