
Defense Report

AUSA



Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve — Vital to National Defense

Since 1973, when our country ceased reliance on conscription to obtain our military manpower, we have found it necessary to assign increasingly important roles to the National Guard and the Reserve Forces. Today, one out of three Americans in uniform is a member of the National Guard or Reserve, a citizen-volunteer whose military duty is a demanding commitment in addition to the member's full-time career and family responsibilities.

The increasing emphasis on assignment of missions to the reserve components requires that they be fully manned and equipped and that they steadily improve their standards of training, readiness and preparedness. These requirements have extended reserve component training time and have increased the numbers in the Reserve and National Guard ranks which, in turn, has exposed more and more civilian employers to the unique character of the citizen-soldier.

These days, employers have a critical role in maintaining the personnel strength of the National Guard and Reserve. Research conducted for the Department of Defense discloses that Guard members and Reservists are far more likely to remain in military service when their employers support their participation. Other studies have concluded that nearly a third of those who choose to leave the Guard and Reserve do so because of conflicts between the full-time demands of their civilian employment and the part-time responsibilities of their military duties.

For the most part, those employers who have shown a reluctance to provide positive support to their citizen-military employees are the ones who, for whatever reason, have not had the opportunity to become fully informed about how the Guard and Reserve are so directly participating in our national defense and why the commitment of their employee is so vitally important.

The National Guard and the Reserves are effective forces today not only through the efforts of the 1.6 million dedicated part-time professionals who would quickly become full-time fighters for freedom in an emergency, but also because of the understanding, cooperation and encouragement of so many thousands of their civilian employers. They are every one deserving of our salute.

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