



FIRST IN THE FIELD

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Weimer discusses the Next Generation Squad Weapon during a visit to Fort Campbell, Kentucky, on Oct. 23, 2024. The 101st Airborne Division is the first Army unit to field the Next Generation Squad Weapon program. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Kaden D. Pitt, 101st Airborne Division)



EFFICIENT WORKFORCE, EFFICIENT ARMY

The Army Acquisition Workforce drives the effectiveness and efficiency of the Army.

Let me take this opportunity to wish everyone a Happy New Year, especially the more than 33,000 members of the Army Acquisition Corps and Army Acquisition Workforce. Because of the work you do, the materiel aspect of the Army's transformation is going well. On any given day, we have more than 500 programs underway—not all get time in the spotlight but all matter to the Army. There's always risk, but I'm very pleased with the work being done.

Our workforce professionals can be found across Army organizations, including program executive offices, the U.S. Army Materiel Command, U.S. Army Futures Command, U.S. Army Test and Evaluation Command, U.S. Army Medical Command and numerous others. They do amazing work every day—developing requirements, developing sustainment plans, working with industry, testing programs and delivering capability to the joint warfighter. They are dedicated public servants and an important reason why we're in such good shape.

Let me also mention our industry partners. They have a critical role in our success—large, medium and small businesses. We are charged with increasing the speed and scale by which we develop, acquire and deliver materiel solutions to the warfighter. Our plan is to provide capability so advanced, so intimidating, that we deter conflict in the first place.

Small businesses are particularly important here because they drive the innovation we need to retain our competitive advantage, and we are continuing to improve how we work with innovators nationwide to be a better customer and collaborator. In fiscal year 2024 (FY24), the Army awarded more than \$24.5 billion in prime contracts to small businesses. This was the highest dollar amount by any federal agency and enabled the Army to achieve 29.6% prime contracts to small businesses, surpassing its small business goal of 26%.

Why are we doing so well?

First, consistency of priority and support from Army senior leaders. It makes a huge difference. It has kept the Army on track and moving in the same direction.

Second, we have flexible requirements that are very well thought through, technically achievable and informed by experimentation and real threats. That has enabled us in acquisition to work with the requirements in an iterative basis so nothing gets thrown over the fence. Everything is an ongoing conversation. Through the years, the Army has been challenged with getting requirements right to make acquisition success possible. We have a much better system in place now.

A third reason is flexibilities from Congress. Congress passes a lot of laws each year, and back in the 2016 and 2017 period, several flexibilities were established that we are using aggressively. We wouldn't be where we are without them. Middle Tier of Acquisition authority allows us to start programs in a rapid prototyping environment and with rapid fielding, which hopefully follows after a successful prototyping effort; as a result, we are slashing the time needed to field advanced capabilities from seven to 10 years down to four to six years. Currently, we have 23 programs in rapid prototyping and nine in rapid fielding. We also have the software acquisition pathway to enable faster, more agile software development and acquisition. We have 19 software pathway programs, 11 in the planning phase and eight in the execution phase.

So, those factors all coming together, along with the great work being done across the Army, are reasons we are doing so well in acquisition. There are risks in all programs especially those that are trying to do very technically challenging things. We will hit bumps along the road, but the issue is how does the Army

deal with the bumps, and so far, I've seen great work getting over them.

One other factor I want to highlight is the importance of teamwork. I served in the Army, and the Army's culture and values don't change that dramatically. A core value of the Army is putting yourself behind the greater good—working together as a team, working together to accomplish something more important than your personal goals. That happens all the way to the top, I assure you, and it's absolutely essential.

I am enormously proud of our success. Let me highlight just a few achievements:

- We have invested more than \$4 billion in our organic industrial base to facilitate 155 mm artillery ramp-up through a combination of new, commercial production facilities and modernization projects at existing Army ammunition plants.
- We achieved more than \$42 billion in new Foreign Military Sales business in FY24, a vast increase over prior years.
- Our FY24 contract actions totaled more than 163,000 for contract awards that surpassed \$118 billion, including more than 2,100 in Other Transaction Authority valued at more than \$6 billion.
- Our Operation and Maintenance, Army execution rate for FY24 was 99.9%.

We in acquisition have an important job to do. We can develop technologies and work to create new capabilities for the Army, but that's not enough to produce real capability in the field. It's not just the platforms. Everything else is just as important. It's about the integration and synchronization of all those DOTMLPF-P—or doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities and policy—domains, which must be brought together, of which materiel is only a part, to

HYBRID AVIATION

A 25th Infantry Division Soldier steps off a mockup of the Future Long-Range Assault Aircraft (FLRAA) to test and provide feedback for improvements on Sept. 9, 2024. The FLRAA program is scheduled to begin building prototypes in 2025 and will have the hybrid capabilities of both planes and helicopters. (Photo by Spc. Charles Clark, 25th Infantry Division)



enable our men and women in uniform to fight and win decisively should deterrence fail.

In the area of materiel, we have numerous achievements to highlight, including:

- First unit equipped for the Next Generation Squad Weapon program, which provides warfighters with significant capability improvements in accuracy, range, signature management and lethality.
- The FLRAA achieved Milestone B, and the program is scheduled to begin building prototypes in 2025.
- As part of the Long Range Precision Fires (LRPF) program, the Mid-Range Capability leverages a mix of existing Navy Standard Missile-6 and Tomahawk missiles for ground launch with an ability to strike targets more than 1,000 miles away.
- The Army is replacing legacy Patriot radars with the Lower Tier Air and Missile Defense System and using the new Integrated Battle Command systems to connect a wide range of sensors across platforms to increase the capacity of our Patriot air defenses.

The cornerstone of the Army is our people. They are and will remain our No. 1 priority. Our military and civilians provide us a decisive advantage against any adversary and are the most important element in our success.

The rapid pace of change in technical, process and digital tools demands that our dedicated workforce professionals remain committed to continued professional development. The Army continues to provide the right training opportunities for the workforce to enhance their own careers, as well as their skills.

From my experience, I am confident that members of the Army acquisition, logistics and technology team will continue to meet every challenge they are presented and will continue to demonstrate excellence in supporting the joint warfighter at best value to the taxpayer.

On a personal note, as I leave my position, I just want to say thank you to the entire Army acquisition team. It has been the honor of my life to lead this organization, but I accomplished nothing—all of *you* did. Thank you all for serving the Army and the country.

My best wishes for much success in 2025. 🇺🇸



FROM SHIP TO SHORE

Brig. Gen. Rory Crooks, director of the Long Range Precision Fires Cross-Functional Team, speaks at the 2024 Association of the United States Army Annual Meeting and Exposition in Washington, Oct. 16, 2024. The LRPF program is using existing Standard Missile-6 and Tomahawk missiles to develop ground-launched versions that can strike targets more than 1,000 miles away. (Photo by Annie Odom, U.S. Army)