

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**MID-GRADE ARMY RESERVE OFFICERS –  
IN SHORT SUPPLY OF A CRITICAL  
COMPONENT OF A STRATEGIC MEANS**

by

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# Report Documentation Page

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## ABSTRACT

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The members of the reserve components of the United States constitute a strategic means, to enable the execution of U.S. strategy. This has been clearly demonstrated in the recent Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). Unfortunately, in the struggle for limited resources within the U.S. democracy, and in terms of recent events, the U.S. Army and its reserve components now appear to have been under resourced in terms of personnel for over a decade. While the members of the reserve components have made tremendous contributions to the GWOT that vastly outweigh the relative cost of maintaining them, they are nearly exhausted under current mobilization policy. Among those most critical and difficult to replace today are the experienced mid-grade officers of the Army's reserve components.

The Army uses a model called Mobilization Manpower Planning System, or MOBMAN, to project personnel requirements, casualty figures, and indirectly as a means of setting goals for inventory of reserve personnel. MOBMAN only supported full mobilization planning until it was modified to include partial mobilization planning in 1994. Today, the U.S. is engaged in a protracted campaign at partial mobilization. Recent planning did not give adequate consideration to the possibility of a large scale, extended partial mobilization event with its 24 month service limit. The Cold War models estimated requirements to replace projected casualties in percentages of the force. Current mobilization policy requires nearly every mobilized reservist to be replaced at, or before, the 24 month mark, as though they were a casualty. This has caused the U.S. to rapidly exhaust forces reduced in size during the 1990s.

This paper examines issues which brought us to where we are today, how much downward trend we can continue to expect, and some options for maintaining or improving critical reserve personnel inventories.



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## PREFACE

After I had been a field grade officer in the United States Army Reserve (USAR) long enough to get over the shock of arriving at “career status” sometime in the mid to late 1990s, I became even more interested in the dynamics of the population I was part of. I had been schooled over the years on the considerations for career success and I began studying in an attempt to divine my future prospects. I read all the professional material I could get my hands on and I engaged others in discussion at every chance.

What began to emerge was a current picture, which did not jive with what I was taught when I was younger. The more I spoke to leaders, peers, and junior officers, the more apparent that things were no longer the same as I had been trained to expect earlier in my career.

I had been active in the Reserve Officers Association for several years and had done some work on a committee, which addressed Individual Mobilization Augmentee (IMA) and Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) issues. I eventually became the committee chairperson. In that capacity, I began to request information on reserve officer population numbers. This led to meeting Majors (both now Lieutenant Colonels) Francisco Espaillat and Joseph Whitlock, who were Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) officers working at the Army Reserve Personnel Command in St. Louis, MO (now Human Resources Command - St. Louis).

Francisco provided a superb briefing on the fundamentals of reserve career management at the Reserve Officers Association Mid-Winter Conference in January 2000. He also gave a detailed outline of the reserve officer population. It was the first time I had ever seen numbers to confirm what I was seeing when I inspected USAR units and spoke with other Army reserve component officers. Francisco passionately described the continuing shortage of Army reserve component officers as a “train wreck in progress”. He repeated his performance at Mid-Winter 2001 and 2002 with updated data, which continued to track downward.

Joseph Whitlock was Espaillat’s work partner in St. Louis. He went on to the School of Advanced Military Studies at Fort Leavenworth, KS where he wrote a definitive paper on what was by then, an undisputable shortage of company grade officers in the Army Reserve. It was completed in May of 2002 and titled “*Can the Army Reserve Overcome its Growing Company Grade Officer Shortage?*”

Recently there has been a spate of articles published on the “sudden” discovery of a shortage of personnel, including officers, in the reserve components of the Army. I can attest that Espaillat and Whitlock accurately detected the growing officer shortage not later than 1997. This paper builds upon their work and follows what was “only” a company grade shortage that has now, predictably, entered the field grades, encompassing what I call the “mid-grades”.





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In memory of Sergeant Major Richard “Dick” A. Wolf, Sr., “Team Daddy” - ODA 20-52

I would like to make further special acknowledgement of some of my other mentors. They also made me sensitive to what is going on with and around Soldiers. They too taught me how to take care of myself and teach others.

Command Sergeant Major Barney Rasor, USA (Ret.), he never crossed paths with a Soldier he did not encourage or inquire into their development, both personal and professional. He is the epitome of a Soldier and a model I strive to follow.

Brigadier General Steven P. Solomon, ARNGUS (Ret.), my first company commander, was never too busy to sit down and help a Soldier.

Colonels Joseph K. Wilson, Jr and James D. Hornaday, USA (Ret.), they exemplified how strong role models in ROTC instructors can raise the aspirations of young people.

Colonel Steve Peace, AUS (Ret), and Lieutenant Colonel Charlie Crumpton, AUS (Ret.) the two best Personnel Management Officers who ever roamed the halls of 9700 Page Boulevard, know today as Human Resources Command – St. Louis.

Colonel Eric Haertel, USAR, a fellow Floridian and platoon leader back when there was a 193<sup>rd</sup> Separate Infantry Brigade in Panama. He repeatedly encouraged me to join the AGR program and has continued to coach me as I followed distantly in his footsteps.

Major Scott P. McConnell, USAR, my best friend, best man, and “battle buddy” for almost 28 years. Scott showed me the kind of family I wanted, and am lucky enough, to have.

To the members of the Reserve Officers Association of the United States who have shared their experiences and wisdom. ROA has been a constant source of community and fraternity as I have moved from assignment to assignment for over 12 years.

Finally, to all the Soldiers I have served with who allowed me to practice the military profession as an affair of the heart.

Thank you all.



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## **MID-GRADE ARMY RESERVE OFFICERS – IN SHORT SUPPLY OF A CRITICAL COMPONENT OF A STRATEGIC MEANS**

On January 5<sup>th</sup> 2005 a memorandum from Lieutenant General James R. Helmly, Chief, Army Reserve to General Peter J. Schoomaker, the Army Chief of Staff hit the press. The memorandum outlined the finite remaining personnel assets of the U.S. Army Reserve available to support Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom and noted that the Army Reserve was “rapidly degenerating in to a “broken” force.”<sup>1</sup> Many of those who serve in the Army Reserve had been concerned for some time about the health of the force and its ability to meet the requirements of multiple waves of continued mobilization. Several news articles and editorials questioning how much use the reserve components could withstand were published in the months leading up to the Helmly memo’s publication. This paper examines issues which brought us to where we are today, why we can expect a continued downward trend in reserve officer strengths, and some options for improving critical reserve officer inventories. Personnel shortages exist across the force today, but this paper focuses on the shortage of experienced mid-grade officers who require lengthy training to replace. It is time to take action to retain the officers we have and to produce more officers by all possible means. The ability of the United States to project military power over an extended period and in sufficient numbers to meet policy objectives demands it.

### **THE CITIZEN SOLDIER AND TODAY**

American history has examples of citizen soldiers from the earliest European settling of the continent. As such, the citizen soldier concept is an enduring belief that helps lead to a developed U.S. National Security Strategy.<sup>2</sup> It is also the law of the land as embedded in the United States Constitution militia clauses and it is current military policy, notably back to the Laird Total Force Concept/ Schlesinger Total Force Policy/ Abrams Doctrine of the 1970s. In the wake of the Vietnam War, the Army realigned its structure so that the Active Component could not conduct sustained operations without reserve component augmentation.<sup>3</sup>

The American military is an element of national power and it is certainly a tool for the exercise of U.S. National Security Policy.<sup>4</sup> The Army and its reserve components are a means of conducting national strategy.<sup>5</sup> There is also little debate that the United States is currently the preeminent military power in the world, but it cannot conduct large scale, sustained operations without its reserve components.

Therefore, the highly trained and experienced officers who lead the Army and its reserve components, the Army National Guard (ARNG) and the United States Army Reserve (USAR),

can be considered a critical component of a strategic means. Within this critical component, a crucial segment is the mid-grade officer population. Junior officers can be trained relatively quickly in an emergency, and the Army has yet to see a shortage of generals.

Specifically, use of "mid-grade" in this paper includes: Captains, Majors, and Lieutenant Colonels. This description overlaps the traditional "company grades" of Second Lieutenant, First Lieutenant, and Captain, with the "field grades" of Major, Lieutenant Colonel, and Colonel.

If you accept the premise that mid-grade reserve officers of the Army are a critical component to a strategic means, then too, it follows that the asset must be maintained in sufficient quantity to enable the conduct of national strategy.

The focus of the U.S. defense strategy on high technology methods to wage war has become a victim of its success. Enemies have also leveraged technology to disperse and become much more difficult targets for high technology weapons. In classic guerilla fashion, they are generally avoiding massing locally, where they may be defeated in detail. Combating such a threat is a manpower intensive effort.

For now, the Islamist terrorists have been drawn to Iraq. However, they have the ability to move on to other countries or regions where instability or lack of government control will allow them freedom of action. Just as they departed Fallujah and spread out to other Iraqi towns once coalition forces committed to decisive action in Fallujah, they can move beyond Iraq. The implication is that the U.S. is likely to be engaged in asymmetric warfare on a significant scale for the foreseeable future.

At the same time, just as the United States experienced Hurricane Andrew in 1992 as a eye opening major catastrophe, so too has the world just seen the Asian Tsunami as a harbinger of potentially massive scale disasters to come. "If" not being the question, but rather when and where the next event will occur being the issue.

The United States' military must remain a robust and fully manned force, capable of conducting operations across a broad continuum and more than likely at multiple locations. None of this argues for a smaller total force.

Every chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Today, one of the links in the U.S. military that is under a great deal of stress is the Army's reserve officer corps. Without an experienced core of mid-grade officers, a military organization would grind to a painful halt. (The same can be said relative to the enlisted mid-grades within their realm of work.)

By sheer weight of numbers and the nature of ground combat, the Army has been the most heavily engaged in post 9/11 operations. Unfortunately, the Army drew down its personnel

strength and structure, both active and reserve, significantly after the fall of the Soviet Union and the first Gulf War in 1991.

## Active Duty U.S. Army Strength

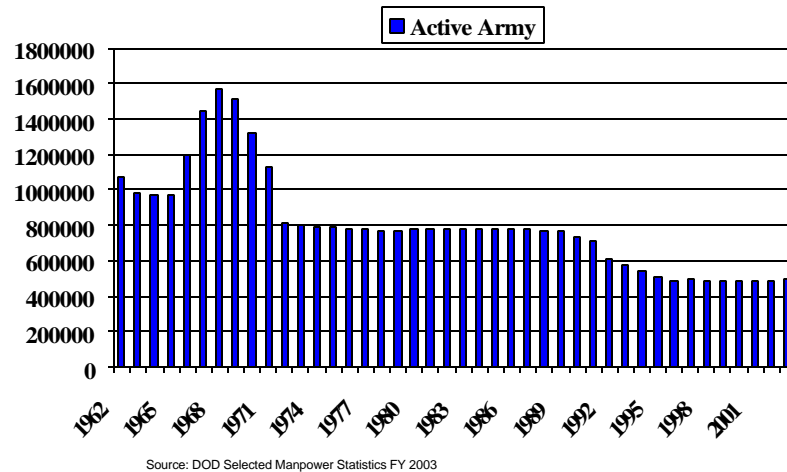


FIGURE 1

The United States has a tradition of rapid demobilization followed by traumatic mobilization between major combat actions. In the end, the soldier suffers as well as the civilians in the combat zone who inevitably must endure longer periods of privation and danger because the warfare takes longer to conclude. General Creighton Abrams, Army Chief of Staff 1972 – 1974, said "...I am appalled at the human cost that we've paid because we would not prepare to fight".<sup>6</sup> A good argument can even be made that excessive de-mobilization creates a perception of weakness which adversaries believe they can exploit and that the cost of ensuing conflict exceeds by several orders of magnitude the savings of excessive demobilization.<sup>7</sup>

Today, warfare is so expensive, both to conduct and to repair the effects of, that we literally cannot afford to be caught unprepared. Additionally, the cost of keeping an active force prepared in periods of peace is so expensive that a significant reserve force must augment the depth and strength in that total force if it is to be truly robust. Furthermore, any review of recent political discourse will show the competition for distribution of wealth and resources in a democracy such as the United States is enormous.



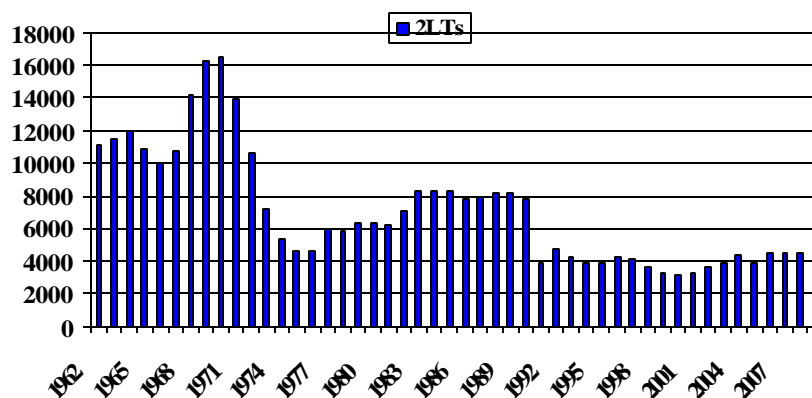
On November 17<sup>th</sup> 2004, Lieutenant General James R. Helmly, the Chief, Army Reserve and the senior Army Reserve officer of the Army testified before the House Armed Services Committee that the Army Reserve is short of officers and that someone was “asleep at the switch”. He expects it to take “five to seven years before we can correct the imbalance”.<sup>8</sup>

### IN THE BEGINNING

To examine the shortage of reserve officers, one must begin at the front end of the shortage, and that is with the numbers of officers created through the various means used by the Army and the capacity of those programs to adjust to needs.

The Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) is a college-based program, which provides the Army with a majority of its officers, both active, and reserve.<sup>9</sup> The program generally lasts four years, but two-year versions exist.<sup>10</sup>

## Army ROTC Officer Production and out year goals



Source:1962-1995 from U.S. Army Cadet Command: The 10 Year History; 1996-2004 from e-mail of Dr Arthur T. Coumbe, Co-author of Cadet Command's 10 year History and current command historian of Cadet Command ; 2005-2009 'goals' from Cadet Command briefing slide at <http://www.rotc.mil/rotc.army.mil/commands/rocc-histings/index.htm>

FIGURE 2

ROTC production has been at about 4,000, sometimes less, since 1992. During the two years of lowest production following the Vietnam War, it never went below 4,500. An article on Army ROTC in the October 2004 AUSA News notes that ROTC “made its mission” in 2003. That is “the first time since 1989”.<sup>11</sup> It should be noted however that this in no way means the Army’s reserve components are currently getting enough lieutenants to begin to overcome the

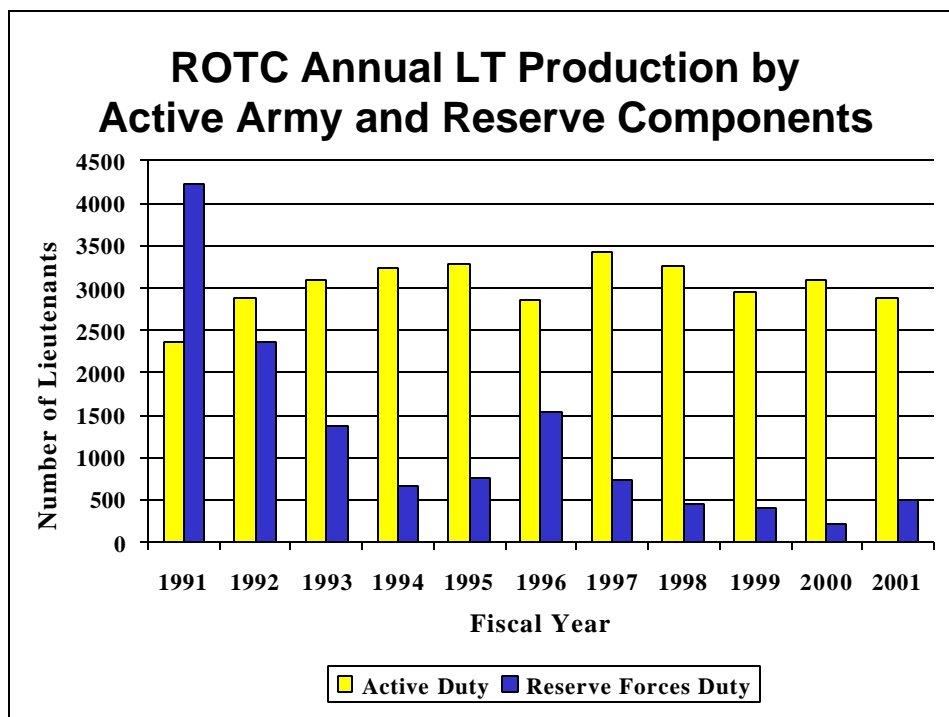
shortages created by nearly a decade and a half of inadequate input. The Army Reserve received ROTC lieutenants for FY 97-01 as follows: 97 - 220, 98 – 152, 99 – 146, 00 - 76, 01 – 151.<sup>12</sup> That is simply not enough entry-level leaders to staff the force structure of an organization with over 200,000 positions.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, the lieutenants who were not produced during those five years did not, or will not, go on to become captains.

These years of minimal lieutenant production for the USAR from ROTC correspond directly with the peak of the active component voluntary losses of Captains described by former Army officer Mark Lewis in his article *Army Transformation and the Junior Officer Exodus*.<sup>14</sup> Lewis describes factors which exacerbated the attrition rate of active component Captains between 1995 and 2001. Many of these factors apparently carried over to their reserve peers or, more importantly, were so critical that they induced a failure to continue participation in the reserve components after leaving active duty.<sup>15</sup> Lewis also notes that the Army's reaction to its active component company grade officer shortage in the late 1990s was to promote lieutenants faster and to increase lieutenant production.<sup>16</sup> As the Army ROTC Officer Production chart and numbers of ROTC officers going to the USAR from FY 97-01 above, and the ROTC Annual LT Production by Active Army and Reserve Components chart below point out, what the active component did was in fact, take a grossly disproportionate share of ROTC production to buck up its strength at the expense of both the USAR and the ARNG.

Varying accession rates of ROTC officers between components has always been a method of adjusting to needs, and rightfully so. However, as the numbers became increasingly skewed to support the active component requirements, Army personnel managers should have recommended immediate corrective action. That corrective action should have included an increased production for ROTC after 1997. In fact, ROTC production dropped off after 1996 and did not exceed the 1997 production until 2004.

Coupling reduced input of young officers with fewer officers coming to the reserve from a smaller and more career oriented active duty force constituted a “double whammy” for the reserve officer corps.<sup>17</sup> A damaging trifecta occurred after a war started on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 and the hazards of service increased along with needs for manpower and likelihood of mobilization.

The AUSA article on ROTC also quotes General George C. Marshall testifying to a “Senate Panel” in April 1941 as saying “...the most valuable single measure of national defense we had available was the Reserve Corps built up by ROTC.”<sup>18</sup> General Marshall's timeless wisdom is worth remembering even in light of today's highly automated readiness reporting systems.



Source: Joseph E. Whitlock, *Can the Army Reserve Overcome its Growing Company Grade Officer Shortage?*, Monograph (Fort Leavenworth: United States Army Command and General Staff College, AY 01-02), 17.

FIGURE 3

The origin of the extreme decline in ROTC production may be traced to a critical General Accounting Office report from May 1991 (# GAO/NSIAD-91-102) entitled *Reserve Officers' Training Corps – Less Need for Officers Provides Opportunity for Significant Savings*. The report notes overproduction of lieutenants in the Army and Air Force ROTC programs.<sup>19</sup>

The lag time in funding, recruiting, training, and commissioning ROTC officers forces attention to the 1989 date when ROTC last met its mission and the May 1991 date of the GAO report addressing an opportunity for a financial savings. By the time the report was written and released, ROTC was about to fail to meet its mission for a second year in what would become a thirteen year string of inadequate production.

Again, reporting systems have improved dramatically in the last 15 years, but the time delay from increasing the funding and mission of ROTC programs to putting a new, fully trained lieutenant in a unit has not. It remains approximately six years. (One year to increase the following years budget, one year to recruit against a higher mission, four years of the normal

college program, and several months of initial entry training upon completion of ROTC and college graduation.) In a long-term sense, it is far less expensive to over-produce (arguably) ROTC graduates than to suffer the consequences of definitive under-production. Unfortunately, until world events play out several years down the road, it is very difficult to tell what the “correct” minimum level of ROTC production is. It would be fair to say though, that the correct level of reserve officer production is one that does not lead to shortages.

The GAO report refers to Officer Candidate School (OCS) being able to adjust production in order to cushion against decreased (or presumably increased) demand for lieutenants.<sup>20</sup> However, the paradigm for OCS has been affected by the absence of a draft that once brought more college graduates and others with the minimum requirements for entering OCS, into the service. The Army currently has only one active duty site for OCS and that is Fort Benning, GA. It teaches 10 regular classes a year of up to 160 students, and according to the OCS web site, since 1998, they have also done the final phase of OCS for all State National Guard OCS programs with about 650 reserve component graduates a year.<sup>21</sup>

The United States Military Academy at West Point is also a four-year program, and based on the size of the installation and the type of program, it has a relatively fixed output of about 1,000 new lieutenants per year.<sup>22</sup>

Direct commissions offer a means of producing commissioned officers, but they require the applicant to hold a college degree. The Army solicits civilians for direct commissions to meet special branch needs for professions such as doctors, dentists, veterinarians, other medical disciplines, chaplains, and attorneys. Currently, the Army Reserve is also soliciting Soldiers who have four-year degrees to apply for direct commissions as line (non-technical) officers as well.<sup>23</sup> However, since the end of the draft, and in periods of a strong job market, one would expect fewer college graduates are entering the Army Reserve as enlisted Soldiers.<sup>24</sup> Many of those interested in direct commissions are likely to have earned their degree using educational benefits derived from military service. If they have benefited from positive leadership while serving as enlisted Soldiers, the likelihood of them applying for a commission and continuing to serve could be expected to increase. However, the existing shortage of company grade officers does not support this because the few officers in units are frequently under great pressure to accomplish tasks intended for a larger number of officers and that is probably not making their situation look very attractive.

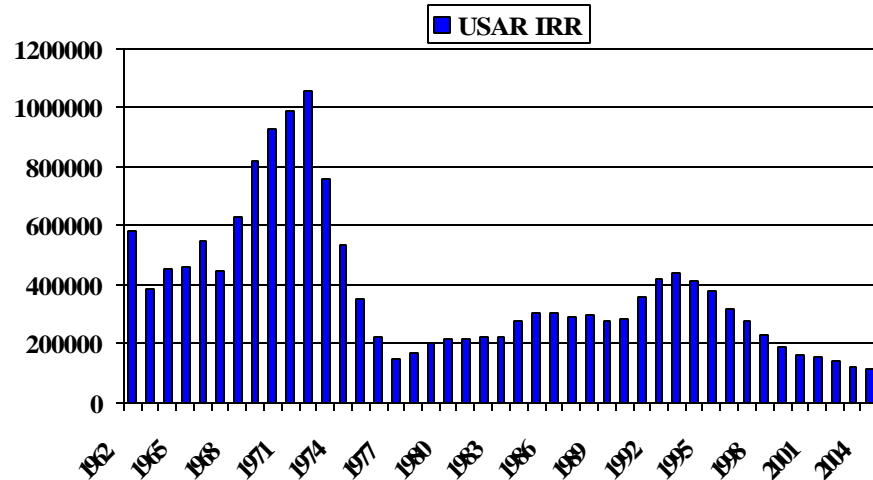
Of the four major sources of commissioned officers of the Army, only ROTC, taught at 270 universities and colleges around the nation, has the clear capacity to vary production to meet changing needs on a strategic scale.<sup>25</sup>

## THE COCKTAIL EFFECT

Now, consider the second and third order effects of what a cocktail of nearly a decade and a half of ROTC not “meeting its mission”; a structural drawdown; generous early separation/retirement programs; a generally good, if not booming, economy; the absence of the draft; changed societal conditions and expectations; repeated mobilizations; an on-going war against “Global Terrorism”; and other changes has brought to the Army’s reserve officer corps.

## USAR Individual Ready Reserve as of 30 Sept

(\* 1983 is as of Jan 31)



Source: 1962-1995 Twice the Citizen – A History of the Army Reserve 1908-1995  
 1996-2003 DOD Selected Manpower Statistics FY 2003– FY 2004 as of 31 Oct 04  
 Note: For Mobilization, 70% of enlisted and 90% of IRR officers are expected available.

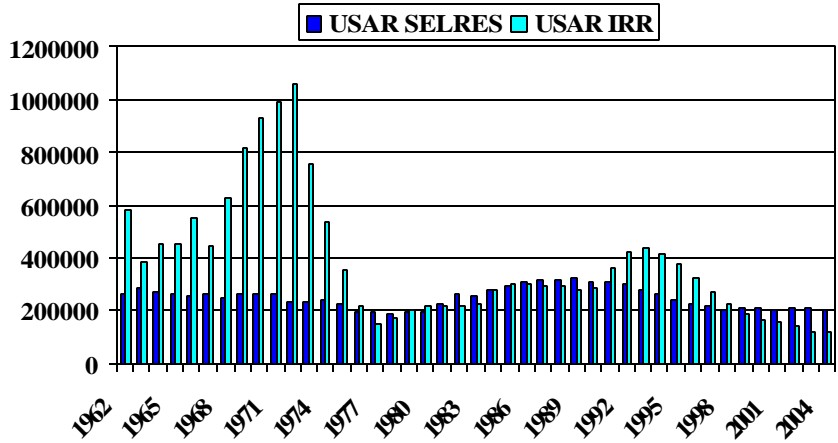
FIGURE 4.

The Army’s Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) is down to its lowest strength since its creation as a term and measurement in 1962. (114,760 on 31 Oct 2004)

The Army’s ratio of IRR to SELRES (members of organized and paid units, Active Guard & Reserve members, and individual augmentees) is at an all time low.

# USAR Selected Reserve and IRR as of 30 Sept

(\* 1983 is as of Jan 31)

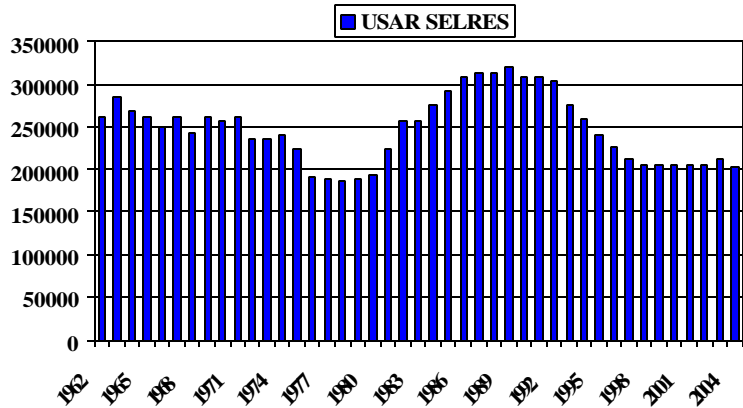


Source: 1962-1995 Twice the Citizen – A History of the Army Reserve 1908-1995  
 1996-2003 DOD Selected Manpower Statistics FY 2003 – FY 2004 as of 31 Oct 04  
 Note: For Mobilization, 70% of enlisted and 90% of IRR officers are expected available.

FIGURE 5.

# USAR Selected Reserve as of 30 Sept

(\* 1983 is as of Jan 31)



Source: 1962-1995 Twice the Citizen – A History of the Army Reserve 1908-1995  
 1996-2003 DOD Selected Manpower Statistics FY 2003 – FY 2004 as of 31 Oct 04  
 Note: For Mobilization, 70% of enlisted and 90% of IRR officers are expected available.

FIGURE 6.

The total number of Army IRR officers was down to 18,166 as of 31 August 2004 and dropping. (In 1994 there were 63,195 officers in the Army's IRR.)<sup>26</sup> Planning factors expect that 90% of these officers would report for mobilization if called, but it is difficult to tell which officers are viable at any given moment.<sup>27</sup> This is the whole pool available to fill all individual officer vacancies in a total army force structure in excess of 1.1 million without reaching into the tiny Standby Reserve and Inactive ARNG, or going to the aging retiree pool.

### Total Army IRR Officers



FIGURE 7.

The Army Promotion List (APL) boards which select reserve officers, except chaplains and medical personnel, for promotion in the Army's reserve components have not met the selection objective for Captain since before 1997 (when the Reserve Officer Personnel Management Act, or ROPMA, began requiring selection objectives), for Major since before 1997, and since 1999 for Lieutenant Colonel.<sup>28</sup> In addition, many of the cohorts of year groups of ROTC produced lieutenants in shortage years have not had time to be promoted to some of these grades yet.<sup>29</sup>

Reserve promotion selection rates have skyrocketed, reaching, at times, above 90% of first time consideres who were educationally qualified for Captain, Major, and Lieutenant Colonel. At the same time, these selection boards are failing to promote the desired number of officers. In historic context, this is difficult for many experienced reservists to imagine.

ARMY RESERVE COMPONENT APL BOARD STATISTICS

TO CPT:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>CONS</u>	<u>SELECT</u>	<u>SEL OBJ</u>	<u>ED Q</u>	<u>FT CONS ED Q %</u>
1997	<b>6053</b>	1464	3825	2137	80% (1341/1678)
1998	6174	1406	1861	2334	74% (1092/1482)
1999	4467	1479	1950	2385	70% (1134/1628)
2000	3907	2207	2300	2605	88% (1639/1858)
2001	3130	1503	3003	2111	81% (1297/1609)
2002	2295	1729	2703	1769	<b>99%</b> (1272/1291)
2003	<b>1520</b>	<b>920</b>	FQ	1089	86% (839/975)
2004	<b>1417</b>	1065	FQ	1117	<b>97%</b> (842/866)

TO MAJ:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>CONS</u>	<u>SELECT</u>	<u>SEL OBJ</u>	<u>ED Q</u>	<u>FT CONS ED Q %</u>
1997	<b>9421</b>	3405	3980	5520	70% (2832/4055)
1998	7715	2085	2599	3808	75% (1905/2526)
1999	6055	1880	2060	2764	81% (1668/2072)
2000	6196	2089	2800	2665	89% (1783/2013)
2001	5532	1859	2850	2498	83% (1616/1936)
2002	6523	2033	3243	2884	77% (1745/2262)
2003	4814	2191	FQ	2720	85% (1610/1891)
2004	<b>2964</b>	<b>1623</b>	FQ	1955	<b>90%</b> (1420/1586)

TO LTC:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>CONS</u>	<u>SELECT</u>	<u>SEL OBJ</u>	<u>ED Q</u>	<u>FT CONS ED Q %</u>
1997	3765	1105	1105	2611	55% (898/1621)
1998	4758	1100	1100	3210	49% (971/1972)
1999	3935	1345	1345	2603	66% (1097/1660)
2000	4235	1122	1605	2233	70% (1006/1437)
2001	3741	1172	2151	1803	80% (949/1180)
2002	3382	1293	1836	1605	<b>93%</b> (1045/1119)
2003	3338	1337	1914	1679	87% (1187/1360)
2004	3142	1559	1615	1687	<b>97%</b> (1250/1286)

TO COL:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>CONS</u>	<u>SELECT</u>	<u>SEL OBJ</u>	<u>ED Q</u>	<u>FT CONS ED Q %</u>
1997	3495	366	366	3367	18% (206/1163)
1998	3379	405	405	3254	20% (254/1241)
1999	3373	462	462	3195	24% (308/1279)
2000	3252	550	550	3066	26% (302/1141)
2001	2990	656	656	2818	<b>38%</b> (356/935)
2002	3326	759	759	3132	<b>38%</b> (537/1416)
2003	3047	529*	529*	2853	33% (347/1059)
2004	3685	<b>857</b>	857	3432	37% (648/1748)

TABLE 1



Note the difference in most grades and years between the SEL OBJ, or goal, and the SELECT or actual number of officers selected for promotion.

Source: Human Resources Command – St. Louis web site “Officer Promotion Brief” <https://www.2xcitizen.usar.army.mil/download/index.asp#newsletters> accessed 10 March 2005 as well as earlier versions downloaded to the author’s personal computer and the 2004 RC CPT APL list released 1 March 2005.

\* Includes the results of a second promotion board for the same considerees

\*\* Highlighting and coloring by author

The table above uses the following abbreviations:

CONS – Total eligible officers considered

SELECT – Total number of officers selected for promotion. (The actual number promoted as a result of the promotion board is generally a lesser number as some of those selected may have already retired or otherwise become ineligible to be promoted.)

SEL OBJ – The Selection Objective is a goal, or limit the board can select. The Mobilization Manpower Planning System, or MOBMAN, helps derive this number, in part based on casualty projections and replacement requirements in a conventional Cold War scenario. “FQ” in this column stands for Fully Qualified and represents a policy to revert to the technically lesser standard of Fully Qualified versus the “Best Qualified” standard provided for in the Reserve Officer Personnel Management Act (ROPMA) of 1996.

ED Q – Educationally qualified. Officers must meet established military and civilian education requirements to be selected for promotion.

FT CONS ED Q % - Percentage of officers considered for the first time that are also educationally qualified. This group is generally representative of the majority of officers selected.

A high quality reserve officer corps was built during the 1980s and 90s, but in 2003 when 93% of first time considered/educationally qualified majors are selected for lieutenant colonel and the selection objective is still missed by 546 officers, something is wrong. We have always promoted some officers who did not live up to the demands placed upon them. The probability of this must be even higher with the current dynamics.<sup>30</sup>

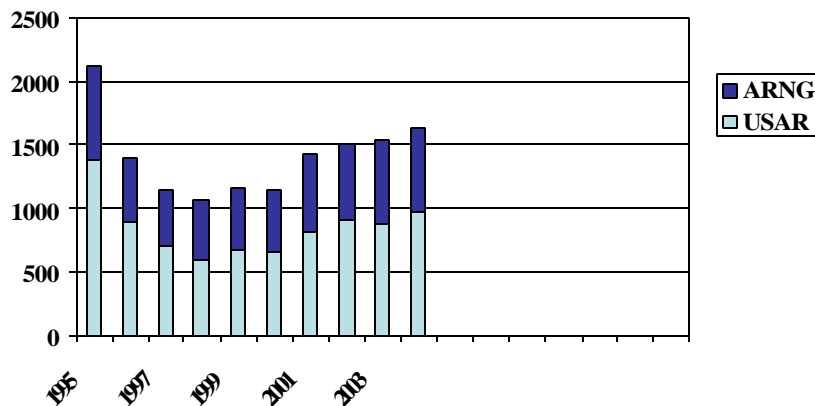
## **THE MID-GRADES**

Having identified the beginning of the mid-grade officer shortage, let’s look at other indicators of things to come.

During same time that the reserve components were being shortchanged in receipt of lieutenants from ROTC and fewer experienced former active officers were coming to the SELRES (the late 1990s and the early part of this decade), graduate numbers of the non-

resident Command and General Staff Officers Course – Reserve Component (CGSOC-RC) slumped.

## CGSOC-RC Completions Overall (all methods)

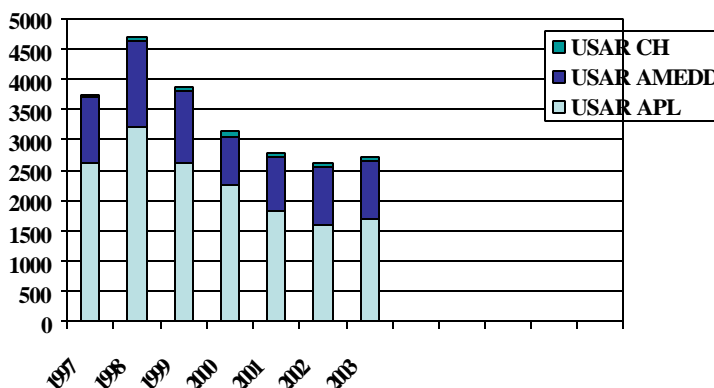


Source: CGSC Directorate of Non-resident Studies quarterly reports to TRADOC. Figures for 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 1996 are an estimate averaging 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 95 and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 97. The 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 96 report was unavailable.

FIGURE 8.

The full completion of CGSOC, or an equivalent, is required to be considered militarily educationally qualified for selection to Colonel. At least 50% completion of CGSOC is required for promotion to Lieutenant Colonel, but the dramatic decline in graduations (100% completion) is apparently representative of those who attain 50% as well. There is nearly a direct correlation between the decline in CGSOC completions and the decline in educationally qualified Majors considered for Lieutenant Colonel. The time lag is 3-4 years. This decline in educationally qualified officers is predictive of continued failure of the APL Lieutenant Colonel Selection Board to meet its selection objective and for the Colonel Selection Board to increase its selection rate, even if requirements remain constant. It also appears representative of a decision by a significant number of Majors (of whom not enough are being promoted based on Selection Objective) not to continue their service. Either these Majors are in the IRR and not participating (perhaps former active duty officers who never performed any reserve service), or they were in the SELRES and were able to reach the minimum qualifying service for non-regular retirement and chose not to pursue more military education which would make them eligible for promotion to Lieutenant Colonel.

## Educationally Qualified to LTC & Considered



Source: HRC – St. Louis - Officer Promotion Brief  
<https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/reserve/download/index.htm#newsletters>

FIGURE 9.

The decline in the number of officers graduating CGSOC should send an even stronger alarm than the shortage of company grade officers for several reasons. First, Majors by definition and design take longer to produce. They generally hold job positions of greater responsibility. They form the only pool from which Lieutenant Colonels and then Colonels are promoted. Worst of all, they are generally considered as having attained “career status” which indicates a significant investment from the Army and from the officer personally. With that career status is a high likelihood of qualifying for a retirement which can be quite substantial in terms of future cost of living allowance increases and medical coverage which are not found frequently today in many civilian retirement programs. Given that the selection rate (APL - overall 1<sup>st</sup> time considered and educationally qualified) for Lieutenant Colonel has ranged from 80% in 2001 to 97% 2004, and that those boards still failed to select enough officers to meet goals, the decision by Majors not to pursue the military education requirement is a dramatic statement about their perception of the effects over the value of continued reserve service.

The nature and demands of fighting asymmetrical warfare under partial mobilization authority has made the reserve components a victim of their own successful integration with the active force. Some active duty veterans used to say they did not want to serve in the reserves

because they had poor perceptions of standards in the reserve force. Today, it is the opposite. Today, many former Soldiers say, that if they wanted to be “active”, they would have stayed active.

Majors who are twice non-selected for Lieutenant Colonel may be removed from service when they reach twenty years of commissioned service.<sup>31</sup> For Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels, Mandatory Removal Date, or MRD, is another factor controlling outflow of officers. The MRD for Lieutenant Colonels is at 28 years of commissioned service. For Colonels, the MRD comes at 30 years. MRD is the same for both active component and reserve component officers. Army Regulation 135-155 (Promotion of Commissioned Officers and Warrant Officers Other Than General Officers) was updated on 24 October of 2001 and provided for selective continuation of lieutenant colonels and colonels for up to five years beyond MRD to meet “needs of the Army”. AR 135-155 was re-published on 13 July 2004 and retains the same language about continuation beyond MRD as the 2001 version. Use of such existing selective continuation authority offers the possibility of keeping some officers longer and thus blunting the effects of already depleted cohorts moving up through the promotion system.

In addition to increasing bonus authority for enlisted members, in recognition of the difficulty in getting young officers to serve in the reserve components, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for 2005 created a new bonus authority of up to six thousand dollars in exchange for a three-year commitment to the Selected Reserve.<sup>32</sup> This new authority is clearly tied to the fact that fewer officers are serving in the active component, and due to atypically high selection rates for promotion, few are leaving active duty. If they do choose to leave active duty, they have not been electing to serve in the SELRES programs.<sup>33</sup>

During the summer of 2004 the Lieutenant Colonels from the cohort of 1976 and the Colonels of 1974 reached mandatory removal and were transferred to the Retired Reserve as required. 1975 (4,606) and 1976 (4,567) were the two years when ROTC officer production bottomed out after Vietnam, prior to recovering in the 1980s. However, in both of those years ROTC produced more lieutenants than the target for production in 2005 and successive years (4,525).<sup>34</sup>

A lot can happen over the 20-30 year potential service life of a reserve commissioned officer. They are affected by the demands and opportunities of their civilian life as well as by policies and climate within the Army. Again, given the responsibility officers are entrusted with and the time it takes to develop a competent mid-grade officer, it is much less expensive to overproduce reserve Lieutenants (primarily ROTC) than to under produce them. This is especially critical when United States strategy involves undertaking a protracted military

campaign that is manned by less than full mobilization (duration plus six months), and instead requires rotating through the force structure with mobilizations of between 9 (Presidential Reserve Call-up) and 24 months (Partial Mobilization). In short, the Army's total pool of personnel is a three-legged stool. The legs of the stool are the Active Component, SELRES, and IRR. The SELRES and largely, the IRR legs are presently far too short.

Major, now Lieutenant Colonel, Joseph Whitlock described several options which would extend the life of reserve component officers still on the Army's rolls in his monograph (*Can the Army Reserve Overcome its Growing Company Grade Officer Shortage?*) written at the School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) in Academic Year 01-02. The Army has been slow to implement those options. A resolution adopted by the Reserve Officers Association of the United States (ROA) is titled "*Reappointment of Reserve Officers of the Army*". If acted upon, it has the potential of making some limited repairs to mid-grade strength inventories. The "resolved" clause reads as follows: "NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Reserve Officers Association of the United States, chartered by Congress, urge the Secretary of the Army to permit an exception to regulation and direct the re-examination of the records of all Army reserve officers who have been discharged since January 1st, 1997 to identify those who were discharged primarily as a result of non-participation, as opposed to poor/mediocre performance, and that subject to the needs of the services, those officers be invited to apply to be reappointed."<sup>35</sup>

It is unlikely that that a high percentage of former officers who passed through the reserve promotions process and were discharged prior to 1997 would be viable or have interest in returning to service. The number of officers discharged since 1997 is roughly on the order of 16,000.<sup>36</sup> Without conducting a survey it is impossible to determine how many of these former officers would be interested in serving again. The Army would also need to make a selection of which officers they want back. However, even a small percentage of officers being reappointed in certain specialties could make a major contribution to meeting current and future reserve requirements. All other discussion aside, there is no other additional source for people, with military experience, who can be fielded rapidly to meet near to mid-term requirements at the mid-grade officer level. It is possible that officers selectively re-appointed into the USAR's IRR could go on to fill positions in the SELRES or even go back to the Active Component to finish careers.<sup>37</sup>

For junior grades, another option to increase both officer and enlisted reserve availability is raising the length of the statutory obligation from eight years to ten years. This may have the added advantage of improving longer-term retention by bringing service members to the

psychological halfway point of a twenty-year career. Of course, the years of reserve service still need to meet the minimum participation requirements to count for retirement, and there may be some down sides. The example could be a four-year active duty enlistment with a Ready Reserve service obligation of six years. A small bonus could be offered to current enlisted members who extend, but the cost should be more than offset by reduced recruitment costs. John C.F. Tillson alludes to this option in his article in the December 2004 issue of *Joint Force Quarterly*.<sup>38</sup>

The ROA resolution was adopted 22 June 2002. Lieutenant Colonel Whitlock's paper was finished in the summer of 2002 as well. For nearly three years, initiatives developed by people who saw a coming situation have been documented. To date, there has been little action to correct conditions. However, in one recent change which begins to conserve the Army's existing reserve component officer strength, selective continuation boards will be conducted on Majors who are twice non-selected for promotion.<sup>39</sup>

This brings us back to the December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2004 memo from the Chief, Army Reserve to the Chief of Staff of the Army warning of the "Army Reserve's inability under current policies, procedures, and practices governing mobilization, training, and reserve component manpower management – to meet mission requirements associated with Operation Iraqi Freedom and Enduring freedom." Supporting documents appended to the memo indicate that only about 37,000 of 200,000 SELRES Soldiers in the USAR remain available for mobilization duty.<sup>40</sup> In addition to failing to adapt and implement appropriate policies, the Army Reserve does not have enough people. Key among these shortages are the mid-grade officers.

History will judge whether correct choices are made, but in the mean time, only Soldiers will bear the burden of going "to war with the Army we have".<sup>41</sup> Rebuilding our forces, both active and reserve, will, once again, require direction and support from the top down. Things will get worse before they get better, but hopefully the senior leadership sees the requirement to begin work now.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

When you read the works of Whitlock and Lewis, review the officer population numbers and promotion selection rates, and speak with reserve officers, the thought that the officer shortage is manageable without significant and costly effort is indefensible. The health and strength of the reserve officer corps of the United States' military and that of the Army in particular, is under stress. Nothing I have read in researching this subject argues for a smaller Army in any of its components. Lieutenant General Helmly's prediction of five to seven years to

correct personnel imbalances in the USAR is probably about right if corrective action is begun soon, and if world events do not further exacerbate the current situation.

A re-balancing of force mix has been discussed and some efforts are being programmed. In the end, I believe the long-term, cost effective answer is to add some active force structure, realign some reserve component structure, and add some reserve force structure to make a proposed five-year USAR rotation plan possible.<sup>42</sup> Solving this part of the complex equation is imperative to setting the goals for the correct numbers of mid-grade officers and other personnel required in all components of the Army.

Assuming near constant officer production by other sources, Army ROTC should increase production to enough lieutenants annually to provide for nearly full strength units in both the active and reserve force and that should include a calculation for a currently realistic attrition rate. This number is likely in the 4,700 to 5,200 range at least until current shortages are overcome in all components of the Army. It is certainly above the 3900 total mission for U.S. Army Cadet Command for Fiscal Year 05.

The Army's IRR must be adequate to provide individual replacements required to respond to extended and varied strategic requirements. For example, if we maintain a Total Army force structure in excess of 1.1 million, and if it were filled to over 90% on average, a pool of 200,000 individuals would almost allow for filling the force to full strength during two consecutive 24 month mobilizations if every member of the IRR was available and fit perfectly to a vacancy. Of course, that statement involves many "if"s. The point is that the Army's IRR strength of 114,760 (as of 31 October 2004) is inadequate and must be increased in order to provide a dependable source of individual replacements without crippling units by using them as a significant source of individual replacements. Methods to extend the statutory military obligation from eight out to ten years, with or without a bonus, should be considered. The Reserve Officers Association suggestion to screen former officers to be invited for reappointment should be acted upon immediately and all other existing policy options, such as selective continuation, should be invoked and used in their broadest scope.

In conclusion, we must recognize and respond to the undeniable. In a system where it takes most officers four years to be commissioned; where after a year group cohort is established there is very little, if any, further input; where the officers spend several years at each pay grade over a 20 to 30 year career, if they volunteer to continue to serve; where they must graduate pre-established schools to be promoted and continue serving; and where there is a known number in each grade, specialty, and component; a shortage over time is just as predictable as the moment of sunrise. We pay skilled professionals to use mature data systems

to monitor these populations, and they do. We cannot lose sight that, in the end, as General Abrams said, "The Army is people..."<sup>43</sup> To use a current Army phrase; it is time to start buying back risk we assumed when we allowed the strength of our reserve officer corps to diminish.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Chief, Army Reserve, "Readiness of the United States Army Reserve", memorandum for Chief of Staff, United States Army, Washington, D.C., 20 December 2004.

<sup>2</sup> J. Boone Bartholomees, Jr., ed., *U.S. Army War College Guide to National Security Policy and Strategy* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2004), 279. Strategy Formulation Model

<sup>3</sup> Lewis Sorley, *Thunderbolt - From the Battle of the Bulge to Vietnam and Beyond: General Creighton Abrams and the Army of His Times* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 364. General John Vessey quotes Abrams as saying repeatedly, "They're not taking us to war again without calling up the reserves." "Was part of the thinking in integrating the reserves so deeply into the active force structure that we were making it difficult, if not impossible, for the President to deploy any significant force without calling up the reserves?" "That's it, with malice aforethought," said Vessey, "the whole exercise."

<sup>4</sup> Bartholomees, 104.

<sup>5</sup> Bartholomees, 279.

<sup>6</sup> Sorley, 350.

<sup>7</sup> "The 2005 Supplemental Budget," *The Washington Times*, 24 February 2005, sec. Editorials/Op-Ed.: available from <<http://washingtontimes.com/op-ed/20050223-082149-6615r.htm>>; Internet; accessed 6 March 2005. The editorial notes that the President has asked for a \$82 billion budget supplemental of which \$75 billion goes to the Pentagon to fund costs associated with operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Coupled with a \$25 billion supplemental approved last year the total for FY 2005 Iraq/Afghanistan expenses is \$100 billion, or roughly ¼ of the \$401 "normal" defense appropriation. (A 1991 GAO report quoted later in this paper said we could save \$31 million per year by closing 50 Army ROTC programs. In retrospect, that does not seem like much of a saving now that we are short of officers across the force.)

<sup>8</sup> Hal Bernton, "Officer Crisis Hits Army Reserve," *Seattle Times*, 9 December 2004, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Andrea Stone, "ROTC Falls Short for a Fifth Year", USA Today, 19 June 2000, sec. NEWS 1A

<sup>10</sup> Department of the Army, *Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps Program: Organization, Administration, and Training*, Army Regulation 145-1 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 22 July 1996), 59.

<sup>11</sup> Association of the United States Army, *Special Report – ROTC* (Arlington: Association of the United States Army, 2004), 12.

<sup>12</sup> Joseph E. Whitlock, *Can the Army Reserve Overcome its Growing Company Grade Officer Shortage?*, Monograph (Fort Leavenworth: United States Army Command and General Staff College, AY 01-02), 18.

<sup>13</sup> Department of Defense, *Selected Manpower Statistics* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, Fiscal Year 2003), 155.

<sup>14</sup> Mark R. Lewis, "Army Transformation and the Junior Officer Exodus." *Armed Forces & Society*, 31, Fall 2004, 65.

<sup>15</sup> Whitlock, 35-36.

<sup>16</sup> Lewis, 68.

<sup>17</sup> Whitlock, 35.

<sup>18</sup> Association of the United States Army, 14.

<sup>19</sup> General Accounting Office, *Reserve Officers' Training Corps: Less Need for Officers Provides Opportunity for Significant Savings*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 2.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

<sup>21</sup> U.S. Army Officer Candidate School, available from <<http://www.infantry.army.mil/ocs/content/dates.htm>>; Internet; accessed 10 February 2005.

<sup>22</sup> Department of Defense, 33.

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Army Human Resources Command – St. Louis, available from <<https://www.2xcitizen.usar.army.mil/soldierservices/guidance/directappoint.asp>>; Internet; accessed 11 October 2004.

<sup>24</sup> Department of Defense, (FY94-03). The percentage of USAR SELRES enlisted Soldiers with a bachelors degree or higher has shown about a 1% increase in FY 02 and FY 03, topping out at 10.06% of FY03. The preceding years (94-01) averaged less than 8%. The author's experience serving in USAR units during the period leads him to believe that the automation reporting systems used in the USAR likely play somewhat into the changes in reported data. The 10.06%, or even a fraction higher is likely representative across the USAR, but it does not mean that all Soldiers with a bachelor's degree meet the litany of other requirements for a commission. The ARNG lags between 2% and almost 4% behind the USAR and has seen about a 1% increase for the same period. The ARNG reported 6.31% for FY03.

<sup>25</sup> Association of the United States Army, 13.

<sup>26</sup> Department of Defense, *Reserve Manpower Statistics* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, Fiscal Year 1994), 35.

<sup>27</sup> Lawrence J. Korb, "For Soldier and Country: Saving the All-Volunteer Army," *The Officer*, March 2005, 53. Korb notes that 37% of IRR Soldiers failed to report. The other side of the percentage is that 63% did report, and the reference article Korb sites also states that over 1800 Soldiers had requested exemptions or delays. Taking the requests for exemption or delay along with the 63% report rate should approximate, or exceed, the 70% enlisted and 90% officer IRR report rate used for mobilization planning purposes.

<sup>28</sup> U.S. Army Human Resources Command – St. Louis, "Officer Promotion Brief," January 2005; available from <<https://www.2xcitizen.usar.army.mil/download/index.asp#newsletters>>;

Internet; accessed 10 February 2005 plus previous versions downloaded to the author's personal computer.

<sup>29</sup> Where selection rates for promotion are quoted, they are the Reserve Component Army Promotion List, or APL, numbers unless otherwise noted or depicted. The APL boards promote the vast majority of Army reserve component officers and their trends are the most recognizable and relative for the majority of officers. The dynamics of the Chaplains Corps and the Army Medical Department, or AMEDD, where populations are smaller, have very different consideration factors from the officers in the APL community and that is why they have separate boards. There are also Position Vacancy Boards held by both the ARNG and USAR. I did not attempt to account for this minority of officers either. Also, I did not attempt to measure partial completions of CGSOC or full or partial completions of CGSOC equivalents because, like the APL lists, the Army CGSOC non-resident program fills the majority of requirements for officers being considered for promotion in the Army's reserve components. CGSOC is also scheduled to become Intermediate Level Education, or ILE, for the reserve components just as it has for the active force. Finally, there are many policies which govern the status and ending point of a reserve officer's career. I have only addressed the general due course pattern. There are many variations.

<sup>30</sup> Lewis, 76.

<sup>31</sup> Department of the Army, *Promotion of Officers and Warrant Officers Other than General Officers*, Army Regulation 135-155 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 13 July 2004), 31

<sup>32</sup> Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for 2005, United States Code Title X, Sec 619.

<sup>33</sup> Whitlock, 35.

<sup>34</sup> U.S. Army Cadet Command, "CG's FY05 Command Objectives"; available from <[http://www.rotc.monroe.army.mil/command/hqcc\\_briefings/index.html](http://www.rotc.monroe.army.mil/command/hqcc_briefings/index.html)>; Internet; accessed 10 March 2005.

<sup>35</sup> Reserve Officers Association of the United States, "Resolution # 02-03"; available from <[http://www.roa.org/legislative\\_affairs/resolutions/02\\_03.asp](http://www.roa.org/legislative_affairs/resolutions/02_03.asp)>; Internet; accessed 11 October 2004.

<sup>36</sup> Francisco Espallat, "Mid-Level Leader Professional Development – Charting Your Future in the Army Reserve" briefing slides with scripted commentary. Washington, D.C.: Reserve Officers Association, 22 January 2002

<sup>37</sup> Department of the Army Message(s) Subject: FY 2005 Limited Call to Active Duty (AD) Program for Lieutenant Colonels (Majors, Captains, and Warrant Officers), Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 23 September 2004.

<sup>38</sup> John C. B. Tillson, "Landpower and the Reserve Components", *Joint Force Quarterly*, December 2004, 45.

<sup>39</sup> G-1, U.S. Army Reserve Command, "Selective Continuation Board," memorandum for Deputy Chiefs of Staff, G-1, USARC MSCs, Atlanta, GA, 21 September 2004.

<sup>40</sup> Helmly.

<sup>41</sup> NBC, MSNBC, and news services, "Bush: Soldiers' Equipment Grips Heard," 9 December 2004; available from <<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6676765/>>; Internet; accessed 9 January 2005.

<sup>42</sup> Joe Charsagua, "CAR Brief to CSA", briefing slides with scripted commentary, Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, 4 November 2004.

<sup>43</sup> Sorley, 350.

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