

# Executive Summary

Army Reserve Public Affairs (Timothy L. Hale)



Army Reservist conducts night qualification with M-4 during 2010 Army Reserve Best Warrior Competition

U.S. Navy (Ryan Steinhour)



Navy Reservists check water depth during joint logistics exercise

*As we reinforce policies,  
implement strategies, and  
continue to call on our Reserve  
Components, we must remember  
that “judicious use” is still  
the watchword.*

— Dennis M. McCarthy  
Assistant Secretary of Defense  
for Reserve Affairs

In this issue, *Joint Force Quarterly* explores the Reserve Components (RC) of the U.S. Armed Forces and our progress in realizing the 1973 Total Force Policy as it evolves toward the operational reserve force delineated in Department of Defense (DOD) Directive, *Managing the Reserve Components as an Operational Force* (October 2008). An operational reserve provides capabilities and strategic depth to meet U.S. defense requirements across the full spectrum of conflict. In their operational roles, RCs participate in a range of missions according to their Services’ force generation plans. While the current high operational tempo of the RC is commonly cited as a shift from a more traditional strategic reserve to an operational one, the difference between the two is not clear or even exclusive. To some degree, the RC seems a victim of its competence and flexibility, constantly in tension between demands for a strategic or operational reserve as assessments and perceptions of national security threats change. Because the RC will be used at a high operational level for

the foreseeable future, some are inspired to predict permanence as an operational reserve. Undeniably, however, a strategic reserve will always be necessary to provide the Nation with the ability to deal with uncertainty and homeland defense in the face of evolving hybrid threats.

This issue’s Forum begins with RAND’s Dr. John Winkler, who provides readers with essential context for the evolution of U.S. Reserve Components from a strategic reserve to today’s operational reserve. The *2010 Quadrennial Defense Review Report* holds that elements of the RCs have a role in preventing and deterring future conflict, despite the reality that budgeting for a transition to expanded responsibilities has not met requirements. The catalyst for expanding the responsibilities of Reserve and National Guard forces was 9/11 and the recognition that Active-duty forces alone could not meet the myriad requirements of robust homeland defense in concert with extended conflict abroad. Moreover, some critical skill sets for a lengthy war on terror were found primarily in the Reserve Components and

were limited by statutory and policy limits on availability. The demanded stress on the RC caused the rebalancing of capabilities between Active and Reserve forces as well as increased cross-training among occupational specialties. Dr. Winkler outlines eight key policy and practice developments over the past decade that enabled this transformation, and then analyzes the conclusions and recommendations in the 2008 Commission on the National Guard and Reserves (CNGR),

prevent the loss of an operational reserve that they consider integral for addressing future national security threats. Moving beyond training to equipping, the authors acknowledge the difficulties in tracking procurement and distribution for the RC and endorse the public release of the new semi-annual National Guard and Reserve Equipment Delivery Reports. Meeting the future equipment needs of an operational reserve will not be easy. Although the February 2010 DOD

of solutions with in-residence attendance at senior Service colleges “where the future generals and admirals of the force are groomed every year.” He points to DOD and military Service responses to the congressionally chartered CNGR and identifies a lack of appreciation for the value that a Reserve point of view brings to the war college educational experience. Instead of endorsing the CNGR recommendation to increase fully funded in-residence slots, DOD has instead pursued

U.S. Air Force (Dan St. Pierre)



Marine Reserve combat engineers conduct explosives training in urban terrain during exercise Javelin Thrust 2010

U.S. Air Force (Andy M. Kin)



Members of Air Force Reserve Aeromedical Evacuation Flight move injured Soldier aboard C-130 in Tikrit, Iraq

in which he participated. Briefly, Dr. Winkler recommends that operational reserve utilization be incorporated in strategic planning, that the operational reserve be properly resourced, and for a true continuum of service, that a promotion system that is experience- and competence-based be incorporated. He concludes that DOD has made great strides in realizing the vision of an operational reserve, but much more needs to be done.

Deviating somewhat from the first article, frequent *JFQ* contributor Dr. John Nagl and his Center for a New American Security colleague Travis Sharp assert that both Congress and DOD have supported and fully resourced the transition from a strategic to an operational reserve. They caveat these observations by noting that the national security bureaucracy will not apportion *future* resources on the basis of contributions of the Reserve Components over the past decade. In fact, there is talk of restoring the status quo ante for budgetary reasons. The authors argue that convincingly answering the question “Operational for what?” is essential to

Instruction 1235.12 mandated that the RCs receive resources to fulfill roles and missions associated with both an operational and strategic force, those roles and missions have yet to be defined. The failure of the Quadrennial Defense Review to see after these definitions has placed the Guard and Reserves behind the programming and budgeting curve, deferring execution until 2016 or even later. The authors conclude their argument with three recommendations to advance the cause of seamlessly integrating the Reserve Component into the long-advocated “Total Force.”

The Forum concludes with a persuasive article focused on the need to eliminate cultural differences and prejudices between personnel serving in Active and Reserve Components. Speaking from his 16-year experience as a professor in the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, retired Army Reserve Colonel Jim Currie argues that although the cultural divide between components will not be resolved soon, changes in law, policy, and procedures will go a long way toward eliminating prejudices and misconceptions. He begins his survey

nonresident educational opportunities for Reservists, but there is a tremendous qualitative difference between resident and nonresident courses. The author identifies similar problems with National Defense University’s CAPSTONE program for general and flag officers. This course is required under the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 for Active Component flag officers, but not for Reservists. As in the war colleges, CAPSTONE offers opportunities for interaction and prejudice reduction, and Colonel Currie offers three recommendations as a remedy for a condition that is inconsistent with a true operational reserve. He concludes with three additional recommendations for achieving a true Total Force in order of value: require greater Reserve attendance at senior Service colleges, place RC knowledge into the curriculum of the senior Service colleges, and increase Reserve attendance at CAPSTONE. A Total Force can exist in reality as well as in theory, but currently, it does not. **JFQ**

—D.H. Gurney