

Association of the United States Army



Voice for the Army—Support for the Soldier

*An Investment in Soldiers and Their Families
... an Investment in America*



AUSA + 2nd Session, 107th Congress = Good News, But . . .

Recent legislation (National Defense Authorization and Appropriation Acts for Fiscal Year 2003) has made great strides in funding such programs as compensation, health care, retirement survivor benefits, housing and family programs for soldiers and their families, and modernization and transformation for the U.S. Army. **Much has been accomplished; however, much more remains.**

AUSA has spoken and will continue to speak out on these and other issues of importance to the Army. The Army's budget has significantly increased, but so have its requirements. Compensation for soldiers is increasing; but the need remains to eliminate the prohibition against concurrent receipt of retired pay and Department of Veterans Affairs disability compensation. Active component soldiers have experienced a comprehensive examination of their benefits; reserve component soldiers have seen increased call-ups without a commensurate increase in benefits. Civilians lag behind their industry counterparts in increased compensation.

Each member of AUSA is a Torchbearer, carrying the message to our elected representatives and to the American public. Some of the major objectives achieved during the last legislative session are listed below. Sustaining and improving upon these accomplishments will require continued diligent effort from all of us.

AUSA and others spoke out for:

- **Closing the pay gap** between soldiers and the private sector.
- **Eliminating out-of-pocket housing expenses** for soldiers and their families.
- **Increasing funding to construct, modernize and upgrade infrastructure**, including barracks and family housing.
- **Repealing in its entirety the Department of Veterans Affairs offset on retired military entitlement** (concurrent receipt).
- **Funding the Federal Impact Aid Program** in the U.S. Department of Education budget to preclude the children of military families from being disadvantaged in public schooling.
- Authorizing and fully funding the provisions of **required health and dental support readiness services to all active and reserve component soldiers.**

Congress responded by:

- Narrowing the pay gap with a 4.1 percent increase, and targeted increases of up to 6.5 percent for mid- and senior-level NCOs and mid-level officers.
- Reducing the average amount of housing expenses paid by servicemembers from the current 11.3 percent to 7.5 percent with the intent of eliminating the out-of-pocket expenses by Fiscal Year 2005.
- Authorizing \$1.2 billion for the construction of 52 new barracks and \$676.6 million for construction and improvement of 3,437 family units and the privatization of more than 30,000 units. Other improvements are included within the \$10.4 billion total infrastructure funding.
- Creating a new special pay for retirees who received the Purple Heart or whose 60 percent or greater disability resulted from combat-related activities. **But** this measure does not include most eligible retirees, so AUSA will continue the fight.
- Authorizing \$35 million DoD supplement to ImpactAid, including \$5 million to support local agencies that aid DoD dependents with severe disabilities.
- Extending TRICARE Prime Remote coverage to unaccompanied family members and reserve personnel activated for more than 30 days. **But** the FY 2003 authorization failed to standardize coverage eligibility for all reserve component soldiers and their families. AUSA advocates consistent health care coverage for all reserve component soldiers and their families, regardless of deployment status.

Well-Being

Readiness and Transformation

AUSA and others spoke out for:

- **Funding operation and maintenance (O&M)** to sustain and improve readiness for the active Army, Army National Guard and Army Reserve.
- **Providing emergency homeland security funding to the Army** for force protection, increased worldwide posture, situational awareness and crisis response, including fielding additional Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) positions for Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) assessment and protection.
- **Funding and staffing full-time manning positions** in the reserve components at 100 percent.
- Maintaining the Army's strategic advantage and advancing modernization in its **Legacy Force**.
- Accelerating the **Stryker Brigade Combat Teams** (SBCTs) as a high-payoff weapon system for Transformation.
- Developing the **Objective Force** for the transformed Army of the future.
- **Funding the RAH-66 Comanche helicopter** to significantly improve the ability of Army Aviation reconnaissance and attack formations to operate on the battlefield.
- **Providing additional C-17 airlift capabilities** by continuing acquisition of the aircraft to enhance the timely projection of combat power anywhere in the world.
- **Ensuring adequate stocks of munitions** to support training and the warfighting stockpile.

Congress responded by:

Increasing critical readiness accounts to \$78.4 billion, up \$4.6 billion from FY 2002, and funding O&M accounts to more than \$150 billion—more than one-third of the defense budget. Reserve component training and readiness authorization included \$236.2 million for the Army National Guard and \$99.4 million for the Army Reserve.

Funding \$7.3 billion for counterterrorism, force protection, consequence management, biochemical detection and decontamination measures, and biowarfare defense technology. The authorization included provisions for National Guard Civil Support Teams in each state and territory to provide assistance following terrorist WMD attacks.

Increasing full-time reserve component manning endstrength to 1,486 in AGR units—a 2.2 percent increase over 2002 levels. The authorization includes a 1.6 percent increase in civilian military techs. **But** the requirement for 100 percent remains.

Funding upgrades and modifications for the UH-60 Black Hawk, AH-64 Apache Longbow and CH-47 Chinook helicopters and enhancements to the M1A2 Abrams tank and M2A3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle.

Authorizing \$788 million for procurement of 332 Stryker vehicles for the third SBCT with an additional \$150.9 million for further research and development toward the **six brigades** laid out in the Army 2004-2009 Program Objective Memorandum (POM).

Authorizing \$759 million to continue research and development for the Future Combat Systems (FCS) combat vehicle technology and \$122 million for DARPA FCS research. Additionally, \$1.9 billion was authorized for Science and Technology programs supporting transformation to the Objective Force.

Matching the President's request for a \$910 million authorization for development. **But** DoD supports procurement of only 650 Comanches, while the Army's requirement remains 819.

Funding \$3.7 billion for procurement of 12 C-17s.

Authorizing \$1.2 billion for the Army Chief of Staff's top unfunded requirement of ammunition programs—\$70 million above the President's request.

Take up the torch and join our crusade!

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RECRUIT a member

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