

AN ALTERNATIVE FULL-TIME SUPPORT PROGRAM IN THE AF RESERVE

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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by

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ABSTRACT

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The Air Force Reserve (AFR) currently relies primarily on two forms of full time support (FTS). These are Air Reserve Technicians (ART) and Active Guard Reserve (AGR). I will demonstrate that the AFR could realize improvements in force development, bureaucratic efficiencies and command relationships by relying on an AGR based FTS structure rather than the ART and AGR mixed structure in use today. A brief description of the current FTS system is provided followed by an analysis of the benefits such a program would provide. Following a look at the benefits, some of the major ART-proponent arguments are analyzed. In so doing, I will demonstrate that there would be no deleterious effects to the Citizen-Airman identity.

AN ALTERNATIVE FULL-TIME SUPPORT PROGRAM IN THE AF RESERVE

To successfully execute the national military strategy in the 21st century, the active and reserve components must increase their military effectiveness by becoming a more integrated total force. It has taken the U.S. armed forces two decades to approach the level of jointness envisioned by the authors of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, which did not address the reserve component. Achieving total force integration of the active and reserve components will require changes to the defense establishment of a magnitude comparable to those required by Goldwater-Nichols for the active component.

—Commission on the National Guard and Reserves¹

Following the Vietnam War the United States Department of Defense (DoD) shifted from a conscription-based military paradigm to today's all-volunteer force. Thus began a major effort to organize, train and equip the Reserve Components (RC) to create a more viable and available force ready to "answer the call" should the nation require it. The US Air Force, and Air Force Reserve, embraced the Total Force Policy by initiating a number of programs that would raise the readiness level of the Reserve forces to that of the Active Component (AC). Since the first Gulf War in 1991 the US military has relied heavily on the readiness and capabilities of the AFR program, thereby accelerating the transition toward Total Force Integration (TFI) and an "operational reserve." Today, the Air Force Reserve has become much more closely involved and aligned with the Air National Guard and the AC. Demand on the Reserve forces generated by the Global War on Terror (GWOT) coupled with the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process, a reduction in resources and a need to remain a viable Reserve have helped create this tight alliance. In the past the Total Force concept meant that either Reserve forces were trained to the same level as the AC, or that the AC was augmented in the form of reserve associate units on Active Duty bases.

Presently, AC units are standing up as associate units on Reserve and Guard bases. In some instances there are units where the AC blends with the Guard and Reserve—in the same unit.² The line between active duty airman and reservist continues to blur.

Successful engagement in the current Long War will require agile leadership in the Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) and an equally agile leadership development process. The AFR currently relies on a Full Time Support (FTS) cadre comprised of Air Reserve Technicians (ART) and Active Guard Reserve (AGR) members as the skeletal structure, supporting the bulk of the force consisting of Traditional Reservists (TR) and Individual Mobilization Augmentees (IMA). This Fiscal Year (FY 08) congressionally authorized Technician positions comprise approximately 15% of the 67500 Selected Reserve billets, while authorized AGR positions make up approximately four percent of that population. Although the ART program has served the Air Force well since its inception in the late 1950's, the demands on the "operational reserve," the high operations tempo and the demand for efficiencies cries out for an alternative. An all-AGR construct could provide AFR leadership more flexibility in selecting and developing future leaders by creating a more homogeneous FTS cadre that would be overseen by one organization as opposed to the current system which charges AGR careers to AF/REAMO and ART careers to AFPC and AFRC. It would be a force free from the bureaucratic shackles of time-keeping and civilian manpower rules, enabling leaders to focus on Airmen that belong to and embrace the profession of arms.

Validating an all-AGR construct as an alternative begins with an effort to understand the curious nature of the ART and to grasp the differences between ART and AGR. Following a brief description of the ART and AGR programs we will look at

benefits to be gained in force development, bureaucracy reduction, and command-relationships with an eye on moving to an all-AGR force. Of course, no analysis of this issue would be complete without answering some of the criticisms that would likely surface with a change of this magnitude. Once benefits and concerns are analyzed a course of action will be offered on how to “get there from here.” While the premise of this essay is change, it is essential that any new construct maintains Reserve identity and values, and reinforces the intrinsic character of our citizen-airmen, while providing the best Air Force Reserve possible for the American people.

The ART Program

The ART program was launched in 1957 as a result of continuity issues with personnel, management and training in the Air Force Reserve following the Korean War. The Air Force and DoD civilian leadership set out to develop a long term solution which included a more permanent and stable FTS structure and training staff at the reserve unit level.³

A complex entity, the Technician is a Federal civil service employee who serves in a position that requires an active Reserve assignment in a Reserve unit.⁴ Conceptually the ART performs duty during the week in civilian status and enters military status as a reservist for weekend drills and two weeks of active duty per year.⁵ If an ART loses qualification in their area of military expertise, “such loss may result in the involuntary removal from Federal employment for failure to maintain a basic condition of employment for an ART position.”⁶ AFRC will usually make every effort to place an ART who has lost qualification in their current billet into one for which they continue to

qualify. The element that defines the ART is their ability to retain the qualification of their military position.

New-hire unit ART's are selected from a competitive pool of applicants through a complex process controlled by the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC) or AFRC. This process will be covered in depth later in this essay. The hiring of ART leaders is accomplished through a series of discussions at the Group, Wing, Numbered Air Force (NAF) and AFRC Headquarters levels.

The ART is theoretically a geographically mobile asset, as every ART signs a "Mobility Agreement" when hired. AFRC leaders seldom exercise this power, however. Most ARTs, if they so desire, can expect to remain with their unit of choice without the concern of forced mobility, unlike their AC counterparts who move when the needs of the Air Force demand it. Currently, only those ARTs who embrace mobility for the sake of career broadening and professional enhancement are invited to engage in the Permanent Change of Station (PCS) process. Because mobility is voluntary the work force remains relatively stable. In addition, large numbers of ARTs have come into the reserves after spending time on active duty having garnered years of experience. The resultant ART force is geographically stable and highly experienced within their respective core competencies. The stability element of the ART program coupled with the unit reservists who generally serve an entire career at one location create the "hometown feel" that is at the heart of the Citizen Airman concept.

Retirement age rules are another element that differentiates the ART from the AGR. Enlisted ART retirement is usually based upon reaching the military retirement age of 60 or meeting a High Year Tenure Date (HYTD) milestone of 33 years of

creditable service, whichever comes first.⁷ ART officers reach retirement generally as a result of reaching their military Mandatory Separation Date (MSD). An example of this would be an ART Lieutenant Colonel who is required to retire at 28 years of creditable service or age 62 whichever comes first.⁸ Under normal circumstances an ART who has reached their civilian minimum retirement age will begin to collect their civilian retirement immediately and their military retirement benefits upon retirement or reaching age 60, whichever occurs last.⁹

The AGR Program

AGRs are reservists who are placed on an extended active duty order, usually about four years, with the same rights and privileges of an individual in the AC but fully “owned and operated” by the AFR.¹⁰ Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-2132, *Full-Time Support (FTS) Active Guard Reserve (AGR) Program* describes two professional avenues available to the AGR, the “leadership track” or the “tactical track”. One must vie for and be selected into the “leadership track” by senior Air Force Reserve leaders. For the members in the “tactical track”, much like ARTs, “the primary expectation will be to provide the operational unit the capability to retain necessary skills and experience, and additionally provide AGRs assignment stability.”¹¹ The choice of which track an AGR will follow depends on their ability and their desire to trade stability for the mobility that comes with the “leadership track”.

AGRs are selected, and their careers managed, through a competitive process coordinated by HQ AF/REAMO in the Pentagon. The AGR program comprises a relatively small number of positions relative to the ART program but most positions in AFRC/HQ, NAF/HQ and the Pentagon are AGR billets—by a factor of seven at the

Pentagon.¹² Within the last several years AFRC has created associate reserve units to assist with Undergraduate Pilot Training (UPT) that consist of 100% AGR support for the mission and their traditional reservists. AGRs are the sole FTS element in flight test units and hold various other billets Air Force-wide. AFR Security Forces (SF) have just undergone a conversion from ART FTS to 100% AGR FTS. Since 2005 the AFR end strength numbers for AGRs have risen from 1900 to 2721 in FY08, a 43% increase, whereas ART numbers have remained stable at around the 9900 mark.¹³ An added benefit for those who enter the AGR program is the potential of earning a full military retirement if they have served “20 years active Federal service preceding MSD with possible continuation beyond 20 years active Federal service based on the needs of the Air Force Reserve.”¹⁴ ARTs, IMAs and TRs are not eligible to collect their military retirement benefits until age 60, with some caveats, based on new legislation.¹⁵

Benefits of an all-AGR Construct

Improve and Facilitate Force Development

As recently stated by Lieutenant General John Bradley, AFRC Commander and Chief of the Air Force Reserve (AFR), "Total Force Integration is changing how we interact with the rest of the Air Force."¹⁶ As Reserve Forces continue to blend with the Active and Guard components the AFR must be proactive in creating a Full Time Support (FTS) cadre that is more homogeneous and agile with respect to changes in force structure and rapid changes in the national security environment. In addition, AFR leadership must have the ability to select the best people to fill critical billets within the “operational” reserve. If one assumes that good leadership is developed by exposure to varied operational and staff environments then the AFR is doing itself a disservice with

the AGR/ART construct. Career broadening opportunities are made difficult by the dual-nature of the ART and AGR career management paradigms. For example there are over 170 AGR billets at the Pentagon vs. 25 for ARTs. For an ART who desires a broadening tour at the Pentagon there are a limited number of slots. For a career AGR in a staff billet desiring an operational tour the door is closed, if they hope to carry their AGR status with them. All of the senior leadership positions at the operational wings are ART or TR billets, except for four group command AGR positions.¹⁷ If an AGR could be chosen to go to a position that is designated as an ART, TR or IMA billet the regulation governing AGRs states that “AGRs who are reassigned from the AGR program relinquish their career status. Personnel who return to the AGR program will serve a new probationary period and will be reconsidered for entry into the career program at an appropriate time.”¹⁸ One solution long discussed but never implemented is position “portability.” In theory “portability” would allow AGRs, ARTs, IMAs and TRs to flow throughout available AFRC positions, carrying their status with them. The intricacies of a “portability” solution under the current four tribe system have thus far confounded its proponents. As the Air Force Reserve operates in this rapidly changing, complex and uncertain global environment, policies must be put forth and systems designed to allow Reserve leadership flexibility with manpower and the development of future agile leaders.

The ART exists to “. . . train other reservists. They may be called upon to plan and/or conduct training of reservists during the normal workday, training assemblies, and when reservists are on active duty training.”¹⁹ Neither the regulation governing ARTs, AFI 36-108 nor “The ART Guide,” a pamphlet containing a well-spring of ART

knowledge, ever mention the words “leader” or “leadership.” Notably, a different AFI that describes ART career management mentions the word “leadership” only once. Although fully codified in AFRCI 36-111, the reality of ART leadership development is that it is an informal process. An ART’s potential is assessed at the wing level, and candidates who assess well and who are willing to be geographically mobile are referred to higher AFRC leadership levels to be considered for the “next step.”

AGR leadership development is well-defined in its governing regulation, AFI 36-2132. The “leadership” and “tactical” tracks described in the AGR regulation mirror what happens in the ART world but are more centrally coordinated by the HQ AF/REAMO staff and codified by regulation. Although both governing regulations address ARTs entering the AGR world for career enhancement accomplishing “occasional and one-time tours,” neither mentions AGRs entering the ART world.²⁰ More importantly AGR and ART leadership development agencies exist in separate geographic locations. The HQ AF/REAMO staff is located at the Pentagon. The AFRC staff, which controls ART career progression, is located at Warner Robins Air Force Base, GA.

AFRC will take a step in the right direction in 2008 by resurrecting the Reserve Command Screening Board (RCSB) with the intent of selecting eligible candidates for Wing, Vice Wing and Group commands. Dormant for several years, the rebirth of the RCSB is good news in that candidates from the ART, AGR, IMA and TR programs will all be considered and it will provide more transparency for aspiring leaders. The bad news is that even though all four tribes will be considered, the complexity of placing an AGR in an ART billet or a TR in an AGR billet for example, will certainly limit available options for the board members.

With respect to the “leadership track,” an all-AGR construct would allow the RCSB greater flexibility in the positioning of qualified (and willing) personnel without being concerned about whether the individual is an ART or AGR. Citizen Airmen who are willing and qualified to move from a staff to an operational billet, or vice versa, would enter a single pool of eligibles. An added benefit of an all-AGR construct is that it would increase greatly the number of billets—to include command billets—available to IMAs and unit reservists for a career broadening “occasional and one-time tour,” while providing them legislated civilian job protection through the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR). An IMA or TR cannot occupy an ART position and receive the same protection, thus potentially dissuading some candidates from choosing this path.

Reducing Bureaucracy

The civilian half of the Technician billet is a study in bureaucracy. There are four aspects of the Air Reserve Technician program which are major bureaucratic concerns distinguishing ARTs from the military members they are meant to serve: Hiring and the Management Directed Reassignment (MDR) process, Time and Attendance, the civilian rating system, and rules and regulations governing civilians vs. military members. Aside from the requirement to “punch a clock” on a daily basis, leading and managing an ART force is far more time-consuming when compared to the care and feeding of an AGR cadre. To illustrate the benefits of an all-AGR construct, each of these categories will be compared and contrasted, in turn.

AGRs and ARTs are generally hired from the ranks of current reservists or active duty airmen seeking a more geographically stable position in their current specialty.

Some ARTs are hired “off the street” and trained from the ground floor up. Issues inherent in the ART program begin with the hiring process which is complex, extremely slow and labor intensive. In 1977 AFRC created a process whereby AFRC/DPC was to be the focal point for hiring, promotions and reassignments of ARTs. The intent was to pick the best candidates, centralize career management and make the process “more timely”.²¹ From the time a unit announces a vacancy until the position is filled, can be a three to six month period with six months being the norm—and that is if the unit puts forth a candidate that they already know is qualified and available.²² An MDR occurs when an ART is moved from one position in an organization to another position or organization. The guidelines for MDRs are virtually identical to those governing the hiring process, resulting in an extremely lengthy process. The time delay is exacerbated in the process by the addition of the time and effort it takes to hire an ART into the position recently vacated. In a unit section that only has five full time employees who are serving the needs of 70+ reservists, an extended position vacancy can have a huge negative impact on the productivity of the remaining ARTs trying to fill the vacuum.

The AGR hiring and MDR process is far more streamlined. AF/REAMO proactively controls the process with the objective of filling positions so as to avoid a break in coverage. Hiring time from the beginning of the process to the receipt of orders can take from five to 14 weeks.²³ The MDR process is also far simpler than the ART model. To move an AGR within a unit to another AGR position of equal rank requires squadron and group leadership’s blessing, an e-mail to AF/REAMO and a change to the unit manning document. Movement to a position with a higher rank requires the same protocol as above with one addition; AF/REAMO will ensure that the move is an

appropriate use of the position. The AGR position provides increased flexibility, fewer complex personnel processes for non-ART leaders and supervisors to master, less stress for the new-hire by way of a shorter hiring time, and ultimately provides those in the organization more time to work on the issues that really matter.

One of the more onerous ART processes is that of time-keeping. AFRC loses approximately 24,772 mandays of work per year from the 9900+ ARTs on time sheet maintenance.²⁴ Meticulous time-keeping records are directed by regulation in part to prevent “dual compensation” violations. “Dual compensation” occurs when an ART is in military status during his/her normal civilian duty hours and not in an approved leave status. For example, if an ART performs military training in Inactive Duty for Training (IADT) status, not only must this data be captured accurately on the weekly time card but it also must be documented and captured in the Unit Training Assembly Participation System (UTAPS). The UTAPS is a web based system designed to track weekend drills and Readiness Management Periods (RMP) for all reservists. Another IADT tracking computer program, the Training Period (TP) tracking database, is used to capture training periods accomplished by reservists and ARTs on flying status.²⁵ The input work for this database is generally performed by ARTs.²⁶ If the ART is performing active duty, then the orderly room clerk (usually an ART) must use the Air Force Reserve Orders Writing System (AROWS-R) web-based program to create an active duty order indicating at precisely what time the duty will be performed and terminated. These times must also be annotated identically on the ARTs timecard, as a copy of the order will be filed with the timecard. If the ART is a flyer and departing on a mission away from home station there is an additional time tracking form that must be turned in

upon their return.²⁷ Additional time must also be spent on auditing and quality control of Time and Attendance paperwork—this work is also generally accomplished by ARTs. Maintaining the civilian records and inputting time cards into the civilian pay system on a weekly basis requires employees whose primary function is the processing of these products. AGRs require no time and attendance tracking, no auditing and no additional personnel to serve as time-keepers. They are on active duty 24/7/365. They would, however, be required to know how to input information into UTAPS and the TP tracking database for the unit reservists they would serve.

An additional bureaucratic layer that pertains to the ART position under the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) includes a series of web-based assessments and self-assessments between supervisor and supervisee leading up to an annual appraisal. The appraisal is based upon performance relating to the employee's job objectives. Understanding the web-based system requires training and time. At the beginning of the year the supervisor will meet with the employee and they will determine a series of job objectives for the year. Throughout the year the supervisee will provide self-assessments and the supervisor will provide feedback to the employee relating to their job objectives. Although feedback is essential, it is important to note that the ART officer is also receiving an Officer Performance Report (OPR) every year, the ART enlisted Airman an Enlisted Performance Report (EPR) every two years, also assessing their performance—usually rating the same aspects of the same job. At the end of the annual self-assessment and appraisals cycle, senior ART leadership convenes and provides manpower for the Pay-Pool. The Pay-Pool is charged with reviewing the annual appraisals and ratings in an effort to determine how

to divide bonuses and pay raises among the ARTs and civilian employees. The Pay-Pool process would not disappear if the ART positions were replaced with AGRs but the work required in an operational unit would be reduced by a factor of ten.²⁸ Certainly the amount of time recovered by not performing these additional tasks could be used to train Reservists or perform other vital duties in defense of the nation.

Clarifying Chain of Command

With respect to homogeneity and Total Force Integration it is important to understand that ARTs in civilian status are governed by rules and regulations generated by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), a federal organization in Washington, DC, chartered with “ensuring the Federal Government has an effective civilian workforce.”²⁹ In addition AFRC adapts some of the OPM rules and guidance and generates Air Force Instructions and AFRC supplements to those AFIs in order to make them more applicable to the dual nature of the ART. Conversely, while in military status ARTs are governed by the rules and regulations as laid out in the Uniformed Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). The end result is that commanders and supervisors, ART and non-ART, must have a thorough understanding of both civilian work rules and UCMJ processes. This adds a lot to a plate that, with today’s operations tempo, is already full. As the Air Force Reserve continues to integrate its operations with ARTs and AGRs, an issue that can further complicate the command climate is that, “An Air Reserve Technician (ART) may exercise command over AGR personnel when holding positions as a commissioned officer assigned to a unit and while in a military duty status. Otherwise, ARTs in civilian status, can exercise supervisory, but not command authority.”³⁰ This same caveat applies to ARTs exercising UCMJ actions against

Reservists. In order to serve the action, the ART commander must be in a military status. The movement towards an all AGR construct would completely remove this command ambiguity and go a long way towards removing the requirement to understand the complex ART world from our already heavily tasked TR commanders and supervisors.

ART Proponent Concerns with an All-AGR Conversion

ART proponents have a number of concerns that bear consideration in this essay. They include, but are not limited to: Productivity benefits of the ART program, an increase in the amount of time ARTs can remain in the Reserve program, the fear that an all AGR construct would bring an “active duty mentality” into the reserves and subsume the Citizen-airman mentality, and finally the cost of the AGR vs. the ART.

ART Productivity

The productivity argument is based on the fact that an ART is normally limited to a 40 hour civilian workweek but can earn additional money by working a full civilian day and then perform some sort of military duty after the civilian day is complete, thus receiving two and sometimes three days pay for one calendar day. Citing a C-5 Specific example, AFI11-2-C5 Volume III is the regulation that governs C-5 operations and aircrew restrictions. The Instruction provides a specific exception for technicians to work a full civilian day and report for a local training sortie as long as the sortie terminates at the 12 hour point, post flight duties are complete and the ART is heading home at the sixteen hour mark from the start of his/her civilian day.³¹ Although this particular example is made legal by regulation, one has to consider that a certain amount of risk is being assumed when the decision is made to command a four hour night time aerial

refueling sortie after having worked several hours in the office. In addition, the underlying issue with the productivity argument is the ART's motive for working beyond the scope of the 40 hour civilian workweek. If one assumes that greed is the driving force, do the means justify the ends? There is no additional pay for the AGR if they exceed an eight hour work day, but as professional Airmen they are expected to perform their duty. For the AGR, dedication and desire to perform are the coins of the realm.

More Years of Production for the ART

Another benefit, say ART proponents, is that ARTs can remain productive workers for DoD longer than their AGR counterparts. The civilian portion of the ART position comes with a minimum retirement age now approaching 57 years old. The military half of the ART position is usually the "retirement trigger" in the form of the MSD for officers or HYTD for enlisted. ARTs are not restricted by the 20 years of creditable service that allows AGRs to retire. If we take the example of a 37 year old E-7 with 18 years (13 years of creditable active duty) as an ART, this individual would be able to work for another 15 years, putting them at 33 years and their HYTD. If the same E-7 were an AGR, they could retire in seven years, having served a full 20 years of creditable service. The argument goes that the DoD loses eight years of productivity out of a highly experienced Airman. This argument does not necessarily reflect reality, however. An AGR officer who is granted career status has their Date of Separation (DOS) extended to 20 years creditable service, their MSD or age 60, whichever occurs first. These officers can be extended beyond 20 years, "but they have to have done the things that make themselves viable and reasonably competitive for the next step."³²

The enlisted force can also be extended beyond 20 years. A Master Sergeant “can expect 20-24 years, a Senior Master Sergeant 22-26 years and a Chief Master Sergeant 24-28 years.”³³ Very much like the ART program, AGR leaders are selected based on their ability and their decision to accept mobility as one of the costs of career progression. Where the programs differ, and this argument may hold some sway, lies in the individuals who are not selected into the leadership track or who chose not to be mobile. In this situation, an AGR’s career will normally culminate at 20 years of creditable active duty. Conversely, the ART can continue to serve until MSD or HYTD. On the face of it the ART program looks like it will provide greater longevity of service at the unit level. For those who elect the tactical track, upward mobility is extremely limited; in fact it is based on attrition. It is conceivable that sometime in the near future the Reserve retirement paradigm will be turned on its head. The recently released *Commission on the National Guard and Reserves* recommends the adoption of, “. . . personnel management policies that promote retention of experienced and trained individuals for longer reserve or active careers.”³⁴ Changes to public law would have to be made, but the intent of the recommendation is that if you have a valuable Reservist, they could serve beyond their current MSD or HYTD. A change such as this would level the playing field with respect to the productivity argument between ART and AGR.

Erosion of Citizen Airman Concept

There is concern that an all AGR construct will have adverse effects on the Citizen-Airman concept. The thought is that AGRs will bring an active duty mindset into the reserves, which may serve to erode the stability and local community flavor that make Reserve units a place where people want to stay and serve their country. A

Reserve unit that is properly nurtured has an *esprit de corps* that is partially based on the ideas of family and community. Usually unit members have served together and lived together in the same communities for years, sometimes for entire careers. The result is a level of unit cohesion that is seldom seen in active duty units. The fear is that the AGR force will be less stable and will be forced to rotate in and out of units much like their active duty brethren, creating turbulence within “the family”. The “mobility” aspect also concerns those who would be converted from ART to AGR. Neither of these concerns needs be the case. The UPT bases that are built on an all AGR structure demonstrate this. The tactical track offers AGR officers and enlisted members alike the ability to remain non-mobile should they so desire, very much like the ART program currently does. Thus the concerns of squadron turbulence and perceived position mobility need not become a reality in the design phase of this program.

Cost Issue

The ART proponent will argue that an AGR is more costly than an ART. Although this is an argument that requires further and more rigorous study, planning numbers used by AF/RECB in the Pentagon for budgeting indicate that there is not a large cost differential. For example if a typical C-5 flying squadron of five ART officers and 12 ART enlisted members is used, annual ART salaries amount to approximately \$1.630 million. If the same squadron were manned by AGRs the approximate annual cost would be \$1.662 million, a difference of \$32,000.³⁵

What cannot be quantified without further study is the likely reduction in manpower—and the cost associated with that manpower—that an all-AGR system would generate. Certainly the Civilian Personnel system would benefit by the reduction

of 9900 ART positions to track, move and pay. By bringing together the force development functions currently performed by AF/REAMO, AFPC and AFRC there are opportunities to gain some manpower efficiencies. The value added by the increase in force development options, reduced bureaucracy, and command and control clarity for this more homogeneous FTS cadre is well worth the effort and, with further study, could prove to be very cost-effective.

An all AGR Construct

The Department of Defense (DoD) Instruction 1205.18, *Full-Time Support (FTS) to the Reserve Components*, states that the Service Secretary shall determine “. . . the mix of FTS personnel . . . to optimize consistency and stability for each RC to achieve its assigned missions.”³⁶ Certainly the Air Force Secretary can be convinced that the road ahead is one that has already been paved by the former ARTs in AFRC’s Security Forces (SF). Following September 11, 2001 AFRC SF were mobilized and deployed, leaving a large gap in force protection at U.S. Reserve bases. Costs for civilian overtime to back-fill deployed reservists amounted to \$500,000 a month. In an effort to regain control of the SF manpower and reduce costs AFRC leadership elected to go to an all-AGR FTS structure. 320 ARTs were converted to AGRs at the base level and 64 converted at the Headquarters, Numbered Air Forces and tenant units. Between 30 and 40 elected not to convert primarily because they were senior ARTs and heavily vested in a civil service retirement. Initial reports from AFRC/A7S, the group responsible for the SF, indicate that the force is more robust and flexible. In addition the AGR positions are proving to be an excellent recruiting tool as expectations are easier to manage when moving from the AC to an AGR in the Reserves, with respect to pay and benefits.³⁷

The SF model could be used AFRC-wide, but a conversion of this magnitude would have to be phased in over time, due in part to fiscal programming and United States Code (USC) issues that would have to be worked out. For example, according to Title 10 USC, any changes in ART end strength require that “the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees with that budget a justification providing the basis for that requested reduction in technician end strength.”³⁸ Fiscally ARTs are funded out of, and account for, approximately 45% of AFRC’s Operation and Maintenance (O&M) funds. AGRs are funded from the Reserve Personnel, Air Force Appropriations budget.³⁹ Any large shifts in personnel would require advanced planning and budgeting in the DoD Program Objective Memorandum (POM) or budgeting cycle. With proper planning, neither of these issues should be insurmountable, nor without peer. As previously alluded to, the function of career management for the combined entity could be placed in one organization instead of the current three. One must assume that by reducing the number of organizations that deal with an all-AGR FTS there would be a reduction in the number of people required to service the new organization. This new streamlined hub would now have visibility on all of the full-time support, increased flexibility, and the capability to position future AFRC leaders in a larger array of positions.

Conclusion

The future of the Air Force Reserve will rely on agile and able leaders with a wide spectrum of abilities and experiences. As we continue the transition towards Total Force Integration, a more homogeneous and less bureaucratic force will be required. In the course of any changes it is essential that we protect the important concept of the Citizen

Airman. As Lieutenant Colonel Vince Bugeja, ARPC's Force Development Chief recently stated, "If I can get our Airmen to understand one thing, it would be this: In the Reserve, force development will never be 'forced development.' We will always respect the Citizen Airman mantra."⁴⁰ An all-AGR construct will give AFRC, NAF, Wing, Group and Squadron leadership greater flexibility in developing their Airmen while reducing non-mission related workload and improving command relationships.

Endnotes

¹ Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, *Transforming the National Guard and Reserves into a 21st-Century Operational Force*, Final Report to Congress and the Secretary of Defense, 31 January 2008, available from <http://www.cngr.gov/Final%20Report/CNGR%20Final%20Report.pdf>, 4; Internet; accessed 11 February 2008.

² This concept is in operation in the "Joint Stars" world at Robins AFB, GA. More info is available from <http://www.garobi.ang.af.mil/History/history.htm>; Internet; accessed 11 February 2008.

³ Gerald T. Cantwell, *Citizen Airmen, A History of the Air Force Reserve, 1945-1994* (Washington, D.C.: Air Force History and Museums Program: GPO, 1997), 146.

⁴ The Civilian Personnel Division, HQ AFRC/A1C, *Air Reserve Technician Guide*, available from <https://www.my.af.mil/gcss-af/afp40/USAF/ep/contentView.do?contentType=EDITORIAL&contentId=1304698&programId=1067122&pageId=681744&channelPageId=-1073755509>; Internet; accessed 11 February 2008.

⁵ Because of the current Operations Tempo today's ART will generally perform far more military duty than the minimum stated in the text.

⁶ U.S. Department of the Air Force, *Procedures for Air Reserve Technicians (ART) Who Lose Active Membership in the Reserve*, Air Force Reserve Command Instruction 36-114 (10 August 2001), 2, available from <http://www.e-publishing.af.mil/shared/media/epubs/AFRCI36-114.pdf>; Internet; accessed 11 February 2008.

⁷ Air Reserve Personnel Center Home Page, "High Year Tenure (HYT) Fact Sheet", available from <http://www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=8238>; Internet; accessed 11 February 2008.

⁸ Air Reserve Personnel Center Home Page, "Mandatory Separation Date Fact Sheet," available from <http://www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=8239>; Internet; accessed 11 February 2008.

⁹ Recent legislation now allows for receipt of retirement benefits prior to age 60 by 90 days for every 90 consecutive days of active duty performed in support of on-going military operations (National Defense Authorization Act of 2008.)

¹⁰ U.S. Department of the Air Force, *Full-Time Support (FTS) Active Guard Reserve (AGR) Program*, AFI 36-2132 (19 Apr 05), available from <http://www.e-publishing.af.mil/?txtSearchWord=36-2132&rdoFormPub=rdoPub>, 5; Internet; accessed 11 February 2008.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹² Michael Massicotte, AFRC/A1MP, e-mail message to author, 13 December 2007. (Provided ART Numbers on the staff at the Pentagon and AFRC/HQ at Robins AFB.), and Randall Robertson, Lt Col, HQ AF/REAMO, e-mail message to author. 19 November 2007, (Provided information on AGR positions throughout the AF Reserves.)

¹³ Randall Robertson, Lt Col, HQ AF/REAMO, e-mail message to author, 19 November 2007.

¹⁴ AFI 36-2132, 7.

¹⁵ The 2008 Defense Authorization Act authorized retiring Reservists a reduction from the time at which benefits normally commence at age 60, of 90 days for every 90 days served in support of a contingency.

¹⁶ Citizen Airman, "Round the Reserve: New Rules Require Technicians to Wear Uniforms," available from <http://www.citamn.afrc.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123068511>; Internet; accessed 11 February 2008.

¹⁷ Michael Massicotte, AFRC/A1MP, e-mail message to author, 28 January 2008. AFRC has 36 Wings containing a wing commander and three group commanders each. All are ART positions. There are four groups; Randolph AFB, TX; Robins AFB, GA; Elmendorf AFB, AK and Hickam AFB, HI that have an AGR group commander.

¹⁸ AFI 36-2132, 4.

¹⁹ *The ART Guide*, produced by The Civilian Personnel Division, (HQ AFRC/A1C, 1 April 2007), available from https://www.my.af.mil/gcss-af/USAF/AFP40/Attachment/20070724/ART_Handbook.doc, 5; Internet; accessed 11 February 2008.

²⁰ U.S. Department of the Air Force, *Full-Time Support (FTS) Active Guard Reserve (AGR) Program*, AFI 36-2132 (19 April 05), available from, <http://www.e-publishing.af.mil/?txtSearchWord=36-2132&rdoFormPub=rdoPub>, 4, and U.S. Department of the Air Force, *Air Reserve Technician (ART) Officer Career Management Program*, AFRCI 36-111 (8 November 1996), available from <http://www.e-publishing.af.mil/shared/media/epubs/AFRCI36-111.pdf>, 4; Internet; accessed 11 February 2008.

²¹ U.S. Department of the Air Force, *Air Reserve Technician (ART) Officer Career Management Program*, AFRCI 36-111 (8 November 1996), available from <http://www.e-publishing.af.mil/shared/media/epubs/AFRCI36-111.pdf>, 10; Internet; accessed 11 February 2008.

²² Captain Cathy Anderson, 512th Airlift Wing Chief of Personnel, Dover AFB, telephone interview by author, 20 December 2007. The hiring process begins when the hiring official (i.e. the unit commander) identifies the potential for an ART vacancy. Approximately 120 days prior to the vacancy date this official notifies the servicing Civilian Personnel Office (CPO) via a "Recruit to fill" notice, who in turn notifies either the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC) or Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC). Determining whether the "Recruit to fill" request goes to AFPC or AFRC depends upon whether the hiring official desires a certain individual to fill the position. In this instance the request will go to AFRC/SEU or Special Examining Unit. If the hiring official has no specific person in mind they can turn to AFPC who will recruit through DOD's USA Jobs website (more than likely, in the case of key supervisory positions, the commander will contact the MAJCOM leadership to determine if there are candidates at other Wing's who might be interested in the position—in this case they will process the "Recruit to fill" through AFRC.) If the hiring official wants to hire an individual from within the unit who is not already an ART, this individual must have already processed paperwork through the AFRC/SEU which is responsible for determining eligibility and rating ART applicants. The SEU rating process for the applicant will generally take about a month to process. If the sought after individual has a rating on file his/her name will be forwarded back to the hiring official in the form of a "Cert." This "Cert" will likely have additional candidates that the hiring official may or may not know. The hiring official has the option to choose the individual who was sought after or to interview and pick one of the other names on the cert. Once the name is selected the hiring official emails a response back to AFRC. If the individual is being hired under NSPS, AFRC will send hiring approval to the hiring official who will in turn notify the prospective employee of the intent to hire. If the individual is a bargaining unit employee, and thus under GS/WG civil service rules, AFRC or AFPC will notify the individual. Once notified, AFRC or AFPC will forward the appropriate hiring paperwork to the servicing CPO who will in turn notify the individual that they have paperwork to complete. ART commanders are generally selected at the MAJCOM level and processed through AFRC channels.

Management Directed Reassignments (MDR), or moving an ART from one position to another is also complex and time consuming. As an ART occupies two positions, one military and one civilian, there are two separate processes involved. The civilian MDR process is subdivided into NSPS employees and bargaining unit (e.g. union) employees. The military portion can be done in house between the unit and the Military Personnel Flight (MPF). When doing an MDR for the civilian portion the hiring official must go through the Wing Commander for approval then to the CPO and on to AFRC as described above in the initial hiring process. It is essential to note that the MDR created a vacancy and that position must be filled.

These processes take a minimum of three months but usually take longer according to Captain Anderson.

²³ Randall Robertson, Lt Col, HQ AF/REAMO, e-mail message to author, 20 December 2007.

²⁴ Assuming 5 minutes per day and a 250 day work year (2006 timesheet used). There are 9909 ARTs on the FY 08 End Strength document.

²⁵ ARTs on flying status are provided 48, four hour training periods per year to assist in maintaining currency and proficiency on their assigned airframe.

²⁶ UTAPS tracks Unit Training Assembly periods (UTA = monthly weekend drill) for all reservists, including ART's. AGRs are on active duty and would not be loaded in this system. Generally the process of operating this system falls to the ART's. Each reservist has 48 UTA periods per year.

Reservists on flying status have 48 Training Periods (TP) per year. TPs are tracked in the Training Period tracking database. This database is monitored by an ART on staff. The data is periodically exported to Reserve Pay for payout. It is essential that information that goes into the TP tracking system be identical to the ART's timesheet as these are maintained in a "hard copy" file for auditing purposes. An error can lead to a discrepancy during unit inspections.

²⁷ An AFRC Form 4, "Air Reserve Technician (Aircrew) Work Hours Record" records dates, takeoff/landing times, what status the ART is in, any comp credit or leave time earned or used and any remarks while on a mission.

²⁸ The 512th Operations Group at Dover AFB, DE has 64 ARTs and 6 civilians on staff. Were the ARTs replaced with AGRs there would be only six appraisals to create, review and assess, as opposed to 70.

²⁹ *U.S. Office of Personnel Management Home Page*, available from <http://www.opm.gov/>; Internet; accessed 11 February 2008.

³⁰ AFI 36-2132, 3.

³¹ U.S. Department of the Air Force, *C-5 Operations Procedures*, AFI11-2C-5 Volume 3 (7 Dec 2005, incorporates change 1, dated 4 Aug 2006), available from <http://www.e-publishing.af.mil/shared/media/epubs/AFI11-2C-5V3.pdf>, 26; Internet; accessed 11 February 2008.

³² Randall Robertson, Lt Col, HQ AF/REAMO, e-mail message to author, 14 January 2008.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, 18.

³⁵ Figures provided by AF/RECB include pay, retirement contributions and the government's cost for health benefits. The 1st table shows a typical C-5 squadron using the average pay figures provided.

	ART				AGR		
Grade/Step	ART Salary	Res Pay	Salary	Rank/Yrs	POM Plan #	Salary	
GS-07-02	\$78,235.00	11685	\$89,920.00	SMSgt/25	75830	\$75,830.00	
GS-09-02	\$78,235.00	11685	\$89,920.00	MSgt/18	75830	\$75,830.00	
GS-09-04	\$78,235.00	11685	\$89,920.00	MSgt/11	75830	\$75,830.00	
GS-09-04	\$78,235.00	11685	\$89,920.00	MSgt/24	75830	\$75,830.00	
GS-09-08	\$78,235.00	11685	\$89,920.00	SMSgt/24	75830	\$75,830.00	
GS-09-09	\$78,235.00	11685	\$89,920.00	MSgt/26	75830	\$75,830.00	
GS-09-10	\$78,235.00	11685	\$89,920.00	SMSgt/28	75830	\$75,830.00	
GS-10-04	\$78,235.00	11685	\$89,920.00	MSgt/24	75830	\$75,830.00	
GS-10-05	\$78,235.00	11685	\$89,920.00	MSgt/18	75830	\$75,830.00	
GS-10-08	\$78,235.00	11685	\$89,920.00	MSgt/20	75830	\$75,830.00	
GS-11-10	\$78,235.00	11685	\$89,920.00	CMSgt/34	75830	\$75,830.00	
GS-11-10	\$78,235.00	11685	\$89,920.00	CMSgt/34	75830	\$75,830.00	
GS-13-01	\$78,235.00	31951	\$110,186.00	Maj/16	150462	\$150,462.00	
GS-13-01	\$78,235.00	31951	\$110,186.00	Maj/15	150462	\$150,462.00	
GS-13-02	\$78,235.00	31951	\$110,186.00	Maj/11	150462	\$150,462.00	
GS-13-03	\$78,235.00	31951	\$110,186.00	Lt Col/25	150462	\$150,462.00	
GS-14-08	\$78,235.00	31951	\$110,186.00	Lt Col/20	150462	\$150,462.00	
	Total of Salaries		\$1,629,970.00		Total of Salaries	\$1,662,270.00	

The second chart shows the same squadron using actual (2006) ART salaries and calculated AGR salaries based off of 2006 Pay tables acquired from the Air Force Crossroads homepage available from, <http://www.afcrossroads.com/financial/pay.cfm#> These figures do not reflect health care costs or retirement contributions; Internet accessed 11 February 2008.

	ART				AGR					
Grade/Step	ART Salary	Res Pay	Salary	Rank/Yrs	Basic	BAS	BAH	Fly Pay	Salary	
GS-07-02	\$38,067.00	11685	\$49,752.00	SMSgt/25	53406	3359	16872		\$73,637.00	
GS-09-02	\$46,564.00	11685	\$58,249.00	MSgt/18	43124	3359	16092	4800	\$67,375.00	
GS-09-04	\$49,570.00	11685	\$61,255.00	MSgt/11	37832	3359	13416	4200	\$58,807.00	
GS-09-04	\$49,570.00	11685	\$61,255.00	MSgt/24	47100	3359	16092	4800	\$71,351.00	
GS-09-08	\$55,580.00	11685	\$67,265.00	SMSgt/24	53406	3359	16872		\$73,637.00	
GS-09-09	\$57,083.00	11685	\$68,768.00	MSgt/26	50448	3359	13416	4800	\$72,023.00	
GS-09-10	\$58,586.00	11685	\$70,271.00	SMSgt/28	56458	3359	16872	4800	\$81,489.00	
GS-10-04	\$54,585.00	11685	\$66,270.00	MSgt/24	47100	3359	16092	4800	\$71,351.00	
GS-10-05	\$56,239.00	11685	\$67,924.00	MSgt/18	43124	3359	16092	4800	\$67,375.00	
GS-10-08	\$61,200.00	11685	\$72,885.00	MSgt/20	43729	3359	16092	4800	\$67,980.00	
GS-11-10	\$70,882.00	11685	\$82,567.00	CMSgt/34	72936	3359	17844	4800	\$98,939.00	
GS-11-10	\$70,882.00	11685	\$82,567.00	CMSgt/34	72936	3359	17844	4800	\$98,939.00	
GS-13-01	\$85,582.00	31951	\$117,533.00	Maj/16	74250	2313	16164	10080	\$102,807.00	
GS-13-01	\$85,582.00	31951	\$117,533.00	Maj/15	72914	2313	19140	10080	\$104,447.00	
GS-13-02	\$88,434.00	31951	\$120,385.00	Maj/11	67224	2313	19140	7800	\$96,477.00	
GS-13-03	\$91,286.00	31951	\$123,237.00	Lt Col/25	88477	2313	20412	10080	\$121,282.00	
GS-14-08	\$115,133.00	31951	\$147,084.00	Lt Col/20	88477	2313	20412	10080	\$121,282.00	
	Total of Salaries		\$1,434,800.00				Total of Salaries		\$1,449,198.00	

³⁶ U.S. Department of Defense, *Full-Time Support (FTS) to the Reserve Components*, DoDI 1205.18 (4 May 2007), available from <http://131.84.1.34/whs/directives/corres/pdf/120518p.pdf>, 2; Internet; accessed 11 February 2008.

³⁷ Chief Master Sergeant Larry Miller, Security Forces Manager, Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command, telephone interview by author, 25 January 2008.

