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## Operational Readiness

### Legion 6's Organizational Message

Increasing operational readiness of the Virginia National Guard has been my common theme in recent months with senior leaders. I continue to meet with leaders in our organization as well as my fellow Adjutants General and I am convinced that this focus on operational readiness must be a cultural and organizational change that is instilled and accepted within our ranks. These changes must be rooted in the concept that our Soldiers and Airmen must be physically and mentally ready to "fight tonight," wherever we are needed.

While this is not a new concept for most of you, my vision of Ready to Fight Tonight is very specific. Commanders will ensure that their units achieve 90% operational availability, ensure all their equipment is accounted for and maintained and ensure mastery of fundamental Soldier / Airman skills.

I understand that we are saddled with a myriad of requirements that consume our staffs at all levels, while facing significant resource constraints. These requirements are important but commanders have the latitude to accept risk in order to ensure that their formations are ready to respond and excel in their jobs. Commanders and leaders at all levels must instill the fundamental Soldier / Airman skills essential to this new paradigm. I expect commanders and staff to question how their directives increase the unit's ability to fight tonight - this should be the standard by which all taskings are measured. All staffs will be held accountable to ensure units remain mission focused and not overly burdened. I will underwrite any commander's decision on taking risk so that unit training and development is combat focused. Ultimately they bear the responsibility for leading our Soldiers and Airmen into harm's way and bringing them home safely.

Ensuring that units are ready to fight tonight starts at the lowest level of command. Commanders and junior leaders must ensure that the fundamental skills are trained to standard including time spent enhancing field craft and basic skills. As a unit progresses through their readiness cycle, collective training must be adequately planned, resourced and executed. These events must be objectively evaluated and retrained when necessary. We will not rely upon readiness metric reporting alone to determine our ability to fight tonight. These numbers, while important, do not adequately tell the story of preparedness for the tactical environment, therefore, I'm relying on you to clearly demonstrate and document your respective unit's preparedness and what you need to meet your objectives.

Our entire organization needs to embrace a culture of readiness where we are prepared to deploy, fight and win now, not tomorrow. This readiness mindset needs to extend beyond those in uniform to our state and federal civilians and our families – all critical in enabling us to meet our readiness goals.

Operational readiness is our business. Commanders are empowered to accept risk in order to guarantee mission accomplishment. I pledge to you that I will foster an environment of trust and support as you make these critical decisions. I expect leaders to institute changes within the organization so that the Virginia National Guard will be ready to meet mission requirements whenever we are called. LET'S GO!

"Fight Tonight!"

Legion 6

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