



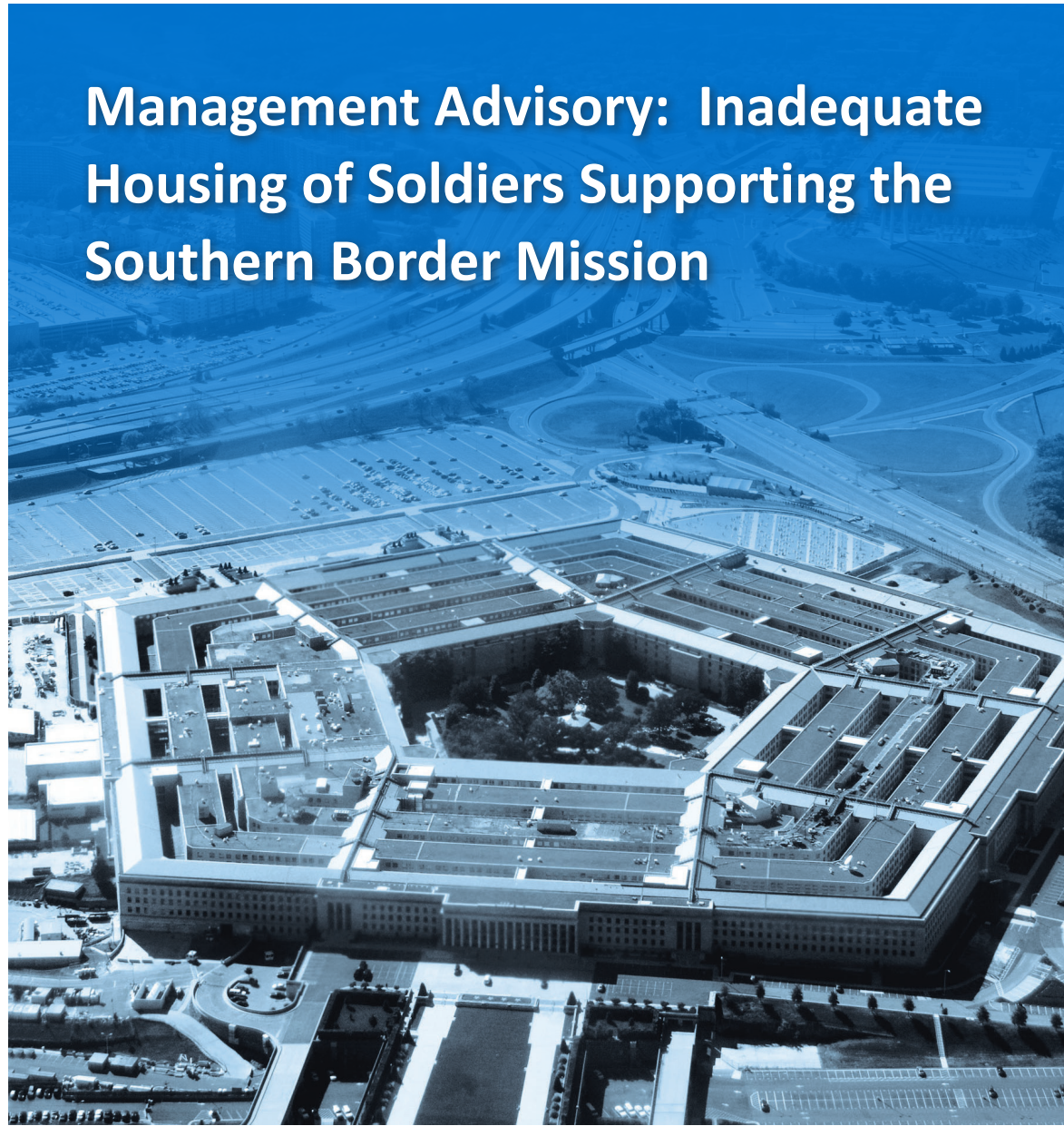
INSPECTOR GENERAL

U.S. Department of Defense

DECEMBER 16, 2025



Management Advisory: Inadequate Housing of Soldiers Supporting the Southern Border Mission







OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
4800 MARK CENTER DRIVE
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22350-1500

December 16, 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDER, U.S. NORTHERN COMMAND
DIRECTOR, JOINT STAFF

SUBJECT: Management Advisory: Inadequate Housing of Soldiers Supporting
the Southern Border Mission (Report No. DODIG-2026-034)

This final management advisory identifies concerns found during the “Evaluation of the U.S. Northern Command Joint Task Force–Southern Border’s Sustainment Operations for Units Deployed to the Southern Border” (Project No. D2025-DEV0HC-0123.000). We conducted this evaluation from June through September 2025 in accordance with the “Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation,” published in December 2020 by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. We previously provided copies of the draft management advisory and requested written comments on the recommendations. We considered management’s comments on the draft management advisory when preparing the final advisory. These comments are included in the advisory.

This advisory contains two recommendations that are considered unresolved because the U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) Inspector General, responding for the USNORTHCOM Commander, did not fully address the recommendations. We will track these recommendations until management agrees to take actions that we determine to be sufficient to meet the intent of the recommendations and management submits adequate documentation showing that all agreed-on actions are completed. DoD Instruction 7650.03 requires that recommendations be resolved promptly. Therefore, please provide a response concerning specific actions in process or alternative corrective actions proposed on the recommendations within 30 days. Send your response to [REDACTED]

The objective of the evaluation was to determine the extent to which USNORTHCOM and the Army effectively sustained the Stryker Brigade Combat Team deployed to the Southern Border. We completed site visits to Fort Bliss, Texas, and the Doña Ana Range Complex, New Mexico, on July 26-27, 2025, to observe housing conditions of Soldiers.¹ After USNORTHCOM established the Joint Task Force–Southern Border (JTF-SB), JTF-SB leadership requested barracks from the Fort Bliss Garrison to house Soldiers.² According to JTF-SB officials, Fort Bliss personnel determined that JTF-SB housing requirements could not be met on the installation, causing JTF-SB personnel to be housed at the Doña Ana Range Complex. In addition, the barracks provided to JTF-SB on Fort Bliss were designated as housing for transient personnel and not for continuous use.

¹ The Doña Ana Range Complex is a training area considered part of Fort Bliss and is located 25 miles northwest of the installation.

² Under the direction of USNORTHCOM, JTF-SB coordinates DoD efforts to secure and seal the Southern Border.

We found that Soldiers were housed in living conditions that did not meet the requirements of Army Regulation (AR) 420-1, “Army Facilities Management.”³ Specifically, AR 420-1 and Fort Bliss Policy Memorandum 27 require that barracks for mobilized Soldiers consist of 72 square feet of living space.⁴ Commanders may reduce the required living space to 54 square feet and further to 40 square feet with approval from the senior medical officer. However, AR 420-1 states that Soldiers will not be involuntarily housed in substandard quarters for more than 45 days.

We found that the Second Stryker Brigade Combat Team, Fourth Infantry Division (2SBCT) Soldiers at Fort Bliss and the Doña Ana Range Complex were housed in less than 72 square feet of living space without obtaining documented exceptions to policy by commanders and the senior medical officer, as required by AR 420-1 and the JTF-SB “Lodging Adequacy Standards.”⁵ Specifically, we observed Soldiers housed at Fort Bliss barracks with as little as 45 square feet per Soldier and Soldiers housed at the Doña Ana Range Complex with as little as 69 square feet per Soldier. The Soldiers were also housed in these conditions for more than 45 days. The table shows the number of 2SBCT Soldiers impacted by limited living space.

Table. Number of 2SBCT Soldiers Housed at Fort Bliss and the Doña Ana Range Complex, as of August 20, 2025 (by Square Feet Per Soldier and Duration)

Square Feet Per Soldier	Soldiers Housed		
	< 45 Days	> 45 Days	Total
71 to 54	0	263	263
53 to 40	151	212	363

Source: The 2SBCT.

Additionally, during our site visits we observed unsanitary conditions in bathroom facilities at Fort Bliss and the Doña Ana Range Complex housing facilities for JTF-SB soldiers, including leaking raw sewage, non-functional toilets, and general disrepair of facilities. The figure shows a photo taken during our site visit to the Doña Ana Range Complex of a dried layer of raw sewage that was leaking from the bathroom toilets. In addition, multiple Soldiers living in the barracks informed us of electrical capacity concerns and continually nonfunctioning air conditioning for barracks assigned to the JTF-SB. According to Fort Bliss officials, exceeding the electrical capacity of the buildings leads to tripping of the circuit breakers, which creates a fire risk in the aging buildings.

³ AR 420-1, “Army Facilities Management,” February 12, 2008.
⁴ Fort Bliss Policy Memorandum 27, “Policy for Assignment, Occupancy, and Termination of Temporary Change of Station Housing,” May 9, 2023.
⁵ JTF-SB, “Lodging Adequacy Standards,” October 1, 2024. The JTF-SB standards require that rooms have adequate space with modest restrictions; the standards detail that any exceptions to policy must be provided by the first colonel (O-6 paygrade) in the unit’s chain of command.



Figure. The Doña Ana Range Complex Bathroom with Sewage Leaking from the Plumbing
Source: The DoD OIG.

Furthermore, the 2SBCT Preventative Medicine team prepared reports for the 2SBCT Medical Officer in Charge from May through August 2025 and provided copies of those reports for our evaluation. The reports identified multiple health and safety concerns at the Doña Ana Range Complex. Specifically, the 2SBCT Preventative Medicine team's concerns included:

- unresolved work orders for several clogged toilets and broken air conditioners,
- air conditioners causing respiratory symptoms,
- waste disposal and unsanitary conditions in community areas, and
- standing water from air conditioner condensation and rain causing a large increase in both the insect and mosquito population.

Army and JTF-SB policies establish minimum adequacy standards of personnel housing. Specifically, AR 420-1 requires that barracks consist of decent, safe, sanitary, and habitable accommodation in good repair.

According to JTF-SB leadership, they assigned Soldiers to the living quarters even though they were aware the living space did not meet required standards.⁶ In addition, 2SBCT Soldiers lived in inadequate housing at Fort Bliss because, according to JTF-SB personnel, JTF-SB leadership determined that the Fort Bliss barracks met minimum living standards for the required sanitary conditions and square feet per Soldier. However, JTF-SB leadership was unable to provide documentation to support their determination.

⁶ In response to our request for information, JTF-SB leadership stated that not all housing standards can be met at the Doña Ana Range Complex due to the "austere nature" of the location.

In August 2025, we notified USNORTHCOM and JTF-SB that we identified health and safety concerns for housing conditions of 2SBCT Soldiers at Fort Bliss and the Doña Ana Range Complex, and that we would issue a management advisory. After we brought our concerns to JTF-SB's attention, JTF-SB leadership recommended moving some Soldiers from the Doña Ana Range Complex to Fort Bliss. However, as of September 2025, JTF-SB leadership had not provided evidence that Soldiers, at either the Doña Ana Range Complex or Fort Bliss, were moved to living quarters that were compliant with AR 420-1.

Recommendations, Management Comments, and Our Response

Recommendation 1

We recommend that the Commander of the U.S. Northern Command:

- a. Develop and implement a plan with milestones that ensures Soldiers assigned to the Joint Task Force–Southern Border have adequate housing conditions that meet the minimally required housing adequacy standards.**

U.S. Northern Command Comments

The USNORTHCOM Inspector General, responding for the USNORTHCOM Commander, agreed and stated that the housing arrangement of Soldiers assigned to the JTF-SB changed. The USNORTHCOM Inspector General stated that, as of November 2025, Soldiers assigned to the JTF-SB were no longer housed at the Doña Ana Range Complex, and the conditions of Soldiers housed at Fort Bliss were in accordance with AR 420-1.

Our Response

Although the USNORTHCOM Inspector General agreed, the comments did not address the specifics of the recommendation; therefore, the recommendation is unresolved. The USNORTHCOM Commander did not provide a plan with milestones that ensures Soldiers assigned to the JTF-SB have adequate housing conditions that meet the minimally required housing adequacy standards. While we acknowledge that the housing conditions of Soldiers may have changed, the JTF-SB still uses the Fort Bliss barracks we physically observed which were the subject for this management advisory. We requested supporting documentation from USNORTHCOM detailing which barracks the JTF-SB currently uses on Fort Bliss. Based on the response, we determined that the JTF-SB still uses three barracks that we physically observed. As stated in the advisory, we identified health and safety concerns for the housing assigned to Soldiers at Fort Bliss, including these three barracks. In addition, the USNORTHCOM Inspector General did not provide documentation that the conditions of the new housing being used at Fort Bliss meets the minimally required housing adequacy standards as of November 2025.

Therefore, we request that the USNORTHCOM Commander provide comments on the final advisory within 30 days describing the specific actions USNORTHCOM will take to develop and implement a plan with milestones that ensures Soldiers assigned to the JTF-SB have adequate housing conditions that meet the minimally required housing adequacy standards.

- b. Require the Joint Task Force–Southern Border to develop and implement policy that requires Joint Task Force–Southern Border to assess all provided housing, on a semiannual basis, for adequacy standards and to document that assessment.**

U.S. Northern Command Comments

The USNORTHCOM Inspector General, responding for the USNORTHCOM Commander, agreed and stated that the office of primary responsibility for housing should be modified in our report to align with Service authorities. The USNORTHCOM Inspector General stated that USNORTHCOM receives weekly updates from JTF-SB leadership but that each Service retains the responsibility for housing at their installations and obtains funding for new construction and renovations. The USNORTHCOM Inspector General stated that, in accordance with section XVI of AR 420-1, Headquarters, Department of the Army receives an annual stationing plan for mobilization from the U.S. Army Forces Command, which includes units deploying in support of combatant commander requirements. Finally, the USNORTHCOM Inspector General added that the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Housing, and Partnerships specifically tracks housing for Soldiers at Fort Bliss and can best provide future assessments of housing adequacy and the status of ongoing or proposed projects.

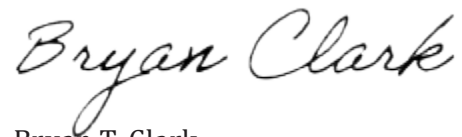
Our Response

Although the USNORTHCOM Inspector General agreed, the comments did not address the specifics of the recommendation; therefore, it is unresolved. The USNORTHCOM Commander did not develop and implement policy that requires the JTF-SB to assess all provided housing, on a semiannual basis, for adequacy standards and to document that assessment. We agree with the USNORTHCOM Inspector General's comment that, according to Section XVI of AR 420-1, the Military Services have the responsibility for managing and funding housing on their installations for mobilizations. However, according to section 164, title 10, United States Code, combatant commanders have a responsibility for the preparedness of their command, including coordinating and approving aspects of administration and support to carry out missions assigned to their area of responsibility. As a result, the USNORTHCOM Commander is responsible for ensuring adequate housing for the command's personnel and coordinating with the Military Services as necessary to ensure it is provided.

Therefore, we request that the USNORTHCOM Commander provide comments on the final advisory within 30 days describing the specific actions USNORTHCOM will take to require the JTF-SB to develop and implement policy that requires the JTF-SB to assess all provided housing, on a semiannual basis, for adequacy standards and to document that assessment.

If you have any questions, please contact [REDACTED]

We appreciate the cooperation and assistance received during the evaluation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bryan Clark". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Bryan T. Clark

Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations
Programs, Combatant Commands, and Operations

Management Comments

U.S. Northern Command

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NORTH AMERICAN AEROSPACE DEFENSE COMMAND AND UNITED STATES NORTHERN COMMAND



26 November 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR DEPARTMENT OF WAR OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

FROM: Inspector General, NORAD and USNORTHCOM

SUBJECT: Draft Management Advisory for Project No. D2025-DEV0HC-0123.001

Reference: Army Regulation 420-1, Army Facilities Management, Revision, 29 August 2025

1. Thank you for your visit to Fort Bliss and the Doña Ana Range Complex in July 2025 to observe housing conditions of Soldiers assigned to Joint Task Force - Southern Border (JTF-SB). While agreeing with the one recommendation included in the draft "Management Advisory: Inadequate Housing of Soldiers Supporting the Southern Border Mission" dated 30 September 2025, the force laydown of Soldiers assigned to JTF-SB has changed, and the office of primary responsibility should be modified to align with Service authorities.
2. JTF-SB recently completed a transfer of authority from the 10th Mountain Division to the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) and repositioned several Soldiers during the changeover. As of November 2025, JTF-SB Soldiers are no longer housed at the Doña Ana Range Complex (Attach 1) and those housed at Fort Bliss are in accordance with AR 420-1 (Attach 2).
3. The Commander of USNORTHCOM receives weekly updates from JTF-SB leadership, but each Service retains responsibility for housing at their installations and obtains funding for new construction and renovations. In accordance with Section XVI of AR 420-1, Headquarters Department of the Army receives an annual stationing plan for mobilization from US Army Forces Command which includes units deploying in support of Combatant Commander requirements. The Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Housing and Partnerships is specifically tracking housing for Soldiers at Fort Bliss and can best provide future assessments of housing adequacy and the status of ongoing or proposed projects.
4. Please reach me at [REDACTED] for any questions.

MCBRAYER.BR
ANDON.LYNN
[REDACTED]
BRANDON L. MCBRAYER
Colonel, USAF
Inspector General

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2 Attachments:

1. (U) JTF-SB JPERSTAT excerpt current as of 20 November 2025
2. (U) E-mail correspondence from Task Force Iron Mule dated 24 November 2025

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