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Reinventing the Army Reserve—Again

by

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The U.S. Army has been transforming itself for years. General Eric R. Shinseki brought new impetus to the concept when he began his term as Army Chief of Staff in 1999. Many fruits of this ongoing transformation were clearly seen during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. These include dazzling high-tech weapons, communications and logistics plus the new doctrine, force structure, training and equipment to support those high-tech systems. The Army Reserve has been transforming along with the Army, changing its structure and organization to better fit the needs of the nation.

For the past three years, the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) has greatly accelerated this transformation. Reserve component Soldiers, in particular, have had to contend with “come-as-you-are” deployments, mandatory cross-leveling to units across the country and involuntary reclassifications.

However, transformation in the Army Reserve is different in other more basic ways. It must focus on issues much more mundane and less dramatic than, say, Stryker Brigades. How can we better prepare Reserve units and Soldiers for combat on short notice? How can we help Reservists balance their civilian and military responsibilities? How can we support them, their families, employers and communities in this process? Indeed, what will be the Army Reserve of the future?

The Stakes Are High

Over the past several years a quiet revolution has taken place in the U.S. military: the reserve components have transformed from forces in reserve to full participants in the nation’s defense. With greatly reduced endstrengths for the active component and sharply increased operational tempos, the reserve component forces have been called upon more and more.

A few numbers from the GWOT will serve to illustrate how important the reserve components have become. Nearly 40 percent of the 138,000 Soldiers in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) are reserve component Soldiers.¹ For the second OIF troop rotation (OIF2), some 112,000 Soldiers deployed to Iraq, including 37,000 reserve component personnel. In addition, another 4,000 reserve component Soldiers went to Afghanistan.²

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The change is particularly noticeable in the Army. In fact, the Army can hardly conduct normal day-to-day operations, let alone go to war, without its reserves. More than half of the total strength and nearly two-thirds of its combat service support capability (medical, supply, maintenance and transportation) are Army Reserve and Army National Guard. Nearly all the civil affairs units—particularly important for the post-combat phases in Afghanistan and Iraq—are in reserve components. The Army Reserve is particularly heavily invested in combat service support.

Troubling Signs

Although the demands of the activations to support the GWOT have been difficult, the Army Reserve has responded well. Reservists have reported for active duty without significant complaint even though some activations have been on short notice. Meanwhile, other alerts have lingered for months without clear orders, leaving Reservists in limbo with their families and employers. Nevertheless, these patriotic and dedicated Americans understand the need and have been more than willing to endure the uncertainties.

Still, the Army has good reason for concern about the future of the citizen Soldier. Among reserve component Soldiers, talk of leaving the service is commonplace, and real data are beginning to validate the anecdotal evidence. In 2003, the Army Reserve missed its retention goal by 6.7 percent, the second shortfall since Fiscal Year (FY) 1997. The primary reason was an unexpected loss of career Army Reserve Soldiers (down 9.3 percent), those who have the skills to train junior officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs). The Army National Guard was 13 percent short of its recruiting goal.

Many analysts believe the problem is worse than these numbers indicate. Currently, many reserve component Soldiers are under a “stop-loss” directive that prevents them from leaving the service or even their current unit of assignment. The exodus might accelerate once the stop-loss is lifted. It’s hard to imagine that the situation will improve with continuous and multiple activations.

Three Different Army Reserves

So, even while we continue our dangerous and complex missions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo and other places around the world, it is important that we also contemplate the future of the Army Reserve and what can be done to preserve and strengthen this valuable resource for the nation.

First, we need to know exactly what Army Reserve we are thinking about. Since the late 1960s, three distinct versions of the Army Reserve can be characterized by their size and utilization. In the Vietnam War era (model one), the Army’s reserve components were relatively large. However, few units or individual Soldiers were activated as the Army met its needs for additional manpower through the draft. In total, approximately 5,900 reserve component Soldiers served in theater. Whatever the value of the Army Reserve to the national defense in the Vietnam era, this model has little use in the GWOT.

After the Vietnam era, policymakers recognized the necessity of mobilizing American public opinion in any future war. Under the Abrams Doctrine, reserve component forces were integrated more fully into the nation’s war plans. As a result, the Persian Gulf War in 1990–91 (model two) witnessed a second manifestation of the Army Reserve. Reservists were a key component of this conflict: 84,000 Army Reserve Soldiers and many units were successfully mobilized in support of Desert Storm.

The third manifestation (model three) of the Army Reserve occurred in the past few years as reserve components of all services have become integral members of the nation's defense team. The Army Reserve sent 11,150 Soldiers from more than 330 units to Bosnia (1995–2001) and other soldiers and units to Kosovo (2000–01).³ As noted above, the actions in Afghanistan and Iraq, in addition to the continuing missions in Bosnia and Kosovo, have required the activation of a substantial portion of the Army Reserve, and some units and Soldiers have been activated more than once.

While the Army Reserve has performed well in the recent conflicts, some officials have expressed concerns. Notably, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld and others have suggested that the mix of active and reserve capabilities should be reexamined and that some capabilities currently assigned to the reserve components might be moved back to the active component. Yet, any modifications to the active-versus-reserve mixture are unlikely to eliminate or even significantly reduce our need to maintain a strong reserve component. Tradition and budget constraints will ensure that.

Time, Distance and a Parallel Universe

Certainly, any new strategy to transform the Army Reserve will have to find ways to mitigate two factors that have long challenged our ability to build ready units: time and distance.

While these are not issues for the active component, they have both defined and confounded reserve component life from the beginning. For part-time Soldiers, finding the time to train to standard has always been an issue. The legacy formula for Army Reserve training has been one weekend per month and two weeks of annual training. The long-standing assumption held that remaining issues could be corrected during long predeployment phases. Today's come-as-you-are activations have rendered this formula out of date.

The challenges of limited training time have been further compounded by the broad geographic distribution of Reserve units and Soldiers. Traditionally, Army Reserve Soldiers, who are not reimbursed for travel to their monthly training drills, have joined units in or near their hometowns. While the active component simply moves Soldiers to fill appropriate vacancies wherever they occur, Army Reserve Soldiers have had to adapt to locally available units. Because a vacant position must exist within an Army Reserve unit before a Soldier assigned to that unit can be promoted, promotion opportunities in any particular geographic area might be slow or require retraining in another military occupational specialty (MOS) and reclassification.

The separation between the Army and the Army Reserve is a lingering problem. Many Army training and personnel systems were developed years ago to support a much larger active component. In those years, when the Army Reserve was rarely called upon, these legacy systems were adequate. Where they were not, the Army Reserve invented patches to make up for shortcomings. For example, many Army Reserve Soldiers need to reclassify to be qualified in local units, and the active school slots are not always available. In response, the Army Reserve established several individual training divisions to teach MOS-producing and career development courses. In addition, training support divisions assist Army Reserve units with unit training planning and mobilization. Army Reserve Soldiers currently are tracked in personnel and finance systems separate from the active component.

As a result of these patches and compromises, the Army Reserve today occupies something of a parallel universe to the active Army. Maintaining this separate structure carries significant cost.

The additional structure consumes Soldiers who could be assigned to line units that routinely struggle to stay at minimal personnel levels (i.e., “P3” in the language of the Unit Status Report). Thus, mobilizations are slower and more disruptive than they need to be, and the “tooth-to-tail” (operations-to-support) ratio in the Army Reserve is lower than it should be.

Defining and Refining the Next Army Reserve

Today the Army Reserve stands at a crossroads. What kind of Army Reserve will best serve the nation in the future?

Models two and three above provide distinct visions of the Army Reserve: either a force in reserve supporting a larger active component or an integral part of day-to-day operations. Each has its advantages, limitations and costs. Meanwhile, the needs of the Army are different now, and mobilization has become a way of life. How can we balance the needs of the Army with those of the individual and his or her family, civilian employer and community?

If we choose to revert to model two, many of the systems currently in effect may be adequate. But higher costs will be incurred through the time needed to activate a unit. If we continue with model three, then sweeping changes will be necessary to ensure that both the Army and the reserve component Soldier get what they need.

Lieutenant General James R. Helmly, Chief, Army Reserve, has said, “This is the first extended-duration war our nation has fought with an all-volunteer force. We must be sensitive to that. And we must apply proactive, preventive measures to prevent a recruiting-retention crisis.”²⁴ The Army Reserve has begun taking steps to mitigate the problem. To start with, General Helmly has stated his desire to make future activations more predictable for Army Reserve Soldiers. He envisions that Reservists will be activated for nine to 12 months approximately every five years.

In addition, the Federal Reserve Restructuring Initiative (FRRRI) will do much for citizen Soldiers. The Human Resources Lifecycle aspect will better enable Soldiers to balance the complicated needs of family, civilian employment and military service by allowing time to complete military education separate from intense Army Reserve unit responsibilities. The Transients, Trainees, Holders and Students (TTHS) account will assign nonqualified and nondeployable Soldiers to a special account (as the active component has done for years), thus eliminating management of this substantial mission from the unit commander’s set of tasks.

These welcome steps will significantly reduce the administrative burden on Army Reserve commanders, and the results will translate to better training and readiness. But more changes are needed to make the Army Reserve more workable for citizen Soldiers in the 21st century.

Lessons from the Other Services

Lessons may be learned from the other services. For example, the Navy has recognized the advantages of closer integration of its active and reserve components. The Naval Reserve comprises 87,000 selected reserve personnel, or about 20 percent of the Navy’s total force. Its Active Reserve Integration (ARI) program will fully integrate the Naval Reserve with the active force through five specific initiatives:

- validating Naval Reserve requirements;
- identifying the Naval Reserve’s role in supporting Sea Power 21 (the Navy’s transformation program);

- identifying their requirements for readiness and training;
- assigning responsibility for training and readiness of the reserve force; and
- assessing reserve readiness.

As ARI is implemented, the need for large Navy Reserve infrastructure will decrease significantly. For example, personnel functions will switch to Navy Bureau of Personnel Command, and training and readiness requirements will become the responsibility of active commands.

The Marine Corps came to the same conclusion in the early 1990s. The U.S. Marine Corps Reserve is much more fully integrated into the active force than is the Army Reserve. Marine Reserve units are well-staffed with full-time support, and that support is active component Marines. The Marine Reserve has no civilians and no active reserve Marines similar to the Army Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) and Navy Training and Administration of the Reserves (TAR) Administration Programs. The positions filled by full-time Marines also include senior staff. For example, in a large Marine Reserve company commanded by a Marine Reserve major, an active component Marine major might serve as the instructor/inspector during peacetime. When the unit is activated, the active major becomes the executive officer for the company.

Reconciling Priorities and Needs

The needs of the Army and those of individual Army Reserve Soldiers are not quite the same. The Army needs a reserve force that can respond quickly. That can be challenging for Army Reserve Soldiers. As indicated above, the time between the alert notice and deployment has been as short as 24 hours. Some units, such as those that work at power-projection platforms and ports within the United States to prepare reserve component and active forces for deployment, routinely activate in short timelines. No time is then available for post-mobilization train-up. Many of these Army Reserve Soldiers must be nearly as technically competent and tactically ready as their active duty counterparts.

The balance between the needs of the Army and the needs of the citizen Soldier is a fine one. As the Army comes to depend more heavily on Army Reserve Soldiers (model three), the demands on individual Reservists greatly increase. Moreover, in this model, Army Reserve Soldiers have to maintain the same standards as active component Soldiers in terms of physical conditioning, MOS training and leadership. Soldiers will also have to be considerably more flexible in juggling family, civilian career and Army requirements. At some point, the legitimate needs of the Army for ready reservists may overwhelm the ability of the Soldier (or the family, civilian employer or community) to fulfill those needs.

Mobilization has become a way of life for Army Reserve Soldiers. About one-third of the Army Reserve already has been activated to support operations in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere since 11 September 2001. More will be. Deployments also are longer now. Army Reservists originally activated for 12 months total but only six months in country have been extended to 12 months in country. That means the total activation will be 16 to 18 months. Some Soldiers have been called up for multiple rotations, and some of those second call-ups came less than 12 months after their first rotation. Deployments have been a concern in the active component for some time. Now the reserve component is sharing those disruptions and concerns. Unfortunately, Army Reserve Soldiers do not enjoy all the support systems available to active Soldiers.

While the Army Reserve will always get recruits, the more restrictive the environment and the greater the demands, the smaller that pool will be. Army Reserve Soldiers have long been caught between the conflicting pressures of their civilian and military careers. The increasing demands of the new Army and the 21st century civilian workplace are exacerbating that long-standing conflict and will squeeze some number of today's citizen Soldiers out of the force. Those who remain may not be able to participate as much and therefore will be less competitive for choice command and staff assignments.

Activations also are disruptive to employers, especially for small businesses in which every employee is important. Even the improved schedule envisioned by General Helmly (i.e., a year-long activation every five to six years) may be more than some small businesses can endure. Many communities have also discovered that a significant number of their public safety employees are members of the military reserve components. Reserve units tend to be geographically focused, so activation of a reserve component unit can seriously deplete police, fire and other emergency services in a community.

Training Soldiers and Units

So what can be done to resolve this dilemma in a way that is satisfactory for both the Army and the Soldier? The first challenge is training Army Reserve Soldiers to the standard needed for short-notice mobilizations. High-quality, mission-focused training prepares Soldiers and units for deployments and retains Soldiers in the Army. Several aspects of Army Reserve training could easily be changed with excellent results.

In the legacy model, Army Reserve Soldiers report to a local center for monthly training or two weeks of annual training. The center may have only one unit with a limited amount of equipment. It may be home to a random collection of units stationed there based on little more than availability of space. Typically, an Army Reserve commander has an overwhelming number of administrative tasks—far more than ever encountered by an active commander—that detract from his or her ability to plan and oversee quality training. In many cases, the unit has little contact with a doctrinal higher headquarters.

A second challenge is training time. Even if all administrative tasks and planning are completed outside of the weekend training time, Army Reserve units have only 38 days—less than two months of total training time—to accomplish everything an active component unit does in 12 months. But the process is far less efficient than this simple formula implies. Every month Army Reserve units must change civilians into Soldiers. It is an inefficient process. Simply changing the mind-set of the Army Reserve Soldier from the civilian world to the military every month takes time.

Army regulations need to be carefully reviewed. Training funds come in several different types, each with its own set of limitations. Units can perform only a set maximum of training drills in any given quarter, and every Soldier in a unit must complete his or her training within a unit-wide 60-day window. These artificial constraints severely impede training opportunities. Any liberalization would help commanders to better plan and conduct training.

The Army Reserve needs to make a serious investment in collective training and unit readiness evaluation. To be effective, Army Reserve Soldiers and units must be more than a hodgepodge of entry-level Soldiers, but with the increased operational tempo, essential elements of readiness can

easily be shortchanged or overlooked. Collective training is often postponed when units are consumed with preparing for mobilization. It is expensive and time-consuming, and the payback on investment is less immediate than getting another Soldier through MOS-producing school.

However, collective training allows Soldiers to train their MOS skills. Training must be done in the context of a wartime mission. Doing movement control in an actual mission is very different from studying it in the classroom. Furthermore, high-quality collective training will reduce the Army Reserve's retention problem. Many units lose 20 to 30 percent of strength per year. Put another way, a loss of 25 percent in combat power would make a unit a candidate for reconstitution. The slow hemorrhage of Soldiers in peacetime can lull unit leaders into complacency, and the current activations and repeat deployments are likely to make a bad problem worse. Finally, collective training builds leaders. NCOs and officers need the on-the-job experience gained in units with real Soldiers and real missions. That doesn't happen in a classroom. Collective training grows the mid- to senior-level NCOs and officers that Army Reserve units need.

The Army Reserve also needs to look at the way it counts its trained Soldiers. Under the current system, a Soldier joins a unit near his or her home and must become qualified for a position in that unit. The disconnect between a small number of local unit vacancies and the system-wide vacancies in all career fields and grades is an extraordinary burden for individual Soldiers and for the Army Reserve. Trained Soldiers are trained Soldiers, and all Soldiers who have completed advanced individual training (AIT) are qualified to fill positions in units somewhere.

The benefits would be immediate. If all Soldiers with an MOS were counted as qualified, the duty-qualified level of the Army Reserve would increase by 5 to 10 percent. In fact, the requirement for reclassification exists only in peacetime. During mobilizations in 2003 and 2004, Soldiers were mandatorily transferred to fill vacancies in deploying units, regardless of the Soldier's residence. By counting qualified Soldiers against vacancies system-wide, the Army Reserve MOS-qualified levels would increase, and the burdens on both the Soldiers to reclassify and on the system to support an extensive network of schools would decrease.

Finally, reserve officer training and qualification should be examined. Key differences in officer qualification and personnel readiness between the active and reserve components need to be brought into alignment. In the active component, officers serve in one or perhaps two branches for their entire careers. By progressing through assignments of increasing responsibility, they build technical expertise in their particular branch. In the Army Reserve, an officer is considered qualified upon completion of any basic course. Reserve officers often serve in multiple branches during their careers. Thus, it is not uncommon to find even brigade commanders who have never served in the branch of the unit they are commanding. Branch qualifying jobs (e.g., operations officer or executive officer) are not required for promotion or command selection within the Army Reserve.

The solution is to require officers to perform in appropriate assignments in the Army Reserve and active setting. Additional schooling will not provide the experience needed. In fact, Army Reserve officers already spend too much time in school at the expense of face time with troops. Unfortunately, the new TTHS program will only exacerbate this problem by removing officers from troop units while they are in school. It would be better to add requirements to complete branch-qualifying assignments—on active duty, if possible—to the criteria for Army Reserve officer promotions.

Regional Training Centers

One solution to the problem of distance would be consolidating Army Reserve training at a smaller number of regional training centers. These centers would have many benefits. They would ensure that adequate Soldiers, units, equipment and training support are readily available to facilitate the planning and conduct of high-quality mission-essential training every time the Soldier reports for duty. They would also provide better connections to the doctrinal base, enhance effectiveness of distance learning, improve training efficiency for Army Reserve and active Soldiers, and promote joint training. Integration of active and reserve Soldiers into joint training greatly enhances the quality of training for everyone. Most important, it would ease the integration of Army Reserve Soldiers into the active Army.

Regional centers would facilitate many other aspects of Army Reserve life. They would better enable the Army Reserve to control unit assignments. The Army Reserve has become a de facto regimental system. Soldiers join a unit and often remain in that unit or within that chain of command for their entire career. Unlike the active component, Reserve Soldiers effectively cannot be transferred without their consent in peacetime. Consequently, Soldiers tend to “homestead” in one unit, often to the detriment of the overall system. By concentrating multiple units at one location, regional centers would facilitate the Army’s ability to move Army Reserve Soldiers from one unit to another.

Solving one problem can introduce others. Clearly, regional training centers would incur additional costs. For example, Army Reserve Soldiers would have to be reimbursed for travel expenses if the regional center was located outside of commuting distance. Of course, the little-known truth is that many Soldiers already travel considerable distances to drill. Mitigating travel costs is essential. Restoring the ability to deduct travel expenses from federal income taxes is a good first step, but some form of direct reimbursement for travel expenses is the real solution. Additional costs of housing and travel will be offset by gains in reduced recruiting and training costs, particularly for highly skilled Soldiers. Even a small investment in defraying travel expenses will bear large readiness dividends.

However, reducing the number of centers will result in several economies of scale, including building costs, full-time staffs and administrative burdens. A small number of centers will facilitate centralized administrative support and holding-company concepts already proposed by the Chief, Army Reserve. Furthermore, the improvements in the level of training and career progression would translate into improved retention and readiness.

Taking Care of Soldiers

The increasing demands of the Army Reserve have translated to an increasing burden on individual Reservists. The increasing workload on a smaller and smaller force has stretched the reserve components as well as the active component. Reserve families and employers feel the increased demands. The Chief, Army Reserve hopes to mobilize Reservists only once every five years. That is a good first step, but more work will be needed to support Soldiers, families and employers. They expect their Soldiers to be activated to fight big wars; they don’t know how to react to an endless series of small missions.

The most difficult challenge will be mid- to senior-level NCOs and officers. What can we do to make it possible to retain them? Educational benefits tend to target more junior Soldiers but are

of less interest to more senior Soldiers. Health and dental insurance are growing and expensive problems for all Americans. Perhaps the Army Reserve could provide medical and dental insurance as an incentive and to ensure that activating Reservists are not delayed because of a failure to have their teeth fixed. Finally, some imaginative thinking about retirement pay and qualification is in order.

Any solution must also include support for employers, especially small businesses. These could include tax breaks (e.g., a tax credit to partially defray the cost of health and dental insurance for reserve component personnel) and some form of activation insurance. Businesses that support reserve component Soldiers, especially during activations, should earn the good will of the community. During World War II, families with servicemembers hung blue banners in their windows. Reviving that tradition would recognize companies for helping reserve component Soldiers.

The Army Reserve is facing fundamental challenges in retention with or without this plan. On top of mobilizations and general morale issues, employers are increasingly put off by the chaos and harm to their well-being, and Soldiers are facing discrimination in hiring and retention in many areas. In this environment, using bonuses to recruit from the active duty roles or among civilians is one thing, but retaining quality people to maintain a core of mid- and senior-grade NCOs and officers will be an increasingly difficult task. Keeping a robust reserve component system in the next 10 to 15 years will require providing individual Soldiers something more worthwhile than a token incremental benefit like 3 to 5 percent pay raises. It will require other enticements such as bridging CHAMPUS medical benefits for all Army Reserve Soldiers assigned to a Reserve unit, initiating retirement pay benefits after 20 or 25 years of service instead of at 60 years of age, and implementing stair-step incentives that encourage people to stay for 20 years and beyond. Expensive, yes; but when compared to adding comparable active duty capacity plus the cost of turnover caused by not retaining trained Soldiers, such solutions may be more cost effective.

Summary

Since America's colonial times, the citizen Soldier has been a symbol of our nation and the touchstone of our military. The Minuteman grabbing his musket and running to join his comrades at Lexington and Concord is one of the enduring images of the American Revolution.

Today's Minutemen—the Soldiers of the Army Reserve and the Army National Guard—are closer to the original concept than has existed for some time. They bring a unique blend of outstanding dedication, technical experience, military training and valuable skills from their civilian careers at a cost that is a bargain for the country. Their deep roots in their communities help ensure the full support of American people for military actions.

The past two years have been anything but business-as-usual for reserve component Soldiers. Many have been called to extended active duty with little advance notice and on a "come-as-you-are" basis. These changes come on top of a rapid evolution in which our force in reserve has become something much closer to a second active force.

Although these topics are less exciting than "Star Wars" weapon systems, they are nonetheless critical to the ability of the Army Reserve to continue its support of the nation's defense. Good starts have been suggested on many fronts: regional consolidated administrative centers, the TTHS holding companies and more predictable activation schedules. However, these initiatives will be little more than incremental changes unless the fundamental problems of time and distance are solved.

We have already redefined what it means to be a citizen Soldier, and in doing so we have wagered the organization's heritage and future. Now we need to focus on the individual Army Reserve Soldier. Army transformation must include a reevaluation of the entire Army Reserve. Challenges keep this relationship from working optimally, but reserve component Soldiers have no need to apologize for the legitimate limits on their participation. The Army Reserve is a good value for the money spent. The contributions and value of reserve component Soldiers to the Army are well established. Despite the cost to family and career, citizen Soldiers have enthusiastically answered the call to serve time after time. However, it is critical that we recognize the new realities and look for ways to better integrate today's citizen Soldiers into the Army.

General Shinseki said we must "acknowledge our components and their unique strengths."⁵ Recognizing the unique value of the citizen Soldier, we must aggressively pursue innovative ways to enhance their ability to contribute. The Army Reserve cannot and should not become another de facto active force. With creative thinking, even in these trying times, we will discover new ways to ensure that today's citizen Soldier will continue as a key partner in the nation's defense.

Endnotes

- ¹ Vince Crawley, “GAO reports says Reserve well running dry,” *Navy Times*, October 4, 2004.
- ² Sergeant First Class Bill Putnam, “Iraq Troop Update,” *Soldiers*, February 4, 2004.
- ³ U.S. Army Reserve web page [<http://www4.army.mil/USAR/mission/history.php>].
- ⁴ Vernon Loeb, “General warns of looming crisis in army reserve,” *Washington Post*, January 22, 2004.
- ⁵ General Eric K. Shinseki, 34th Chief of Staff of the Army, in remarks delivered at Army Chief of Staff Arrival Ceremony, June 22, 1999.

The final assignment of Colonel Gary C. Howard, U.S. Army Reserve Retired (Transportation Corps) in the Army Reserve was as commander of the 1397th Transportation Terminal Brigade at Mare Island, California. In his civilian career, he is a principal scientific editor for an independent biomedical research institute affiliated with the University of California, San Francisco.