

Making the Most of ReARMM

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The Army has a long history of change. As adversaries adapt and technology improves, doctrine and equipment adjust. Every current member of the Army is living through such an adjustment as the Army faces the challenge of balancing modernization and maintaining a capable force ready to fill global demand in a time of fiscal uncertainty. Given this challenging problem set, every Soldier and leader should understand their role in helping the Army through this transition period so that we can win the next fight. This article provides a brief history of readiness within the Army, explains the Army's new readiness model, and makes a few recommendations to help the Infantry community adjust and succeed.

The Army's first real readiness model change was in 1953 when the Soviet Union threatened democracy. Then, the Army shifted from maintaining a small force and mobilizing for war when necessary to maintaining a large deterrent force mainly positioned in Europe. Those units forward deployed to Europe received the preponderance of training resources, creating a tiered readiness system. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the need for such a large force became too costly, subsequently leading to a drastic reduction to the Army force structure following Desert Storm.¹ This smaller, well-trained Army primarily supported deployments in eastern Europe. Shortly after the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the Army realized it could not sustain fighting in both Iraq and Afghanistan. As a result, the Army grew and developed the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) model. This new model focused on the brigade combat team and put a premium on family time for units returning from a combat rotation. Over time, an unintended consequence of ARFORGEN was the Army's inability to dominate in large-scale combat operations (LSCO). As a result, many essential skills learned from the professional force of the 1990s atrophied. To fix this quickly, the Army shifted to the sustainable readiness model (SRM), resourcing premier training opportunities focused on decisive action. This model increased readiness and educated the next generation of leaders on how to fight a near-peer threat.

As the National Security Strategy shifted its focus from violent extremist organizations to near-peer threats during the Trump administration, the Army realized the need to modernize. The focus on decisive-action training created a force more knowledgeable of LSCO, but the Army's support of the war on terrorism created significant capability gaps. To address capability gaps, the Army implemented a comprehensive modernization strategy at a scale not seen since the 1980s.² Modernizing a large force while maintaining readiness and balancing global demand is complicated. In 2020, the Army announced its implementation of the Regionally Aligned Readiness and Modernization Model (ReARMM) to tackle this challenge. This model will enable the Army to fulfill its joint functions in support of the National Security Strategy. It balances operational tempo while ensuring the nation's premier land force

Figure 1 — ReARMM Unit Life-Cycle Model⁵

Modernization (8 Months)	Training (8 Months)	Mission (8 Months)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unit reorganization• Integrating modern capabilities• Displace equipment process• New equipment fielding/training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mission-tailored• Regionally focused• Individual/small unit/collective training• Home-station training/live-fire exercises/combat training center rotations/warfighter exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Designated units assigned against specific missions/regions• On mission or ready for assignment• Initial response force/contingency response force/decision action
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Enables Army <u>transformational change</u> to a multidomain land power➤ Focuses units regionally with predictable, habitual relationships to specific missions and theaters, enhancing Army support <u>competition</u>➤ Synchronizes all Army components, providing predictability to formations		



A row of Joint Light Tactical Vehicles assigned to the 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division arrives at Fort Stewart, GA, in September 2022 as part of Army modernization efforts. (Photo by SSG Justin McClarran)

is equipped to defeat a future threat.³ Additionally, this model creates habitual relationships between units and regional forces throughout the globe to better tailor missions to combatant commander requirements.⁴

ReARMM is conducted in three distinct phases, each with a planned eight-month timeline: modernization, training, and mission. During the modernization phase, units will receive and train on their new capabilities. This phase is also an opportunity to build a healthy, ready force. Units can take advantage of this time to create cohesive teams and give Soldiers opportunities for time to recharge. Once complete with modernization, units will conduct a mission-essential task list-focused training cycle, integrating and mastering their new capabilities to prepare for a combat training center rotation. Once proficient, teams will deploy to their region or continue training as part of the more significant contingency force.⁶

The Army faces multiple challenges in 2023 that could easily distract good leaders from getting ReARMM right. Like any other operation, preparing and executing this 24-month readiness model takes detailed planning and shared understanding within a unit. Success requires leaders who understand how ReARMM creates a better force and communicate this to their formations. Additionally, leaders must invest equal time in planning for the modernization phase as they would for the training and mission phases. It is easy to focus planning resources primarily on field training or deployments. With ReARMM, if a unit fails in the modernization phase, the modernized equipment may not be integrated effectively, resulting in an exhausted force going into a high-demand training cycle. This scenario could further complicate the Army's retention challenges. Lastly, leaders must not view ReARMM as a tiered model and accept that the Army is modernizing as quickly as possible and prioritizing units based on known demands.

ReARMM is the right approach for the Army to balance readiness and modernization. It includes many benefits: allows commanders to prepare their organizations; balances mission, equipment, and personnel requirements; and ensures prioritization of limited resources based on regional alignment. ReARMM will only serve to increase the strength and flexibility of organizations as the Army modernizes; however, it requires leaders who understand the process and share their understanding with subordinates to maximize opportunities.

Notes

¹ James Kitfield and Don Ward, "The Drawdown Deepens," *Government Executive* (1 May 1993): 9.

² Latashia Bates, "Army Readiness and Modernization in 2022," Association of the United States Army (15 June 2022), accessed 25 January 2023, from <https://www.ausa.org/publications/army-readiness-and-modernization-2022#>.

³ Devon Suits, "Army Implementing ReARMM Unit Life Cycle Model," Army News Service (2 March 2021), accessed 25 January 2023 from https://www.army.mil/article/243828/army_implementing_rearmm_unit_life_cycle_model.

⁴ GEN James C. McConville, "Army Multi-Domain Transformation," (16 March 2021), accessed 25 January 2023 from <https://api.army.mil/e2/c/downloads/2021/03/23/eeac3d01/20210319-csa-paper-1-signed-print-version.pdf>.

⁵ Graphic was adapted from MG Kurt J. Ryan and COL Jin H. Pak, "Operationalizing ReARMM: A Sustainment Perspective," *Army Sustainment* (11 August 2021), accessed from https://www.army.mil/article/249275/operationalizing_rearmm_a_sustainment_perspective.

⁵ MG Ryan and COL Pak, "Operationalizing ReARMM."

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Paratroopers in 2nd Battalion, 503rd Airborne Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, engage targets during a live-fire exercise in Cyprus on 14 February 2023. (Photo by SSG John Yountz)