



(Photo by Spc. Michael Crawford, 354th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Sgt. Anthony Goodman (left), a truck driver with the 298th Transportation Company based in Franklin, Pennsylvania, removes a ground-rod for a fuel tanker while Staff Sgt. Jonathan Collier, a fuel handler with the 1st Infantry Division, prepares to remove a fueling hose 24 July 2007 at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California. Seventy-eight percent of the Army's sustainment forces are projected to reside in the reserve component by 2017.

The Role of the Reserve Component as an Operational Reserve

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[The Nation must] ensure the right mix of operationally ready and responsive Total Army forces and capabilities to rapidly meet emergent global combatant command requirements while maintaining an operational and strategic landpower reserve.

—Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, former chief of staff of the Army

Current U.S. military strategy calls for an expeditionary force that is available for short-notice deployments. This means that active component (AC) forces must conduct unpredictable mobilizations and deployments. In contrast, reserve component (RC) forces follow predictable mobilization and deployment schedules. The Army now needs viable courses of action to synchronize employment of the RC in an Army Total Force (ATF) structure.

Background

The events of 11 September 2001 changed the way AC and RC forces were mobilized and deployed, as evidenced by Operation Noble Eagle, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Dr. John Winkler, in his 2010 article in *Joint Force Quarterly*, describes the operational reserve with this statement:

The concept of an operational reserve, in which Reserve forces participate routinely and regularly in ongoing military missions, is viewed as a fairly recent development. This concept is distinct from an earlier view in which the RCs were seen mainly as a “strategic reserve” whose primary role was augmentation and reinforcement of Active forces during a major contingency—an event that was anticipated to occur at best once in a lifetime.¹



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kendall James, Oklahoma National Guard)

A soldier negotiates one of the nine stations on an obstacle course 7 November 2015 during the Oklahoma Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition on Camp Gruber in Braggs, Oklahoma.

Winkler further states that “key developments ... in policy and practice that governed the transformation of Reserve forces and enabled the development of an operational reserve recognized that the reserve components provide both operational capabilities and strategic depth to meet U.S. defense requirements across the full spectrum of conflict.”² With ongoing postwar reductions to the Army end strength in the current fiscally constrained environment, the ATF concept is a particularly useful way for the RC to be leveraged as an operational reserve.

With no long-war plans, the U.S. Army must change the way it thinks about the roles of the RC as follows:

- ◆ fully implement ATF strategies, concepts, and policies
- ◆ integrate geographically colocated AC and RC forces
- ◆ conduct ATF training at combat training centers, regional training centers, and home stations
- ◆ create additional multicomponent headquarters to better utilize capabilities inherent to each component

Fully Implement Army Total Force Strategies, Concepts, and Policies

The U.S. Army must change the way it thinks about the roles of the RC by fully implementing ATF strategies, concepts, and policies. Senior leaders at the joint and Army level are clearly calling for a better-integrated ATF, and the current fiscally constrained environment

is a natural impetus for this change. Several strategic documents discuss the role of RC forces as an operational reserve, most notably the 2015 *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations* (CCJO); Army Directive 2012-8, *Army Total Force Policy*; the former chief of staff of the Army’s *CSA Strategic Priorities*; and, the posture statements of the chief of the Army Reserve and the chief of the National Guard Bureau. Each document identifies the requirement for an operational reserve and the need to integrate all of the Army components.

The CCJO details how future forces require pervasive interoperability, saying that “interoperability refers not only to materiel, but

also to doctrine, organizations, training, and leader development.”³ The CCJO also states that the military will need to be more agile and expeditionary in order to meet combatant commanders’ requirements. For the operational reserve to be effective, it will require integration with AC forces. With 78 percent of the Army’s sustainment forces projected to reside in the RC by 2017, the demand for this support will facilitate the ATF policy.⁴

In “CSA Strategic Priorities,” former CSA Gen. Raymond T. Odierno calls for the use of “Total Army forces and capabilities to rapidly meet emergent global combatant command requirements while maintaining an operational and strategic landpower reserve.”⁵ The priorities also seek to leverage the unique sustainment capabilities of the RC to set and sustain theater and regional campaigns. With the reduction of AC end strength, the future security environment will necessitate an Army that is predominantly based in the United States but retains power projection capabilities. To foster a regionally focused and globally responsive Army, the former CSA championed the regionally aligned forces concept. When fully implemented, regionally aligned forces will provide a holistic approach to regional activities by integrating special operations forces, conventional forces, and Army National Guard (ARNG) State Partnership Program forces.⁶

According to the *Army Total Force Policy*, “the Army will integrate AC and RC forces at the tactical level (division and below), consistent with the Secretary of Defense’s policies for use of the Total Force.”⁷ The policy also outlines the need to streamline mobilization to provide RC capabilities to support the ATF and Army missions. The document calls for the consolidation or elimination of certain U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) and ARNG publications concerning training and personnel, stating, “All components will collaborate in the development, administration, and execution of publications to ensure streamlining while addressing the uniqueness of the component and leveraging their subject matter expertise.”⁸

The *United States Army Reserve 2013 Posture Statement* clearly articulates the role that the USAR will play in the ATF by providing an operational reserve “crucial to supporting Army and global combatant command theater security cooperation objectives. In addition to being utilized in the ‘available year,’ the unit’s soldiers and leaders

will remain operationally engaged throughout the entire force generation cycle.”⁹ The document also discusses how the USAR can augment AC formations through the ability to “sustain and enhance Total Army capability through employer partnerships and an innovative force mix that facilitates movement of soldiers between active and reserve duty.”¹⁰

The *2015 National Guard Bureau Posture Statement* describes how the ARNG complements the AC, stating that the “Total Army ... will be pressed to modernize while preserving combat power with fewer resources. Today’s unprecedented National Guard readiness posture as part of the Total Force offers options to preserve both capability and capacity rather than choose between them.”¹¹ The ability to retain combat power in the ARNG is a key strategic enabler that allows the AC to flex combat arms forces to meet global demand. The ARNG is projected to provide more than half the Army’s infantry brigade combat teams and engineer, motor transport, and medical treatment capabilities by 2019. The ARNG is a proven combat multiplier and an integral part of the ATF.

Integrate Colocated Active and Reserve Component Forces

The Army must change the way it thinks about the roles of the RC by integrating geographically colocated AC and RC forces. The following example uses Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM), Washington, as the focus area due to its large number of both AC and RC forces. JBLM is home to I Corps, the 7th Infantry Division, and subordinate AC units totaling more than twenty thousand soldiers, spanning all warfighting functions. The Washington National Guard Joint Force Headquarters and the 81st Armor Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) are located less than five miles away at Camp Murray, Washington. JBLM is home to the 66th Theater Aviation Command (also an ARNG unit), as well as USAR sustainment, civil affairs, and aviation units. Additional sustainment units, including the 385th Transportation Battalion (Terminal) and subordinate watercraft units, are located approximately twenty miles north in Tacoma, Washington.

The design methodology is to align echelon-above-brigade RC units with I Corps headquarters in a direct support role to augment a deployed

headquarters. Several corps headquarters have a small number of USAR soldiers assigned to the staff, most notably in the Army Reserve engagement teams (ARETs). The ARETs integrate USAR units into corps training events. However, although there are opportunities for small units or individual soldiers, USAR training requirements often take precedence over AC exercise participation. The Army continues to make progress in integrating the unique capabilities of each of its components to support the needs of the global combatant commands, as outlined in the 2015 *U.S. Army Capstone Concept* and *Army Posture Statement*:¹²

As part of the Army's Total Force Policy, the U.S. Army Forces Command is leading the way by partnering every Guard and Reserve division and brigade with a Regular Army peer unit. The Army is also piloting a program to assign Guard and Reserve personnel directly to each Regular Army corps and division headquarters.¹³

Assigning RC personnel to AC units allows the Army to effectively meet operational requirements and facilitates integrated training.

Conduct Army Total Force Training

The Army must change the way it thinks about the roles of the RC by conducting ATF training at combat

training centers (CTCs), regional training centers (RTCs), and home stations. Integrated training opportunities abound, such as ATF warfighter exercises and CTC rotations. Currently, AC maneuver units conduct training at CTCs, while RC units train at RTCs. To better support ATF, the CTCs and RTCs should be integrated or combined. With the Army's focus on mission command, it is imperative that AC and RC units train collectively. The *Army Posture Statement* speaks to this requirement when it states that the Army "will develop and field a robust, integrated tactical mission command network linking command posts, and extending out to the tactical edge and across platforms."¹⁴

One example of current integrated training is First Army (AC) units providing RC company-level tactical training at one of three RTC sites. Another example is platoon- or detachment-sized RC sustainment units supporting AC formations with subsistence items and bulk petroleum.

Further employment of RC units as exercise participants at CTC rotations will expand and enhance skill sets under tactical conditions and replicate the roles sustainment units play in AC deployments. RC forces could also be integrated in warfighter exercises and simulation programs at home-station facilities. The *Army Posture Statement* calls for training programs



(Photo courtesy of South African National Defense Force)

New York Army National Guardsmen from Company C, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry, based in Gloversville, New York, compete with South African soldiers in pistol marksmanship using the South African Z88 pistol during the South African Reserve Force Council Military Skills Competition 11 November 2010 at Potchefstroom Military Base, North West Province, South Africa.

that provide integrated learning with the aim to “provide tough, realistic multiechelon home-station training using a mix of live, virtual, and constructive methods that efficiently and effectively build soldier, leader, and unit competency over time, contributing to the effectiveness of the current and future forces.”¹⁵

The Army provides land forces for homeland defense and defense support of civil authorities (DSCA), a requirement that could also be better accomplished through integrated ATF training. The *Army Capstone Concept* states that the “ARNG plays a unique role in homeland defense and DSCA, whether under the mission command of a state governor or federalized in a Title 10 status under the mission command of the president, secretary of defense, and supported combatant commander.”¹⁶

DSCA support provides additional AC and RC integrated-training opportunities with civilian partners at the local, state, and federal levels. This training would enhance the capabilities of each component while demonstrating interagency unity of effort.

Further integrated-training opportunities lie in converting RTCs to the same network caliber as the CTCs. The RTCs have sufficient maneuver space to support both AC and ARNG brigade combat team formations, which will allow RC sustainment, engineer, military police, and medical forces an increased scope for support that will deliver realistic training. This will also provide additional geographically dispersed training venues that may reduce transportation cost and time. An example of cost savings is the 10th Mountain Division conducting CTC-like training at the RTC at Fort Dix, New Jersey, rather than the national training center at Fort Irwin, California. The reduced transportation costs alone will provide significant savings. Each RTC has an equipment concentration point that can expand to include additional maneuver equipment that returns from Afghanistan, which will in turn provide a solution to the excess equipment issue the Army is facing as it departs theater. To manage these new opportunities will require fully integrated multiple-component headquarters.

Create Additional Multicomponent Headquarters

The Army must change the way it thinks about the roles of the RC by creating additional multicomponent headquarters. As the size of the AC force continues to decline, the RC can provide the additional personnel necessary to create more multicomponent headquarters, allowing for

better utilization of the capabilities inherent to each component. The USAR and ARNG can staff vacant positions with RC Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) or mobilized personnel; this will not affect the USAR or ARNG end strength as the increase will come from accessions of current personnel. The *Army Posture Statement* details an increase in the AGR force in the following excerpt:

Although we are making reductions in the overall end strength of the Army National Guard and the U.S. Army Reserve, we have continued to invest in higher full-time support levels, including Active Guard and Reserve, military technician, and civilians. This budget supports 82,720 full-time support positions in FY16 as compared to 68,000 in FY01. This level of full-time support constitutes a 20 percent increase since 2001.¹⁷

Future multicomponent headquarters will use the First Army force structure as the template. A current First Army unit, the 189th Infantry Brigade (Training Support) is a multicomponent unit stationed at JBLM. The unit is comprised of ten subordinate units including a headquarters and headquarters company and nine battalions, three of which are AC units. The subordinate units provide warfighting function capabilities in movement and maneuver, fires, and sustainment. The following approach to more comprehensive integration may provide additional solutions to mitigate the effects of future force reductions.

An opportunity exists to replace the headquarters element of 2nd Battalion, 358th Armor Regiment (AC), a subordinate command of the 189th, with the 81st ABCT (ARNG) to integrate additional RC units under the brigade headquarters. This would allow AC soldiers the opportunity to fill positions within maneuver units throughout the AC force structure. This would also provide ARNG integration at the battalion level while maintaining current state and corps alignment. Assigning the 81st ABCT as a subordinate unit would provide a similar structure and full-time support while increasing capabilities to provide training and support to DSCA operations.

RC soldier integration into key positions within the brigade headquarters also would act as an incentive for retention and growth, and it would provide stakeholders in the USAR and ARNG commands. Assigning AGR or mobilized RC soldiers to key staff positions would

provide operational continuity and risk mitigation as the AC force reduces. This plan would not affect the total number of positions within the brigade headquarters, only the component filling the position. RC soldiers could easily fill key positions in personnel management, operations, logistics, and communications—capabilities that reside in the RC force structure. These key staff functions reside in both the ARNG and USAR, so either component could fill the positions.

Conclusion

The ATF can provide the right mix of trained and ready forces for combatant commanders despite the

current drawdown and fiscally constrained environment. To do so, the RC must continue to develop as an operational reserve. The Army approach to the ATF must be four-fold: first, it must implement the ATF strategies, concepts, and policies already outlined in strategic documents; second, it must integrate the USAR and ARNG units with geographically colocated AC forces; third, it must train as an ATF at CTCs, RTCs, and home stations; and finally, it must create additional multicomponent headquarters to leverage capabilities and capacities inherent to each component. These adaptations would allow the Army to meet operational requirements, even as end strength and budgets shrink. ■

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Notes

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