



## CHAPTER 14

### **MANAGING THE RESERVE COMPONENTS AS AN OPERATIONAL FORCE**

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As described at the outset of this volume, the Department of Defense (DOD) is asking much more of the reserve components—more time, more training, more frequent deployments. Today, guard and reserve members are making a different type of commitment, based on different expectations—for themselves and their families and employers. No longer simply “a force in reserve,” today’s guard and reserve plays a central role in both operational and strategic missions.

Effective management of the guard and reserve as an operational force will require changes in how it is recruited, trained, equipped, compensated, and resourced. Over the past decade and a half, some changes in force management have occurred in response to the evolution of the reserve components. New management approaches evolved as DOD gained a better understanding of the demands of the new operational environment, and the guard and reserves’ role as part of an integrated, total force.

Yet the need for change has accelerated—the result of a nation at war. DOD is faced with a sea change in how the reserve components are being used as part of the total force. This change is not temporary; it is not business as usual. Rather, it reflects a fundamental shift from the past. As such, a new approach to management is needed—one that also reflects a new way of doing business for the future. Incremental changes at the margin will no longer be enough.

In October 2008, the Secretary of Defense signed a directive that established an overarching set of principles and policies to promote and support the management of the reserve component as an operational and strategic force. The intent of the directive is to codify a new approach to managing the total force—until now done largely through policy memoranda—to ensure that the military services foster closer

integration between the active and reserve components, provide the most efficient training opportunities for all personnel, and allow for shared use of resources. Its goal is to provide a concrete foundation for institutionalizing management of the reserves as an operational force and as a basis for developing and evaluating future policies.

We conclude this volume with an overview of the five key management principles outlined in the DOD directive. The policy discussions contained in the preceding chapters are largely consistent with these principles and identify areas where focused attention is needed as the department transitions to a new management approach for the reserve components and the total force.

## **Continuum of Service**

**The continuum of service is utilized to sustain and enhance the effectiveness of the all-volunteer force with flexible service options that are attractive to a broad population.**

While operational tempo of the reserve components has increased overall, some capabilities traditionally resident in the reserve components have also been in near-continuous use. As a result, an increasing number of reservists perform duty more than the traditional 39 days each year. The increased use of the reserves since the end of the cold war pointed to the need for a new approach to managing the all-volunteer force that better reflects this reality. The continuum of service responds to this need.

The continuum of service is a set of management policies that provides variable and flexible service options that could make military service attractive to a broader population—options that are consistent with DOD manpower requirements and with an individual's ability to serve over the course of a career. The continuum of service aims to facilitate, to the extent possible, transparent and seamless movement of individuals between active military, reserve military, and civilian service. Such policies offer DOD greater flexibility in accessing the variety of skills needed to respond to evolving requirements—particularly highly technical and civilian-acquired skills that are difficult to sustain full time in the force.

More flexible force management tools are needed to support the continuum of service. This means flexible compensation, benefits, and incentives commensurate with the service provided to encourage members to continue to serve. Flexible management tools must encompass recruiting, career development, promotion, and separation and retirement options. Other considerations include ensuring benefits and entitlements are consistent for all members, with the goal of equitable compensation and benefits for a day's work. Finally, developing an approach to medical benefits that ensures continuity of health care for reservists and their families is paramount. In using these tools, it is essential that the system enable participation

at any point along the continuum of service by eliminating complexity and creating greater efficiencies.

A continuum of service offers DOD more flexibility in accessing and managing personnel over a lifetime of service. It recognizes that the support provided by military members can vary substantially throughout a career. It also addresses the fact that military requirements vary in duration, creating a fluctuating but continuous demand over time for augmentation and support. Thus, implementation of the continuum of service would sustain and enhance the effectiveness of the all-volunteer force.

## **Utilization Rules**

**Utilization rules are implemented to govern frequency and duration of activations. Since expectation management is critical to successfully managing the reserve components as an operational force, these rules enhance predictability and prudent use of the reserve components.**

Requirements of the post–September 11 era have demonstrated the need for the reserve components in support of ongoing operations and the potential for repeated deployments during the course of a career. The use of reserve forces will vary depending on type of mission, individual service utilization policies, and the availability of a reserve member. Utilization rules are important in order to successfully manage the reserve component consistent with operational requirements. They also provide expectations of how often and for how long reserve members may be activated during the course of their careers. Such information is important not only to members, but also to families and employers. Being able to predict absences from family and the workplace is perhaps one of the most critical factors in retaining support from members, their families, and employers.

In January 2007, the Secretary of Defense established total force utilization guidelines that included the planning objective for involuntary mobilization of guard and reserve units and individuals of a “one year mobilized to five years demobilized ratio.” This guideline does not mean that every reserve member will serve one year out of every six years. But this is the expectation that DOD is setting forth. The perception that a reserve member will be activated once in a career is no longer valid. Prior to joining the reserve components, individuals must be made aware of likely annual participation requirements—that most guard and reserve members perform additional military service beyond the minimum set in law.

It is against these guidelines that the military services need to align their force structure. If global demands require a number of selected guard and/or reserve units to be remobilized sooner than this goal, those exceptions should be temporary. The policy also includes accommodations to compensate individuals who are involuntarily mobilized beyond the established frequency.

## **Voluntary Duty**

**Voluntary duty is encouraged to meet mission requirements.**

Voluntary duty is duty performed by reservists who request or indicate willingness to accept orders for active duty beyond any active duty obligation. The expanded operational use of the guard and reserve is built on a construct of voluntary service, in which guard and reserve members are able to serve more frequently or for varying periods to support operational missions, and predictable periods of involuntary service (as described previously). The continuum of service structure fosters volunteerism by providing greater opportunities for guard and reserve members to tailor service commitments to their availability, consistent with military requirements.

A system that is flexible and agile encourages members to perform military duty beyond minimum participation requirements. For such a system to work, both monetary and nonmonetary incentives may need to be established to encourage participation and meet mission requirements, even on short notice, for varied periods of time. Flexibility in the system enables the military services to accomplish force management objectives according to individual preferences. By promoting volunteerism, the services can better position themselves to meet some of the sudden requirements that emerge during times of national emergency.

Many skills that are useful to the uniformed military are difficult to acquire through traditional accession policies, are challenging to obtain on short notice, or are needed only for a limited duration. These skills might include cutting edge, technical skills such as those possessed by engineers, scientists, or information technology professionals, as well as specialized skills such as languages and cultural understanding. Flexible affiliation options allow the services to employ individuals who may be willing to volunteer for some form of military service for short periods of time or in response to specific emergencies, but for whom traditional affiliation programs are not adequate. Thus, removing barriers that limit reserve members from contributing more to defense missions is an ongoing and necessary process.

Unit volunteerism is another concept that can be facilitated by a more flexible force management system. Reserve members could voluntarily participate in units with higher readiness levels and deployment requirements, without being constrained by the current structure of the traditional 39-day training program for reservists. Mission areas such as early responder units, stability operations, reach-back operations, and homeland defense requirements could be met, at least in part, by such units. Promoting both individual and unit volunteerism can have significant payoffs for the military services. Without this flexibility, the military services would have to rely primarily on involuntary service.

## **Readiness**

**The reserve components are resourced to meet readiness requirements. Reserve components' resourcing plans shall ensure visibility to track resources from formulation, appropriation, and allocation through execution.**

One of the most critical elements of managing the reserves as an operational force is ensuring that the force is adequately resourced to meet readiness requirements—properly trained on current generation equipment; properly equipped; and physically, medically, and operationally ready to accomplish assigned tasks. Standards for training and equipping the force must be consistent for active, guard, and reserve members. Reserve component resourcing plans must be designed so that funding can be tracked and evaluated throughout the planning, programming, budgeting, and execution process. Such visibility helps to ensure that resources can be justified, that they are distributed in a timely fashion for the uses intended, and that shortfalls can be quickly identified.

In concert with the utilization guidelines established by the Secretary of Defense in early 2007, the reserve components embarked in earnest on developing a new mobilization model—referred to as “train-mobilize-deploy”—that shifts a significant amount of training into the period before mobilization. The underlying concept is to enable a longer period of deployment in the theater of operations by reducing the amount of training that occurs between the time a member is activated and deployed.

This construct of train-mobilize-deploy is the basis for resourcing the new reserves. Force generation plans for the reserve components should be developed and maintained to provide ready and available forces in support of operational requirements. These plans should be developed in concert with the objectives, established by the Secretary of Defense, that define the frequency and duration of use for involuntary mobilization. The plans should be resourced by allocating personnel, training, and equipment to ensure reserve forces are ready when needed. Funds for training and equipment should coincide with the services' force planning cycles, enabling an effective pre- and post-mobilization training and deployment sequence.

Another important aspect of readiness is having the right mix of full-time support personnel to enhance integration and promote readiness. This mix should include active personnel, active guard and reserve personnel, military technicians, and other federal civilian employees—all of whom need to be considered in the resource allocation process. Other requirements include resources to support medical and dental readiness, so that reserve component members comply with medical and dental standards from pre-activation through deactivation. Facility and training areas must be resourced to support reserve component training opportunities, which have even more importance under the new mobilization model. And legal resources are also needed to support activation of reserve personnel.

The bottom line is that adequately resourcing all aspects of the reserve component is essential to sustaining the reserves as a ready, operational force.

## **Outreach**

**Outreach services are established and available for reserve component members, their families, and employers from pre-activation through reintegration.**

The military services need to stay connected to guard and reserve members throughout their careers, keeping them informed of obligations and opportunities in the all-volunteer force. Outreach services for members, families, and employers are critical from pre-activation throughout the training, activation, deployment, deactivation, and reintegration cycle. Family readiness is a critical issue for DOD. Quality of life and family matters are priority issues for the Secretary and the military services. DOD's ability to assist service members and their families to prepare for separations during short- and long-term deployments is paramount to sustaining mission capabilities and mission readiness. Integrated family readiness and support programs provide information and services to all members, regardless of parent service or component—whether active, guard, or reserve.

Equally important is sustaining support of employers during this new era. Economic status and job security of reserve component members is integral to DOD's manpower strategy and can only be assured with strong employer support. Employer support is also critical to recruiting and retaining high-quality men and women in the reserve components. Building employer support requires a strong network of both military and civilian-employer leaders who are capable of fostering communication, education, and an exchange of information. Employers have offered sustained support during this era of high operational tempo—even beyond what is legally required. There is every expectation that such support will continue as long as reserve members are used at reasonable levels and employer relationships are nurtured through appropriate outreach programs.

## **Conclusion**

In this era of persistent conflict, with heavy reliance on the reserve components, the Department of Defense must take deliberate steps to manage the guard and reserve as an operational force. It must create a force planning and personnel management environment that supports the new guard and reserve—recognizing both operational and strategic roles. It must accommodate the different attributes and strengths of the active and reserve components. It must allow for the unique plans in each military service for employing its active and reserve forces. It must recognize the implications of the new guard and reserve for force structure, training, compensation, readiness, recruiting, and retention—institutionalizing the reserve components as an operational force.

This volume has focused primarily on manpower and personnel issues as well as the cost of the reserves. But there are other issues that must be addressed and pursued as part of the DOD's future research agenda. Examples include force readiness as reflected in training and deployment models, medical readiness, and readiness reporting; providing the reserve forces with modern equipment to aid in training and readiness; and making force structure decisions for the appropriate size, mix, and skill sets of the active and reserve components. Each of these areas will require research and analyses to support the evolution of departmental policies and programs.

The task is great, but it can be achieved. Success will result in a stronger, more flexible, more effective force for the future and, in turn, will further the sustainment of an all-volunteer guard and reserve.