

LTG VAUGHAN: General Wallace, thank you for being here, and General Miller, thank you. Can you roll this thing real quick?

(Film shown.)

(Applause.)

LTG VAUGHAN: Folks, what do you think of that song?

(Applause.)

LTG VAUGHAN: All the citizen soldiers, we put them together and they said "You know, hey, we're not in this just to recruit people your age."

(Laughter.)

LTG VAUGHAN: The guys had it right, didn't they, out there where the kids are? This is on 30,000 screens today and the hits on this song, it's over the top. Over the top.

It's part of the strategy, by the way. You'll have a hell of a time going anyplace in the United States of America, not understanding what the Guard's about.

It is the most branded organization in the United States today. You don't think that people think that service on our nation's behalf is a very worthy thing to do? Then you're not following what's going on, and your head's in the sand.

This marketing strategy is just part of a bigger strategy. That's what I'm going to take you through today. I'm going to try to do that. We ask our leaders to do it and that's to go up here once again and go through the vision with you. We're going to talk about the vision. We're going to talk about the vision. We're going to line you up on the football.

That's what we've been very effective doing in the last three years, with the adjutant generals and with the collective organizations that can make a change over on the Hill. Line them up on the football in the same direction, knowing what's really important.

I don't deal day to day to day at the grassroots level, and the things that these great field leaders do. What we try to do is set the place and make it fair for everyone, and on the top end of this gives everybody a chance to get, at the end of the day, really train their soldiers in the right manner and prepare to do whatever the mission asks them to do.

Whether it's overseas or whether it's here, it doesn't really matter. It's not a question of what we want them to do. Step forward and do it like you've done in the last 370 years. They've done a magnificent job.

Let me tell you I'm guided like some things like we all are. You know the story most of do. My father's background is in the Guard, so there's no sense in going back to that. I was a combat engineer and a company commander walked in about an old AST.

He said "Son, you've got 100." He said "Son," because my dad hired him, I guess. "Son" -- who's from Missouri back there? He said "Son, you've got 100 soldiers in this unit. You're an 100 percent unit kind of." He said "Because you've got a bunch of people in training and you've got a bunch of people ready to medical out, and he says that's actually the strength. It was about 126. We're going to break in. Upon every day, there will be 100 soldiers show up on the drill.

I said "I can accept that, 100 folks." But I'm going to train them. I need to get them trained. Then he said "But the other thing is if we ever go to war, our authorized war time requirement is 146 folks." I thought boy, that's a head scratcher. He said "But don't worry, because when we go to load stations, the IRR or the draft or something's going to fill them up with trained soldiers." Right.

Everybody out here knows that that is fatally flawed. Whether or not the strategy was ever going to be used to go into a fight, I don't know. But that's terrible, because this thing that proceeds from that is cross-level.

Okay. Now my old man, my dad told me one other thing, and with old folks, you know, it's the greatest word, reorganization. Every time you get everybody set and you train everybody through the pipeline, you know, you're ready reorganize. You've got to retrain them again.

As cohort units, you've got all your folks. The best thing we can do is get our doctrine right and our training right, get them all through the training pipeline. You all come back out and stabilize them.

So when I came in here a few years ago and we looked at this and we said "You know, what we really need to do, we took a group of TAGs, a coalition of the folks that can make change and said we really need to face up to this."

We're not ready. This is crap. Schumacher comes along and says "Don't confuse enthusiasm with capability." You remember that? He was exactly right. Shame on us. If we ever expressed that position again, that builds a hollow force like we were in.

So what are we faced with? Give me a slide up here and I'll tell you why structurally we've got a problem.

(Slide.)

LTG VAUGHAN: The problem is we've got this many folks in our force that aren't really there. That is the truth. Every one of your cross level, and I know; you know, it's hard to put this back together in time of war.

When you're building the plane and fighting the plane and everything all at one time, and it's flying through the air up here. But that's what we're doing. We're having to rebuild this plane and it's going to take us a couple of years to get out of this for the most part, although we'll never get out of cross level.

But this is the problem. It's a systemic issue, but it wasn't all systemic. A whole bunch of this was our problem. But the complacency of our organization, I've got to tell you. We were pretty complacent, you know. Just because we've got the world's best soldiers.

We really do. The citizen soldiers we've got are enormously capable, and like all good Guardsmen and women, we'll make due with what we've got. That doesn't work. That leads you to bust all formations back behind you forever, unless you take on and transform.

This is an overworked word, transformation. But I'm telling you, the Army Guard has gone through the biggest transformation of all components, flying under the nose. It's happening, and we've got two more years to go and we're getting readier every day. You can see. You all know what I'm talking about.

All right. So we've got the threat. Give me the first slide.

(Slide.)

LTG VAUGHAN: I came in and said "Holy cow. How are you supposed to come into this as a leader and assess the organization? What is wrong about this organization?" Well, we were 20,000 under strength. That's a huge problem. The strength in any organization is people. That's what we say in the Army. We're all about people.

Did we believe it? I'll tell you what we believe. We were in a surge with 100,000 soldiers mobilized, and could train. Late August and September we went to 150,000 soldiers and you say "Boy, that's something, out of 350."

It ain't something out of 350. Our strength was only 330, and oh by the way, if you think that the 45,000 trained were ready to go, that's something. 150,000 is something out of 280,000 qualified soldiers. That is really something. That was the surge we went through. We appreciated it.

However, Leahy talked about this the other day. We appreciate it, right? I was concerned about that being appreciated. So you know, we said there's an issue up here. We've got to get the folks out of the complacency business. We've got to start looking at the Achilles heel we've got called "end strength."

We know the story. Great, innovative programs, but we couldn't place states to build a coalition to help us build and execute, until you've seen the brand name thesis we do, you know, the whole thing for each strategy, great technological innovation, great branding.

We don't have recruitment right. But you know what? A funny thing happened. We got shook up on this complacency thing, and we had a crisis appear because of the QDR in '05, and then for the first time we made sure that the states truly understood what we were on the brink of with our in-strength protected goal of 333,000 to fight the war, a new 17,000. Oh by the way, take the force structure of 314,000, right?

(Slide.)

LTG VAUGHAN: That was the crisis that was really needed to shake the states up, I'm telling you, because there was another problem. The problem associated with our understrength, which is the capability gap, and you'll see the great delta in there in 2005, where the purple or pink or whatever see there on top is the most. That's where we found ourselves under strength.

The next gap is created, because we were overloaded and overstructured. So we would a-load down. The thing that Barney Caldwell, my old AST told me, that we finally understood and looked at, and we said got to whip out our force structure. We've got to take out the hollow force and ride out the crisis.

Because of QDR, we probably wouldn't have been able to do it. But that helped us lead to change. It had us coalesce together. We put the coalition together that would make that change, and came up with innovative ways to do it, and empowered people to do the things that we ought to be doing, and started making those small wins. Strength-wise, every state popping up in the news, historical numbers on strength nationwide.

Last year, we started at what, with remember that deal? It was to get everybody at a rallying point. We rallied around, but we also rallied around something else, the TAGs did under cover with the Army staff. That recreates on the wing the right force structure for the Army Guard.

I know that there was. In fact, I got miffed last year. Hey, I didn't want to come out of these BC teams. I don't want to do this, I don't want to do that. We were already out of it. We just didn't know it.

We had the right organization and we're stabilizing that organization today. We took -- corporately, everybody here took that hollowness out of the program, and we've engaged with TRADOC on this platform we've created, because we've recruited so many soldiers. That is an issue. Give me another slide.

(Slide.)

LTG VAUGHAN: There it is. Our piece that we've got to push up on now is to create a TPA chess and add additional strength to the Army Guard, at a time when it's going to be hard to get all the resources to do it.

If we don't do that, it's the only way that you can create the readiness that you need every day of the year. That is to reduce force structure. When you reduce force structure in the Guard, you close out armories, you close out communities forever. We closed out 150 of them over the last three years.

This has been painful. When you roll that flag up, people cry about it and it's a bad deal. But it doesn't compare to closing a cotton-picking community, which we're all pledged to, to keep as many communities in this thing as we can.

So we've got to take our strength to accommodate that piece right there. The piece I've got circled is people who don't have their nose under the tent in training, and the Army, the TTHS put us all there. I've got to tell you. If we go into training, I'm here to tell you that we don't need the demand on our nation's resources right now to accommodate a full-sized TTHS.

Our end strength appropriation today is 351,300. We're supposed to be at 358,213. We're over that now. We're over 360,000. We need to continue to drive this thing on to 371,000, and we need to do something very, very uncomplicated. We need to say there's a healthy number that ought to be in the TTHS, what we call the RST.

(Slide.)

LTG VAUGHAN: The thing that you had to build, hold onto your soldiers. Do you know that we in the Army Guard saved a brigade's worth of soldiers in losses in the training pipeline? It's gotten there, and we're saving a brigade here where the soldiers that graduate more effectively through the training pipe, through basic AIP. It's documented.

So the RSPs, because we've got that paragraph, right, we can't manage a central TTHS nationally. Hell, we don't recruit like that. We recruit by community, by that specific slot they've got to go into.

So not rocket science. We said "Look, let's take the force structure that we're going to go back to. We can't help this. At 358,000, let's add 12,500 to that. There's a little overage. Let's clean up about 12,500 of it that's in the training pipeline, and we will come up with another 23 or 24 thousand trained soldiers we don't have today."

You lump that on top of the 30,000 trained soldiers, trained soldiers that we've gained in a smaller number of units in the last two and a half to three years, we are making great progress on this. You're seeing equipment, right? What do you think gave us the capability to go out and make the claim on equipment?

You can't do that unless you're trained and ready to go force. You can't do that without demand or power that it takes to run the Army Guard. There's all kinds of wins associated with something that we've just done, and we've got two more years to do. Another slide. Let me see what else is up there.

(Slide.)

LTG VAUGHAN: That's the pipeline that we're pushing forward, and a lot of it is based on the success we've had. I'll tell you something else. We have committed to TRADOC to do whatever it is to help them do this. I know people say well, we're in the institutional Army business. Okay, we've got an issue. We're going to help that issue and get this fixed before the end of the day. Next slide.

(Slide.)

LTG VAUGHAN: There it is. All right. So what have we done? What's the vision? The vision is trained and ready force. Everybody says "Oh, that's simple. Otherwise, how could we have ended up with this force that we had, that had this built-in hollowness in it?" But no one meant it. Otherwise, how could we have ended up with this hollowed out force that had no one in it?

With our equipment piece with our force structure, we're getting better every day in equipment, on the road towards the TTHS. I've had a lot of support for 371 over and above this piece of the 358 to in end strength. What we've got to do as leaders, what you've got to understand is we've got to stabilize now the force structure, and we've got to do something that's entirely different, instead of paper claim, having five of these over there and General Wallace is worried about getting through the training pipeline that we really don't need.

We've got to recruit the square box or the square hole. We're going to have to incentivize across the force, people not only to access but to ship and to write time and fill out that hole. Now you say that's not enough TTHS to help me in my regs. That's exactly right; it's not.

But it gives us a model to provide those kinds of assets and that overstrength on the backside of the year, when the whole Army is committed to making the backside of 24 months work right before we put these folks off to war.

So that's the program. That's the vision. That's exactly where we're going today. Let me tell you. The U.S. Army's got this right. Everything that's right about America is founded on the citizen soldier. All these guys in our lineup, they got it. They know what the deal is.

Who's from North Carolina here?

(Show of hands.)

LTG VAUGHAN: One story and then I'm going to get off of here. A young man from Rocky Mount, North Carolina, you know who I'm talking about. I won't embarrass him by name. He's off on patrol. He come back again with his body armor off. He got into a mortar attack, went to a bunker and that bunker got hit.

His mother, out there with his family, in all the trials that they're going through, a tremendous young man. So as Junior and I were sitting there, his mother says to me, she says "You know, he had a reporter come to him about five weeks ago, looking for a story," you know. It's politics time. Don't worry about the politics; don't ask for why. Step forward and do what you're supposed to do for your nation, right?

Okay. So the guy comes and he's trying to make a story out of this. He says, and I called him by name, he said "Hey so and so. Would you do it again?" You know what? I want a sensational story, you know. I want to know what you're thinking about this war.

He says to this young man, would you do it again? He said "Hell no, I wouldn't do it again. I would have gone to a different bunker."

(Laughter; applause.)

LTG VAUGHAN: I'll get off here and you can listen to the other two. Thanks for what you've done. You represent the very best in this United States of America, and we owe it to our soldiers. That what my buddy says. Don't let them meet each other for the first time. He's got it right. We just never listened all these years and figured out how to fix this. We're going there. Play it.

(Applause and film shown.)

(Applause.)