



# The Reserve Component

## Trained and Ready? Lessons of History

Major General Mark MacCarley, U.S. Army Reserve

**I** RECENTLY ATTENDED a change of command for an Army Reserve sustainment headquarters, with one tour as a flagged command in Southwest Asia. The outgoing commander expressed overwhelming satisfaction with his unit's war record and proudly stated he was leaving behind a great unit "trained and ready" for any mission at any time. His successor confirmed this understandable expression of confidence and promised to increase readiness and train to proficiency in accordance with the Army's Force Generation Model and progressive resourcing process (ARFORGEN). This senior logistics command entered the ARFORGEN cycle upon redeployment three years ago. There has been a 70 percent turnover of personnel of all ranks and a 95 percent turnover of key leaders. At the end of the round of speeches, the massed formation shouted out, "Trained and Ready!"

The strategic question for the Army in the second decade of this century, as it faces the challenge of continuing and emerging threats across the full spectrum of engagements under increasingly constrained resources, is whether that "shout-out," "Trained and Ready," is true, partially true, or just plain bravado. To support the demands of a decade-long war, the U.S. Armed Forces, and the Army in particular, have turned to the Reserve Component (RC)—the National Guard and Army Reserve—for direct personnel augmentation to Active Component (AC) units and for the needed capabilities RC units offer from combat to combat service support and from brigade combat teams to dog handlers. With over one million RC soldiers and their units deployed during this period of "persistent conflict," many within and outside the defense establishment have optimistically concluded that the National Guard and Army Reserve are truly a "trained and ready operational reserve force," as opposed to a "strategic reserve force" employed only in periods of dire national emergency and after lengthy post-mobilization training. The expectation is that by reason of vigorously executed pre-mobilization training, these "operational" reserve units no longer require long periods of post-mobilization training, either to prepare for programmed deployments to a theater of war (as a deployment expeditionary force) or for commitment to contingency missions at home and abroad (as a contingency expeditionary force).

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PHOTO: U.S. Army SGT David Rider, right, leads his squad through the Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills event, during the 2010 Department of the Army Best Warrior Competition, on Fort Lee, VA, 21 October 2010. Rider, from Bravo Company, 256th Combat Support Hospital, Ohio U.S. Army Reserve, was selected U.S. Army Reserve NCO of the Year. (U.S. Army, Timothy L. Hale)



42nd Infantry Division soldiers in the presence of gas, Essay, France, 20 September 1918.

The operational reserve concept is Department of Defense (DOD) policy in DOD Directive 1200.17, “Managing the Reserve Components as an Operational Force.”<sup>1</sup> As expressed in the widely circulated “Independent Panel Review of Reserve Component Employment in an Era of Persistent Conflict,” dated 2 November 2010, the objective is an RC force that is manned, trained, and equipped for recurrent mobilization and for employment as cohesive units. This is in accordance with the ARFORGEN model, the all-volunteer force, and the citizen-soldier ethos.<sup>2</sup>

This is not the first time nor will it be the last in which the United States seeks to maximize the value of its investment in its Reserve Components. What observations can we distill from the last 100-year history of the mobilization and deployment of Guard and Reserve soldiers for our nation’s wars and emergencies as we move ahead to an Operation Enduring Freedom post-conflict environment that remains even more dangerous with the emergence of near-peer military competitors? Must we relearn the lessons of conflicts past? How can we leverage

the experience and best practices of a century of Reserve Component training and engagement?

## World War I

On the eve of World War I, Congress passed the National Defense Act of 1916, which provided for federal recognition of the National Guard, consisting of 48 state Guard units—some of which had illustrious histories as state militias reaching back to before the American Revolution. With the entry of the United States into its first truly global conflict, many Guard units and soldiers were amalgamated into new division echelons, such as the 42nd Infantry Division—the heralded Rainbow Division—consisting of Guard soldiers from 26 states.

Most National Guard combat units spent at least six months and up to a year at mobilization training camps throughout the United States before deploying to Europe. Some of the post-mobilization time was due to the logistical challenge of equipping and then moving so many American soldiers across the Atlantic and, thereafter, integrating them into the battle plans of the British and French

allied formations. Due to a perception that most Guard senior officers lacked professional military competence and had obtained their appointments through political influence, AC officers replaced most Guard commanders and senior staff at brigade and division level while at the mobilization camps. The veteran British and French commanders first considered these citizen soldiers “green, untrained, and untested frontiersmen.” This opinion quickly materialized into admiration of the fighting abilities of these guardsmen. More National Guard soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor than were soldiers in any other military component in the American Expeditionary Force. The records of the German High Command, released after the war, listed eight American divisions as excellent or superior. Six of these divisions were National Guard divisions.

Concurrently, the newly formed Army Reserve sent physicians and other technical specialists to France after barely two weeks of post-mobilization training, due to the pressing need for medical expertise and the assumption that these reservists would not be serving at the front line.

## World War II

The same extended mobilization training—sometimes up to one year—for the Guard and Reserve was reemployed in World War II, as citizen soldiers, regardless of their previous military experience, relearned individual, squad, platoon, and company-level skills at lengthy mobilization train-ups before deployment to Europe or the Pacific. World War II offered the benefit of time to train these formations, although the first major U.S. ground fighting forces to see combat in both the Pacific Theater (164th Regiment and the 32nd Division) and the Atlantic Theater (34th Division from Iowa, Minnesota, and South Dakota) were National Guard divisions. Just as in World War I, with some notable exceptions, Regular Army officers replaced most of the Guard’s division-level leadership.<sup>3</sup>

## Post-World War II—Korean War

The National Defense Act of 1947 acknowledged the Reserve Components as an integral part of the armed services and directed that the services engage immediately in the post-war revitalization of their reserve programs as America entered into a new era

of hostilities—the Cold War. Secretary of Defense James Forrestal directed Assistant Secretary of the Army Gordon Gray to convene a committee to study the structure and capabilities of the Army Reserve and National Guard and determine what roles, if any, these components would play in the emerging Cold War. The Gray Board “criticized the reserve forces for being long on experience (composed largely of World War II veterans), but short on readiness.” Secretary Gray recommended Congress integrate the National Guard into the Army Reserve. This proposal was not well received and, consequentially, the Army shelved the entire study.<sup>4</sup>

Exactly three years later, Guard and Reserve soldiers returned to combat in Korea, suffering heavy losses in the early months of the war, attributable (among other things) to equipment shortages and training deficiencies. It is only fair to point out that active Army units deployed to Korea in the summer of 1950 demonstrated comparable initial combat ineffectiveness. The first Army National Guard units mobilized in August 1950. Eventually, 138,600 men from 1,698 Army National Guard units, including eight infantry divisions and three regimental combat teams, mobilized for active duty, based upon a partial mobilization order issued by the president. Of the



Conferring at Chipyeong-ni, Korea, are L-R: LTG Matthew Ridgway, commander, U.S. Eighth Army; MG Charles Palmer, commander, 1st Cavalry Division; COL John Daskalopoulos, commander, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. (DOD)

eight mobilized infantry divisions, four remained in the United States, two went to Europe, and two others—the 40th and 45th—were sent to Korea. The two divisions arrived in Japan for further training in April 1951. Their future deployment to Korea soon became a topic of national discussion and provoked a storm of protest from politicians and the National Guard Association after the supreme commander in Korea, General Matthew Ridgway, declared that these Guard units were ill-prepared for combat due to the lack of adequate post-training time and paucity of equipment. He preferred to use their personnel as individual replacements. The Army chief of staff acknowledged the ground commander’s observation but persuaded Ridgway to use the divisions anyway. The “swap in place” of mission and equipment between the Guard’s 45th Division with the 1st Cavalry Division and between the Guard’s 40th Division with the 24th Infantry Division proceeded without a hitch in November 1951. Both divisions went on to prove themselves in combat.<sup>5</sup>

## The Cold War Period

The Cold War drove the development of a national military strategy that postulated that any major armed conflict between the two “super powers,” the United States and the Soviet Union, would commence with a massive nuclear exchange, destroying major population centers and industrial infrastructure, followed by a ground war in Europe characterized by its speed and lethality, fought with forward-deployed active duty American and NATO forces. Guard and Army Reserve units would deploy to Europe as reinforcing and replacement forces only after a suitable and lengthy period of post-mobilization training, thus the emergence of the term, “strategic reserve,” as applied to the Reserve Components. Other than domestic civil disturbances during the decade of the 1960s, there was neither an actual nor an even contemplated need for immediately deployable National Guard and Army Reserve formations.<sup>6</sup>

## Vietnam War

While the Vietnam War was not an apocalyptic struggle between the world’s “super powers,” almost nine million Americans fought in Southeast Asia from 1965 through 1972. However, the RC did not play a significant role in this war. In 1964,



**First contingent of 34th Infantry Division personnel arriving in Belfast, Northern Ireland, on 26 January 1942, marching from the docks to the train station. (DOD)**

after President Lyndon B. Johnson sought the Tonkin Gulf Resolution from Congress to make the Vietnam conflict an American war, he chose to fight the war using only active forces led by career soldiers, fleshed out by hundreds of thousands of draftees, conscripted from the annually refreshed pool of eligible young men. With a very few exceptions, he refused to mobilize the Reserves. Due to this policy decision, the reserve forces became “safe havens” for men seeking to satisfy their military obligation without deploying to Southeast Asia. This policy did nothing to burnish the professional military reputation of these components.

Soon after the end of hostilities in Vietnam, General Creighton Abrams, Army chief of staff and former commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam, acknowledged the error of that political decision not to engage the Reserve Components. He declared, “Our [original] arrangement was that we would have one Army with certain things in the Active Force, others in the National Guard, and yet others in the Army Reserve. And if the unfortunate circumstance should occur [we would]

use the Active, the National Guard, and that's the only way [we would] do it. So all the maintenance, all of the supply, a lot of the medical—all of those things we've got to have, they're in the Reserve. But somehow, it didn't quite work out that way. Instead, we used the Army in Vietnam minus the National Guard and the Army Reserve. . . . The Army will never again go to war without the Reserve Component."<sup>7</sup>

At the same time, the United States, exhausted by the conflict, looked forward to a financial "peace dividend" resulting from a significant downsizing of the Army and the abolition of the draft. These two actions collectively insured that Reserve and Guard soldiers would participate in the nation's future conflicts, in some manner, as soon as they were ready. The Reserve Components became, at least conceptually, an "operational" asset of the "Total Army." Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird committed himself to implementing this "Total Army" or "Total Force" policy as a pillar of national military strategy. He commented, "When the Total Force concept was announced in August 1970, our plan was to integrate Guard and Reserve forces as full partners in defense. In so doing, we were able to end the draft and establish the all-volunteer force. Better training and fully equipping our nation's militia would be essential to ensure that we had a cost-effective force."<sup>8</sup>

## Cold War Implications

Thus began almost two decades of continued experiments and periodic restructuring of the Guard and Reserve to meet these "operational" expectations. The most important of these expectations was that certain critical Reserve units would be able to deploy within 30 days of mobilization. To achieve this level of "operational readiness," a program of "affiliation" between the Army's active and Reserve combat arms units began in 1974. By 1980, most Army Guard divisions and brigades were spending their annual training with active Army partner units. The "roundout/roundup" program, which began in 1976, assigned Army Guard combat units to augment active Army units in case of mobilization. In order to train and, if necessary, mobilize and execute their assigned military mission when deployed, the Army Guard began to receive more modern weapons and equipment.<sup>9</sup>

The Army continued to transfer combat power into the National Guard and reassigned and reflagged support units into both the National Guard and the Army Reserve. Addressing Congress in 1986, Army Chief of Staff General John A. Wickham testified that because of these force structure decisions, "The Reserves would have to be used for any multi-division commitment [to a national contingency operation]."<sup>10</sup>

It is important to emphasize that, even in the 1980s, the Army Guard and Army Reserve sought to be "operational ready." Their leadership and congressional supporters demanded greater integration of the Guard and the Army Reserve into the National Military Strategy and incorporation of RC units into all the Joint Security Capabilities Plans drafted in anticipation of possible "contingency" military conflicts. In line with the build-up of the active duty force under President Ronald Reagan, both the Guard and the Reserve saw significant increases in personnel. From a manning figure of 346,974 personnel in 1979, the Army Guard strength reached 456,969 soldiers by 1989, due in no small part to recruiting bonuses and the availability of the Montgomery G.I. Bill to reservists. The expectation, built into the National Military Strategy, was that Army Reserve and National Guard units, upon mobilization for a national or overseas contingency, would seamlessly align with partnered AC units under a program known as CAPSTONE.

Notwithstanding these vaunted efforts, most reservists continued to train with "cascaded" hand-me-down equipment from the AC with their own mission essential equipment on hand rarely exceeding 70 percent of the unit's authorization. Shortages of resources resulted from the effort to modernize the active Army, first, to fight and win the Cold War. The ability of the RC to efficiently mobilize in support of contingency operations remained questionable.<sup>11</sup> The nation's senior military Reserve officers complained to Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger that despite recent improvements their forces were far from ready for wartime duty. In a March 1987 article in the *New York Times*, these officers reported that there were critical shortages amounting to nearly \$17 billion in weapons and combat equipment and inadequate funding of reservist individual and collective skills training.<sup>12</sup>

## Desert Shield/Desert Storm

The call-up of reservists for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm from August 1990 to 1991 held the 17-year old training strategy of the Reserve Components up to intense congressional scrutiny. President George H.W. Bush exercised his statutory authority to identify for mobilization almost one million reservists, of whom 228,500 Guard members and reservists mobilized and approximately 97,484 served on active duty in the Persian Gulf in combat, combat support, and combat service support units. Army leaders pointed to the commendable service of two Reserve field artillery brigades, the 142nd from Arkansas and the 196th from Tennessee, as validating the “Total Army Policy” of the previous decade.

However, for the most part, RC units arrived at the active Army mobilization (MOB) stations at less than represented levels of “operational readiness,” despite all the resources the Army had expended for premobilization training.<sup>13</sup> Units reported to their respective MOB stations with less than their required personnel strength. Many soldiers who did

report were either too old, out of shape, or had not completed their individual military occupational specialty (MOS) training. Substantial numbers suffered from medical and dental problems that could not be timely rectified at the MOB stations, making these soldiers nondeployable. For most units, time spent at the MOB stations consisted of records reviews, medical check-ups, equipment outfitting, and one or two opportunities to fire individual and crew-served weapons. Sixty-seven percent of all Army Guard and Reserve units deployed within 45 days of mobilizing; 28 percent deployed within 20 days.

Generally, deployed RC combat support and combat service support units performed acceptably in theater after acclimation and substantial additional training in Saudi Arabia. However, RC combat units, including the “roundout/roundup” brigades, did not fare so well. These brigades had received the largess of training and logistics support over the last decade under the “Total Army Policy.” A case in point was the 48th Infantry Brigade of the Georgia National Guard, which reported to



An M-1A1 Abrams main battle tank lays a smoke screen during Operation Desert Storm.

Fort Irwin upon mobilization. After six months of post-mobilization training, the active Army refused to deploy the brigade to Desert Storm, declaring the unit incapable of combat operations. Declared Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, “I feel strongly we would have run the risk of getting a lot of people killed unnecessarily if we sent these units (to the Gulf) before they were ready.”<sup>14</sup> Guard senior officers and congressional supporters countered, “The Army never intended to deploy a guard combat team because to do so would validate the cost savings associated with moving more combat structure to the National Guard.”

### After Desert Storm—the 1990s

Beginning in 1992, in response to the perceived operational deficiencies of RC units mobilized and deployed in support of Operation Desert Storm, Army leaders implemented a new training strategy, called “Bold Shift,” to increase and thereafter sustain the operational readiness of a select number of high-priority RC units that it expected to use first in any future crisis. Bold Shift operated in tandem with the new Army policy of “tiered” readiness, which provided that, within the constrained resource environment of the 1990s, only certain units designated for early deployment would receive the bulk of the Bold Shift training resources.

To ensure these Guard and Army Reserve formations were ready to deploy on short notice without significant post-mobilization training, Bold Shift dictated that such units train on a critical set of collective tasks in training events, called “lanes,” to meet the Army standard through repetition—the “crawl-walk-run” path to training success. All collective training was followed by after action reviews. The strategy called for closer ties between active Army units and “like-type” RC units within the same geographical area. The supporting AC brigade commander would be responsible for approving the training plans of the supported RC unit and reviewing its readiness reports.<sup>15</sup> Congress obliged this strategy by authorizing and funding the assignment of AC trainers to these RC formations in 1993 and increasing the number of trainers in the 1994, 1995, and 1996 National Defense Authorization Act.<sup>16</sup> Bold Shift encouraged the development of new training concepts and

tools, to include the use of computer “war game” simulations, to bring Army Guard and Reserve units to comparable levels of readiness with their AC counterparts.

Guard, Reserve, and active Army commanders regarded Bold Shift as effective in improving the overall readiness of the tiered RC units selected for participation. They believed the program should be expanded to other, lower-tiered Reserve units, many of which had been “gutted” with their full-time personnel and much of their equipment redirected to higher priority units.<sup>17</sup>

Several studies attempted to objectively assess the value of the Bold Shift program to the overall readiness of Reserve units selected for participation. A 1994 Rand Arroyo study, “Training Readiness in the Army Reserve Components,” concluded, “While successful in concept and features, the [Bold Shift] program has not been able to bring most pilot units to their premobilization training and readiness goals. . . . These results are in keeping with our general impression that company-level proficiency is attainable for support units [before mobilization], but not combat units, although in practice most of the combat support and combat service support companies still have a distance to go.” According to the study, only 34 percent of units that received the enhanced training resources reported that they would not require substantial post-mobilization time to achieve operational readiness.<sup>18</sup> A 1995 Government Accountability Office report to Congress identified common readiness inhibitors across most Reserve formations:

- The inability to recruit and retain qualified personnel over time.
- Average annual attrition rates of 23 percent, “obliterating the significant investments of time and money in individual and collective training intended to benefit the particular unit.”
- The failure of unit personnel to master collective skills.<sup>19</sup>

On the positive side, the Bold Shift training strategy provided a mechanism for prioritizing and allocating limited resources, including equipment, full-time personnel, and training days to RC units, according to the immediacy of their need by combatant commanders. Active Component units and their leaders were obligated to work with RC counterparts to develop realistic training

plans and goals. Reserve Component commands sent their soldiers to MOS qualification schools and professional development courses as soon as possible. The dynamic after action review process became the norm for analyzing and improving AC and RC training.

## Bosnia-Kosovo

Contingency plans written for anticipated major conflicts, supported by Time Phased Force Deployment Lists identifying specific RC units for early deployment, were not relevant to the Bosnia-Kosovo peacekeeping engagements. Reserve Component units (often just slices of these units) were selected for mobilization and deployment based upon required capabilities rather than based on their tiered classification or their stated level of overall readiness. Post-mobilization training averaged 45 days. Total active service time could not exceed 270 days initially.

At the same time both the Guard and Army Reserve were undergoing major restructuring, with the Army Reserve allocated the preponderance of early deploying combat support and combat service support units. With a few exceptions, most combat capability migrated to the National Guard. Concerned with the ability of RC units, especially the guard combat brigades, to mobilize and deploy in support of contingency operations

such as Bosnia and Kosovo, the Army jettisoned its Bold Shift training strategy. As a consequence of the 1993 bottom-up review, Army leadership designated these units, formerly known as “roundout/roundup” brigades, as “enhanced separate brigades,” each with a self-sustaining force structure with the responsibility to “augment and reinforce” active units engaged in future combat or contingency operations. As part of early reinforcing force (ERF) packages, these enhanced brigades “will be able to deploy worldwide to reinforce active Army combat units, with less than 90 days of post-mobilization training, as part of a crisis response force.”<sup>20</sup> This new initiative was to provide early deploying capability and significantly reduce the training time for these brigades at the mobilization station.

## Training Support XXI

These mid-decade efforts ultimately culminated in a new strategy, “Training Support XXI,” initiated in 1996. The Army again reorganized its training forces in an effort to synchronize training of Guard and Army Reserve units, pre-mobilization, by eliminating redundant training capabilities among the three components. Congress further increased the number of AC advisors (Title XI trainers named after a provision in the National Defense Authorization Act of 1993) in support of this readiness initiative to 7,000.<sup>21</sup> Training Support XXI solidified the operational relationship of the Army Reserve training support divisions to the AC dedicated senior training headquarters, First and Fifth Armies. It directed that training resources be employed toward obtaining platoon-level proficiency on collective tasks for RC combat units and for reaching company-level proficiency on select mission-essential tasks for combat support and combat service support units.

## Post 9/11—Operations

The aftermath of 9/11 resulted in the call-up of hundreds of thousands of National Guard and Army Reserve soldiers over the course of a decade. The assumptions supporting earlier RC mobilization and deployment models and strategies were put to the extreme test. Initial comments about the Guard and Reserve mobilizations and subsequent performances in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom ranged from “phenomenal” to “unmet operational expectations.”<sup>22</sup> Military



Fourteen Minnesota National Guard soldiers, deployed to Kosovo with Task Force Bayonet, earn their Expert Infantryman Badges at Camp Bondsteel, 5 May 2008. (DOD)





DOD

**SFC Walter Douglas, a First Army trainer from 3-314th Field Artillery, First Army Division East, instructs soldiers from the 387th Human Resources Company how to properly take cover at the corner of a structure during post-mobilization training at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, NJ.**

historian Roger Thompson considered the difference in predeployment training between the “regulars” and the “reserves” in this conflict as the largest obstacle to early engagement of these forces.

It is a real problem for reservists to maintain the same standards of performance as the regulars because they have so little time to train . . . [premobilization]. History has shown that with the proper equipment and enough time, reserve forces can fight on the same level as the regulars . . . Unfortunately, the whole concept of total force is to save money, by creating the illusion that reserves can be deployed at the same time or even before the regular forces go. Most military analysts would agree that the “ready to go in a flash” Total Force Army is a dangerous illusion.<sup>23</sup>

Dennis McCarthy, the recently retired assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs, provided a more balanced opinion of the performance of the Reserve and Guard soldiers in the early years of this period of “persistent conflict.” He noted that among all the reserve forces across the services, the Army’s Reserve Component faced the largest and most difficult transition from a strategic to an operational force. For decades, the Army had relied on a deployment model that assumed that its reserve units would have sufficient time after mobilization to train and get the equipment they needed to deploy. According to Secretary McCarthy, that model has shifted, putting more demands on the Army Reserve and National Guard units to report to the mobilization site trained and ready to deploy.<sup>24</sup>

The shift from a “strategic reserve” to an “operational reserve” required the active duty force to work hand-in-hand with the Reserve on funding, equipping, training, and readiness requirements. McCarthy admitted that the relationship between the active Army and the Reserve Components got off to a shaky start at the beginning of the war, but over time, the outcome of this coordinated effort to man, train, and equip Guard and Reserve soldiers for deployment overseas has been phenomenal.

At the forefront of this effort to prepare, equip, and train RC soldiers were the Army’s mobilization and training forces resident in First Army and, until 2006, in Fifth Army. At the beginning of the conflict, Guard and Army Reserve soldiers called to active duty endured lengthy training periods at the mobilization training centers before deployment. Many reservists saw the equipment they would fight with for the first time at the site. Most training venues assumed that these reservists had forgotten most of their individual warrior and survival skills and lacked proficiency in the various collective tasks they were responsible to execute in theater. As a consequence, mobilization training centers’ programs of instruction resembled basic training curricula. No credit went to RC soldiers for training accomplished before mobilization. They felt like second-class warriors throughout their mobilization train-up.

Manned by veteran active and reserve soldier trainers, First Army, as the active Army command responsible for RC mobilization, training, and deployment, has overseen a significant reduction in the post-mobilization training time for most units.

This quantum improvement was attributable to several factors:

- Both the Guard and the Army Reserve stood up training centers where soon-to-deploy soldiers refreshed their warrior individual skills during extended periods of annual training. That pre-mobilization training is certified and not repeated at mobilization.

- Alerted RC units participate in collective training exercises before and during mobilization.

- Ceremonial events and other nonrelevant training distracters have been eliminated from the mobilization training calendar.

- Robust contingency budgets have permitted Reserve units identified for mobilization to send many of their soldiers to military occupational training schools and to additional collective training activities before mobilization. This money also allows Reserve units to put significant numbers of their soldiers on full-time active duty in the year leading up to mobilization.

- Alerted Reserve units now see new equipment early enough so that their soldiers have time to train with this equipment before they mobilize and deploy.

- After so many years of war, the Army has imposed a rotational/cyclic discipline into the engagement of Reserve units in the theaters of war. Reserve units are identified for mobilization and deployment sometimes up to two years in advance. The units can then formulate a training plan in conjunction with First Army that focuses on individual soldier readiness and the training of a specific set of collective tasks to perform in theater.

- Units benefit from significant prior coordination—both electronically and personally—with the units they will replace in Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>25</sup>

After multiple rotations through the mobilization training centers and in and out of the combat theaters, RC units now boldly assert that they are “Trained and Ready.”

## Observations from History

Maintaining this vaunted “operational readiness” of RC units for future conflicts and contingencies requires cataloging what processes have worked over time, what processes have contributed nothing to “operational readiness,” and what the costs have been and will be to maintain the Reserve

Components’ ability to respond to the nation’s call without long training tenures at mobilization camps and stations. What do we gain from reading mobilization history? Six basic inputs bring soldiers and their units up to a level of operational readiness in which RC elements can do what they are supposed to do when needed to accomplish doctrinal or assigned missions. Those building blocks of readiness are—

- Authorized personnel on hand.

- Individual skill proficiency.

- Equipment on hand and working.

- The collective ability of the unit’s personnel to perform the missions assigned to the unit by doctrine or the necessities of combat.

- Adequate training facilities.

- Quality unit leadership.

Post-mobilization training can remedy almost all shortfalls in pre-mobilization training of Guard and Reserve units and personnel. Assuming there are sufficient resources (and this is not assured) within the active Army to handle the initial phase of a contingency operation for one to several months before reserve formations become available, almost all training and readiness issues can be resolved at the mobilization training centers. This is exactly how the nation’s Reserve Component trained to deploy after the commencement of formal hostilities with Germany in 1917 and after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The Guard and Army Reserve can simply regress to the role of a “strategic reserve,” ready to backfill and replace active Army units and personnel after several months of post-mobilization “basic training.”

Assuming that the Reserve or Guard unit mission requires the application of civilian-acquired skills, then the more competent in technical skills acquired from such civilian employment the individual soldier is, the less time that reservist must spend at the mobilization site. To wit, if the Army will employ a doctor, meteorologist, resource management specialist, intelligence analyst, civil affairs soldier, lawyer, truck driver, or cook to accomplish tasks similar to those performed in his civilian employment, these reserve soldiers only need refresher training on basic combat survival skills and an orientation to theater-specific cultural and language requirements before deploying. Even today, we are deploying doctors, dog handlers, and

military intelligence soldiers to the fight with only a week or so of post-mobilization training. This replicates the mobilization model for Army Reserve doctors in World War I.

The counterpoint to this observation is that the greater the requirement for personnel and the units in which they serve to execute complex combined arms tasks at increasingly higher levels of intensity, then the greater the requirement for more collective training time to rehearse and confirm their ability to do what they are supposed to do in a combat environment. Combined arms units at battalion and above require substantial time to train at well-resourced mobilization training venues or at the three combat training centers. Empirical evidence accumulated during the implementation of the Bold Shift training strategy and from the last 10 years of mobilization experience with combat battalions, brigades, and division staffs suggests that no full-spectrum combat units have ever achieved the required collective training readiness before mobilization.

The observations of a Government Accountability Office report, dated 5 May 1992, remain true today:

It simply may be unrealistic to assign early deployment missions to Reserve combat brigades when the required proficiency of such large maneuver forces cannot be achieved in just 39 days of training a year. The most basic systemic problem is the limited peacetime training that reservists receive compared to their active duty counterparts—39 days spread out over 11 weekends and 2 weeks of annual training. However, even fewer than this number of days is actually available for training because of the administrative demands placed on the units according to an Army study.<sup>26</sup>

Operational readiness does not depend on the number of paid training days afforded to Guard and Army Reserve soldiers and their units over a training year. The amount of time necessary to bring different units—combat, combat support, combat service support—to satisfactory levels of operational readiness should be the consequence of objective assessments made by impartial evaluators at combat-like training events. Their findings should be the basis for calculating post-mobilization training. On the other hand, providing RC units additional funding

to train increases the likelihood that more soldiers within the unit will benefit from the training and remember the lessons taught due to sheer repetition and muscle memory.

We must assess all culminating training exercises for guard and reserve units, especially those at annual training events, and maintain scorecards to establish a baseline for improvement. External assessment compels RC leaders to focus on the tasks necessary to meet the required standard of performance. With the expectation of a tough external review, the unit commander, officers, and senior enlisted leaders must synchronize and judiciously employ the scarce resources of time, personnel, training venues, and equipment to prepare for the annual training event rather than face humiliating failure. If there is no assessment, there is no real pressure to succeed. Rather, the unevaluated training event becomes an experience rather than a challenge.

As demonstrated by the investment of AC training personnel and resources into Guard and Reserve units under Bold Shift and Training Support XXI, there is significant benefit to Reserve units in partnering with “like-kind” AC units to achieve training proficiency. The resurrection of validation and assessment programs with active duty support, such as the Army Training and Evaluation Program and the Command Logistics Review Team evaluation of equipment availability and operability, can contribute to increased operational readiness.

## Summary

As Lieutenant General Jack Stultz, commander of the United States Army Reserve, has said, “We can’t go back to being a strategic reserve.” Can RC units and their soldiers achieve and maintain the required level of operational readiness needed to respond rapidly, without long periods of post-mobilization training, to unforeseen “force on force” contingencies, homeland security and humanitarian assistance missions, and theater security cooperation exercises? This is the same question asked of the Reserve Components in 1917, 1941, 1950, 1965, 1990, and throughout this period of persistent conflict. They answered the question in different ways at each critical period in our country’s military history over the last 100 years. They must do so today as well, as the Army faces an uncertain future. **MR**

## NOTES

1. Department of Defense (DOD), "Managing the Reserve Components as an Operational Force," Directive 1200.17, 2008.
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