DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AT A GLANCE

BRIEF HISTORY

In 1775, the Continental Congress established three Military Services – the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps – to wage the Revolutionary War. Following ratification of the Constitution of the United States, Congress formed the Department of War in 1789, to administer the Army, and the Department of the Navy in 1790. Also in 1790, Congress established the Revenue-Marine, the predecessor of today’s Coast Guard (which is now part of the Department of Homeland Security during peacetime). The National Security Act of 1947 split the Department of War into the Department of the Army and the Department of the Air Force. Further, the law unified the leadership of all three Military Departments under the National Military Establishment (NME), led by a Secretary of Defense who would be advised by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). The JCS, in turn, received the statutory authority to establish what today are known as Combatant Commands. The National Security Act Amendments of 1949 transformed the NME into the Department of Defense and created the position of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Over time, the Department has consolidated certain common functions into Defense Agencies and Department of Defense Field Activities. In 2019, Congress established the newest Military Service, the Space Force, under the Department of the Air Force.

A U.S. Army Soldier assigned to the 165th Quartermaster Brigade Aerial Delivery Company-Airborne Det 1 conducts post airborne procedures during a U.S. Army and Qatar Joint Special Forces airborne insertion exercise in Doha, Qatar, Aug. 17, 2023. The exercise provided an avenue for practicing tactics, techniques, and procedures in a joint environment, while building partnerships between the U.S. and Qatari military. The U.S. Army 165th Quartermaster BADC-A Det 1 teamed up with U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command Central to demonstrate their capabilities in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Devin Boyer)

Headquarters
The Department of Defense is headquartered at the Pentagon, located in Arlington, Virginia. The Pentagon is one of the world’s largest office buildings – it has 17.5 miles of hallways, three times the floor space of the Empire State Building, and houses about 26,000 employees.

For Pentagon Tour information, click here.

Mission
To provide the military forces needed to deter war and protect the Nation’s security.

Employees
The Department of Defense is the country’s largest employer, with more than 2.1 million Military Service members and over 778 thousand civilian employees. For information on the armed forces, click here. For information on military rank insignia, click here.
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ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AGENCY FINANCIAL REPORT

The United States Department of Defense (DoD) Agency Financial Report (AFR) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 provides an overview of the Department’s financial information as well as preliminary summary-level performance results. The AFR demonstrates to Congress, the President, and the public the Department’s commitment to its mission and to accountability and stewardship over the resources entrusted to it. This report satisfies the reporting requirements contained in the following legislation:

- Federal Managers’ Financial Integrity Act (FMFIA) of 1982 – requires ongoing evaluations and reports of the adequacy of internal accounting and administrative controls, and whether financial management systems comply with federal financial management systems requirements;
- Chief Financial Officers (CFO) Act of 1990, as amended – established the position of Chief Financial Officer, requires audited financial statements for each major executive agency, and requires the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to prescribe the form and content of the financial statements;
- Reports Consolidation Act of 2000 – permits agencies to consolidate certain statutorily required reports into a single annual report and requires certain information be contained in the consolidated report; and
- Payment Integrity Information Act (PIIA) of 2019 – requires agencies to improve their efforts to identify and reduce government-wide improper payments.

Pursuant to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular No. A-136, Financial Reporting Requirements, the Department produces two separate annual reports in lieu of a combined Performance and Accountability Report (PAR):

- An AFR, published in November 2023, which focuses primarily on financial results and a high-level discussion of performance results, and
- An Annual Performance Report (APR), published in February 2024, which details DoD strategic goals, performance measures, and results.

The estimated cost of the AFR for the Department is $475,892 in Fiscal Years 2023 – 2024. This includes $190,992 in expenses and $284,900 in DoD labor. The estimated cost of the AFR was generated on November 8, 2023 (cost estimate report reference ID: 2-751C4EE).
WEBUNES AND MEDIA PLATFORMS

NEWS SERVICES

DoD News is the Defense Media Activity’s news service. It delivers news stories, photos, video products, and live broadcasts pertaining to senior defense leaders and U.S. military forces around the world.

American Forces Network (AFN) is the Defense Media Activity’s broadcast information service. It provides command information from all DoD levels to the authorized audience stationed outside of the United States and its territories and possessions. The service is available via direct satellite reception, cable distribution on installations, streaming audio on mobile and desktop computers, and a streaming video-on-demand app for mobile devices and in-home media platforms. Twenty-four manned AFN stations on military installations in 11 countries directly serve commands and communities in the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East with over-the-air radio service. More than 200 U.S. Navy, Military Sealift Command, and U.S. Coast Guard vessels receive the signal via satellite when they are underway outside the range of terrestrial U.S. broadcast signals.

Stars and Stripes is a DoD-authorized daily news and information media organization servicing the U.S. military community. Independent of interference from any outside chain of command, Stars and Stripes provides commercially available U.S. and world news and objective staff-produced stories relevant to the military community in a balanced, fair, and accurate manner. Stars and Stripes is part of the Defense Media Activity, however it retains its editorial independence and is congressionally mandated to be governed by First Amendment principles.

OPPORTUNITIES:

Join the Military

- Army
- Navy
- Marine Corps
- Air Force
- Space Force
- DoD Civilian careers
- Contract opportunities for small business

MEDIA PLATFORMS

@DeptofDefense (Twitter)
@DeptofDefense (Facebook)
@DeptofDefense (Instagram)
@DeptofDefense (YouTube)
@DeptofDefense (LinkedIn)

Subscribe to DoD RSS Feeds.


RESOURCES

- Military OneSource provides robust online information and resources to connect Military Service members, their families, survivors, and the military community to a wide range of programs, services, and products developed for military life.

- National Resource Directory provides a database of validated resources that supports recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration for Military Service members, veterans, family members, and caregivers.

- USA.gov is the U.S. Government’s official web portal which provides information by topic for citizens, business and non-profit concerns, government employees, and U.S. visitors. Also, learn more about help for veterans and service members, joining the military, and more.