



Transforming the U.S. Army Reserve to an Operational Force

We made some decisions in the 1990s that did not hold up well. Smart, hard-working and patriotic people did their best to predict the future, and planned accordingly, but the future surprised us nonetheless. We drew down the active duty Army from 781,000 to 482,000 troops. We slashed our defense modernization budgets. The reserve component became a full 55 percent of our total Army. Yet we failed to develop policies or make the investments in the reserve component commensurate with its new and expanded role. We said we were One Army, but we did not put adequate resources behind our rhetoric. [Today] the reserve components are no longer a strategic reserve. They are a part of the operational force. We are one Army. We must organize, train and equip the Guard and Reserve so that we can train and fight as one Army.

The Honorable Pete Geren, then-Acting Secretary of the Army,
AUSA Institute of Land Warfare Breakfast, 10 May 2007

Introduction

During the 20th century, the U.S. Army Reserve functioned as a strategic reserve force of warrior citizens who trained one weekend a month and two weeks every summer. To meet the challenges of the 21st century, the Army Reserve is undergoing profound change—transforming from a strategic reserve to an operational force that is an integral part of American landpower. This transformation is occurring at an unprecedented pace while more than 25,000 Soldiers are forward deployed (“boots on the ground”) in Iraq, Afghanistan and 18 other nations in support of the Global War on Terror (GWOT).

The increased demand for combat support and combat service support units, especially within the past six months, represents a continuous state of mobilization and affects how the Army Reserve recruits, retains and maintains its authorized 206,000 warrior citizens. Army Reserve Soldiers now mobilize as cohesive units for one year, down from 18 months. This policy is designed to support the total force and combatant commanders with recurrent, predictable access to Army Reserve units that have trained together. The short-term impact is that some Army Reserve Soldiers who may have previously deployed on an individual basis with other units will now deploy again earlier than expected. For the long term, recruiting future leaders, retaining battle-tested veterans and transforming



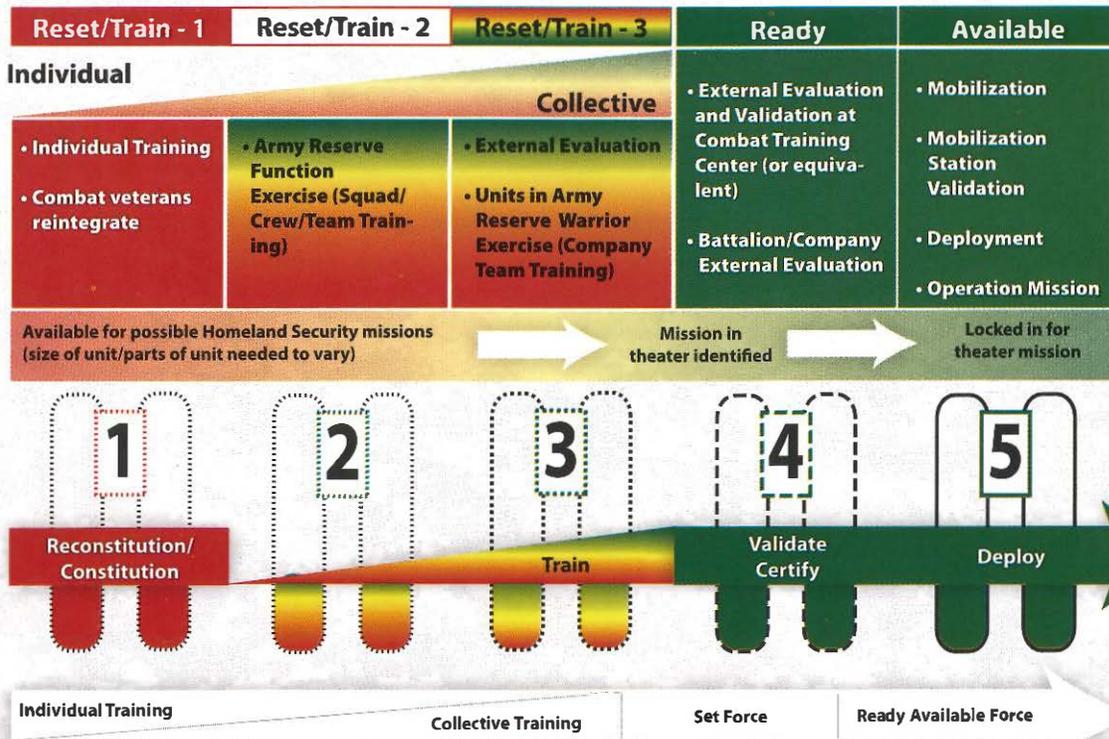
the force are key imperatives for the Army Reserve to grow and sustain its operational force, one that is fully manned, trained and equipped to support current and future force requirements.

Transforming U.S. Army Reserve Training and Readiness

The Army Reserve’s wide-ranging transformation is focused on providing needed capabilities to combatant commanders on a continuous basis. To accomplish this, the Army Reserve has implemented a system to establish a training, mobilization and deployment model of predictability for commanders and Soldiers. Based on a five-year cycle, this Army-wide readiness and predictability model is called Army Force Generation, or ARFORGEN.* It is

* The ARFORGEN model for the active component is based on a three-year cycle.

Army Reserve Support to Army Force Generation



the process that ensures trained and ready units are available to meet the requirements of the combatant commanders. ARFORGEN is tied to the Army Reserve Training Strategy, which reinforces the fundamental concepts of the train-alert-deploy model for Army Reserve Soldiers. That strategy includes progressive training and readiness cycles, priorities for resources, managed readiness levels and predictable training as dictated by the ARFORGEN model. As units advance through a series of cumulative and progressively complex training events, each training phase improves the level of unit readiness. When the five-year ARFORGEN cycle is fully implemented, units in years one to three (reset/train) will reconstitute and train on basic mission-essential task-list tasks. While some Soldiers complete professional education and individual training, units complete collective training in squad-to-company-level training in local areas and functional exercises. Units complete the reset/train phase of ARFORGEN with a Warrior Exercise—a multifunctional, multi-echelon event that improves unit proficiency. In the fourth year (ready), immediately prior to mobilization, training focuses on collective warfighting skills and theater-

specific mission tasks. Upon successful completion of a combat training center or a comparable event, and validation of their combat skills, the unit will move into year five (available).

Under the ARFORGEN model, a Soldier will train for a specific number of days in each year of the five-year cycle, will be available for mobilization once every five years, and will deploy if needed. This kind of predictability in the training and mobilization cycle gives Soldiers the ability to plan important aspects of their lives, including their education, career and personal lives.

The ARFORGEN model provides additional mobilization/training time for units and the leadership as they progress through the five-year cycle. Under this phased mobilization, selected Soldiers and leaders mobilize in intervals (before their unit's mobilization) to perform Soldier leader training, Soldier skill training and unit collective training. This phased mobilization ensures all units are fully trained and mission-ready as whole cohesive units before deployment.

As ARFORGEN becomes fully implemented, the rotational depth of ready units increases while the predictability and stability spread the operational demand for Army Reserve forces over a manageable time period.

Transforming U.S. Army Reserve Force Structure

Although the Army Reserve makes up only 20 percent of the Army's organized units, it provides nearly half of the Army's combat support and a quarter of the Army's mobilization base expansion capability. Currently, resources for the Army Reserve account for approximately 5.3 percent of the Army's budget. This results in the Army Reserve providing a cost-effective solution to the Army's need for specialized capabilities. To that end, 2007 has been a key year for Army Reserve transformation as it continues to comply with the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) mandates.

To improve force structure to meet current challenges and better prepare for the demands of future operations, the Army Reserve is deactivating its legacy structure of Regional Readiness Commands (RRCs) and Regional Readiness Groups (RRGs) and activating Operational and Functional (O&F) Commands. This transformation ensures the right equipment and resources are positioned in strategic locations for Army Reserve Soldiers. No force structure spaces/billets will be lost as the Army Reserve transforms the operational capabilities of these new commands.

As of 15 September 2007, the 65th Regional Readiness Command in Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico, has been inactivated. Three RRCs are programmed to inactivate by 15 September 2008, another five RRCs are programmed to inactivate by 1 July 2009, and the final two RRCs to be inactivated are programmed for 15 December 2009, during Fiscal Year 2010. As the Army Reserve transforms to this new O&F design, three Regional Readiness Groups (the 81st at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, the 90th at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and the 88th at Fort Benjamin Harris, Indiana) have been inactivated.

Four Regional Readiness Sustainment Commands (RRSCs)—the 63d at Moffett Field, California, the 81st at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, the 88th at Fort



McCoy, Wisconsin, and the 99th at Fort Dix, New Jersey—are in line to activate in FY 2008.

Five Expeditionary Sustainment Commands (ESCs) are programmed to be converted to O&F commands and activated by the end of FY 2008. The 143d at Orlando, Florida, and the 316th at Coraopolis, Pennsylvania, have already been converted to O&F commands. Still on line for future conversion are the 103d at Des Moines, Iowa, the 310th at Indianapolis, Indiana, and the 311th at Los Angeles, California. The 316th ESC not only activated in the past year but is also currently deployed in Iraq as the primary logistical support command in theater.

Transforming U.S. Army Reserve Recruiting and Retention

Training Soldiers is only a part of the Army Reserve's responsibility to the total force. Meeting future obligations will require the Army Reserve to do much more than focus on managing current resources and training requirements. Growing a stronger force of warrior citizens draws on the strength, support and success of the diverse backgrounds of these Soldiers and the communities where they live.

To build that total force, it is imperative that Army Reserve Soldiers are offered incentives and benefits to retain these leaders in the force. Incentives dramatically affect the way Army Reserve Soldiers are recruited and retained. In June 2007, the Army Reserve launched the Army Reserve Recruiting Assistance Program to increase the number of Soldiers recruited into the Army Reserve. The program essentially allows all Army Reserve Soldiers to become recruiting assistants who work at the grassroots level to recruit



in the communities where they live and work. Each successful recruiting effort can earn Soldiers a financial reward of up to \$2,000. This newly launched program is exceeding goals and is an indication of the success to be expected as the Army Reserve develops community-based programs.

When the Army Reserve trains Soldiers, like the active component, it retains families. However, unlike most active component families, the Army Reserve family often does not reside on or near a military installation. To help families with concerns about potential problems that may arise when a Soldier mobilizes and deploys, the Army Reserve is exploring the concept of a virtual installation, an Internet site that will serve as a sole Army Reserve solutions center for families. Instead of searching dozens of Internet sites for assistance, this virtual installation will link families to the appropriate government agencies, support groups and social and military organizations to find the help they need. The Internet assistance could also be combined with Soldier support centers around the country, staffed with volunteers and possibly sharing space with organizations such as the American Legion or Veterans of Foreign Wars. The goal is to take better care of Army Reserve families to provide them the same support they would receive if they physically resided at a military installation.

Incentives also play a role in how the Army Reserve retains its Soldiers. These include retirement benefits, cash incentives for reenlistment, tuition assistance, student loan reimbursement and reimbursement for travel and lodging to attend training events that exceed the current allowable home-to-training mileage ratios.

Consistent health care remains another significant incentive. The Army Reserve feels health care portability is an issue that directly affects the Soldier's work in theater. Its senior leadership has initiated a dialogue with business leaders and policy influencers to explore health care portability for warrior citizens. When an Army Reserve Soldier mobilizes, his or her health care benefits and civilian medical providers may change. Lack of health care continuity for the warrior citizen family can affect the Soldier's performance in the field. If the Soldier's family is stable, then the Soldier's work in theater is usually more consistent and less stressful. Instead

of constantly moving Soldiers and their families to and from civilian and TRICARE medical providers, the Army Reserve has raised the prospect of offering a balanced, formulaic response to health care benefits wherein neither the civilian employer nor the Army Reserve would be responsible for 100 percent of health care benefits. This is advantageous to both the military and the civilian employers as many Army Reserve Soldiers are employees who return to the civilian workforce with enhanced leadership skills and greater mental, physical and emotional strength.



Future Challenges

The 21st century presents tremendous challenges for this nation's reserve forces. The Army Reserve remains poised to provide America with skill-rich Soldiers prepared to act when the nation calls. It is vital to assure those Soldiers who have committed to serve their nation, that the nation is committed to them. Lieutenant General Jack Stultz, Chief, Army Reserve, has stated, "If we are going to have an operational force, we cannot whipsaw our Soldiers, their families and employers. Our biggest challenge is to continue our operational and functional transformation while our Soldiers serve as both warriors and civilian employees as they defend this great nation."

To ensure the Army Reserve remains a vital operational force, Congress and the Department of Defense must fully fund all aspects of the Army Reserve transformation now and in the future. A failure to do so directly impacts military readiness and the quality of life for Army Reserve Soldiers and their families.