

Rotary Wing Aircraft and Unmanned Aircraft within the Army National Guard

What is it?

In early FY11, The Army National Guard has 40+% of the Army's total authorized inventory of rotary wing aircraft and Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS). In addition to being essential elements of the Army's aviation war fighting capability, these aviation and UAS assets also comprise one of the National Guard's "Essential-10" capabilities that provide critical support to the 54 States and Territories so that they can quickly and effectively respond to emergencies and natural or man-made disasters within the Homeland. The Army National Guard provides the total Army with the following aviation assets:

- 1 of 2 Theater Aviation Command HQs (TAC)
- 1 of 2 Theater Airfield Operations Groups HQs (TAOG)
- 4 of 4 Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Groups (TASM-G)
- 4 of 5 Theater Aviation Brigade HQs (TAB)
- 8 of 20 Combat Aviation Brigade HQs (CAB)
- 9 of 35 Attack-Recon Battalions/Squadrons
- 2 of 3 Theater Fixed-Wing Battalions
- 14 of 26 Assault Helicopter Battalions
- 13 of 28 General Support Aviation Battalions
- 6 of 6 Security & Support Aviation Battalions
- 30 of 80 Tactical UAS Platoons ("Shadow"), plus the same percentage of Small UAS Assets ("Raven")

What has the ARNG done?

The Army National Guard has completed most of the remaining actions mandated under the Army's Aviation Transformation Plan of 2004. All eight of the ARNG's divisional combat aviation brigades (CABs), four theater aviation brigades (TABs), one theater aviation command (TAC), one theater airfield operations group (TAOG), and one separate air cavalry squadron are now on the ground in their new designs and with the majority of their required aircraft on-hand.

The Army National Guard continues sustained aviation support to combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as to the contingency operations in Kosovo and other locations. This overseas support effort now uses the equivalent of two ARNG aviation brigades at any one time. Meanwhile in the homeland ARNG aviation routinely supports local, regional, and national disasters whenever and wherever they occur, plus ARNG aviation is also currently keeping one ARNG aviation brigade team dedicated to the NORTHCOM Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosive (CBRNE) Consequence Management mission.

What continuing efforts does the Army have planned?

The Army continues progress on accelerated programs to first provide the Army National Guard with a full fill of its almost 1,400 authorized rotary wing aircraft, plus continuing the upgrades to the newer model versions of each current series of aircraft

(AH-64, OH-58, UH-60, and CH-47, and UH-72). Modernization of the ARNG rotary-wing fleet continues, and the ARNG has been maintaining a 100% fill level of its 786 authorized UH-60 Black Hawk utility helicopters. The ARNG has also been working a new authorized level of 849 H-60's based on the recently approved increased size of Medical Evacuation Companies from 12 to 15 aircraft each.. Cargo helicopters continue to be an area of concern, with the ARNG maintaining the same +/-80% fill level (131 of 161) that has existed since the mid-1990's; however, a full CH-47 fill is now projected by the end of FY13 followed by an upgrade to a pure fleet of all CH-47F models by the end of FY18. The modernization of the AH-64 attack fleet from "A" models to "D" models is well underway and is projected for completion by the end of FY15.

Why is this important to the Army?

The Army National Guard rotary wing fleet not only provides more than 40% (approximately 45%) of the Army's total aviation force for all missions, but in certain key areas such as the most widely used UH/HH-60 helicopters has a significantly greater proportion. In addition, when not mobilized the Army National Guard aviation units are the most available and fastest responding aviation elements for critical First Response missions in the homeland, where they are controlled by the States and ordered out by the Governor.