

AU/ACSC/2016

AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE

AIR UNIVERSITY

**TOTAL FORCE INTEGRATION:
PROVIDING STABILITY FOR CITIZEN SOLDIERS
IN AN EVER-CHANGING AIR FORCE**

by

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A Research Report Submitted to the Faculty

In Partial Fulfillment of the Graduation Requirements

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October 2016

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would to first and foremost thank all of my fellow reservists from across the country, primarily the IMAs I have worked with at Joint Base San Antonio and Kandahar Airfield. I would like to thank Col Brent French, PhD, (Doctor Colonel, Sir) and CMSgt Matt Harmatuk (Chief Hollywood). You are amazing mentors and friends, and I would not be who or where I am today without you. I would also like to thank Active Duty commanders, Maj Julia Jefferson, Col Michael Gimbrone, and Maj Gen Robert LaBrutta, who are extraordinary models of leadership and professionalism, and who exemplify the core values on a daily basis.

I would like to thank my classmates, who provided exceptional advice to improve my final product. I am indebted to them for the constant help, and also recognize the amazing efforts of their own projects. I would also like to offer my sincere appreciation to my instructors, Dr. Niesiobedzki and Dr. Ledlow. Their constant encouragement and guidance has been invaluable. I apologize again for being tardy on just about everything. I am exceptionally grateful for Dr. L's insight as an IMA reservist, and can only hope to make a similar impact throughout my career.

Finally, I cannot thank my wiffe enough, for her unwavering support and the amount of time she has also sacrificed toward this endeavor. I will admit it was not the greatest idea to start my master's program the day you went into labor with our first son and to attempt to finish it the week we had to move and when you are due with our second son. I hope you know how much I realize, "you're the best around... nothing's ever gonna get you down!"

ABSTRACT

The United States Air Force continues to make significant efforts to pursue Total Force integration with the service's Reserve Component and Active Duty forces, yet has struggled to find effective balance in successfully utilizing each element. Through scenario analysis, this research aims to provide an answer to the question "Which Total Force integration efforts are a worthwhile pursuit, given the Air Force's present organization and financial constraints?" This paper will also provide recommendations for the Air Force with regards to future Total Force efforts. Long term planning will anticipate the utilization of Reserve Component members, as well as Active Duty members with regard to their roles and responsibilities. Current Total Force endeavors, established primarily by former Chief of Staff of the Air Force (CSAF), General Mark A. Welsh III, as well as proposals from the *National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force* and the *Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission*, will be used as key factors and the basis for predicting future Total Force proposals. The four predictive scenarios (*Let it Be*, *Nowhere Man*, *The Long and Winding Road*, and *We Can Work It Out*) will assess potential Total Force actions within the Air Force and will demonstrate those which are most worthwhile to pursue, based upon the degree of importance and uncertainty. The scenarios analyzed examined how the Air Force integration efforts will continue to evolve, examining current fiscal constraints and mission readiness relationships, and predict purposeful actions to increase stability for the Total Force.

Total Force Integration:

Providing Stability for Citizen Soldiers in an Ever-Changing Air Force

Introduction

If we can become more efficient as an Air Force, without losing operational capability by putting more things under the reserve component, why wouldn't we?

– Gen Mark A. Welsh III, 2014¹

In the military, the phrase “weekend warrior” has historically been a derogatory name for a *citizen soldier*. Perhaps it conjures the image of an overweight, over-promoted, and out of date NCO or officer sitting around “training” while the Active Duty members work toward mission accomplishment, and look down upon the Reserve Component members with disdain. As the needs of the Air Force have evolved, this perception is also changing, as the strength and reality of Reserve Component members prove time and time again, both in mission readiness and cost savings. The relationship between Active Duty and Reserve Component military members, to include Air National Guard and both Traditional and Individual Mobilization Augmentee (IMA) reservists, is articulately stated by Lt Col Ryan Samuelson, an Active Duty commander. Upon relinquishing command of the 64th Air Refueling Squadron at Pease Air National Guard (ANG) Base, N.H., he acknowledged that the Guard [as part of the Reserve Component] is about, “working in a collaborative environment, where ideas are shared... about managing personnel who operate in a multitude of statuses,” and who “operate under different statuses and management rules.” The Guard, “fully supports and greatly enhances the capabilities of the Total Force... capable of achieving any task it is given... often with little clear written guidance from higher headquarters.” The Guard, “is proud of its culture... taking care of the people who make up the organization, the families, the communities, and the country... I’m glad we’re on the same

team.”² Lt Col Samuelson’s perspective is one that is now being shared across the Air Force, yet there is still much work to be done to achieve stability across the Total Force.

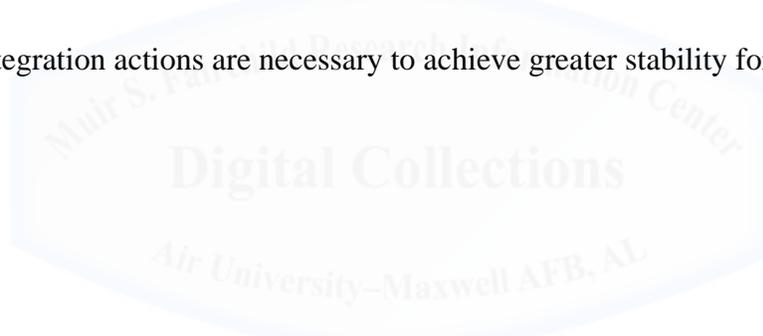
The United States Air Force continues to make significant efforts to pursue Total Force integration with the service’s Reserve Component and Active Duty forces, yet has struggled to find effective balance in successfully utilizing each element. In 1995, the Air Force Chief of Staff, General Ronald Fogleman stated, “a fundamental precept of our American military tradition is that the United States of America is a militia nation.”³ The purpose of the all-volunteer armed forces is, in peacetime, to provide a small standing defensive military and in conflict, rapidly train, equip, mobilize, and then demobilize the fighting forces upon completion of the mission. Even as late as 2012, Gen Fogleman declared, “we should return to the constitutional construct for our military and the days when we maintained a smaller standing military and a robust militia.”⁴

This research paper will use scenario planning to answer the question “Which Total Force integration efforts are a worthwhile pursuit, given the Air Force’s present organization and financial constraints?” Using current Total Force initiatives and recent reports from the *National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force* and the *Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission*, this paper will offer unique scenarios (*Let it Be*, *Nowhere Man*, *The Long and Winding Road*, and *We Can Work It Out*) which balance mission readiness against fiscal constraints.⁵ These scenarios ultimately provide specific data which allow for recommendations regarding further Total Force integration actions to be taken, and which will be the most appropriate for achieving stability for Air Force Reserve Component, as well as Active Duty, members.

Active Duty manpower vacancies, such as Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC) instructor duties, are being filled through unique Voluntary Limited Period of Active Duty (VLPAD) programs, designed for volunteer Reserve Component members to “return” to temporary Active Duty status to fill these positions.⁶ Additionally, other shortages, such as those in the Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) career field seek solutions. The Air Force has invested in a variety of ways to fill manpower gaps, to include using enlisted Active Duty members to conduct what was previously considered officer-specific duties.⁷ Utilizing Active Duty personnel adds to the burden of an already strained budget, and the cost of a Reserve Component member accounts for much less than an Active Duty member due to many factors. Three primary reasons include requiring less training and resources, the part-time pay and benefits and delay of retirement pay (generally 60 years of age), and the lack of infrastructure costs, such as family housing.⁸ However, current commitments of Reserve Component members often overtax certain career fields, such as aircrew, which account for over 43 percent of the entire Air Force airlift mission, resulting in substantial stressors on civilian careers and family life, which has always been the cornerstone of reserve status.⁹ Army National Guard’s chief of behavioral health officer, LTC Laura Wheeler, states the Reserve Component members face, “significant challenges when reintegrating with their family, communities, work and school.”¹⁰ Since 2001, the increase in demands on the Reserve Component has led to an increase in reported risk factors for alcohol use disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, and depression.¹¹

In 2005, the use of Guard and Reserve members peaked in Iraq and Afghanistan, and Congress created the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves. Between 2006 and 2008, the commission presented three reports which were compiled into one final review, concluding, “the US government had, ‘no reasonable alternative’ but to rely increasingly on the Guard and

Reserves as an operational force.”¹² Since 2008, the Air Force, along with other service branches, has increasingly made Total Force integration a higher priority, yet has still not found balance among Active Duty mission readiness and reservists’ civilian, military, and family lives. The Air Force has also implemented or initiated many of the 42 recommended suggestions from the 2014 results of the *National Commission of the Structure of the Air Force*, yet did not accept two significant recommendations of the commission’s proposals, which were to dissolve the Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) and to reorganize the component mix to a 58 to 42 percent Active Duty to Reserve Component ratio.¹³ With these specific measures, as well as additional applications of Total Force integration, the Air Force will prove to be much more efficient than currently realized. Given the current mission readiness and fiscal constraints of today’s Air Force, further integration actions are necessary to achieve greater stability for the Total Force.



Background and Significance

The men and women who compose the Reserve components are a testament to the desire, willingness, and ability of our countrymen to serve the security interests of our nation while also contributing to the wealth, resiliency, vitality, and stability of our nation on a daily basis in their various capacities as private citizens when not soldiering.

- Col Richard J. Dunn III, US Army (ret)¹⁴

History of Guard and Reserves



Fig. 1. *Stand Your Ground*, Lexington, Massachusetts, 19 April 1775. In the early hours of 19 April 1775, Captain John Parker was alerted to mobilize the “minutemen” of Lexington, Massachusetts, in anticipation of the British who were marching to Concord to capture provincial arms. Captain Parker’s minutemen fought the first battle of the American Revolution. The “minuteman” was established as a part of the heritage of the Army Reserve by the War Department in 1922. (A National Guard Heritage Painting.)¹⁵

Prior to America's independence, local communities would form their own defense forces, mainly consisting of able-bodied citizens who volunteered to rally in emergencies, to protect their towns from any immediate danger (see Fig 1). After independence was won, the individual states remained in the habit of keeping their "militias" at stand-by, providing units to complement those of the federal forces, should they be required.¹⁶ After the sinking of the American battleship *Maine*, and the Spanish-American War and Philippine Insurrection (1898-1902), Congress determined a need for a more formally organized and federally managed structure.¹⁷ The Militia Act of 1903 (the Dick Act) provided federal support to National Guard units, and in exchange, the units would be trained and qualified for overseas deployments.¹⁸ The Medical Reserve Corps of 1908, the predecessor of the Army Reserve, provided solutions for the manpower shortages of "medical professionals, trained officers, and non-commissioned officers".¹⁹ Subsequent changes to the National Defense Act of 1916 included solidification of the National Guard as both a federal and state asset. Funding increased in 1920, which led to the growth of the Reserve Component. In 1939, only one third of the US military end strength was Active Duty.²⁰

The drawbacks of the Reserve Component were not in numbers, however, but in mission readiness. Reserve Component members were not exceptionally well-trained, and opportunities for additional training were slim.²¹ Mission readiness was sacrificed for cost effectiveness. After the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the number of participating reservists grew from fewer than 3,000 to over 57,000.²² Despite the assumed safety of being surrounded by water (Atlantic and Pacific oceans), "air power had changed the strategic paradigm forever."²³ It was apparent that a new system was necessary to keep fully qualified reservists distinct from those who were not actively participating. By 1952, the Armed Forces Reserve Act had established the modern

organization of Reserves, creating a Ready Reserve (actively drilling reservists), the Stand-by Reserve (non-participating reservists who are periodically obligated to check in with their component), and the Retired Reserve.²⁴ During Vietnam, President Johnson attempted to keep US military association inconspicuous, leading to the decision to avoid Reserve mobilization.²⁵ This significant decision nearly destroyed the relationship between the Active Duty and Reserve Component, as many saw the reserves as a way of escaping the draft.²⁶ Army Chief of Staff, General Creighton Abrams, felt that reservists were essential in maintaining public support of conflict, stating, “by involving the Guard and the Reserve, the will of the people is brought into the fight.”²⁷ The post-Vietnam Abrams Doctrine led to some of the most comprehensive integration (and future Total Force) efforts the military structure had seen to date.²⁸

The history of the Reserve Component platform has traditionally been to augment Active Duty military personnel and units during times of emergency. This relationship and role led to the Reserve Component being recognized as a strategic reserve force, yet hope for international peace and stability has been consistently devastated with new crises and conflicts, which has led to the operational reserve status recognized today. Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm mobilized over 80,000 Army Reserve soldiers.²⁹ In Operation Iraqi Freedom, Air Force Reserve aircraft and crews flew nearly 162,000 hours, and provided 45 percent of the Air Force’s aeromedical crews, including 3,108 patient movements.³⁰ After September 11, 2001, the increase in utilization of Reserve Component members has not reduced. “At one point in 2005, half of the combat brigades in Iraq were Army National Guard;” these types of numbers and ratios had not been seen since the first years of World War II.³¹ Nearly half of all Air Force Reserve Component members have been activated and mobilized, and most have mobilized more than once (see Fig. 2).³² The reality is now, for most Reserve Component of all services, there has

only been a steady increase in the application and deployment of Reserve Component members. It is no longer a matter of “if” a Reserve Component member is mobilized, but “when” they will be activated and/or deployed. The mission has changed for the *citizen-soldier*. The reorganization of the Air Force structure is necessary to maintain mission effectiveness and to stay ahead of fiscal constraints, while at the same time, allowing flexibility for Reserve Component members to serve in a capacity that also permits them to have a family, career, and personal health.

Service	Component	Total Mobilized		Mobilized Once	Mobilized More Than Once	Not Mobilized	Total Strength
		Number	Percent				
Air Force	Guard	45,712	43.40%	24,315	21,397	59,629	105,341
	Reserve	34,472	47.80%	14,210	20,262	37,713	72,185

Fig 2. Reserve Component members activated since September 11, 2001. Data indicates Reserve Component members mobilized for Operations NOBLE EAGLE, ENDURING FREEDOM, and IRAQI FREEDOM, as of 31 May 2007.³³

Total Force Integration

The National Guard and Reserves remain an indispensable force for defending the American homeland and protecting U.S. security interests around the world. Civilian Guardsmen and Reservists possess specialized skills that augment their military capabilities, rendering them a cost-effective and highly talented force well suited for operations that the U.S. military will likely perform over the next 20 years.

- General Gordon R. Sullivan, USA (Retired), 2010³⁴

Total Force development originated in 1966, due to a RAND study regarding the utilization for the Air Force Reserve, focusing precisely on, “the cost and effectiveness of alternative mixes of regular and reserve forces in various mission areas”.³⁵ The Air Force led the way in developing Department of Defense Total Force policy, and one of the key contributors, deputy assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Reserve Affairs, Thomas Marrs, was soon promoted to deputy assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. His promotion made

spreading the Air Force's Total Force success to the sister services much more fluid.³⁶ The Secretary of Defense at the time, Melvin Laird, was the first to articulate the full Total Force concept; his predecessor, James R. Schlesinger, faced with further budget cuts and manpower challenges, proposed the Total Force policy to pair Reserves and National Guard units with Active Duty forces in order to balance the military's mission needs.³⁷

Despite targeted actions in the post-Vietnam era, current Total Force integration efforts still do not account for the transformation of the Reserve Component from a strategic reserve mission to a fully operational war-fighting mission, which occurred in 2004.³⁸ Supporting these initial transformation efforts were the Total Force Initiative, the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC) and Program Budget Directive 720.³⁹ These were all actions taken to support Total Force management, yet many were heavily contested. As an example, there was extreme opposition against the Department of Defense to have the ability to close or realign a National Guard base without the consent of the governor.⁴⁰ Additionally, there was resistance to Program Budget Directive 720, which stated Air National Guard personnel end strength would decrease by 3,500 positions, and 7,700 reserve billets would be removed, in order to "free up resources for equipment modernization."⁴¹ Key factors of the conflict stemmed from either having to choose to support the Active Duty or the Reserve Component, not necessarily finding a balance between the two. In 2010, the Center for New American Strategy reported on the National Guard and Reserve status, which showed the Department of Defense (DoD) had significant budgetary concerns, health and wellness issues, continuum of service problems, lacking policies and knowledge, and a lack of cost analysis research.⁴² In 2011, the Budget Control Act (BCA) and subsequent caps on spending even further constrained both Active Duty and Reserve Component forces.⁴³ In 2013, Congress marshaled the National Commission on the

Structure of the Air Force, to “determine whether, and how, the structure should be modified to best fulfill current and anticipated mission requirements...in a manner consistent with available resources.”⁴⁴ In this report, the committee recommended that the Air Force should, “entrust as many missions as possible to its Reserve Component forces,” yet also acknowledged that the Air Force has an “irreducible minimum below which the Air Force cannot prudently cut Active Component end strength without jeopardizing warfighting capabilities, institutional health, and the ability to generate future forces.”⁴⁵

Key Factors

Guardsmen have consistently been great trainers who present significant knowledge bases for their Active Duty counterparts. Since Guardsmen do not PCS, they seem to be the new stability, “holding down the fort” as well as participating in deployments and other wartime efforts.

- MSgt (Ret) Mary I. Meyer, Virginia Air National Guard, 2013⁴⁶

Determining the appropriate Total Force actions which are most worthwhile is challenging, as there are many factors which affect the importance and uncertainty within the method of evaluation. Key factors assessed in this specific research are the roles and utilization of both Active Duty and Reserve Component, mission readiness and effectiveness, and financial constraints. These will be considered the major elements in developing the scenarios and axes for determining results and conclusions.

Reserve Component members spent the majority of their time prior to September 11, 2001 considered a strategic reserve force, but events on that date ultimately led our military forces into a nearly two-decade rotation of mobilization. This change to the methods in which the United States applied its military national instrument of power also led to Reserve Component being more frequently activated and utilized in operational taskings. In 2004, policy followed suit, and the Reserve Component were officially recognized as an operational reserve force.⁴⁷ In

2011, however, the terms “operational reserve” and “strategic reserve” were no longer recommended, as suggested by the *Comprehensive Review of the Future Role of the Reserve Component* report.⁴⁸ The terminology led to confusion and miscommunication of the roles of the Reserve Component, as their responsibility is to provide both strategic depth and operational forces as needed. The Budget Control Act of 2011 and additional limits on spending placed all service components under significant pressure as they faced increased demands for both operational and “presence” missions, in spite of dwindling Active Duty forces and funding.⁴⁹ Per Air Force instructions, “since a substantial capability resides in the ARC, the AF relies on its Total Force to meet its taskings.”⁵⁰ As Reserve Component units are delegated with bearing these challenges, they are also responsible to find resources for readiness, training, and to receive funding allocations for military personnel appropriation (MPA) orders, or manpower days. One of the key factors in the determining the utilization of Reserve Component members is, when not in use, the cost of a reserve member is approximately 15 percent of an Active Duty member; even when activated or mobilized for a full year, a reserve member still only costs 80 to 95 percent of what an Active Duty member does.⁵¹ This makes the Reserve Component a significant savings compared to utilization of an Active Duty member (see Figure 3). While not all models for measuring costs “incorporates all significant factors and satisfies all the measurements” needed, the analysis shows that the significant cost savings of a Reserve Component member is, “only possible when those forces can be used on less than full-time basis until mobilized.”⁵²

Individual Compensation Example, PB13

Individual Compensation US Air Force E-7	Basic Pay	Retired Pay	MERHC	Other Allowances	Service Composite Rate
AC (Average of 15.6 years of service)	50,000	16,000	4,000	36,000	105,000
RC on Active Duty all year (20.9 years of service)	52,000	13,000	2,000	32,000	99,000
RC in Drill Status (Average of 20.9 years of service) Assumes 39 days = 24 days drill (48 pay periods) + 15 days AT	9,000	2,000	2,000	3,000	16,000

Table 3

Individual Compensation Example, PB13

Individual Compensation US Air Force E-4	Basic Pay	Retired Pay	MERHC	Other Allowances	Service Composite Rate
AC (Average of 3 years of service)	25,000	8,000	4,000	25,000	62,000
RC on Active Duty all year (5 years of service)	28,000	7,000	2,000	22,000	58,000
RC in Drill Status (Average of 5 years of service) Assumes 39 days = 24 days drill (48 pay periods) + 15 days AT	5,000	1,000	2,000	2,000	10,000

Fig 3. Individual Compensation (Costs) Examples for Active Duty member, Reserve Component member (activated), and Reserve Component member (drill status).⁵³

Another determining factor in how the utilization of the Reserve Component would best be integrated is in comparing how the US Army is currently configured, and contrasting how the Army seeks to adjust their Total Force to reach stability regarding mission readiness and effectiveness in consideration of costs and fiscal restraints. The National Guard Adjutants General Association states the Army and Air National Guard comprises the world's fifth largest Air Force and 38 percent of the US military end strength.⁵⁴ Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Ray T. Odierno, seeks to adjust the Army Total Force ratio to 54 percent in the Reserve Component and 46 percent in the Active Component.⁵⁵ This is even more drastic than the recommendation proposed by the *National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force*, which recommended a shift for the Air Force structure to a 58 percent Active Duty and 42 percent Reserve Component mix.⁵⁶ Currently, the mix of Air Force Active Duty to Reserve Component is 69 percent to 31

percent, respectively. According to Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, Gabe Camarillo, the results of the *National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force* are valid, and the Air Force is doing its own internal study. The results appear to show, “we are getting to the same result, just getting there differently.”⁵⁷ However, another area to note is the component blend is not distributed evenly throughout units based upon their particular specialty skills, such as Tactical Airlift or Weather Reconnaissance (see Fig 4).⁵⁸ Many types of Air Force units utilize Reserve Component manpower due to the qualities of small unit skills or individual skills that are comparable to their civilian duties, such as Security Forces or Civil Engineering. Other types, such as POTUS airlift or ICBM units, have high tempo steady state operations and require highly specific military skills with no civilian equivalents.⁵⁹



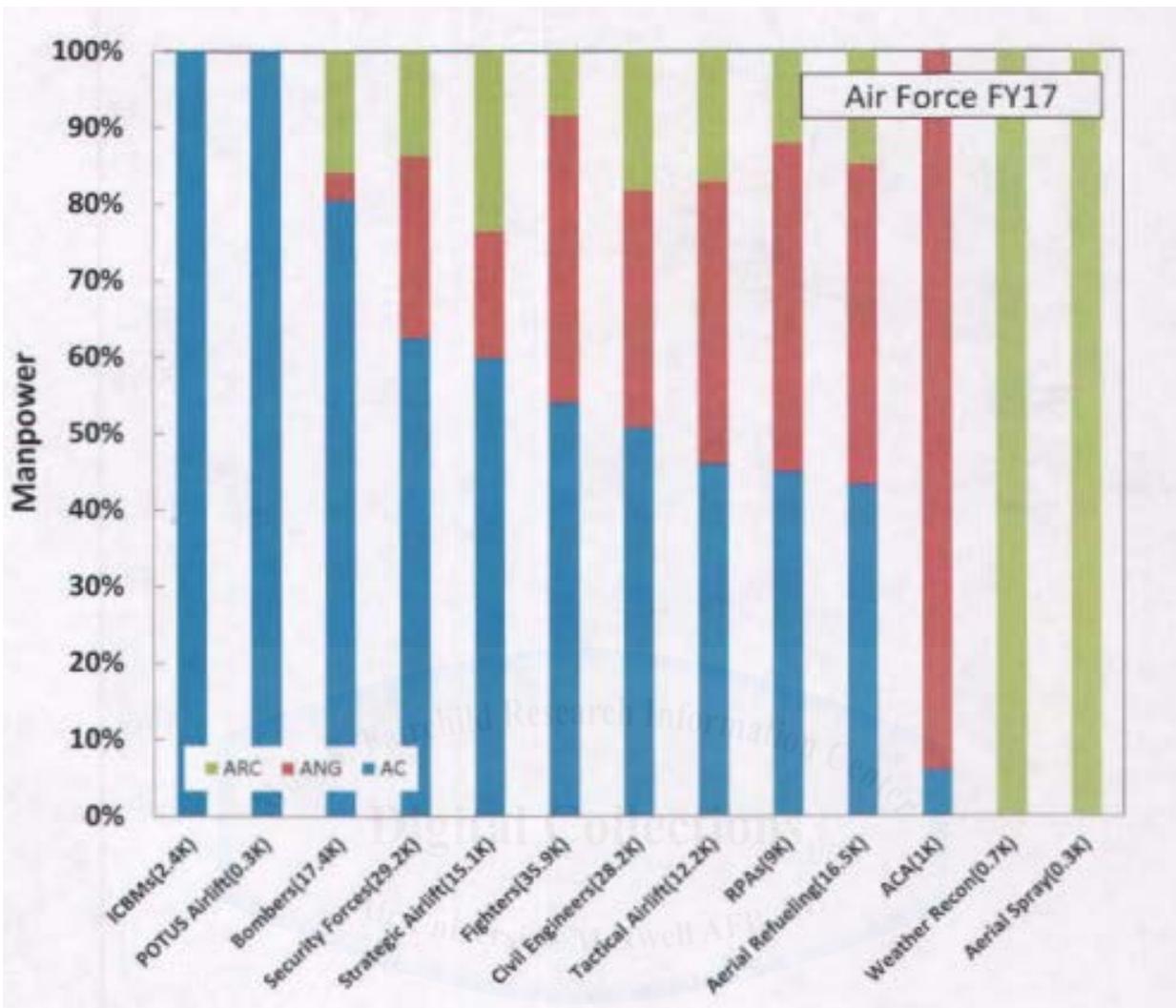


Fig 4. Types of Air Force units broken out by percentage of Active Duty to Reserve Component (ANG/AFRC).⁶⁰

The Reserve Component also does not often consider the utilization of the Individual Mobilization Augmentee (IMA) reservists in Total Force integration planning. As of September 2010, there were over 15,000 reservists serving as Air Force IMAs.⁶¹ The IMA is a reservist assigned to an Active Duty unit, and the primary role of the IMA is to augment or “backfill” a corresponding Active Duty member. However, the “validation process has expanded to include mobilization, contingency operations, specialized or technical requirements, and even economic considerations.”⁶² During each year a typical Category B IMA is required to participate in 12 to 14 Inactive Duty Training (IDT) days and a two-week Annual Training (AT) period.⁶³ In the

Army, there are even less IMA reservists, totaling only approximately 4,000 members in strength. Analysis of the Army shows, “the IMA program lacks of a unity of effort and command. This lack of unity contributes to a lack of clarity of strategic direction and vision and sends mixed signals in a disconnected communication effort. Addressing these elements positively impacts all aspects of the IMA program.”⁶⁴ The Air Force IMA members are placed under the administrative control (ADCON) of the Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC), and under the operational control (OPCON) of the Active Duty Major Command (MAJCOM) to which they are assigned. Due to the separate and incompatible nature of the Active Duty and Reserve Component data systems, “many ADCON functions have become shared responsibilities, the MAJCOM implementing the action and AFRC tracking it.”⁶⁵ This has led to many errors and inconsistencies in pay, logistics, and personnel management, as the presumption is that the systems will interface and communicate as intended for the member. Since the IMA member will generally not return back to duty status for months on end (unlike a Guard or Traditional Reserve member), administrative errors are typically not caught in a timely manner. The Active Duty component is not yet structured to integrate the IMA member entirely, so force management is frequently delegated to the member, often reinforcing the cliché, “*I am alone,*” when indicating the level of support IMA members receive from Reserve Component or Active Duty administration. The Air Force recognized some of these inconsistencies and initiated the “3 to 1” Total Force Human Resources Management, but did not project a specific implementation date.⁶⁶ As of 2013, the implementation is yet to be fully realized. Further analysis shows the IMA structure is not viable, and even with changes implemented since 2013, there are still no significant increases in the efficacy of the program.⁶⁷ One of the most important subjects for the IMA program is a question of identity; should Active Duty or AFRC determine the skills and

utilization required by the IMAs? Without this key piece of functional information, the IMA program will continue to generate conflict. A structural shift may be necessary to uphold one of the most basic principles of Air Force doctrine - unity of command.⁶⁸

Active Duty costs and utilization will also be a factor for Total Force integration efforts. Proposed changes to the structure of the Air Force would have an impact on costs, as well as recruiting and retention, and would need to address the stereotypes of the reservist as a “weekend warrior,” or as service members lacking in experience, mission readiness, or training. In the most recent study that compared medical readiness statistics of Active Duty members to their respective Reserve Component peers, both the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve have met or exceeded the goal established by the Department of Defense (DoD) since the end of 2009.⁶⁹ However, across all service branches, the, “DoD goal of having 75 percent of members fully medically ready is *not* being met by either the active component (AC) or the RC, although great progress has been made.”⁷⁰ According to Air Force Instruction 36-2629, *Individual Reservist (IR) Management*, each Reserve member is responsible to “comply with readiness requirements in order to maintain currency.”⁷¹ The failure of a Reserve Component member to maintain readiness is upon them as an individual, however, the allowance of the member to stay in the ‘red’ (failed readiness status) falls upon the supervisor, as the instruction then goes on to establish the responsibility of the supervisor is to, “ensure the IR is aware of his/her role in mobilization and receives the training necessary to remain current and proficient.”⁷² Finally, the ultimate accountability rests with the commander, as the authority to discipline, including dismissal of a member to Inactive Ready Reserve (IRR) status, for failure to maintain readiness is within their authority with proper documentation.

With regard to training, it is also important to note that the basic requirements for annual training for most Reserve Component members is the same as Active Duty members, yet there may be additional training requirements for specific Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC), or based upon assigned MAJCOM or location. Furthermore, Reserve Component members have only their allotted days of orders, IDT or AT, to complete the required amount of training, whereas Active Duty members have the full year. Finally, there are many discrepancies within Air Force guidance which separate the Active Duty members from the Reserve Component members' ability to perform at the same level. As an example, Air Force Instruction 36-2905, *Fitness Program*, establishes the standard for units to "encourage Airmen to participate in physical fitness training for up to 90 minutes, 3-5 times per week," yet most Reserve Component members are not afforded the same consideration in their civilian jobs.⁷³ In addition, if an Air Force member fails a Physical Fitness Assessment (PFA), the Active Duty member must then accomplish a Fitness Improvement Program (FIP) which is available through multiple options: a BE WELL online course, a Healthy Weight program, or Military OneSource Health Coaching.⁷⁴ In contrast, the Reserve Component member who fails the PFA has only one option, to complete an online FIP, which is accomplished through the Advanced Distributed Learning System (ADLS), and not nearly as practical as compared to the Active Duty options, and is often not even monitored.⁷⁵ This instance is just one of many that demonstrate how the Reserve Component face unbalanced challenges compared to Active Duty members, and where system processes do not always match for each component.

Driving Forces

This is one of the biggest issues for the future of the Air Force – to develop the right force mix of Regular and Reserve Component Airmen. Getting this mix right directly affects our Air Force’s capability, capacity, efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

- Lt. Gen. James F. Jackson, chief of Air Force Reserve and commander of Air Force Reserve Command, 2014⁷⁶

Mission Readiness

“Air Force reservists are ‘mission ready’ – trained to the same standards, inspected in the same proficiency level, and maintain the same currencies as the Regular Air Force.”⁷⁷ However, as noted in the example given in the key factors section, maintaining mission readiness does not always reflect realistic guidance or integrated systems. As the mobilization assistant to the Air Force Chief of Staff, Major General Vincent Mancuso, acknowledges, “there are big gaps and disconnects in today’s requirements and resourcing processes.”⁷⁸ Legacy systems and policies from when the Reserve Component was largely a strategic reserve force are still in place today. “The Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard are now truly operational forces with strategic depth, but the processes and policies we currently use to get ARC Airmen, resources and operational missions aligned have not caught up with this reality.”⁷⁹ In the past, changes were made to account for each MAJCOM with regard to budgeting and projecting how many MPA days would be required to accomplish their respective missions. This progress has been successful in projecting costs and required days; however, there is still additional need for change. One of the biggest changes currently in process is for A3 (Operations) to manage all of the mission requirements for the Reserve Components, which was previously controlled by A1 (Personnel).⁸⁰ A1 will still manage the man-day appropriation and funding. Maj Gen Mancuso admits there are, “bound to be some growing pains as the responsibility for collecting and documenting ARC utilization requirements switches from A1 to A3.”⁸¹ Historically, the Air

Force has under-executed their allotted man-days, and these process changes are projected to reduce this inefficiency. In addition to the control measures being put in place, the Air Force Chief of Staff will also be receiving a report from all organizations that return MPA days, which will include justification for any under-execution.⁸²

An additional measure for mission readiness is enhancing the talent pool of the Airmen who are currently serving as *citizen-soldiers* and who may already have unique skill sets that mirror or complement their AFSC. Force of the Future initiatives include that the, “DoD will better align individual capabilities with mission requirements by cataloging civilian skill sets inherent in reserve component Service members.”⁸³ As an example, if a Security Forces member is a civilian law enforcement officer, and required to train to proficiency in the skill of handcuffing, they may not necessarily need to accomplish a two-hour course through their AFSC requirement, but could instead test annually to show they have maintained the required level of proficiency. Additionally, if an officer has opportunities in the Active Duty to obtain joint experiences, education, and qualifications, then the Reserve Component member must also be able to do the same.⁸⁴

Through the conflicts in Bosnia, Kosovo, and the first Gulf War, Reserve Component units, primarily Army, were utilized more frequently and gained experience through repetitive deployments; the distinction between components faded. Reserve Component units began to be considered as suitable alternate for Active Duty units, provided they received the proper personnel, equipment, training and time prior to being mobilized. The perspective of the Reserve Component being equally “ready” was further reinforced by the amounts of continuing activations of Reserve Component forces during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, which led many to believe the successful performance of the Reserve Component members validated the

Total Force Policy.⁸⁵ “Some Army officials have argued, however, that AC [Active Component] and RC units are not interchangeable, with one senior Army officer indicating that this was the reason RC BCTs [Brigade Combat Teams] were used for less complex missions in Iraq and Afghanistan than their AC counterparts. RC advocates counter that they had no control over the missions they were assigned in Iraq and Afghanistan, that they were effective in all the missions they were given, and that they could have successfully completed combined arms maneuver missions if they had been given the opportunity.”⁸⁶ Air Force Reserve Component members are not only held to the same standards, but also need to have the tools, training, and opportunities to perform in order to effectively achieve mission readiness.

Taking Care of Airmen

Secretary of the Air Force, Deborah James, states, “the right people in the right job at the right time, who are trained and developed should be our number one priority.”⁸⁷ In her ‘State of the Air Force’ address, she specifically called for achieving a better work-life balance and “leveraging the best talents of our Guard, Reserve, and civilian teams.”⁸⁸ Taking care of Airmen has always been a priority for the Air Force, but the impacts of activations and over-utilization have become more consequential in recent years for the Reserve Component. More than 75 percent of reservists are parents, and when a reservist is deployed their family is affected very differently than when an Active Duty military member is deployed. The reservist’s family is often decentralized; potentially a reservist’s spouse or child can be the only person in their community with a deployed military member, and there is often not a local Family Readiness Group available to them.⁸⁹

Reservists who have been deployed report higher rates of suicidal ideation and attempts than Active Duty members who have been deployed, and also report higher rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).⁹⁰ One of the areas addressed by Secretary of Defense, Ashton Carter, in the Force of the Future initiatives is allowing Active Duty to Reserve Component permeability. “The Department will form a Task Force, chaired by the USD (P&R), to identify mechanisms that increase the speed and ease with which Service members can transition from the Active Component to the Reserve Component.”⁹¹ While this is a step toward Total Force integration, there are certain limitations. One of the most significant disadvantages to this proposal is it only allows for a transition between Active Duty to the Reserve Component, and not the reverse. If a Reserve Component member wants to transition back to Active Duty and permanently fill one of the under-manned career fields, there is currently not a path for them to do so. In addition, it does not address the additional unique challenges that Reserve Component members face in being over-tasked.

While all Reserve Component members supposedly fall under the same Deploy-to-Dwell ratio of 1:5 years, “it has become abundantly clear that certain military skills and certain types of units are much more in demand than others.”⁹² The Reserve Component members who belong to these career fields and units that are over-utilized or deployed frequently are at a higher risk for personal and mental health issues. In addition, many Reserve Component members volunteer for additional activations due to the financial benefits they receive on military status. “Limited local employment opportunities and low-wage jobs reportedly have prompted some National Guard members to return to active-duty status, in part because of the potential earnings. Thus, although the Georgetown National Guard unit deployed as a unit twice, several members have volunteered for additional deployments with other nearby units.”⁹³ These Reserve Component members face

the same stressors as their Active Duty counterparts, however, they have the additional burden of often being decentralized and having extra financial concerns due to facing uncertainties with their civilian jobs when they return.⁹⁴

Cost Effective Solutions

The *National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force* proposed that by shifting the mix of the Air Force to 58 percent Active Duty and 42 percent Reserve Component, the estimated savings realized would be “\$2 billion per year in manpower costs, with no reductions in Total Force end strength.”⁹⁵ Utilizing voluntary or temporary active duty Reserve Component members is still more cost effective than utilizing Active Duty members.⁹⁶ Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, Gabe Camarillo, stated the Air Force needs to, “rely on our Guard and Reserve components” and give them opportunities to come on active orders for limited periods, but “the rule set has not caught up yet.” He goes on to state there is a “real desire to fix this in the future” but the Air Force needs, “the help of Congress.”⁹⁷ The shortages in RPA, cyber, maintenance and special duty AFSCs could be filled by Reserve Component members willing to take on these roles. As an example, the AFROTC instructor shortage was alleviated in 2016 by allowing Reserve Component members the ability to apply for the VLPAD program, which placed selected Reserve Component members on Active Duty for three years. One noteworthy disadvantage to this program is that the members had to voluntarily give up their reserve billet in order to participate, which was a significant risk for each member, as they would not have a unit or reserve assignment to return to after the three years of service in the Active Duty component. As Secretary of the Air Force, Ashton Carter, commented, the Air Force must, “relook the way we have been doing things to help stimulate innovative talent.”

Additionally, if the current sequestration continues, the Air Force will eventually be required to cut additional costs. The Air Force is the “smallest, leanest force its ever been, but there is more demand than ever” for what the Air Force accomplishes.⁹⁸ While Secretary of the Air Force, Deborah James, may not agree with downsizing, the Air Force will likely still have to reduce \$10 billion from the budget in the upcoming years.⁹⁹ The most significant argument for keeping the AFRC in place is the immediate costs involved with dissolving a MAJCOM. While it may not provide effective functionality as currently structured, Assistant Secretary Camarillo acknowledged, “administratively... AFRC would not be able to migrate easily, without a significant amount of change.”¹⁰⁰ In addition, Camarillo claims that most of the migration, how assignments are issued out, is handled by a new Total Force Integration Task Force through Air Force Headquarters. The Task Force’s primary job is to find out how to get more use out of the Guard and Reserve units, and this is now where decisions are being made. This alone makes the recommendation to dissolve the AFRC unnecessary in the immediate short-term. As Camarillo continues, there is just “not a good way to do the care and feeding that needs to be done” to accomplish this recommendation.¹⁰¹

Scenario Analysis

Assumptions will remain consistent for all four scenarios: The Air Force will sustain the same readiness levels at which the Active Duty and Reserve Component are all held to the same standards and goals, per DoD. The Deploy-to-Dwell ratio for the Reserve Component will remain at 1:5 and 1:2 for Active Duty members respectively. Policies and practices needed to sustain sufficient rates of volunteerism amongst the Reserve Component members will remain

static. Economic influences for global economic forecast predicts slow but steady growth over the evaluated time period, which influences recruiting and retention at a predictable rate. Resources available are constrained by Budget Control Act (BCA) and sequestration in accordance with a stressed forecast, similar to current real world analysis. Total end strength would be consistent with Fiscal Year 2015 levels and expected retention. Scenarios and primary axes are presented in Fig 5 below:

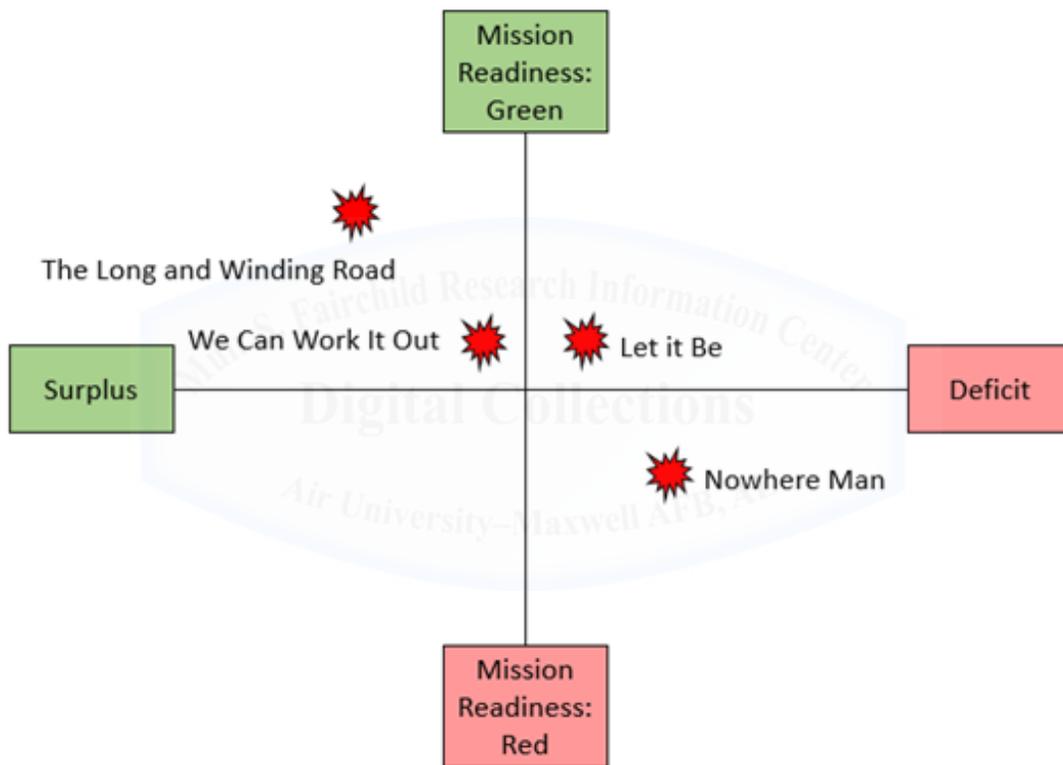


Fig 5. Scenarios and primary axes for analysis.

Let It Be

This scenario demonstrates an organic Total Force movement; integration will slowly happen as the Active Duty leans out due to retention issues, and AFRC and other MAJCOMs will be required to provide additional manning in specific AFSCs and special duties, and be driven by “the needs of the Air Force.” Additional efforts in recruiting will be a key factor in

this scenario, as Assistant Secretary Camarillo, states, “we are stove-piped in how we do recruiting.”¹⁰² Currently, as each component and element of each component (Active Duty, National Guard, and Reserve, officer and enlisted), maintains their own recruiting processes and database, the systems do not communicate across the spectrum of talent found. For instance, if and when a college student is interested in joining the Air National Guard and speaks with a National Guard recruiter, but is potentially qualified for ROTC, it is the burden of the individual recruiter to reach out to the ROTC Recruiting Flight Commander, (formerly the Unit Admissions Officer), and make sure they are aware of the individual, and add them to their list of potential prospects as well. If this does not happen, the individual could easily be enlisted, and only later find out they could have taken a different path, and have earned a commission as an officer while still taking college classes. In this scenario, the Air Force will be obligated into putting more money and resources into recruiting the best talent, as well as into retention efforts, to ensure the talent continues to produce results for the Air Force, whether on Active Duty or in the Reserve Component. This will drive costs and not guarantee immediate results.

This scenario would also take the longest time to bring about any significant change. There may be some progress, especially through continuing specialized programs such as VLPAD and enlisted RPA operator efforts, and each of these concepts will relieve manning shortages as they come and go. However, the largest downfall to this scenario is the Total Force will continue to “catch up” to required numbers, rather than get ahead of the future projections, and retention will continue to be an issue as we lose quality Airmen to civilian sector jobs, lack of opportunities in cross-training, or the ability to flex between Active Duty and Reserve Component. In addition, many of the challenges mentioned previously regarding training and inconsistent guidance will likely not be addressed in the near-term, which suggests that overall

mission readiness would continue to be an area of inconsistency between Active Duty members and Reserve Component. This scenario would likely produce low but constant levels of mission readiness, and some minimally higher costs, based on the predetermined assumptions.

Nowhere Man

This scenario is leadership driven and focused on individual efforts; AFRC in conjunction with MAJCOM leadership will support the Total Force in conjunction with Active Duty efforts, with the current efforts of the Secretary of the Air Force and Chief of Staff of the Air Force seeking fiscal savings beyond the Total Force Task Force and Task Force-Continuum initiatives. Currently, many efforts are sought for reducing costs, in a variety of realms. One example of this is “the Residential Energy Efficiency Program, which is designed to show base housing residents how much energy they use and how much it costs.”¹⁰³ RAF Lakenheath has reduced their water consumption by approximately 17 percent. In addition, Incirlik has saved over \$700,000 by reducing their own energy consumption throughout the installation by 26 percent.¹⁰⁴ Another significant cost saving plan the Air Force has been approaching is phasing out and retiring the A-10 Warthog aircraft, in favor of modernizing and introducing the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter as its replacement. The Air Force has concluded that the “benefits of divesting the A-10 outweighed retaining it” and estimated a \$4.2 billion savings over five years.¹⁰⁵ However, a secondary Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, claims that these estimated savings may not be accurate, and the “divestiture of the A-10 could also contribute to gaps due to the training focus of its aircrews, its wide range of weapons and its operational capabilities...”¹⁰⁶ This scenario would put together a multitude of cost-savings plans and programs, but at the reduced efficiency of the Reserve Component. The component mix of

Active Duty and Reserve Component forces would remain the same, and no savings would be realized. In addition, no mission readiness enhancement would be attained. This scenario reflects moving backwards from progressive Total Force policies and initiatives. There may be some very insignificant fiscal savings in individual areas, but at a loss of both mission readiness and utilization of the Reserve Component. There would be no benefits for Reserve Component members, and this scenario would not enhance mission readiness or increase overall savings for the Air Force Total Force. This scenario reflects a very antiquated view, and one that does not consider Total Force as a priority for future Air Force success.

The Long and Winding Road

This scenario involves dissolving the AFRC and restructuring the Reserve Component and Active Duty blend to the *National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force* proposed 58 percent Active Duty and 42 percent Reserve Component. “As the Air Force progresses toward fuller integration at the unit level, the need for an Air Force Reserve Command as a “force providing” headquarters declines...”¹⁰⁷ This restructuring would force Reserve Component members into the spotlight of Active Duty leadership, and would ensure Reserve Component members maintain high levels of readiness, increasing overall mission effectiveness. In the short-term this would likely increase costs, as the migration from dissolving the AFRC would be an initially difficult process. Long-term fiscal impacts would then see a slow trend in decreased costs, as more Reserve Component members take on backfill and traditional strategic reserve force roles, and continue to serve at significant savings as compared to Active Duty members. This scenario would put additional pressure on Active Duty commanders to ensure their allotted Reserve Component members meet training, mission readiness, and utilization requirements. Reserve Component members who want to serve on Active Duty would have

additional opportunities to do so, and this would encourage implementation of suggested Total Force efforts to guarantee component mixes at the highest levels of each unit's leadership elements (e.g., if the Commander was Active Duty, the Deputy would be a Reserve Component member).¹⁰⁸ The Air Force would also need to address limitations in the IMA program's identity and strategic planning. In this scenario, since AFRC would be dissolved, it would require each MAJCOM to assume full responsibility for its own assets, which would also solve the IMA conflict of identity. The Air Force can then, "determine and document the role of reservists in the Air Force of the future" and adjust policy to reflect this change accordingly.¹⁰⁹ This development will likely take years of further efforts, as dissemination of information to Reserve Component members is a complicated process. Assuming AFRC is dissolved, the policy changes would all be directed to the MAJCOMs, operational units, supervisors and the individual reserve members. In the case of the IMA program, it would either need to be dissolved completely, or absorbed into either an Active Duty or a Traditional Reserve force management structure. Since each IMA does not schedule IDT and AT duty at the same time, and personnel can often be six to eight months away from doing their required duties, there are many gaps in this effort which will either be overlooked, or just would not function properly along the way. The Air Force does not have the priorities or funding available to "modernize the information systems and communication channels" required by the IMA program.¹¹⁰ Ultimately, "with the help of senior leaders and minor course corrections, the functions of the IMA program should improve," but this would require significant efforts over a substantial amount of time, and there are many unknown variables which are not taken into account in this scenario.¹¹¹ For this scenario, dissolving the AFRC would ultimately provide cost-savings, but initially would create costs, and could also create mission ineffectiveness, as systems and processes would not integrate smoothly

or quickly. Mission readiness would be affected for a significant number of Reserve Component members as the transition occurred, and until the systems were in place to support the integration over to the MAJCOMs, this would likely result in a variety of readiness discrepancies. While in the long-term, this scenario provides the most cost savings and mission readiness benefits, the disadvantages are the uncertainty and unpredictability of future escalations, or operational tempo required of future forces.

We Can Work It Out

This scenario implements one suggestion from the *National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force* report that proposes the Active Duty and Reserve Component blend at 58 percent and 42 percent, respectively. This adjustment in numbers would create savings in both the short and long-term. Modifying the increase of Active Duty end strength by compensating with Reserve Component members will save the Air Force significant amounts in training, retirement, and infrastructure. It allows the Air Force to continue Total Force Task Force and Total Force-Continuum efforts to work toward the “revolving door” concept for Active Duty and Reserve Component members, and utilize the Reserve Force Development concept of the “right fit at the right time.”¹¹² This would allow Reserve Component members the ability to return to Active Duty, or for Active Duty members to transition to the Reserve Component more fluidly. Currently, moving to the Reserve Component is relatively easy, as, “in the past the continuum has flowed only toward the Reserve Components because a combination of law and tradition has made it exceptionally difficult for Airmen to return to Active Component.”¹¹³ A restructure and complete overhaul of the IMA program, would ensure all Reserve Component members are fully involved, maintaining readiness, and managed appropriately. This scenario would also require

the Air Force to stay ahead of the budget requirements for each fiscal year, and would allow retention to be more accurately projected for areas short in manpower, as well as future recruiting areas. “Relying on the Reserve Component as a source when building force structure to alleviate shortfalls or preserve or expand capacity especially in cases where the Reserves are particularly well suited and cost is a consideration.”¹¹⁴

This recommendation would likely not create as much significant savings in the long-term as *The Long and Winding Road* scenario, but would provide for slow growth and progressive steps toward Total Force integration. This scenario accounts for most unpredictable situations with regard to budget concerns, as well as uncertainty in operational tempo. This also would allow for the current structure to remain in place, which would create the least force management problems for the foreseeable future. The structure and directives already exist to unify personnel management for all three components (Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard, Active Duty) under a single integrated organization (A1) in the Headquarters Air Staff (HAF).¹¹⁵ This recommendation would allow room for this “3 to 1” Human Resources Management to actually be put in place, and to further the efforts to include recruiting, assignments, force development, and force management.¹¹⁶ This scenario allows for the most favorable utilization and readiness of Reserve Component members, while not increasing initial costs. This would allow short-term savings and the most effective integration efforts, with the least risk of uncertainty or instability.

Recommendations

The proposal to dissolve the Air Force Reserve Command would allow for the Major Command (MAJCOM) to truly “own” Reserve Component assets, and allow the MAJCOM to direct and properly utilize each Total Force member effectively. Just as Active Duty personnel

are ultimately allocated to the MAJCOM, it would make sense to apply the same principles for a Reserve Component member who is either assigned to augment or backfill them. However, as noted in Assistant Secretary Camarillo's statements, "there is work that is done by AFRC that would not be able to migrate easily" and the Air Force would potentially spend additional resources trying to dissolve the AFRC, and this recommendation could cost more than it would effectively save in the short-term.¹¹⁷ While this is a highly encouraged solution for the long-term, it would not be recommended for the immediate two to three years, when uncertainty is high for future budgets. While funding for the next two years is relatively positive, there is no guarantee for later, and, according to Chief Financial Officer, Mike McCord, "we would still absorb about \$800 billion of cuts over 10 years from the BCA."¹¹⁸ Looking at this from the perspective of Air Force leadership, it does appear to be beneficial to dissolve the AFRC, considering long-term effects, but based purely on immediate needs, and the uncertainty of the future, it is not recommended in the short-term.

While AFRC may not be dissolved, the recommendation to allow Reserve Component members leadership opportunities within the Active Duty structure is still highly supported and encouraged. In allowing Reserve Component leadership the ability to serve alongside Active Duty component members, as a Vice, Deputy or Commander, this aspect of professional development will also allow for Reserve Component members to be utilized more effectively, and for the Total Force mission to be realized. This assignment process would also very likely ensure there are no overlaps in requests, allocations, or under-utilization of Reserve Component member within the particular unit or command. In many ways, this would raise the standards and visibility of the Reserve Component members, and ensure there are no "weekend warriors" in the mix, shirking readiness requirements, and collecting a pay check for attending the minimum

required days, with limited oversight. This example would be similar to when IMA personnel were responsible for administration of the IMA program management within their own units; having a Reserve Component leader would keep the Reserve Component members responsible to someone who has knowledge of the Reserve Component rule set, and how it applies to the Total Force. In this way, there will always be a leadership element who can interpret, translate, or correct any guidance or policy that affects Reserve Component members differently than Active Duty members.

This research also concludes that a true Continuum of Service would include the consideration to, “allow members to transition to a part-time Reserve Component position with the potential to return to the Active Component when circumstances change.”¹¹⁹ While the recommendation for a Continuum of Service to allow members to transition smoothly from Active Duty to a Reserve Component was included in the approved findings from the *National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force*, the reversal was not found anywhere in any reports, or leadership analysis from the Active Duty perspective. While there are many known benefits and cost savings to having Reserve Component members perform temporary Active Duty missions, there is also a consideration that retention and recruitment would be greater if the possibility existed where a member could serve in any capacity they chose. For example, if a Reserve Component member took five years away from Active Duty to further their education or raise a family, they could then come back to Active Duty in one of the career fields in high demand, and continue their military career. The cost savings would benefit the Air Force in terms of retirement and benefits, and the member would be allowed time needed for a civilian career, family, medical hardship, education, or to preserve their health and well-being by taking some needed time off from sustained operations on Active Duty. Many members who were

previously affected by Reduction in Forces (RIF) actions could also potentially benefit, as the Air Force fluctuates between losing highly qualified personnel and then needing additional personnel in later years down the road, as instabilities frequently occur in manpower requirements. As an example, in 2014, the Air Force was instructed to cut its Active Duty ranks by over 16,000 Airmen, yet just two years later, in 2016, the Air Force was allowed to grow the Active Duty end strength by approximately 1.3 percent, or 4,000 personnel.¹²⁰ If personnel transitioned to the Reserve Components for a period of time to stay in service, then wanted to jump back into the Active Duty component, they should be allowed the opportunity to do so, if manpower deficits exist, especially at the experience, ranks, and education levels those individuals may already have.

Finally, as a result of the full Total Force proposals and efforts currently reviewed and analyzed by this research, it is suggested that the Air Force continue its efforts to adopt the *National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force* proposal to shift the component mix from Active Duty to 58 percent and the Reserve Component to 42 percent. When compared to the Army's proposals of Total Force, and the analysis of Air Force leadership, it is apparent that most current military structures are seeing benefits with increasing utilization of Reserve Component forces. Even in the United Kingdom, "as a result of their 2010 Strategic Defense and Security Review, the British military initiated a significant reform of its Reserve Component force. The reforms include increasing the size of their Reserve Components (doubling the size of their Army Reserve), increasing investment in Reserve Component readiness, and regularly using their Reserve Components to complement their active forces."¹²¹ While the recommendations included in *The Long and Winding Road* would provide for the effective use of Reserve Components, it would not necessary generate the stability and short-term effects

necessary for successful mission accomplishment. The recommendations proposed in the scenario *We Can Work It Out* are a blend of balanced and efficient methods to increase readiness, utilization, and stability for the Total Force. Increasing the utilization and readiness of the Reserve Component members only enhances and enables the Total Force to perform its mission, and to be more effective, more efficient, and to leverage the talent we already have within the Air Force.

Conclusions

We are making ends meet with this much smaller force precisely because today's Air Force is more integrated across the active duty, the National Guard and Reserve," she said. "We are asking more of you, we are utilizing your talents more now than ever before, and I would say that's precisely because we need you now more than even we did before.

- Deborah Lee James, Secretary of the Air Force, 2016¹²²

The United States Air Force has over 690,000 Total Force Airmen who are highly trained, highly capable, and battle tested. The Total Force efforts continue to be pushed toward "seamless integration."¹²³ The Air Force has an ingrained sense of innovation, and yet the solutions for Total Force integration are not fully operational or up to speed with the current rate of how the Reserve Component forces are utilized. Data shows cost and resource benefits from increasing the Reserve Component end strength, yet the Air Force has not accepted these proposals from the 2013 *National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force*.¹²⁴ The Air Force is also dedicated to supporting and sustaining the right size and force ratio to meet mission tasking responsibilities with appropriate personnel tempo and operational stress on the force.¹²⁵ Balancing the lives, families, and health of the *citizen-soldier* remains vital to the wellbeing of the all-volunteer force, yet has not been entirely effective. Reserve veterans face greater mental and physical health risks without the support of the Active Duty networks and services, and with

the increased tempo of mobilizations, need further research to facilitate healthy and successful balanced integration in their Reserve Component duties, as well as in their civilian lives.

In addition, Reserve Component members must maintain readiness at the same levels of proficiency as their Active Duty counterparts. Active Duty units and commanders must be able to provide ample training opportunities, utilize members with civilian skill sets closely resembling their Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC), and ensure proactive communication to which the Reserve Component members are allocated. These factors will all help to achieve the most effective use from each member.

Alongside of taking care of Airmen and meeting mission readiness requirements, the Air Force must also look for cost savings solutions which leverage talent, resources, and provide the most benefit to the service and the member. Current vacancies in career fields such as Cyber, Maintenance, and Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) domains could each benefit significantly from VLPAD programs, such as ones currently being offered to select reservists who are currently instructors for the Air Force ROTC. An added benefit of utilizing Reserve Component members in these types of roles is that many have critical experience due to their civilian jobs. As an example, many Security Forces reservists are law enforcement officers in their civilian careers, and bring a vast level of experience and knowledge into the Active Duty forces every time they perform IDTs or come in for their AT to conduct required training. Secretary of the Air Force, Deborah Lee James, stated, “some of you have gained experience every day that we can leverage better...”¹²⁶ The Air Force will benefit greatly in applying this Total Force concept by utilizing Reserve Component members effectively to fill manpower and resource gaps where the Active Duty cannot do so efficiently.

While the Air Force has implemented or initiated many of the 42 recommended suggestions from the results of the *National Commission of the Structure of the Air Force*, they did not take on two significant proposals of the commission's findings, which were to dissolve the Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) and to reorganize the Air Force structure to a 58 to 42 percent Active Duty to Reserve Component ratio.¹²⁷ As shown in the scenario *The Long and Winding Road* and *We Can Work It Out*, these types of far-reaching measures would be advantageous, in addition to including further applications of Total Force integration efforts, in order to stay ahead of the needs of the Air Force. However, as the scenarios also suggest, we may not be quite ready to assume the costs of dissolving a MAJCOM quite yet, as evident by the discussion of Assistant Secretary Camarillo, as well as analysis of other Air Force leadership. Current efforts to achieve Total Force stability would be best addressed by achieving balance in the component ratio of Active Duty and Reserve Component mix, as well as increasing the utilization of Reserve Component members, without over-stressing certain career fields. The level of uncertainty of future budgets make it difficult to balance priorities and predict capabilities to modernize, manage readiness, and right-size the force. Every proactive measure taken to balance the costs, readiness, and utilization of Active Duty and Reserve Component members is a step forward in allowing the Air Force's Total Force to continue to, "Aim High... Fly-Fight-Win."¹²⁸

Notes

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Acronyms

Active Component (AC)

Administrative Control (ADCON)

Advanced Distributed Learning System (ADLS)

Aerospace Control Alert (ACA)

Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC)

Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC)

Air National Guard (ANG)

Air Reserve Component (ARC)

Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC)

Annual Training (AT)

Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC)

Brigade Combat Team (BCT)

Budget Control Act (BCA)

Chief of Staff of the Air Force (CSAF)

Department of Defense (DoD)

Department of Justice (DOJ)

Fitness Improvement Plan (FIP)

Government Accountability Office (GAO)

Headquarters Air Staff (HAF)

Inactive Duty Training (IDT)

Inactive Ready Reserve (IRR)

Individual Mobilization Augmentee (IMA)

Individual Reservist (IR)

Institute of Medicine (IOM)

Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM)

Major Command (MAJCOM)

Military Personnel Appropriation (MPA)

New Hampshire (N.H.)

Operational Control (OPCON)

Physical Fitness Assessment (PFA)

President of the United States (POTUS)

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Reduction in Forces (RIF)

Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA)

Royal Air Force (RAF)

Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD P&R)

United States (US)

United States Air Force (USAF)

United States Air Force Reserve (USAFR)

United States Army (USA)

Voluntary Limited Period of Active Duty (VLPAD)

