



## CHAPTER 1

### **THE NEW GUARD AND RESERVE**

JENNIFER C. BUCK

THOMAS L. BUSH

BARBARA A. BICKSLER

KAREN I. MCKENNEY

JOHN D. WINKLER

The United States was founded on a fundamental principle that national security is the responsibility of its citizens. The Constitution provided for the creation of an army, navy, and state militia to execute the laws of the nation when called into federal service. Over time, the organization of the military has evolved, with the creation of organized reserve forces and an air force. Yet the fundamental principle remains the same.

Members of the guard and reserve are part-time personnel, but are essential components of the armed forces. As citizen-soldiers they represent a vital link between the military and the American public. They, along with the members of the active components, demonstrate the willingness of citizens to take on responsibility for the nation's security.

The reserve components contribute to missions in various ways, spanning the spectrum from dedicated peacetime roles to wartime support with their active duty counterparts. The role of the guard and reserve has expanded over the past few decades—today the guard and reserve are integrated into the planning and execution of all military operations. In addition to their expanded role, participation of reservists in support of military missions has also increased.

Today there is a *new guard and reserve*. This evolution in the use and participation of the reserve components calls for changes in how the Department of Defense (DOD) manages the force—changes that must be formally recognized and incorporated into how it does business. These changes have redefined what it means to serve in the reserve components. They have redefined what it means to recruit, retain, train, equip, compensate, and employ the guard and reserve.

The chapters in this volume address many force management elements that are needed to support this new guard and reserve. The research on which these papers are based evolves from the underlying premise that the reserves now play a greater operational role than in the past—a role that will continue into the future and should guide policy development and force management. As such, this volume is perhaps the first to comprehensively address the reserves in this context. We begin in this introductory chapter with a short overview of how these changes in guard and reserve contributions came to be and what is “new” about today’s guard and reserve.

## **Increasing Reliance on the Reserve Components**

The guard and reserve have served in all modern conflicts. Guard and reserve members were mobilized for World War I and about 400,000 members were called to duty during World War II. During the Korean War, nearly 1,000,000 guard and reserve members were mobilized. However, the reserve components were used sparingly during the Vietnam War, with only about 37,000 guard and reserve members mobilized for that conflict.

In the aftermath of the Vietnam War, several factors created the framework for today’s increased reliance on the reserve components: the Abrams doctrine, evolving “total force” policies, the effects of downsizing, and increasing mission demands.<sup>1</sup>

The Abrams doctrine grew from Army Chief of Staff General Creighton Abrams’s belief that the nation must never go to war without the involvement of the guard and reserve and, thus, the support of the American people. He believed there was a strong link between public support for military operations and employing the reserves—a philosophy that began to influence military strategy at that time.

During the same period, the total force concept emerged as the nation embraced the all-volunteer force, which brought an end to conscription. Defense Secretary Melvin Laird recognized that the success of the all-volunteer force would require greater reliance on the reserves. He issued the total force guidance to emphasize the necessity of the guard and reserve to military operations. This concept was applied initially for combat missions, but later to the full spectrum of military requirements. As defense budgets declined, the reserve components were recognized as a cost-effective way to maintain military capabilities.

Two decades later, the total force concept was put to its first real test when the United States responded to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. To help liberate Kuwait, 267,000 reserve component members were mobilized for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. The performance of the reserve components during these operations demonstrated they were capable and reliable—an important milestone in shaping the use of the guard and reserve in the decade to follow.

Looking back at the early decades of the all-volunteer force era, the reserve components were viewed *primarily as a strategic reserve*—an expansion force and a repository for capabilities that could be needed in support of major combat operations. The reserves participated in operational missions to a modest extent, but their composition, training, equipment, and readiness levels presumed that the guard and reserve would be primarily used as a “force in reserve” in the event of a “big war.” This approach was based on the planning assumption that there would be sufficient time to train and equip strategic reserve forces after they were mobilized, if they were not already at the required readiness level.

Reservists themselves did not anticipate participating in long-term operational missions to any significant degree—perhaps only once in their entire career. Members generally served 39 days a year—one weekend a month, plus two full weeks at some point during the year, usually in the summer. If a major war broke out, it was expected that the reserves would be called upon to augment the active forces in an operational role, principally in combat support or combat service support, and the mobilization lead time would likely be months, not weeks or days.

However, in the 1990s, force downsizing—the peace dividend from the end of the cold war—along with reduced budgets and rising operational tempo, spurred an increase in the use of the reserve components. In part, this increase occurred to relieve operational stress on the active forces. It also occurred because the reserve components were the repository for capabilities needed in the later phases of major theater war, particularly in support of stabilization and reconstruction efforts abroad, and in conducting homeland defense missions at home. These capabilities—such as civil affairs, military police, and air traffic control—were unexpectedly crucial to U.S. commitments during the 1990s and early 21st century in operations in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

As a reflection of these circumstances, the first Gulf war, in 1990–1991, was conducted along different lines. Large numbers of reserve forces were engaged. They were deployed quickly, early in the conflict, alongside the active component forces, serving across the entire mission spectrum. As mentioned previously, these reserve forces proved effective in their operational role during this conflict. But given the short duration of the war, its impact was relatively contained for many reservists—the strategic role still dominated in large measure. Yet this event did serve as a catalyst for thinking about using the reserves in a more operational capacity—as we have witnessed in nearly all operations since that time.

Today, the reserve components still serve as a strategic hedge, but they are far more integrated into day-to-day military operations and participate at a higher level in operational missions than ever before. Following Desert Storm, mission requirements increased and began to strain a smaller active force. DOD recognized that

there were capabilities in the guard and reserve that could be used to meet mission requirements. As a result, reserve component contributions to total force missions steadily grew between 1992 and 1996, reaching a sustained level of 12 to 13 million duty days per year (Figure 1). It is during this period that the *operational role* of the guard and reserve began to take shape.

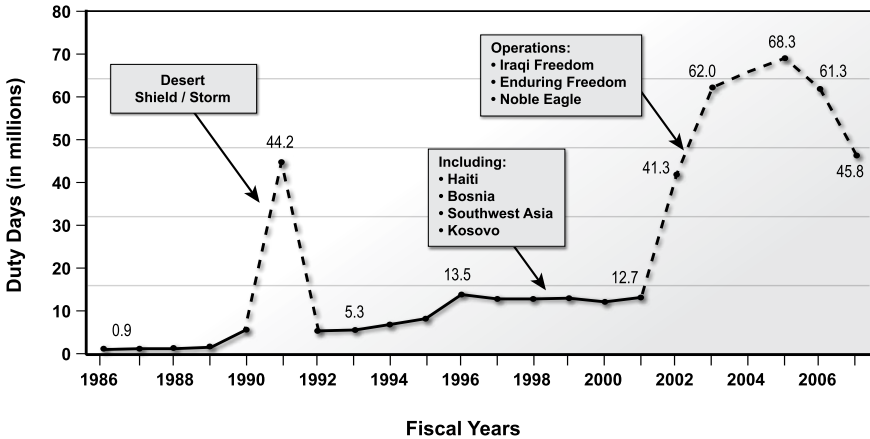


FIGURE 1. RESERVE COMPONENT CONTRIBUTIONS, FISCAL YEARS 1986–2007

The military services began capitalizing on the operational capabilities of the reserve components in many contexts, illustrated by the following examples:

- The Army National Guard provides rotational forces to sustain operations in the Sinai, Bosnia, and Kosovo.
- The Air Force’s new Aerospace Expeditionary Force construct includes Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve assets in its rotation cycles.
- The Navy’s contributory support program provides greater opportunities for reservists and reserve units to not only train but also support the day-to-day operations of the Navy.

Today’s pace of operations is expected to continue, though not necessarily at the same level experienced during the height of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The global war on terrorism is perceived as a “long war.” The contributions made by the reserve forces and the type of capabilities they bring to today’s missions will continue to be needed, both during and after the global war on terror is won.

As the use and participation of the reserve components have evolved, some changes in force management have been made to reflect this evolution toward a more operational

role for the reserves. But these changes do not represent the kind of fundamental overhaul that is really needed, and will take time to accomplish. *Nevertheless, it is critical that the concept of the new guard and reserve—that combines both strategic and operational roles—be embraced as the framework for the future.*

## **What is the New Guard and Reserve?**

Today's guard and reserve provide operational capabilities and strategic depth to meet U.S. defense requirements across the full spectrum of conflict. This fact alone is not new, as the reserves have always filled *both* strategic and operational roles. What is “new” is a greater reliance on the capabilities of the guard and reserve to support operational missions and the expectation that this increased reliance will continue.

In this context, it is no longer appropriate to manage the reserve components as though they are still primarily a strategic reserve. Rather, force management tools—including the contract that is made with members joining the reserve components—must recognize the enhanced operational nature of reserve service. DOD has not typically considered these two distinct roles in managing the reserve components within the total force—but must do so in the future.

There are many questions about the new guard and reserve and their more operational nature. How do the new guard and reserve differ from a strategic reserve? How can the new guard and reserve perform both strategic and operational functions? What should be the frequency and duration of service for the new guard and reserve? Is participation in the new guard and reserve voluntary service or is it simply involuntary service that occurs more frequently? How does this new construct change the ways in which we compensate, train, and equip the guard and reserve? Are there law and policy implications?

In order to understand how the new reserves operate, it is essential to answer these questions. And to create a framework for further discussion, it makes sense to first address the fundamental question of how the new guard and reserve should support operational missions.

The new guard and reserve must be organized, equipped, and trained to support operational military mission requirements at the same level as regular, active forces. Individuals and units should be tasked to prepare for and participate in missions, across the full spectrum of operations, in a cyclic or periodic manner that provides predictability for service members and their families and employers.

However, the ways in which members of the reserves are assigned to operational missions vary. Operational missions may be assigned in whole or in part to a reserve component unit. Active and reserve elements may be integrated into a homogenous unit. Individuals may perform duties in direct support of defense missions. The

operational function of the guard and reserve is a combination of these and other options that leverage individual and unit capabilities in the reserve components. Members of the guard and reserve are still a part-time force, but the amount of time that a reservist may actually perform operational missions varies widely depending on the mission of the unit and the willingness of a reservist to serve longer than the traditional 39-day training regimen.

In the past, it was assumed that reserve forces would only be mobilized for a major war—a once-in-a-career-event. Secretary Laird’s total force guidance changed the concept of a strategic reserve. Embedding capabilities in the reserve components as prescribed by the Abrams doctrine required the reserve components to be called upon even for regional conflicts—such as those in which the United States has been involved during the past decade.

The underlying principle of the strategic reserve has not changed. The guard and reserve still serve as an expansion force. But they *also* serve as an operational force. As a practical matter, how the new guard and reserve are used has changed. Participating in operational missions is not a once-in-a-career event. While it is possible for a large mobilization of the reserve force to occur, the planning construct being pursued by DOD—one year of involuntary active service every six years—will result in more frequent reserve mobilization.

However, there is no one-size-fits-all approach for how these functions are supported. Within each military service, there are different demands placed on guard and reserve units and members. Some units are integrated in operational missions, while others serve primarily as a strategic reserve, and still others support both functions. Within units that are more strategic in nature, there are individuals who are available to contribute to operational missions without degrading unit readiness.

Service plans differ based on how the military service accesses its members, and the duration and frequency of service that reserve component members are expected to provide. To be part of a more heavily committed unit, members must be willing and have the time available to perform more than the traditional 39 days of training each year. Some examples of how the services are using the guard and reserve are as follows:

- Under the Air Expeditionary Force construct, the Air Force calls upon its guard and reserve forces in a voluntary duty status for a period of 120 days as part of a three-year rotation cycle.
- The Army, on the other hand, plans to make its guard and reserve forces available for activation one year out of every five or six years. Transitioning to this regimen, with planned rotations that allow for more deployment training before mobilization, reduces the 15 to 18 months of mobilization now being experienced by many Army Reserve members.

- The Marine Corps mobilizes its reserve forces for seven months of “boots-on-the-ground” service to augment and reinforce active units. Current mission demands dictate about a three-year cycle.
- The Navy and the Coast Guard integrate the vast majority of their reserves with active units to prepare for and perform operational missions.

Thus, frequency and duration of service depend on the type of mission, the services' utilization policies for their reserve component members, and the availability of reservists.

For operational missions, frequency and duration of service depend on the military department, the unit, and the mission or requirement. There is no preset limit on frequency or duration of voluntary service. But each member who volunteers to serve in a unit must first understand and agree to the particular terms and conditions of that unit. Reserve members may participate in operational units for all or part of their career in the guard or reserve, as circumstances of their civilian responsibilities allow.

As mentioned previously, the Department of Defense has established a planning guideline that guard and reserve members should expect to be involuntarily called up for not more than one year out of every six years. This does *not* mean that every reservist *will* serve one year out of every six, but this is the *expectation* that has been set forth. In the cold war era, it was commonly believed that mobilization would be a once-in-a-lifetime event, if that. That perception is no longer valid. For the foreseeable future, the one-in-six construct provides a reasonable planning factor for reservists, their employers, and their families. But even under this construct, during times of national emergency or if a surge in manpower is required, the military services could use the full period of involuntary service authorized by law to meet military requirements.

Taking the new construct into consideration, the question arises of whether service in the new guard and reserve is still truly voluntary, or whether it has been made involuntary by longer deployments that occur more frequently. The operational use of the new guard and reserve is built on the construct of voluntary service; guard and reserve members are able to support operational missions for varying periods of time and with varying frequency, depending on individual circumstances and predictable periods of involuntary service. The construct also allows for leveraging the traditional training regimen—as stated by Secretary Laird in 1970—to perform peacetime missions as a by-product of, or adjunct to, regular training.

In support of this principle of voluntary service, the concept of the “continuum of service” was introduced in 2002 to provide greater opportunities for guard and reserve members to tailor their service to their availability, consistent with military requirements. Removing barriers that limit reservists from contributing more to defense missions is an ongoing and necessary process. The goal is a transparent system that

allows members to easily move on and off duty for varying periods of time. The flexibility for members to vary their level of participation is essential to a successful new guard and reserve. Without this flexibility, the military services would have to rely primarily on involuntary service.

The new guard and reserve also call for a change in the way reserve components are compensated, trained, and equipped. Employing the guard and reserve in operational missions requires a different level of readiness. Guard and reserve members must be prepared to perform assigned missions—whether regular missions assigned to a reserve unit or upon reporting for a rotation cycle. Units and individuals must be able to operate as an integral part of the mission, with relevant training on comparable equipment.

Adjustments are required in pay and benefits consistent with the expected utilization of guard and reserve members. While many pay and benefit programs are based on a sliding scale—the more duty performed, the greater the rewards for service—special consideration is required to elicit the desired level of volunteerism needed for the new guard and reserve where members are engaged in operational missions.

## **Policy Implications**

Laws and policies that govern the reserve components must evolve to maximize the new guard and reserve construct. In order to support the new guard and reserve, which are and will remain more operational in nature, force managers and policy makers should:

- Promote judicious and prudent use of the guard and reserve. This can be achieved by rebalancing force structure and assigning functions to the reserve components that maximize the inherent strengths of a part-time force.
- Remove impediments to the implementation of the “continuum of service” personnel management system, while enhancing volunteerism and expanding innovative forms of reserve component affiliation and participation.
- Create compensation and benefit plans that sustain an all-volunteer force and provide incentives based on intensity of duty.
- Understand the economic impacts of mobilizations on civilian employers, communities, and reserve component members. Policies must minimize economic stress, particularly for small businesses and self-employed reserve component members.
- Further reengineer mobilization and demobilization policies, practices, and procedures to reduce pre-mobilization training and improve predictability and notice for members and their families.

- Maintain training policies and procedures that enable the reserve components to train to a higher readiness level prior to mobilization, expand opportunities for joint and coalition training, and continue to increase the use of technology to expand training alternatives.
- Ensure that the reserve component infrastructure supports the needs of rotational training and home-station mobilization, and utilizes robust joint basing strategies.
- Implement equipping strategies that provide sufficient equipment to effectively train reserve component units through all phases of their deployment cycle, and ensure that all reserve component units are fully supplied with comparable and compatible equipment upon deployment.
- Ensure that the reserve components are provided the resources necessary to man, equip, and train units, with a particular emphasis on the cyclical needs of rotational use.

## Organization of This Volume

The new guard and reserve, with both strategic and operational roles, can no longer be managed as a “force in reserve.” The chapters that follow address many of the issues raised in this introductory discussion and offer policy considerations based on data drawn from actual experiences during the past several years.

This book is organized in four parts.

Part I looks at *use of the reserve components*. Although the reserve components have contributed effectively to operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere worldwide, their growing involvement in operational missions has created stress on the force, particularly in high demand, mission-critical specialties. Over the long term, the military services must design rotational plans that prevent overuse. The chapters in Part I examine several alternatives for how capacity can be created using both active and reserve components. One alternative is to use large military formations—such as the brigade combat team—as the basis for force planning. Another is to develop rotation policies that rely on smaller units or individuals to build the needed capacity to meet mission requirements. Each of these approaches is explored and compared in the context of unit cohesion.

Part II offers perspectives on how the prolonged mobilization of the reserves has affected *recruiting and retention*. While stories in the popular press would suggest that the duration and nature of recent mobilizations have led to dramatic increases in losses in the reserve components, the data examined in these chapters show otherwise. Activations and deployments are not altogether bad, but how they are

managed—their duration, frequency, and predictability—matters. Expectations of being activated in the future can directly affect retention. The analyses here also point to how bonuses and other force management tools can be targeted to encourage retention, thereby offsetting some of the impact of extended deployments.

The *burdens of more intensive use* of the reserves—that is the impact on earnings, employers, and families—are examined in Part III. These are crucial issues as excessive earnings losses or demands on families and employers can undermine the military’s ability to maintain adequate force strength. Yet like recruiting and retention, anecdotal evidence from the popular press tends to present a rather negative picture of today’s circumstances. In contrast, the analyses presented in these chapters offer a far more encouraging reality. For example, reservist earnings, on average, increase as a result of activation. Few employers appear to be severely affected by deployment of members of their workforce, and policy options can be exercised to offset those experiencing considerable losses. Further, most families tend to be ready for and cope well with deployment, though not without some challenges. Although today’s assessments are generally good, there are steps that can and should be taken, as discussed in these chapters, to sustain the force and ease the burdens of service as activations become routine and periodic.

Finally, the chapters in Part IV examine a *benefit structure for the future*. Whether reserve personnel levels will be adequate to meet staffing and deployment requirements over the long run depends importantly on compensation. Research has shown that individuals do respond to monetary incentives and other benefits that encourage participation. Addressed in these chapters are several essential areas of compensation: retirement reform, health care, and affiliation bonuses. Because both active and reserve members *choose* to participate in military service, appropriate compensation will be a key to transforming the new reserves. At the same time, how compensation strategies are approached affects not only participation but also the overall cost-effectiveness of the reserve components.

## Looking Ahead

The chapters in this volume address how the changing nature of the guard and reserve affects force management and personnel policies—policies that must evolve to reflect how the guard and reserve are being used. We believe that the concepts explored herein offer important insights to those who are tasked to address these important challenges—the success of which will be critical to the future of the total force.

## Notes

1. A more detailed discussion of these factors can be found in *Review of Reserve Component Contributions to National Defense*, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, December 19, 2002.