Mark Alexander Milley (born June 18, 1958) is a United States Army general and the 20th chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He previously served as the 39th chief of staff of the United States Army.[2]

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Early life and education

Born in Winchester, Massachusetts, Milley attended Belmont Hill School.[3] Milley graduated from Princeton University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in politics in 1980 after completing a 185-page long senior thesis titled "A Critical Analysis of Revolutionary Guerrilla Organization in Theory and Practice".[4] Milley also holds a Master of Arts degree in international relations from Columbia University and another Master of Arts degree in national security and strategic studies from the Naval War College.[5] He is also an attendee of the MIT Center for International Studies Seminar XXI National Security Studies Program.[6]

Military career

Born
June 18, 1958
Winchester, Massachusetts

Allegiance
United States

Service/branch
United States Army

Years of service
1980–present

Rank
General

Commands held
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
Chief of Staff of the United States Army
United States Army Forces Command
III Corps
International Security Assistance Force (joint)
10th Mountain Division
2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light)

Battles/wars
Operation Just Cause
Operation Uphold Democracy
Operation Joint Endeavor
Although Milley earned his commission as an Armor officer through Princeton’s Army Reserve Officers’ Training Corps program in 1980, he has spent most of his career in Infantry assignments.[7]

Milley has served in the 82nd Airborne Division, the 5th Special Forces Group,[8] the 7th Infantry Division, the 2nd Infantry Division, the Joint Readiness Training Center, the 25th Infantry Division, Operations Staff of the Joint Staff, and as a Military Assistant to the Secretary of Defense in the Pentagon.[9] In November 2000, he participated in the 2nd Annual Army-Navy Ice Hockey Game in Honolulu, Hawaii, a charity event benefiting youth ice hockey players in the area.[10]

General Milley has had multiple command and staff positions in eight divisions and Special Forces throughout the last 39 years to include command of the 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry, 2nd Infantry Division; Milley commanded the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light) from December 2003 to July 2005, served as Deputy Commanding General (Operations), 101st Airborne Division from July 2007 to April 2008, and was Commander of the 10th Mountain Division from November 2011 to December 2012.[11] He then served as the Commanding General of III Corps, based at Fort Hood, Texas, from 2012 to 2014,[12] and as the Commanding General of United States Army Forces Command, based at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, from 2014 to 2015. He was appointed Chief of Staff of the United States Army on August 14, 2015.[13]

Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army

In his initial message to the U.S. Army, General Milley laid out his priorities on readiness, the future Army, and taking care of troops. "We must ensure the Army remains ready as the world's premier combat force. Readiness for ground combat is- and will remain- the U.S. Army's #1 priority. We will do what it takes to build an agile, adaptive Army of the future."[14]

Modernization and reform

During his tenure, Milley focused heavily on modernization efforts for the Army, which included a new command designed to consolidate the methods that deliver Army capabilities, similar to the approach used by U.S. Special Operations Command. At the 2017 Association of the United States Army annual meeting, Milley described the areas targeted for modernization, including tanks, aircraft and weapons. "Faster results will be obtained...as we shift to a SOCOM-like model of buy, try, decide and acquire rather than the current industrial-age linear model that takes years to establish requirements, decades to test, and it may take a long, long time to go from idea to delivery," Milley said. "If we adapt to the changing character of war, and we embrace the institutional changes that we need to implement, then we will continue to be the most lethal fighting force in the world for the next seven decades and beyond. If we do not, we will lose the next war," Milley warned.[15]
In February 2017, the Army announced the establishment of Security Force Assistance Brigades. Also known as SFABs, these permanent units were established in Fort Benning with a core mission to conduct security cooperation activities and serve as a quick response to combatant commander requirements.[16]

While their training would be similar to that of Special Forces, soldiers in the SFABs would not be considered Special Forces, Milley said. "They will be trained in many ways similar to Special Forces, but they are not Special Forces." These SFABs will be structured using the non-commissioned and commissioned officers of infantry brigade combat teams to train foreign military units in conventional light infantry tactics, Milley said.[17]

In 2018, Milley established Army Futures Command in Austin, Texas, to take advantage of nearby academic and industrial expertise. Coequal in status to the Army's three senior most commands: Army Forces Command, Army Material Command, and Army Training and Doctrine Command, it represented one of the largest reform initiatives undertaken in more than forty years. Beyond developing future warfighting concepts, eight cross-functional teams conducted research to further the Army's modernization priorities: long-range precision fires, next-generation combat vehicles, air and missile defenses, soldier lethality, synthetic training environments, future vehicle lift platforms, and assured positioning, navigation, and timing.

In 2018, Milley also led the roll out of a new Army Combat Fitness Test. The new fitness test was designed to improve overall combat readiness and mimic physical tasks and stresses associated with combat and was set to replace the 40-year-old Army fitness test by October 2020.[18] "We want to make sure that our soldiers are ... in top physical shape to withstand the rigors of ground combat," Milley said. "Combat is not for the faint of heart, it's not for the weak-kneed, it's not for those who are not psychologically resilient and tough and hardened to the brutality, to the viciousness of it."[19]

While the ACFT became the test of record for soldiers on Oct. 1, the Army is still working to finalize the evaluation, according to Sergeant Major of the Army Michael Grinston.[20] The COVID-19 outbreak forced Army leaders to pause all fitness testing in late March of this year to prevent the spread of the virus, a move that also paused the ACFT graduation requirement for new soldiers.[21]

**Army Green Service Uniform**

In early 2017, Milley and then-Sergeant Major of the Army Dan Dailey began considering the possibility of bringing back an iconic two-tone uniform known as the "Pinks and Greens" to honor the "greatest generation"of soldiers who fought in World War II.[22]

The Army believed the reintroduction of the uniform would give Soldiers a uniform for professional environments that honored the Army heritage, reconnect today's Soldier with their service history, strengthen pride, bolster recruiting and enhance readiness.[23]

According to an Army Times poll conducted in the fall of 2018, of the 32,000 respondents, 72 percent indicated they were ready to embrace a new uniform, while 28 percent said they were happy with the current blue Army Service Uniform. Soldiers did express concerns about the need for an additional uniform as well as the costs associated with acquiring the new uniform. [24] The Army tried to address this concern in its official roll out announcement Nov. 11, 2018, indicating the uniform would be cost-
neutral for enlisted Soldiers, who would be able to purchase the new "everyday business-wear uniform" with their existing annual clothing allowance. The Army also indicated the new uniform would come "at no additional cost to the American taxpayer" and would be "made in the USA." [25]

Following an initial testing and evaluation phase with recruiters, senior leaders, and members of the Old Guard and Army Band, the Army had to delay the issuing of the uniform at entry-level training locations due to production setbacks related to COVID-19.[26]

**Iraq War study**

In 2018, Milley was involved in deciding whether the Army would publish a controversial study on the Iraq War. Milley reportedly decided he wanted to read the two-volume, 1,300-page, 500,000-word document before making a decision. Milley also directed that an external panel of scholars review the work. After the panel returned glowing reviews on the study, including one that described it as "the gold standard in official history", Milley continued to delay publication so he could review it further.[27]

In September 2018, Secretary of the Army Mark Esper and other Army officials decided to distance themselves from the study by casting it "as an independent" work of the authors, instead of being described as a project by the Chief of Staff of the Army's Operation Iraqi Freedom Study Group. When confronted by a journalist from *The Wall Street Journal* in October 2018, Milley reversed these decisions, ordering the study published officially and with a foreword from himself. He said the team who wrote the study "did a damn good job", the study itself was "a solid work", and that he aimed to publish the study by the holidays (2018).[27]

Within days of this revelation, two members of Congress who sit on the House Armed Services Committee (Reps. Jackie Speier, D-California, and Ruben Gallego, D-Arizona) sent a letter to Army leaders expressing their anger over the delay. In a press release accompanying the letter to Milley and Esper, Speier said, "This is simply the Army being unwilling to publicly air its mistakes. Our military, Congress, and the American people deserve nothing less than total transparency on the lessons the Army has identified so that we may use those lessons to avoid costly, and too often deadly, mistakes of the past."[28] The two-volume study was published January 17, 2019.[29][30][31]

**Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of staff**

On December 8, 2018, President Donald Trump announced that he would nominate Milley to serve as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, although then-Secretary of Defense James Mattis and then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph Dunford favored Air Force Chief of Staff General David L. Goldfein to be the next Chairman of The Joint Chiefs of Staff.[32][33][34][35][36] With Senate confirmation (89–1) on July 25,[37][38] he was sworn in on September 30, 2019.[39][40][41][42]

After Milley was nominated, he headed a commission with other American military officials that were responsible for designing a report on the country's impending near-term impacts from climate change. The report, which was released in August 2019, stated that the country and its military would experience a total collapse within the next two decades due to collapses in the country's aging power grid and food supply, as well as the increased risk of infectious disease outbreaks globally. The report also mentions...
the likelihood of increasing water scarcity in developing countries, which would result in an increase of civil and military conflicts due to a failure in the global food system.[43][44]

After attending 75th anniversary commemorations of the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium and Luxembourg on December 16, 2019, Milley met with the Russian military chief of staff Valery Gerasimov in Bern, Switzerland, on December 18. This continued a series of regular meetings between the American and Russian military chiefs reestablished by Milley's predecessor Joseph Dunford in 2017 to ensure open communication and avoid conflict, especially in Syria.[45] The face-to-face meeting was arranged with the assistance of the incoming Swiss Chief of the Armed Forces Korpskommandant (Lieutenant General) Thomas Süssli.[46]

On June 1, 2020, during protests in Washington, D.C., in the wake of the killing of George Floyd, Milley joined National Guardsmen and various police forces assembling in Lafayette Square, across the street from the White House.[47] Minutes later, the troops and police used tear gas and other riot control tactics to disperse rioting protestors so President Trump could stage a photo-op at nearby St. John's Episcopal Church. The church had been set on fire by BLM protesters and suffered extensive damage. About half an hour after that, Milley, in combat uniform, walked alongside the president from the White House to the church, drawing sharp criticism from former military officers and others.[48][49][50][51][52][53] Milley subsequently refused to testify in front of Congress regarding the military's role in the response to the protests.[54] He reportedly considered resigning over the incident,[55] but chose instead to address it in a video recorded as his commencement address to the National Defense University. In that speech, streamed on June 11, Milley said he should not have been at the event because his presence created a perception of military involvement in domestic politics.[56] Milley testified in front of Congress in July 2020 about the military's role in the George Floyd protests.[57]

During President Trump's re-election campaign, he used images of Milley in ads. Milley said he did not give his consent to appear in the ads. Uniformed service members are forbidden from participating in political campaigns (see also Hatch Act and DODD 1344.10).[58]

### Operational deployments

Milley has deployed for various military operations, including:

- Multinational Force and Observers, Sinai, Egypt
- Operation Just Cause, Panama
- Operation Uphold Democracy, Haiti
- Operation Joint Endeavor, Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Operation Iraqi Freedom, Iraq

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Milley
- Operation Enduring Freedom, Afghanistan

Awards and decorations

- Combat Infantryman Badge with Star (denoting 2nd award)
- Expert Infantryman Badge
- Special Forces Tab
- Ranger tab
- Master Parachutist Badge
- Special Operations Diver Badge
- Joint Chiefs of Staff Identification Badge
- Army Staff Identification Badge
- French Parachutist Badge
- 101st Airborne Division Combat Service Identification Badge
- 506th Infantry Regiment Distinctive Unit Insignia
- 10 Overseas Service Bars
- Defense Distinguished Service Medal with one bronze oak leaf cluster
- Army Distinguished Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters
- Defense Superior Service Medal with two bronze oak leaf clusters
- Legion of Merit with two oak leaf clusters
- Bronze Star Medal with three oak leaf clusters

Secretary of Defense Dr. Mark T. Esper and U.S. Army Gen. Mark A. Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff provide testimony to the House Armed Services Committee on Department of Defense authorities and roles related to civilian law enforcement in Washington D.C., July 9, 2020. (DOD photo by Chad J. McNeeley)
Personal life

Milley is married to Hollyanne Milley, a cardiac nurse. They have two children.[60][61] During a 2020 Veterans Day ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, Hollyanne Milley saved the life of a veteran who had collapsed.[62]

References


31. Todd South (January 18, 2019). "Army's long-awaited Iraq war study finds Iran was the only winner in a conflict that holds many lessons for future wars" (https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2019/01/18/armys-long-awaited-iraq-war-study-finds-iran-was-the-only-winner-in-a-conflict-that-holds-many-lessons-for-future-wars/). *Army Times.*


External links

- Appearances (https://www.c-span.org/person/?markmilley) on C-SPAN
- This article incorporates public domain material from the United States Army document: "Lieutenant General Mark A. Milley" (http://www.forscom.army.mil/cmd_staff/gen_milley/gen_milley.html).

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Order of precedence

- Preceded by Barbara Barrett as Secretary of the Air Force
- Succeeded by Jerome Powell as Chair of the Federal Reserve
- Order of Precedence of the United States as Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
