Providing a View From the Front Line: How Deployment Effects Reservists

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Who are the Reserves?

• **1.1 million men and women** from the Army, Air Force, Navy and Coast Guard Reserve, the Army National Guard and Army Air Guard

• **Gender:** 888,892 Males; 192,453 Females

• **Race:**
  - White: 817,843
  - Black: 152,802
  - AI/NA: 0,979
  - A: 29,382
  - NH/PI: 5457
  - UNK: 12,918
  - O: 51,984

• **Ethnicity:**
  - A: 33,176
  - H: 102,659
  - NA: 11,160
  - O: 499,876
  - NONE: 410,153
  - UNK: 24,341

• **Average age:** 38 years old

Data Source: Defense Manpower Data Center
How Long Have They Been Deployed?

• **Percentage Deployed**¹
  - Army National Guard: 46%
  - Army Reserve: 55%
  - Navy Reserve: 25%
  - Marine Corps Reserve: 39%
  - Air National Guard: 13%
  - Air Force Reserve: 22%
  - Coast Guard Reserve: 0.2%

• **Average length of deployment since 2001**²
  - Army NG and Reserve: 414 days or 14 months
  - Navy Reserve: 324 days or 11 months
  - Marine Corps Reserve: 356 days or 12 months
  - The Air National Guard & Reserve: 248 days or 8 months

*Note: since January 2007 Deployments have been limited to 12 months

¹ Reserve Components Common Personnel Data System
² Defense Manpower Data Center
Who Are The Families?

- **Reservists**
  - Married: ~50%\(^1\)
  - Dependents: 1,618,041\(^2\)

- **Location**
  - Most live in communities far from military installations
  - Communities have little understanding of, and experience, with the military

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1. Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System / Reserve Components Common Personnel Data System
2. Defense Manpower Data Center
Effects of Chronic Deployment

• Multiple deployments and returns can amplify family problems and stress strained relationships and financial resources.

• Even a single deployment can create problems with civilian employers. Deployment often leads to an increase in substance dependence and abuse.¹

• No direct link between deployment and suicide has been found.²


Substance Abuse in the Reserve Component (RC)

- **Tobacco:**
  - General smoking rates: 8-9% across all Reserve Components
  - Higher rates of heavy smoking in ARNG, USMCR and USAR

- **Alcohol:**
  - Lower daily alcohol consumption rates in USAFR, ANG and USNR than ARNG, USAR and USMCR

- **Illegal Substances:**
  - Highest Rates in ARNG
  - Lowest in USNR
  - All illegal drug users are outprocessed from the RC

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1DoD Survey of Health Related Behaviors Among Guard and Reserve Force, 2007 by RTI International
Stress and the RC

**Source:**
- Family
- Civilian employment
- Reserve employment

**Result:**
- 36% reported military work demands interfere with family life;
- Highest level of family-work conflict: USMCR
- Lowest level of family-work conflict: ANG
- History of SH/SA leads to poorer physical and mental health: depression, PTSD & somatic symptoms

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1. DoD Survey of Health Related Behaviors Among Guard and Reserve Force, 2007 by RTI International
Women and Stress in the RC

• DoD Survey Indications
  
  – Women reported significantly **more stress than men**\(^1\)
  
  – 25% reported a **great deal’ of stress** related to being a female in a male-dominated, combat-oriented environment\(^1\)
  
  – More than 50% of females and 37% of males reported some type of physical or sexual harassment or abuse\(^1, 2\)

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Women and Stress in the RC

• Most studies on women are descriptive & observational, clustered in areas related to PTSD:
  – Stress of military life
  – Health & performance
  – Health services research
  – Psychiatric conditions

• There is much less research on evaluation of treatment or prevention programs

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Children of Deployed RC Members

• Little research on children of deployed RC

• 400,000 DOD adolescent family members

• Number of school-age children of RC-deployed personnel unknown

• Evidence indicates the Gulf War (1990-1991) families were still experiencing difficulties one year after reunion

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What We Don’t Know

• Effective ways to reduce tobacco and alcohol use in RC
• Effective ways to teach gender-appropriate stress-reduction behaviors in RC
• If there are varying responses to deployment by gender and component
• Effective ways to help families and children cope with deployment
• Ways to provide effective services to a geographically-dispersed force
Reserve Component vs. Active Duty

- The Reserves are now an operational force comprised of 82% men and 18% women.¹
- The Reserves are an ethnically diverse force.
- RC Members are unique in that they juggle a civilian career in addition to military career and family—which may mean greater stress prior to and after deployment.
- RC Members may have unique needs yet to be identified within the paradigm of being an operational force.

¹. Defense Manpower Data Center
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