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Military Leadership Diversity Commission
1851 South Bell Street
Arlington, VA 22202
(703) 602-0818

<http://mldc.whs.mil/>

National Guard and Reserve Manpower

Abstract

In this issue paper, we examine reserve manpower, considering both the organization and size of the seven National Guard and Reserve Components. In terms of organization, manpower for these seven components is divided into three main categories: the Ready Reserve, which includes the Selected Reserve, the most important source of augments for active forces; the Standby Reserve; and the Retired Reserve. Each of these categories is further divided into several additional subcategories. In terms of size, reserve manpower constitutes an important portion of military end strength. When we present the Selected Reserve as a percentage of Selective Reserve and active-duty manpower, reservists account for 37.2 percent; when all categories of the reserve force are considered (that is, Ready Reserve, Standby Reserve, and Retired Reserve) in comparison to the active force, that percentage jumps to 47.4 percent of the total.

This issue paper (IP) highlights the importance of the Reserve Component (RC) of the U.S. military. In total, the RC represents almost 50 percent of military personnel and consists of seven National Guard and Reserve Components:¹

- the Army National Guard
- the Air National Guard
- the U.S. Army Reserve
- the U.S. Navy Reserve
- the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve
- the U.S. Air Force Reserve
- the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve.

Manpower for each of these service components is divided into several categories and subcategories to create different pools of trained personnel who can be called to duty when required. Perhaps the most important of these categories is the Selected Reserve, which is the primary source of augments to active forces when the President issues a mobilization order.

In this IP, we first briefly discuss each of these categories and subcategories, specifically highlighting the importance of the Selected Reserve. Following that discussion, we show the number of National Guard and Reserve members in each component for each of the categories. We also look at how reserve manpower compares proportionally to the active-duty population. By calculating reserve manpower as a percentage of the total for each Service, we are able to show how important reserve-manpower numbers are to total force end strength.²

The Structure of National Guard and Reserve Manpower

The organization of the principal categories and various subcategories of the RC is shown in Figure 1. We also provide brief descriptions of each category and subcategory. For this discussion, we quote or paraphrase material from a 2005 document from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs entitled, *Reserve Components of the Armed Forces: Reserve Component Categories*.

Ready Reserve

The Ready Reserve is composed of Reserve and National Guard members—organized in units or as individuals—who can be called to active duty during war or a national emergency. This category is divided into three subcategories: the Selected Reserve (SelRes), the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR), and the Inactive National Guard (ING).

The Selected Reserve. Selected reservists are designated by their respective Services as “essential to initial wartime missions” and are the primary source of augments to active forces. Selected reservists can be called into active duty when the President issues a mobilization order. Members of the SelRes fall into one of the following three categories: Units, Individual Mobilization Augmentees (IMAs), and Active Guard/Reserve (AGR).

SelRes units are manned and equipped to serve and train either as operational units or as augmentation units. Operational units train and serve as units, and augmentation units train as units but disband when mobilized (placing individuals in an active unit or activity). Members of SelRes units fall into one of two categories:

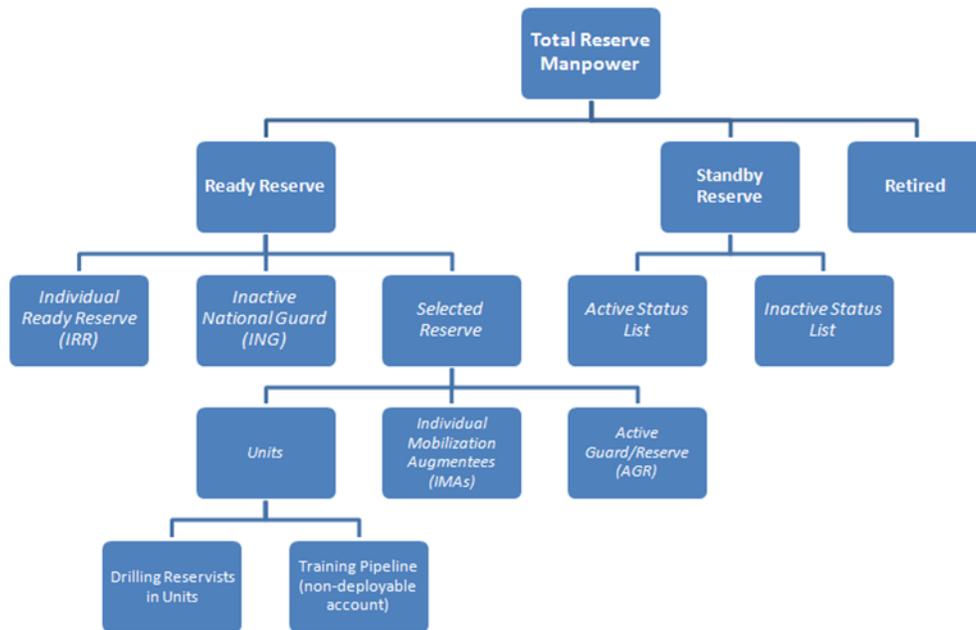
- Drilling Reservists in Units, which includes trained members who participate in unit training activities on a part-time basis
- Training Pipeline, which includes members who have not yet completed initial active duty for training (IADT) or who are officers in training for professional categories or in undergraduate flying training.

IMAs attend drills and are preassigned to a specific billet with one of the following groups: an Active Component (AC) organization, the Selective Service System, or the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The nature of these billets requires them to be filled upon or shortly after mobilization, and IMAs train on a part-time basis with these organizations so they are ready if they are called to serve.

AGR members are ordered to active duty or full-time National Guard duty “for the purpose of organizing, administering, recruiting, instructing, or training the Reserve Components. . . . All AGR members must be assigned against an authorized mobilization position in the unit they support.”

We emphasize that SelRes members actively train with their units or as IMAs, or are in active duty as AGRs. This active engagement makes them the most important source of augments to active-duty personnel. Also, as we point out below, the SelRes is by far the largest RC subcategory.

Figure 1. Reserve Component Manpower Categories



SOURCE: Adapted from Office of the Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, 2005.

The Individual Ready Reserve (IRR). The second subcategory included under Ready Reserve is the IRR. This manpower pool is composed of individuals who have previously served in the AC and who have some military service obligation (MSO) remaining, of reservists who are no longer affiliated with a drilling unit but have remaining MSO time, and of individuals who are transitioning from one drilling unit or IMA billet to another. The IRR also includes personnel in various administrative categories, including

- select participants in officer-training programs or in the Armed Forces Health Program Stipend Program
- those who are awaiting IADT and are assigned to units without pay
- members of the Delayed Entry Program
- a special category of members who have volunteered to be called to active duty under 10 U.S.C. 12304 when needed.

After the SelRes, members in the IRR are the second major source of augments to active duty.

Inactive National Guard. The final subcategory under the Ready Reserve is the ING. Members include National Guard personnel in an inactive status in the Ready Reserve (not in the SelRes) who are attached to a specific National Guard unit. ING members must muster once a year with their assigned units, but they do not participate in training activities. Upon mobilization, ING members mobilize with their units. Some ING members have legal and contractual obligations, but they are not eligible for promotion and they may not train for points or pay.

Standby Reserve

The Standby Reserve consists of the following personnel: those who maintain affiliation without being in the Ready Reserve, those who have been designated key civilian employees, and those who have a temporary hardship or disability. Personnel in the Standby Reserve are not required to train or be part of units. Rather, the Standby Reserve is a pool of trained individuals who can be mobilized if necessary in order to fill manpower needs in specific areas.

Members of the Standby Reserve are placed on either the Active Status List or the Inactive Status List. Generally speaking, placement on the former indicates one of four things: that the member has been temporarily assigned to the Standby Reserve for hardship or other reasons, that the member has not fulfilled his or her MSO, that the member can be retained in active status under the provisions of 10 U.S.C 1264, or that the member has been designated “key personnel” (e.g., he or she is a member of Congress) and removed from the Ready Reserve because his or her civilian employment is of critical importance to national security. The Inactive Status List includes members “who are not required by law or regulation to remain in an active program and who retain their Reserve

affiliation in a nonparticipating status.” This list also includes members whose skills may be of possible future use to the U.S. armed forces.

Retired Reserve

The Retired Reserve is made up of personnel who

- have completed 20 qualifying years, are 60 years of age or older, and are drawing retired pay
- are eligible for retired pay but have not reached age 60, have not elected discharge, and are not voluntary members of the Ready or Standby Reserve
- retired for physical disability under 10 U.S.C. 1201, 1202, 1204, or 1205
- are drawing reserve retired pay based on retirement for reasons other than age, service requirements, or physical disability.

The Size of Reserve Manpower

In this section, we show the breakdown of the reserve population by component and category. We also examine reserve and active-duty manpower as percentages of the total force by Service. As seen in Tables 1–3, reserve manpower constitutes a significant portion of each Service and of the entire U.S. military.

The data used to create the tables come from September 2008 snapshots from the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) and the Reserve Components Common Personnel Data System (RCCPDS). The RCCPDS database supplied the data we use to describe the RC. We use the DMDC data for comparisons between the AC and RC.

In Table 1, we list the end strengths of each component, broken out by the categories described in the previous section.

In total, the RC has more than 1.28 million personnel, slightly fewer than the 1.43 million in the AC. When only the SelRes is considered, manpower numbers are still strong at slightly fewer than 850,000 members.

In the following tables, we show reserve and active-duty manpower as percentages of each Service’s totals.³ In the last row of each table, we combine all Services to show percentages for the entire U.S. military. Table 2 focuses on the SelRes. The percentages we present in that table are computed from the SelRes and active-duty manpower totals for each Service. Table 3 looks at total reserve manpower—Ready Reserve, Standby Reserve, and Retired Reserve—as a percentage of each Service’s total military strength.

As shown in these tables, the reserve population makes up a significant portion of the country’s military force in terms of manpower. When comparing the SelRes with the active-duty population, we see that the Reserve constitutes more than one-third of the force. When the Standby Reserve and the Retired Reserve are included, the reserve portion jumps to nearly 50 percent.

Table 1. End Strength, by RC and Category

	Army National Guard	Army Reserve	Coast Guard Reserve	Air National Guard	Air Force Reserve	Marine Corps Reserve	Navy Reserve
Ready Reserve	363,028	263,198	10,259	107,277	116,519	95,157	122,714
Selected Reserve	360,351	196,745	7,964	107,277	67,427	37,503	67,905
Units	333,974	176,852	7,964	93,460	55,835	32,567	55,994
Drilling Reservists in Units	280,085	154,535	7,957	88,288	54,051	29,848	54,124
Training Pipeline (nondeployable account)	53,889	22,317	7	5,172	1,784	2,719	1,870
Individual Mobilization Augmentees	0	3,996	0	0	9,080	2,796	231
Active Guard/Reserve	26,377	15,897	0	13,817	2,512	2,140	11,680
Individual Ready Reserve	0	66,453	2,295	0	49,092	57,654	54,809
Inactive National Guard	2,677	0	0	0	0	0	0
Standby Reserve	0	2,118	1,763	0	10,367	1,684	3,294
Active Status List	0	1,331	45	0	148	19	37
Inactive Status List	0	787	1,718	0	10,219	1,665	3,257
Retired	0	80,661	2,406	0	62,424	5,445	37,318
Total End Strength	363,028	345,977	14,428	107,277	189,310	102,286	163,326

Table 2. Percentage of SelRes and Active Duty, by Service

Service	Reserve (SelRes)	Active
Army	50.8%	49.2%
Coast Guard	16.1%	83.9%
Air Force	35.1%	64.9%
Marine Corps	15.9%	84.1%
Navy	17.2%	82.8%
All Services	37.2%	62.8%

Table 3. Total Reserve and Active Duty as Percentages of the Total Military Strength, by Service

Service	Reserve*	Active
Army	56.8%	43.2%
Coast Guard	25.9%	74.1%
Air Force	47.9%	52.1%
Marine Corps	34.0%	66.0%
Navy	33.3%	66.7%
All Services	47.4%	52.6%

*Ready Reserve, Standby Reserve, and Retired Reserve

Summary

In this IP, we described the categories and subcategories that make up each of the seven National Guard and Reserve Components. These descriptions and the manpower numbers presented in the paper emphasize the importance of the RC in general and of the SelRes in particular.

Data on numbers of personnel in each component showed that the Reserve constitutes a significant portion of total military manpower: more than one-third when only the SelRes is included and nearly 50 percent when all reserve categories are taken into account. Both the descriptions and the data included here highlight the fact that the SelRes is the primary source of augments for the military.

Notes

¹This list does not include the United States Health Service Reserve Corps, which is a uniformed service but not an armed service.

²In the appendix, we further break down the numbers for each RC, looking separately at the enlisted, officer, and warrant officer populations.

³For the Army, we combine the U.S. Army Reserve and the Army National Guard; for the Air Force, we combine the U.S. Air Force Reserve and the Air National Guard.

References

Office of the Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. (2002, rev. September 2005). *Reserve Components of the armed forces*.

Appendix

As in the main text of this IP, we used 2008 snapshots from the DMDC to create the tables.

In the first section of this appendix, we consider the enlisted population; in the second, commissioned officers; and in the third, warrant officers. Likewise, there are three tables in each section: the first shows raw numbers, breaking down the reserve population by category, as described in the main body of the IP; the second shows the percentage of SelRes and active-duty manpower; and the third is similar to the second but compares active-duty manpower with the *entire* Reserve (i.e., Ready Reserve, Standby Reserve, and Retired Reserve).

Enlisted

Table 1. Enlisted End Strength, by Reserve Component and Category

Enlisted	Army National Guard	Army Reserve	Coast Guard Reserve	Air National Guard	Air Force Reserve	Marine Corps Reserve	Navy Reserve
Ready Reserve	324,027	219,534	8,752	93,204	87,750	88,849	97,334
Selected Reserve	321,605	160,824	6,585	93,204	52,267	34,028	53,012
<i>Units</i>	300,982	148,519	6,585	81,792	46,998	30,955	42,930
Drilling Reservists in Units	250,447	127,554	6,579	76,958	45,311	28,291	41,098
Training Pipeline (nondeployable account)	50,535	20,965	6	4,834	1,687	2,664	1,832
<i>Individual Mobilization Augmentees</i>	0	765	0	0	3,587	1,283	17
<i>Active Guard/Reserve</i>	20,623	11,540	0	11,412	1,682	1,790	10,065
Individual Ready Reserve	0	58,710	2,167	0	35,483	54,821	44,322
Inactive National Guard	2,422	0	0	0	0	0	0
Standby Reserve	0	1,059	1,691	0	3,515	7	2,100
Active Status List	0	1,020	42	0	62	5	13
Inactive Status List	0	39	1,649	0	3,453	2	2,087
Retired	0	60,275	1,654	0	48,892	2,737	23,229
Total End Strength	324,027	280,868	12,097	93,204	140,157	91,593	122,663

Table 2. Enlisted Force: SelRes and Active Duty as Percentages of the Total Military Strength, by Service

Service	Reserve (SelRes)	Active
Army	51.6%	48.4%
Coast Guard	16.5%	83.5%
Air Force	36.0%	64.0%
Marine Corps	16.0%	84.0%
Navy	16.1%	83.9%
All Services	37.6%	62.4%

Table 3. Enlisted Force: Total Reserve and Active Duty as Percentages of the Total Military Strength, by Service

Service	Reserve *	Active
Army	57.2%	42.8%
Coast Guard	26.7%	73.3%
Air Force	47.5%	52.5%
Marine Corps	33.9%	66.1%
Navy	30.8%	69.2%
All Services	47.1%	52.9%

*Ready Reserve, Standby Reserve, and Retired Reserve

Commissioned Officers

Table 4. Commissioned Officer End Strength, by Reserve Component and Category

Commissioned Officers	Army National Guard	Army Reserve	Coast Guard Reserve	Air National Guard	Air Force Reserve	Marine Corps Reserve	Navy Reserve
Ready Reserve	31,910	40,474	1,317	14,073	28,769	5,926	25,241
Selected Reserve	31,685	33,092	1,209	14,073	15,160	3,156	14,759
<i>Units</i>	27,110	26,286	1,209	11,668	8,837	1,417	12,932
Drilling Reservists in Units	24,356	25,011	1,208	11,330	8,740	1,362	12,894
Training Pipeline (nondeployable account)	2,754	1,275	1	338	97	55	38
<i>Individual Mobilization Augmentees</i>	0	3,094	0	0	5,493	1,445	213
<i>Active Guard/Reserve</i>	4,575	3,712	0	2,405	830	294	1,614
Individual Ready Reserve	0	7,382	108	0	13,609	2,770	10,482
Inactive National Guard	225	0	0	0	0	0	0
Standby Reserve	0	990	65	0	6,852	1,657	1,193
Active Status List	0	298	3	0	86	14	24
Inactive Status List	0	692	62	0	6,766	1,643	1,169
Retired	0	18,327	638	0	13,532	2,409	13,839
Total End Strength	31,910	59,791	2,020	14,073	49,153	9,992	40,273

Table 5. Commissioned Officers: SelRes and Active Duty as Percentages of the Total Military Strength, by Service

Service	Reserve (SelRes)	Active
Army	47.0%	53.0%
Coast Guard	15.6%	84.4%
Air Force	31.1%	68.9%
Marine Corps	14.7%	85.3%
Navy	22.9%	77.1%
All Services	34.8%	65.2%

Table 6. Commissioned Officers: Total Reserve and Active Duty as Percentages of the Total Military Strength, by Service

Service	Reserve*	Active
Army	55.7%	44.3%
Coast Guard	23.6%	76.4%
Air Force	49.4%	50.6%
Marine Corps	35.3%	64.7%
Navy	44.7%	55.3%
All Services	49.4%	50.6%

*Ready Reserve, Standby Reserve, and Retired Reserve

Warrant Officers

Table 7: Warrant Officer End Strength, by Reserve Component and Category

Warrant Officers	Army National Guard	Army Reserve	Coast Guard Reserve	Air National Guard	Air Force Reserve	Marine Corps Reserve	Navy Reserve
Ready Reserve	7,091	3,190	190			382	139
Selected Reserve	7,061	2,829	170			319	134
<i>Units</i>	5,882	2,047	170			195	132
Drilling Reservists in Units	5,282	1,970	170			195	132
Training Pipeline (nondeployable account)	600	77	0			0	0
<i>Individual Mobilization Augmentees</i>	0	137	0			68	1
<i>Active Guard/Reserve</i>	1,179	645	0			56	1
Individual Ready Reserve	0	361	20			63	5
Inactive National Guard	30	0	0			0	0
Standby Reserve	0	69	7			20	1
Active Status List	0	13	0			0	0
Inactive Status List	0	56	7			20	1
Retired	0	2,059	114			299	250
Total End Strength	7,091	5,318	311	N/A	N/A	701	390

Table 8. Warrant Officers: SelRes and Active Duty as Percentages of the Total Military Strength, by Service

Service	Reserve (SelRes)	Active
Army	40.2%	59.8%
Coast Guard	9.7%	90.3%
Air Force	n/a	n/a
Marine Corps	14.3%	85.7%
Navy	7.5%	92.5%
All Services	34.7%	65.3%

Table 9. Warrant Officers: Total Reserve and Active Duty as Percentages of the Total Military Strength, by Service

Service	Reserve*	Active
Army	45.8%	54.2%
Coast Guard	16.4%	83.6%
Air Force	n/a	n/a
Marine Corps	26.9%	73.1%
Navy	19.1%	80.9%
All Services	41.1%	58.9%

*Ready Reserve, Standby Reserve, and Retired Reserve