

Forward Stationed U.S. Army Reserve Units: A Study of Readiness

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Abstract

As the Army Reserve (AR) has transitioned from a manpower and a strategic reserve to an operational reserve, the Joint Force has become more reliant on its timely and cost-effective capabilities. This reliance is illustrated in the study of AR units forward stationed Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS). The capabilities of this small subset of AR units play a vital role to the commanders of United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) and United States European Command (EUCOM) when needed during shaping and contingency operations. It is unclear if the OCONUS stationed AR units are capable of overcoming the readiness challenges related to the personnel recruiting base, rapid mobilization, and ability to meet necessary training requirements. This study will examine those challenges in order to determine the specific role of forward stationed AR units. It will also provide recommendations that address the challenges of meeting the desired outcomes of the AR and Joint Force.

Forward Stationed U.S. Army Reserve Units: A Study of Readiness

The Army Reserve has never failed to have a unit ready before the date it was needed to execute a mission.

—Lieutenant General Jeffrey Talley¹

During its history, the Army Reserve (AR) has seen significant changes to the role it plays in national security. Through the years, the AR has transformed itself to better meet the needs of the nation. The initial purpose of the AR was to provide civilian medical capabilities and a manpower reserve to the federal force while maintaining a structure that could be filled in time of need. Subsequently, it evolved into a strategic reserve with the goal of mobilizing ready and trained units in order to backfill the active forces. Today it sees itself as an operational reserve providing key capabilities to the Joint Force on a regular basis. Throughout all these periods the Active Component (AC) has become increasingly dependent on the AR.

This dependency is clearly displayed by a study of United States Army Reserve (USAR) units stationed Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS). The USAR units stationed OCONUS include those that are currently assigned to United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) and United States European Command (EUCOM). The majority of AR personnel assigned to those units are located in Alaska and Hawaii. Of greater interest are those units stationed in the United States (U.S.) territories in the Pacific and on U.S. installations in Japan, Korea, Italy and Germany. These units are a very small subset of all USAR forces, but are of vital interest to the Combatant Commanders to whom they are assigned and where they are forward stationed. The question this paper attempts to study is the inherent challenges OCONUS stationed USAR units face and whether they are able to overcome them to achieve readiness.

The USPACOM and EUCOM commanders are the key stakeholder for OCONUS stationed USAR units. Much like the trend in Total Force these commanders might see USAR units as a cost-effective solution to provide a needed capability.² Since these units are forward stationed and assigned to the Geographic Combatant Commander (GCC), there is a perceived expectation that these units are easily accessible for training and that they can be rapidly mobilized in time of need. Several concerns arise from these expectations, the first of which is whether the existing recruiting base for Department of the Army (DA) civilians, dependents and expatriates who might serve in the AR provide the capability to meet personnel requirements. A second concern focuses on whether the limited number of available training days allocated to each AR unit are sufficient to meet pre-mobilization training requirements. A third concern is how the mobilization process will work for each OCONUS unit. Finally, there is concern as to whether training and mobilization authorities inhibit access to the unit. This paper will examine each of these concerns to the joint force as well as examine the USAR units stationed in the Pacific and Europe then provide recommendations.

Background of the Army Reserve

Since its inception, the USAR has followed a path from a military manpower reserve to the operational reserve that it is today. One consistent theme throughout its history is the fact that the AR is considered an efficient and cost effective way of providing needed capabilities to the Army as a whole. The USAR initially grew out of the Medical Reserve Corps, which was established in 1908 to solve the problem of mobilizing volunteers during the Spanish American War and Philippine Insurrection.³

In 1912, Congress created the Regular AR separate from the Medical Reserve Corps. This early force was further formalized by the *National Defense Act of 1916* and

the *National Defense Act Amendments of 1920*, which provided the federal government authority combine all of its reserve components into the Organized Reserve.⁴

During World War I, the reserve was quickly put in to action with nearly 90,000 Reserve officers and 80,000 enlisted AR soldiers serving.⁵ At this time the reserve was not mobilized as units but rather individual soldiers were placed into units, trained and deployed.⁶ In the interwar years, the units in the Reserve force existed only on paper or in a cadre status--with small staffs ready to accept forces if the Army need to grow quickly.⁷

During World War II, the Army mobilized twenty-six AR infantry divisions and over 200,000 AR soldiers served in the war.⁸ As World War II signified the beginning of a new national security era, it also marked a significant change for the AR. During this time, and following it, the AR transitioned from a military manpower reserve to strategic reserve.

The environment that existed as the U.S. entered the Cold War created the need for a large military force. Congress, in an attempt to defray the cost of maintaining a large military, required the AR to maintain a higher readiness in order to more quickly mobilize and deploy its forces. The active Army also looked to the AR for the first time to better complement its forces.

This better trained and better integrated strategic reserve was first called up during the Korean War where more than 240,000 AR Soldiers were brought onto active duty.⁹ It was during this call up that congress made further changes to the AR by creating the USAR which organized Reserve Soldiers into a Ready Reserve, Standby Reserve and Retired Reserve.¹⁰ During this era the Army first established USAR forces

overseas. In 1956 the AR established five schools in Europe that were manned by AR Soldiers.¹¹

The reliance on AR Soldiers diminished during the Vietnam War with under 6,000 soldiers mobilized during the conflict.¹² The Total Force Policy announced in 1973 changed that trajectory by placing an increased reliance on reserve component forces for rapid deployment. This policy increased the reliance on a well trained and equipped reserve component to deploy within a month's notice in support of military operations.¹³ AR history describes the intent of this new policy to ensure that "the Army would never engage in major conflict without reserve components."¹⁴

In 1990 congress mandated the creation of the USAR Command (USARC) to command all Continental United States (CONUS) USAR forces.¹⁵ The next historical shift for the AR occurred after the attacks of September 11, 2001 when the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan increased the need for USAR forces. This persistent requirement for Reserve Component forces led to the Operational Reserve.

In the context of this history the OCONUS stationed USAR units are as relevant as ever. As the Army has become forward deployed, the USAR has followed suit when needed. As the need for USAR forces increases, the reliance on this small subset of forces will also increase. The *2016 Army Reserve Posture Statement* stated, "The current demand for Army Reserve forces is about 25,000 operational troops annually. To generate that number, at least one third of all Army Reserve forces must maintain prescribed levels of readiness for manning, equipping and training to meet operational requirements."¹⁶

The question remains as to how much of a role OCONUS USAR units should play in both the current and future demand on the AR.

Stakeholders for Forward Stationed USAR Forces

The Joint Force

The Joint Force is the largest stakeholder for the AR and its OCONUS stationed forces. Since the evolution of the AR from a manpower and strategic reserve to an operational reserve, the demand for its capabilities has increased. The *2016 Army Reserve Posture Statement* recognized that the AR is an essential element to the Total Army and Joint Force by “meeting high operational tempo demands; operating and generating forces to support the National Military Strategy and U.S. commitments worldwide; and providing predictable capabilities to global combatant commands.”¹⁷

The structure of the AR with a majority of the total Army’s combat support and combat service support capability make the components extremely interdependent. The Active Force needs the capabilities of the AR while the AR depends on the Active Force for its force structure and strategic guidance. The OCONUS stationed USAR units, although small, carry a disproportionate risk for both the AR and the Joint Force. The challenges for the AR and the expectations of the Joint Force are outlined below.

Cost Savings

Throughout its history, the AR has been seen as a cost-effective means of maintaining military capability. The 2016 USAR posture statement states the advantages of the operational AR, “When deployed to support operational contingencies and theater cooperation missions, a federal operational Army Reserve force saves the Army money. It reduces the demand for Active Army capabilities, helps mitigate current Army capability shortfalls.”¹⁸ According to the commission on the

National Guard and Reserve published in 2008, active component service members cost approximately four times as much as a reserve component service members when not activated.¹⁹ The report further stated that “this significant cost advantage...will drive policymaking in the coming years.”²⁰ For this reason commanders, may look to the AR to solve force strength problems without fully grasping the limitations on readiness and access that are described later in the paper.

The Army is facing budget pressures and has already been directed to cut its end strength.²¹ One solution to this problem is the attempt to obtain greater capability out of the total force by asking the AR to make a larger contribution.²² This may be especially true OCONUS where reductions have already been made. A report by the Atlantic Council on the future of the Army pointed out:

For the first time since World War II, the vast majority of the Army is permanently based at home. During most of the Cold War, the Army deployed more than a third of its active duty forces around the world, especially in Europe and Asia, in order to deter adversaries, reassure allies, and respond rapidly to crises. But that successful long-standing model has been largely dismantled during the past twenty years.²³

Based on this reality, the commanding general of United States Army Europe (USAREUR), Lieutenant General Ben Hodges, described his task as making 30,000 Soldiers look and feel like 300,000.²⁴ The AR plays a role in achieving this end state with both CONUS and OCONUS stationed units. The concern is whether OCONUS stationed USAR units are able to overcome the challenges, discussed next, of providing trained and ready Soldiers when needed.

Trained and Ready USAR Soldiers

Combatant Commanders have a clear responsibility to USAR units assigned to them. They exercise training readiness oversight (TRO) over assigned Reserve

Component (RC) forces not on active duty. According to Department of Defense (DOD) instructions, TRO include the following specific authorities:

1. Provide guidance to Service component commanders on operational requirements and priorities to be addressed in Military Department training and readiness programs;
2. Comment on Service component program recommendations and budget requests;
3. Coordinate and approve participation by assigned RC forces in joint exercises and other joint training when on ADT or performing IDT;
4. Obtain and review readiness and inspection reports on assigned RC forces;
5. Coordinate and review mobilization plans (including post-mobilization training activities and deployability validation procedures) developed for assigned RC forces.²⁵

Although this authority is clearly outlined, commanders must understand the limitations imposed on readiness in personnel and training when relying on USAR units.

By Title 10, the purpose of the AR is to provide trained units and qualified persons available for active duty in time of war.²⁶ Geographic Combatant Commanders expect to employ trained and ready units. The USARC is tasked with training, manning and equipping missions for all USAR units except those stationed OCONUS.²⁷ Forward stationed OCONUS units, as detailed later, are commanded by USAREUR and U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC).²⁸ Although, OCONUS Stationed USAR units are assigned to Army Service Component Commands (ASCCs), the Office of the Chief, Army Reserve (OCAR) has a responsibility to program and budget funds for those units. The Soldiers in those units must adhere to DOD and DA training policies that govern Reserve Soldiers and Troop Program Units. The division between the chain of command and chain of resourcing creates a challenge if OCAR does not fully understand the unit

requirements and the ASCC lacks knowledge on RC force training limitations. Dealing with these authorities is complex and contributes to the problem of providing trained and ready USAR Soldiers.

Another challenge that OCONUS USAR units encounter is availability and recruitment of qualified Soldiers in order to fill their ranks. The decision-making process used to decide where to station individual AC units centers on unit capabilities and the availability of supporting facilities. These factors are also a consideration for the USAR, but greater emphasis is placed on the local recruiting market and the availability of Reserve Soldiers in the immediate area to fill the unit. The active component units have the capability to recruit soldiers from CONUS and station them OCONUS while the USAR component is limited in its recruitment efforts to the commuting area around the unit. Reserve units fill their ranks from a contingent of local Reserve Soldiers actively looking for a unit or civilians residing in the area who are eligible for military service. Soldiers recruited from the local area are typically a great asset to OCONUS units because they have a better understanding of the local culture and language. The challenge that OCONUS units face is the limited availability of qualified U.S. Citizens or Permanent Resident Aliens willing to serve.

Typically, the pool of eligible USAR Soldiers OCONUS comes from one of three areas. The first area consists of Government Employees stationed overseas who want to serve in the AR. This group may include DA Civilians or contractors stationed OCONUS. Generally, they would be either currently serving in the AR or in the process of transitioning from Active duty while looking for opportunities to continue their service. The second category encompasses dependents of military service members stationed

OCONUS. The last category of Soldiers in OCONUS units are U.S. Expatriates living and working overseas. The challenge presented by DA Civilians, contractors, and dependents is that they may only be stationed OCONUS for a limited period of time creating turbulence within the unit. This limited availability of talent is a key component to unit readiness for OCONUS stationed USAR units.

According to Army Regulation 5-10, the ASCC with its geographical responsibility will coordinate stationing plans as they are formulated and implemented, and ensure that the number of RC units in a local community does not exceed the community's ability to support them at authorized strength.²⁹ In CONUS, the tool the USAR uses to assess each market is the Stationing Tool-Army Reserve (STAR) which is designed to assist in achieving and maintaining trained and ready units.³⁰ This tool focuses on the top 100 urban areas in the U.S. and is of little use at most OCONUS locations.³¹ For those locations, the ASCC and AR would rely on demographic studies. With so many variables impacting the availability of US government civilians, contractor, dependents and expatriates living in the OCONUS market, making a clear determination on the ability to fill OCONUS units is unclear at best.

Timely Access for Training and Other Missions

Although OCONUS units are assigned to the GCC, it may frustrate combatant commanders who see the capability of the units but may not have been fully informed of the limitations of utilizing reserve forces unless they are fully mobilized. Unlike AC units within the GCC chain of command, USAR units have a limited ability to execute missions. To utilize OCONUS USAR units, commanders must account for the limited number of training days available to those units to meet readiness and other mission requirements. The OCONUS USAR units are limited to the same number of days

available for training as CONUS stationed USAR units. Units may be brought onto active duty for 15-days active service once per year as part of Annual Training or an operational mission. Otherwise units may use their 48 Inactive Duty Training (IDT) periods--which totals to two days per month. Traditionally, these training days are executed over a weekend. The OCONUS units may request and receive more training days or other resources to achieve a higher level of readiness. If funding is available, units may request additional IDT. Requesting additional training days to meet readiness risks interfering with each Soldier's civilian commitments and could impact retention of RC Soldiers. Expatriates face the most risk since protections under The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act does not apply to them.

One tool for utilizing OCONUS USAR capabilities is the use of Active Duty for Operational Support (ADOS). The ADOS is an authority defined under Title 10 that provides a way to bring OCONUS stationed soldiers voluntarily on active duty to serve for up to three years in order to execute a mission.³² Since it is voluntary it would be difficult to utilize an entire unit for a specific mission, but may work well for individual needs. The OCONUS USAR units will always face a difficult balance between the desire of the GCC to employ the units for training and other missions with the limited ways to bring RC Soldiers on orders to support those missions.

Rapid Mobilization

Since OCONUS USAR units are assigned to the GCC, it is reasonable for the GCC to expect that those units are easily accessible in time of need. The GCC anticipates that during a contingency operation units with necessary capabilities will be the first ones called to active duty. To fulfill this mission OCONUS USAR component must be prepared to quickly mobilize and deploy a trained and equipped unit to the

combatant commander. This need creates a readiness dilemma that CONUS units may not face.

The USAR units may be involuntarily brought onto active duty when either the President or Congress determines that RC Forces are required to augment AC Forces.³³ Under a mobilization authority a RC unit will complete post-mobilization training and then deploy into a GCC area of responsibility (AOR). In CONUS, U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) is responsible to validate the manning, equipping and training readiness of forces for federal active duty employment.³⁴ Outside the Continental United States, the responsibility for validation is less clear. The responsibility ultimately falls on the ASCC commander in their respective AOR. In the Pacific, the 196th Infantry Brigade validates all RC units on behalf of the USARPAC commander. While no Army Regulation addresses the responsibility for USAREUR, USAR units have deployed from Europe in the past.³⁵

According to FORSCOM, one of the intended outcomes of the current Army Total Force Policy is to “streamline the mobilization process and reduce post-mobilization training time for RC units. In order to achieve reductions in post mobilization training time, readiness must be generated during pre-mobilization.”³⁶ To improve readiness, Reserve Component units must establish stabilizing manning procedures, schedule the adequate training exercises and resource the right number of training days. These tenets apply to OCONUS units where, as discussed previously, manning and inherent training demands in a forward deployed environment present a greater challenge. These challenges are examined in the next section where the USAR interests and OCONUS units are introduced in more detail.

The United States Army Reserve

The AR has great interest in the success of its OCONUS stationed USAR units. The AR is currently led by Lieutenant General Charles D. Luckey who is the Chief of Army Reserve (CAR) and also the commanding general of the United States Army Reserve Command (USARC). His responsibilities as CAR are outlined in Title 10 Section 3038 of U.S. law. He is accountable for the justification and execution of the personnel, operation and maintenance, and construction budgets for the AR.³⁷ From this purview, he is responsible for shaping and funding OCONUS stationed USAR units.

As the commander of USARC, who is subordinate to FORSCOM, he is responsible to provide trained, equipped and ready Soldiers, Leaders, and Units to meet America's requirements at home and abroad.³⁸ The readiness of CONUS USAR units is the responsibility of the commanding general, FORSCOM through USARC. The USARC does not maintain mission command over OCONUS stationed USAR units but does have oversight of the units and considers many of them as part of the force pool to meet emerging requirements. The Commander, USARPAC and commander, USAREUR are responsible for preparing their assigned USAR units for mobilization.³⁹ The USAR units are usually apportioned to one or more OPLANS.⁴⁰

The Army determines the AR force structure by using the Total Army Analysis (TAA) process. The TAA uses what the congressional research service describes as "a deliberative campaign analysis process to determine the demand for forces from all three components based on multiple possible future scenarios, current operational demands, as well as lessons learned from past operations and conflicts, and resource constraints."⁴¹ Through this process the AR has resourced OCONUS stationed USAR units for USARPAC and USAREUR out of its mandated end-strength. The two reserve

headquarters that train and equip AR units for the ASCCs are the 9th Mission Support Command station in Fort Shafter, Hawaii and the 7th Mission Support Command stationed in Germany.

Pacific USAR Units



Figure 1. The 9th Mission Support Command⁴²

The 9th Mission Support Command (MSC) is one of the most unique headquarters in the AR. It is assigned to USARPAC and has the responsibility to provide trained and ready AR forces for mobilization. Its mission statement, taken from its Tables of Distribution and Allowance, is to:

Provide peacetime command and control, and administratively and logistically support assigned and attached U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) units and personnel as a direct reporting unit and senior Army Reserve

Headquarters to the Commander, U.S. Army Pacific. Provide trained and ready USAR Forces for mobilization, and support all USAR demobilization requirements. Execute all USAR Title 10 responsibilities on behalf of the Commander, U.S. Army Pacific.⁴³

Its direct reporting units span seven time zones from Alaska to the Republic of South Korea. Those direct reporting units have mission command of 30 units with approximately 3,400 Soldiers stationed in Hawaii, Alaska, American Samoa, Japan, Korea, Guam and Saipan. The 9th MSC is largely centered around the population base in Hawaii but is a vital resource in U.S. territories where many of its units are stationed.

Several of the 9th MSC's units are split stationed with companies geographically dispersed. The 100th Infantry Battalion, under the 303rd Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, is an example of this with Companies and Platoons split between Hawaii, Guam, Saipan and American Samoa. The 411th Engineer Battalion is dispersed in the same locations plus Alaska. This type of stationing contributes to many training challenges for its units who are in locations with limited training resources. The 5,339 miles between units in Alaska and American Samoa can certainly challenge mission command.⁴⁴

The ability to recruit RC Soldiers varies across the 9th MSC. The recruiting markets in Hawaii and Alaska provide an adequate base to support units stationed in those states and the majority of units in those states are stationed on Joint Bases or Army posts. In Guam, the AR Center is located in the community. In Guam and Saipan, 9th MSC units compete for local talent with the Guam National Guard. In American Samoa, the AR units are the only RC opportunity for the local residents to serve. Units stationed in Japan and Korea face the greatest recruiting challenge due to the limited recruiting market and availability of Reserve Soldiers.

Although the 9th MSC and its direct reporting units are assigned to USPACOM and further assigned to USARPAC, the USARC has included 9th MSC units in its force pool to meet contingency requirements. Units from the 9th MSC have mobilized and deployed into other theaters. Most recently a detachment from the 368th Military Police Company mobilized and deployed to Afghanistan directly from a mobilization station located in Guam.⁴⁵ Units have also mobilized and deployed from Schofield Barracks, Hawaii which is the other established mobilization station.⁴⁶

The 196th Infantry Brigade is an AC unit that validates all RC units on behalf of the USARPAC commander. They utilize the established mobilization stations on Schofield Barracks and Guam. The 3rd Mobilization Support Group under the 9th MSC has Mobilization Support Battalions that may be mobilized to support the 196th Infantry Brigade when necessary. Although the capability exists to mobilize RC units at Schofield Barracks and on Guam, the greater concern is what the mobilization of RC forces would look like in places like Korea and Japan.

Only a limited number of USAR units are stationed in Japan and Korea. The U.S. Army Pacific Support Unit, whose unit mission is to reinforce a Joint Headquarters, has forward elements in both Korea and Japan.⁴⁷ The other USAR unit stationed in Korea is the 658th Regional Support Group. The Regional Support Group is the only modification table of organization and equipment USAR unit stationed in Korea. Between the two units there are authorizations for approximately 124 Reserve Soldiers in Korea and 30 Reserve Soldiers in Japan.⁴⁸

The 9th MSC, in reply to questions posed by the National Commission on the Future of the Army on its ability to recruit in Korea and Japan, stated that “Most of the

uniformed and civilian personnel are resident in Hawaii and must fly to their units during weekend and annual training periods.”⁴⁹ This exposes several obvious challenges to stationing USAR Soldiers in Korea and Japan. The first is the available market eligible personnel in foreign countries to fill the ranks of those units. As previously outlined, Reserve Soldiers may come from DA Civilians and contractors stationed in Korea, Dependents or Expatriates. With the high turnover of personnel in those locations, it is difficult to do an appropriate study to justify the units stationed there.

Another challenge is the mobilization of those units. In the Pacific USAR units have been mobilized in Hawaii and Guam. The task of validating the units in Korea and Japan can be delegated to the Eighth Army Commander and the Commander of the United States Army - Japan, but the question remains what mobilization might entail. In a contingency, members of those units will need to be exempted from Noncombatant Evacuation Operations. All the tasks usually done at a mobilization station that ensure the service member is prepared to enter active duty will have to be done in country. Research for this paper could not find any evidence that such a plan has been developed. Ultimately, there needs to be a readiness standard so that those units may be able to come on active duty when needed. The commanders of those units will have to ensure they are resourced sufficiently to achieve the necessary level of readiness.

European USAR Units



Figure 2. The 7th Mission Support Command⁵⁰

The 7th Mission Support Command, located in Germany and Italy, poses its own set of challenges as an OCONUS stationed USAR unit. It is assigned to the 21st Theater Sustainment Command (TSC) as part of U.S. Army Europe. A distinct mission of the 7th MSC is its forward-stationed command and control capabilities. Its unit mission is:

Provide trained and ready, forward-stationed consequence management command and control capabilities, civil support teams, civil affairs forces and all other assigned U.S. Army Reserve units in support of U.S. Army Europe and 7th Army. Provide Title 10, U.S. Code responsibilities and on order, mobilize and deploy European-based U.S. Army Reserve units.⁵¹

The unit has deployed 10 of its 22 units in the past five years including personnel from its Headquarters as part of the Africa Ebola Response mission.⁵² The 7th MSC is viewed by USAREUR as cost effective solution to provide a needed capability. On its unit website, they state, “With the downsizing of units and capability in Europe, the AR has

become a key element in filling the gaps that develop across USAREUR and U.S. European Command, providing a pool of trained and ready forces to support overseas contingency operations.”⁵³

The 7th MSCs required strength of just under 900 soldiers is mostly in the Civil Affairs Brigade that has the mission command of a civil affairs battalion and the movement control battalion. The remaining units are below company size and include the Medical Support Unit- Europe, two Digital Liaison Detachments, and the 773rd Civil Support Team. In Europe, the 21st TSC assists the combatant commander with executing training and readiness oversight to ensure that units are mobilized and validated for deployment.

The 7th MSC units do not have the challenge of split basing and are able to train collectively during weekend drills. The market to recruit USAR Soldiers in Europe is slightly greater than in Korea, but the 7th MSC needs to fill nearly 700 more billets in Europe than the 9th MSC does in Korea and Japan. The tour lengths in Germany may also provide greater stability for dependents serving in USAR units, but it is still difficult to determine the market to fill USAR units in foreign countries.

A larger challenge for the 7th MSC may be meeting the demands and expectations to accomplish its missions. The latest Army in Europe Regulation 350-1 requires 7th MSC units to, “be postured to provide a fast, integrated, visible, and effective response to a foreign consequence management or foreign humanitarian assistance event occurring within the AOR.”⁵⁴ Again, mobilization authorities may slow their capability to respond in the way desired by the U.S. European Command commander.

Recommendations

In order to ensure that the USAR can meet the requirements of the joint force with its OCONUS stationed units, it must ensure that those units are stationed at locations which support readiness. To achieve this, OCAR must first conduct a formal stationing study for OCONUS units. That study should provide the demographics of the recruiting market to ensure that it can support the personnel authorizations for each OCONUS stationed unit. Next, the combatant commanders and ASCCs must provide OCONUS stationed USAR units with clear training, equipment and personnel requirements for readiness. With this information, OCAR needs to provide adequate training days and resources to assure unit success.

Stationing a small number of AR units overseas may seem easier than it is in practice. It may be presented as a cost-effective means of meeting a demand. However, little congressional interest exists for units stationed OCONUS as there are fewer local constituencies to please. As the TAA process determines AC/RC force mix another level of analysis must be done to determine the capability for OCONUS USAR units to meet personnel and training requirements. Overall, the USAR should be wary of expanding its presence outside U.S. and its territories.

The USAR should conduct new demographic studies to establish the standard number service members of various ranks that each market can support for units stationed in Korea, Japan, Germany and Italy. The USAR should use this data as a basis for the type of RC units stationed there. Unit strength should be analyzed annually to determine if the market has shifted and assess its ability to support the readiness required. In these forward deployed areas, a unit's readiness and its ability to mobilize is paramount. In CONUS, if an AR unit is mobilized with a deficiency of personnel or

equipment those resources can be cross leveled in from other units across the USARC force structure. Outside the Continental U.S., this process of cross leveling personnel or equipment is much more difficult due to the smaller AR force structure available to the GCC and to the increased time it takes to bring those capabilities from CONUS.

The AR should continue to consider split stationing USAR units with forward detachments. Again, USARPAC-SU presents a good model of the flexibility that might provide a better ability to manning units. For that unit, positions are often filled between Korea, Japan and Hawaii dependent on the talent available at each location. The arrangement is ideal for non-traditional units with a limited collective mission. It may not work for units whose mission requires them to train together collectively.

As part of their TRO responsibility, combatant commanders, or their ASCC, should clearly outline personnel, equipment and training requirements for USAR units to meet necessary pre-mobilization training requirements. The intent would be to mitigate any readiness inhibitors so that the unit is capable of rapid mobilization and execution of its mission when needed. This training requirements will have to be analyzed to ensure it does not put an undue burden on the AR Soldiers' civilian occupation. Ultimately, the decision needs to be made whether OCONUS stationed units with their limited capability to meet readiness requirements present a better solution than using CONUS units with more stability and a higher level of readiness.

To assist in providing talent for units stationed OCONUS, the number of military technician positions should be maximized. These unique positions require civilians who serve in specific federal civilian employee positions to also serve as an AR Soldiers as a condition of employment. United States code states that a military technician is a federal

civilian employee who is assigned to a position as, “A technician in the organizing, administering, instructing or training of the selected reserve.”⁵⁵ There are certainly a number of these positions in the USAR units stationed OCONUS. It is worth investigating if there are additional positions in USARPAC, USAEUR, Eighth Army or the 21st TSC that can become military technician positions. These positions would provide USAR Soldiers working in the federal system the ability to work and serve overseas.

Special consideration should also be given to the type of units stationed in forward deployed areas. The AR will have to reconcile the need to establish a forward deployed capability and its ability to train and equip that force. A unit with a small equipment and maintenance footprint is beneficial since it will have a smaller training burden. Staff augmentation units like USARPAC-Support Units are also ideal. This provides a broad capability to augment an existing headquarters or do a mission like that of the 7th MSC which is to support a Joint Force Land Component Command (JFLCC).

The active component has a substantial interest to utilize reserve component forces to meet capability gaps OCONUS. In 2015, USAREUR asked the 7th MSC to increase its size in order to support its JFLCC mission.⁵⁶ They also asked for force structure changes to include swapping CONUS and OCONUS units and build an OPCON relationship between USAREUR and CONUS units while establishing forward detachments of those units. This trend of fostering a greater dependency of the AR will continue.

As these types of requests move forward, it is imperative for the AR to establish a clear position on its capability to provide trained and capable units OCONUS and to manage expectations of the GCCs. It is the AR's responsibility to provide cohesive units that can be filled to authorized levels by citizen soldiers capable of being mobilized to meet a need. This interest aligns with that of the combatant commander whose desire is to receive trained and ready USAR units. The agreement among these positions should result in a common decision to place the right units in the right locations. These units should have the ability to recruit talent from the local area and train it effectively to meet mission requirements.

Conclusion

While the USAR has matured in its role as an operational reserve, the Army has increasingly relied on the USAR as a cost-effective means of providing needed capabilities. The OCONUS stationed USAR units provide an example of this growing dependency on the USAR. This presents some specific concerns about the ability of OCONUS stationed USAR units to meet the required readiness standards. Challenges include an adequate market for manning units, access to units for shaping operations and training time necessary to meet pre-mobilization training requirement to rapidly mobilize if needed.

To mitigate some of these challenges, a deliberate process is required to determine the types of USAR units stationed in Japan, Korea, Germany and Italy. Staff augmentation and civil affairs units with their low equipment density may provide the best outcome for readiness. Split stationing units may also provide flexibility in manning units by supplementing the available talent in the host countries from resources in the

U.S. and its territories. Finally, the number of military technician positions should be maximized within the ASCC.

Many of the challenges posed in examining OCONUS stationed USAR units extend to the USAR as a whole. Since the inception of regionally aligned forces many have been touting the advantages of going beyond allocating units to Combatant Commanders and assigning forces without stationing them OCONUS.⁵⁷ The trend of commanders wanting more control over the units apportioned for planning will continue. The USAR as a whole will need to examine this trend in the same way it looks at OCONUS stationed units. There needs to be a clear understanding of the limitations to access these units through training or mobilization. As the USAR transitions to sustainable readiness, the need to station the right type of unit in the right market is vital to its success.

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