

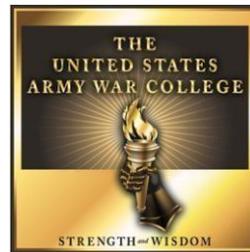
Strategy Research Project

Operational Army Reserve Sustainability Fact or Fiction?

by

Lieutenant Colonel Chris Marie Briand
United States Army Reserve

Under the Direction of:
Professor Edward J. Filiberti



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Abstract

After years of deployments, the US Army Reserve Components (RC), comprised of both the Army National Guard and Army Reserve, have emerged and been recognized as critical components of the “operational” Army. As the military continues the post OIF/OEF drawdown, the Army needs to reexamine its Total Force concept and revise its current readiness model to capitalize on the capabilities as well as the economies and efficiencies inherent with the reliance on the RC. The RC provides a cost effective solution to help field a balanced and affordable force capable of meeting the full range of mission requirements. Importantly, the USAR provides capabilities that augment, supplement and are unique with those provided by the Active Component (AC). Central to optimizing the AC-RC force mix for the Total Force is the development of a viable force generation model and codification of what has been loosely termed as the “Operational Reserve.” This paper examines and defines the “Operational Reserve,” assesses readiness and resourcing challenges with operationalizing the RC, and recommends a stratified strategic management process to exploit the capabilities and cost effectiveness of the US Army Reserve.

Operational Army Reserve Sustainability Fact or Fiction?

There is only one Army....We are not 10 divisions, we are 18 divisions. We're not 32 brigades; we're 60 brigades. And we're not 490,000 Soldiers; we are 980,000 Soldiers....We cannot conduct sustained land warfare without the Guard and the Reserve.

—General Milley¹

This quote from General Milley, Army Chief of Staff, to senior Reserve Component (RC) officers in Nashville, Tennessee on September 11, 2015, is timely as the RC struggles to remain trained, ready and relevant in the constrained post OIF/OEF resource environment. However, is General Milley's statement an accurate projection of the future reliance on the RC; or is it wishful thinking? As the Army progresses on its post-OIF/OEF drawdown, the United States continues to face a broad range of threats to our national security interests. With a shrinking Active Component (AC) force structure, reliance on the RC will likely be even more, not less, essential. Consequently, it is important to objectively assess the conditions under which the RC became “operational” over the last decade of routine mobilizations and deployments and then develop a realistic readiness management approach that will effectively and efficiently meet the force requirements and account for the readiness constraints inherent with a component largely manned by part-time citizen-soldiers. The value of the RC as a member of the total force is in the additional force structure and capabilities it brings to the fight at a reduced overall cost compared with AC forces.² To optimize both readiness and potential cost savings requires the balancing of a multitude of factors.

Generally, the Army should not pay for unusable or excess reserve force readiness. The traditional AC-RC force-mix framework postulates that AC forces be used to respond to immediate, high probability and/or high risk mission requirements.

Conversely, the RC forces are postured to be at some pre-determined readiness level and then mobilized, conduct a limited period of post-mobilization manning, equipping, and training, and then deploy in-stride with when their capabilities are required. Moreover, RC forces can be programmed to meet planned deployment missions and then conduct deliberate and focused pre-mobilization and post-mobilization preparation to meet the programmed mission employment timeline and readiness level.

To optimize RC force readiness and cost savings requires RC forces to be efficiently managed consistent with a range of situational factors. These include:

- When that unit/capability is required in theater for the contingency mission or major theater of war decisive operation;
- The readiness level needed to conduct routine planned peacetime engagement activities and support of civil authorities missions;
- Considerations of the perishability of unit-specific individual and collective training that may affect the duration of post mobilization training;
- The density of similar RC units that would allow for the cross-leveling of qualified personnel for the deployment/mission; and
- The corresponding throughput capacity of the mobilization and training base to process the total number of projected RC forces post-mobilization training needs; the capacity of strategic lift to move the total forces into the theater; as well as many others.³

These factors are unique for most every Standard Requirement Code (SRC) RC type organization and should be weighed and balanced when managing and resourcing the readiness of the various units. Inherent in the efficient management of RC force readiness is adhering to the concept of an "Operational Reserve." As the Army continues to reduce force structure, the Army Reserve (AR) needs to revise its current readiness model so that it capitalizes on its inherent cost savings while providing trained and ready forces at the readiness levels required in time to meet mission requirements.

This paper assesses how best to implement the "Operational Reserve" in a post OIF/OEF strategic environment. The paper examines the resources (manning, training, equipping, and maintaining) required to maintain an affordable level of operational readiness and the challenges inherent with the current readiness models when applied to the RC. The paper concludes by proposing a different readiness methodology for effectively and efficiently managing USAR operational availability through the use of a stratified readiness management approach. Before detailing the exigent readiness challenges facing the RC, it is useful to briefly examine the historical context that influences the current operational and strategic environment.

History

The history of the AR includes the evolution of its role and use as a reserve force for the defense of the Nation. The RC began as a "Strategic Reserve" where units were kept at very low readiness levels waiting to respond to generally low-probably but high-risk mission requirements. Units were mobilized and then usually commenced a lengthy post-mobilization preparation period that required additional manning, equipping and training efforts to prepare the units for deployment and employment. The RC units were essentially held in stable tiered and low readiness levels and then "mobilized, trained, and deployed" when the situation warranted. Differently, the USAR employment in the recent OIF/OEF conflicts as a so called "OR" required the RC to continuously supplement the AC as an equally capable rotational force. Given the fairly stable deployment schedule, the RC was able to improve its pre-mobilization preparation and further focus their post-mobilization activities to progressively reach the readiness levels required to be deployed. The RC essentially transitioned to using the construct of "train, mobilize and deploy" by going through a relatively limited post-mobilization manning,

equipping and training regimen.⁴ This was a significant difference, not only because of the increased costs associated with maintaining higher readiness levels when not mobilized, but because it ensured the improved availability of the RC when called to meet a greater range of un-forecasted emergent mission requirements. There is a long storied history of the US Army Reserve leading to the recent bifurcated readiness construct that further informs proposed management approaches.

The AR was created by Congress in 1908 as the Medical Reserve Corps. “Then using its constitutional authority ‘to raise and support armies,’ Congress passed legislation in 1916 and 1920 creating the Organized Reserve Corps which included the Officer Reserve Corps, The Enlisted Reserve Corps and the ROTC.”⁵ The first activation of the AR was in 1916 when 3,000 AR soldiers were activated to supplement the AC when Pancho Villa attacked Columbus, New Mexico.⁶ World War I saw extensive use of the AR with more than 160,000 Reservists being called up. Between the war years, the AR served in the Civilian Conservation Corps where 30,000 officers served as commanders and staff officers.⁷ All of these call-ups employed the strategic model of mobilize, train, and deploy.

During World War II, twenty-six reserve divisions mobilized and roughly a quarter of all Army officers serving were Army Reservists. Next, the US participated in the Korean War which would be the last significant call up of the AR until Desert Storm. However, significant policy changes occurred during the interceding years. In 1961, 69,000 Reservists were called up for the Berlin Crisis. The call up proved less than successful with units lacking or having old or incompatible equipment and having personnel shortages...all of which hampered effective employment of the RC. This

experience may have contributed to the limited use of the RC in Vietnam where only 3500 Reservist were called up and deployed to active duty.⁸

Significantly, in 1973 the RC began its evolution towards its current management construct. With the elimination of the draft and reductions in funding, the Department of Defense was faced with critical issues on how to meet the significant force requirements portended by the constant threat of a global war against the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact.

As a response, the Department of Defense (DOD) introduced the Total Force Policy. This policy would initially address the force structure and corresponding manning shortfalls caused by the elimination of the draft, but created a greater reliance on the RC to provide unique and supplemental capabilities. In particular, the then Chief of Staff of the Army General Creighton Abrams, led the redesign of the AC-RC force mix so that the Active Army was dependent on the capabilities of the RC to meet wartime requirements. Consequently, in a national emergency, the AC could no longer go to war without mobilizing the RC and, as such, required Congressional approval for mobilization and, by implication, the support of the American people. This force structure construct was later termed the “Abrams Doctrine” and its effect, if not in its originally intended design, was that the Nation could not go to war without the support of the American public.⁹ Based upon this “doctrine” the AC-RC force structure mix continued to be adjusted and the resourcing and readiness levels of select RC forces improved. Generally, those forces that were early in the flow according to the operational war plans were held at higher readiness levels.¹⁰

While small numbers of reservists were used during the Cold War period, the next large call up of RC forces occurred during Desert Storm with mixed results for the RC. Several RC combat arms units, mainly artillery and Combat Support units, performed well. However, three Roundout Brigades that were mobilized for Desert Storm proved to be unprepared with inadequate readiness.¹¹ This again led to changes in the RC structure which are directly applicable to the post-war implementation of an “operational reserve” concept.

As a means to improve readiness of select RC units that the Army expected to rely upon for high priority mission requirements, the Army designated 15 Army National Guard Brigades as “Enhanced Separate Brigades (ESBs)” in 1993. The experience with ESBs is important in that it provides some insights into some of the challenges and lessons learned associated with managing a stratified readiness system within the RC. The 15 ESBs received specialized training and higher priority for resourcing than other National Guard units and were expected to attain a collective and individual training readiness level so that they could be fully deployable following a 90-day post mobilization preparation period.

To compensate for the inherent RC manning challenges, the ESB’s were authorized 110% of their organizational design strength.¹² Both in a 1995 and 2000, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) conducted a study and published comprehensive reports on the US Army National Guard brigade readiness. They found that with increased priority the ESBs had improved their readiness levels but were still unable to meet the readiness goals. The reasons cited included:

- Personnel shortages;

- Various distracters causing the non-attendance of assigned personnel to training sessions;
- Not enough time to accomplish required training; highly subjective and inconsistent methodology for assessing readiness;
- Unrealistic expectations for achieving readiness standards in the time allocated;
- Attempting to train on too many tasks and not focusing or limiting training to essential tasks; and
- Inconsistent Army guidance as to the duration of post-mobilization preparation and that training tasks were not tied to actual war plans.¹³

In general, the GAO criticized the Army for not recognizing reserve training limitations, relying on unreliable subjective readiness assessments and not basing RC post-mobilization timelines on actual military requirements. These issues may re-emerge as the Army responds to limited resources and attempts to retain and implement an “operational reserve.”

Also in the 1990s, the United States Army Reserve Command (USARC) was created as a headquarters organized under Forces Command. This provided more centralized control of the AR. In an agreement with all three components, the National Guard was organized with combat arms and division level support units. The AR was reorganized with combat support and combat service support units mainly at the Corps and higher level. Congress wanted to leverage the AR by ensuring they were operationally equivalent to and manned, equipped and trained at the same levels of the AC. The concept of the "Operational Reserve" would continue to evolve over the next 25 years.¹⁴

The War on Terrorism would bring further changes to the RC. "Since September 11, 2001, the AR has deployed over 300,000 Soldiers globally providing unique

enabling capabilities crucial to Joint Forces fulfilling National Defense Strategy demands."¹⁵ The past twelve years of almost continuous rotational deployments has created what is touted as a well-trained and ready "Operational Reserve." The additional Congressional funding appropriations for Overseas Contingency Operations likely helped make it possible to sustain an "Operational Reserve."¹⁶ Perhaps what most enabled the rotational operational use of the RC was the adoption of a new readiness model.

The Army Force Generation or ARFORGEN model was formally established in 2006. The ARFORGEN model was developed to provide a continuous flow of units for operations in OIF and OEF. While the RC proved that it could deploy and operate units in theater, the ARFORGEN model was unable to achieve its designed rotational employment (deploy-to-dwell) parameters due both to the high demand for forces and the shortage of available AC/RC force structure.¹⁷ Moreover, to meet the readiness requirements of deploying forces required the cross-leveling of large numbers of qualified personnel and some equipment from non-deploying units, thus further reducing the readiness levels of those non-deployed units.

The manning turbulence was excessive. In essence, only unit patches moved along a designated timeline, whereas soldiers, equipment, families, and employers operated on inconsistent and ad hoc timelines.¹⁸ After numerous complaints from soldiers and employers, the AR instituted a two-year stabilization policy before soldiers could be involuntarily cross-leveled or deployed again.¹⁹ This two-year stabilization provided some relief from multiple individual deployments but still did not reduce the number of soldiers affected or the amount of cross-leveling required to meet the

deploying units' manning requirements. Clearly, the RC units were able to prepare, deploy and meet the operational mission requirements throughout the long OIF/OEF stabilization operations; however, the Army and RC cannot lose sight of the volatility of unit internal preparation timelines, the ad hoc manning measures, and the essential cannibalization of other non-deploying units.²⁰

If managing the RC's "operational availability" for the future range of missions, these consequences would likely not be acceptable, especially for those RC units that are required early in the force flow. So what RC readiness levels are possible to attain in a non-mobilized status and are also cost effective to sustain for long periods of relative peace? Can the US afford to rotate readiness among non-deploying units for equity purposes or maintain excess force structure to allow for the cannibalization of other like-RC units when mobilized? If not, what aspects of the "Operational Reserve" remains feasible for the post OIF/OEF period?

Not surprisingly, the concept of the "Operational Reserve" continues to evolve and its post-war applicability and sustainability is highly debated amongst senior leadership. Lieutenant General (LTG) Jeffrey Talley, the current Chief of the AR and Commanding General of USARC, recently stated "To date, the Army has not established the specific equipping, manning and training levels required for an Operational Reserve, nor adequately budgeted for most of the costs required for sustaining the AR in an Operational role." Though the training readiness requirements of an "Operational Reserve" is ill-defined, the current condition and funding for the USAR is not in accordance with DoD Total Force Policy, that requires the reserve component to be manned, equipped, trained and integrated as an operational force to

provide "predictable, recurring and sustainable capabilities."²¹ Establishing and sustaining an "Operational Reserve" is subject to a wide range of interpretations that requires clarification.

"Operational Reserve"

As discussed earlier, the concept of the "Operational Reserve" is widely debated. Its definition alone has caused confusion with both civilian and military leaders. A memorandum to the Secretary of Defense dated January 14, 2013 from Major General Arnold L. Punaro, US Marine Corps (Ret), Chairman, Reserve Forces Policy Board, concluded, "The Board found that senior defense officials use the phrase "Operational Reserve" inconsistently creating potential confusion within the Department in communications to Congress, and with the Public."²² Also, if you reference formal publications to include Joint Publications, Quadrennial Defense Review, and the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, you will find different definitions. For instance, Joint Publication 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, dated 8 November 2010, still defines OR in more tactical terms as "An emergency reserve of men and/or materiel established for the support of a specific operation (JP 5-0)."²³ While, the final report to Congress and the Secretary of Defense in the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves in 2008 defined OR as:

The total Reserve component structure which operates across the continuum of military missions performing both strategic and operational roles in peacetime, wartime, contingency, domestic emergencies and homeland defense operations. As such, the Services organize resource, equip, train, and utilize their Guard and Reserve components to support mission requirements to the same standards as their active components. Each Service's force generation plan prepares both units and individuals to participate in missions, across the full spectrum of military operations, in a cycle or periodic manner that provides predictability for the combatant commands, the Services, Service members, their families, and civilian employers.²⁴

Four years later, in October 2012, a working Operational Reserve definition by the Army G3/5/7 was briefed to the Army Forces Reserves Policy Committee that stated Operational Reserves was:

The Reserve Component (RC), as the Nation's operational reserve force, complements and supplements the Active Component (AC) ensuring the Total Force remains capable of providing trained and ready forces in support of the Nation's security strategy. Maintaining an Operational Reserve includes several core elements: sustaining manning strength and equipping levels to meet ARFORGEN requirements, adequate training resources, opportunities for leader development and employment in support of Combatant Command requirements. The RC provides tailorable capabilities needed to meet diverse demands which are leveraged as a portion of the Total Army Commitment to Combatant Commanders and Civil authorities.²⁵

In 2013, the final recommendation to the Secretary of Defense by the Reserve Forces Policy Board was to update the *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (JP 1-02), with the following definition for consistency throughout the Armed Forces, Congress and the public to ensure proper use in policy, strategy, publications and budget decisions:

Operational Reserve - Routine, recurring utilization of the Reserve Components as a fully integrated part of the operational force that is planned and programmed by the Services. As such, the "Operational Reserve" is that Reserve Component structure which is made ready and available to operate across the continuum of military missions, performing strategic and operational roles, in peacetime, in wartime, and in support of civil authorities. The Services organize, man, train, equip, resource, and use their Reserve Components to support mission requirements following the same standards as their active components. Each Service's force generation plan prepares both units and individuals to participate in missions, across the range of military operations, in a cyclical manner that provides predictability for Service Members, their Families, their Employers, and for the Services and Combatant Commands.²⁶

Ultimately the definition was not updated in JP 1-02 that was amended in October of 2015; so confusion reigns.

An analysis of these definitions can imply a wide range of mandated management approaches. Does the “operational” qualifier pertain to the maintenance of all reserve forces at an equivalent readiness level of the AC; or only select forces? Does every RC unit need to prepare for all missions across the “military continuum” or “full spectrum;” or can portions of the RC be prepared for select missions as long as *other* RC forces can cover those they are unprepared to address? Must all RC units be involved in “cyclical preparations” that are predictable? What about those “unpredictable” emergent mission requirements that the RC may be called upon to respond? Is the “operational reserve” only that portion of the RC rotated for scheduled operational deployments? Are there just a select number of RC units “made ready?” If so, is every other unit considered a “strategic reserve”?

Perhaps one foundational principle for the operational reserve is that both Active Component and Reserve Component must measure readiness to the same standards. Clarifications of these interpretations are never going to completely clear up all the inconsistencies when it comes to defining the Operational Reserve, but ultimately both operational necessity and funding constraints will adjudicate how the Army will manage readiness and force generation for the RC. Ultimately, the AR needs to be an integrated force that is manned, trained, equipped, funded and *ready* to provide capabilities to the Total Army Force *when* they are required.²⁷

Department of Defense Total Army Policy

For the Total Force policy to work, senior leaders need to determine how the "operational reserve" will be implemented. As a general framework, the operational reserve should consider two pools of units; with some units likely residing in both pools. The first pool includes those RC units that could be rotated through scheduled

programmed deployments fulfilling Combatant Commander (CCDR) or domestic requirements. The second pool would include a more stable pool of RC units that are required to provide critical capabilities relatively early in the force flow for high probability or high risk operational contingencies or Operation Plans. This pool could be sub-divided into two tiers: one consisting of early-deployers filling AC capability gaps and the other tier providing redundancy and strategic depth for both the AC and early deploying RC units. The challenges are most difficult for those RC units not programmed and resourced for a scheduled deployment but are required to be mobilized and deployed in time to meet emergent or contingency missions.

For RC forces in the on-demand pool, probably the greatest constraints are sustaining the requisite deployable manning levels and attaining the requisite pre- and post-mobilization training levels. The readiness management concept should realistically determine what pre-mobilization readiness levels can be sustained by specific types of reserve forces for their most probable mission set within the “normal” training regimen of the RC, i.e., one weekend a month and two weeks a year (or perhaps more for select early deploying units without continually infringing on civilian employment). Given their pre-deployment training readiness, there needs to be an estimate of how much post-mobilization time and other resources are needed to attain the required readiness levels in-time to meet the associated deployment and mission timelines. Both of these “operational pools” will require additional resources. Other RC units could be rotated, as appropriate, through the programmed deployment pool and, when not preparing for deployment, be held in lower readiness levels.

If the RC is to function as an "Operational Reserve," it will likely require additional resources and/or more efficient management of available resources using a stratified readiness approach. The RC will also have to determine a workable readiness model beyond the current ARFORGEN to remain trained, ready and relevant.

Equipping and Maintaining

One area that is most amenable to improved management is in equipping and maintaining. Figure 1 shows the disparity in equipment funding that limits the AR in its participation as an "Operational Reserve" to meet the demands of the Total Force Policy. This is significant in that in many functional areas, the AR is the primary supplier of that capability to the AC.

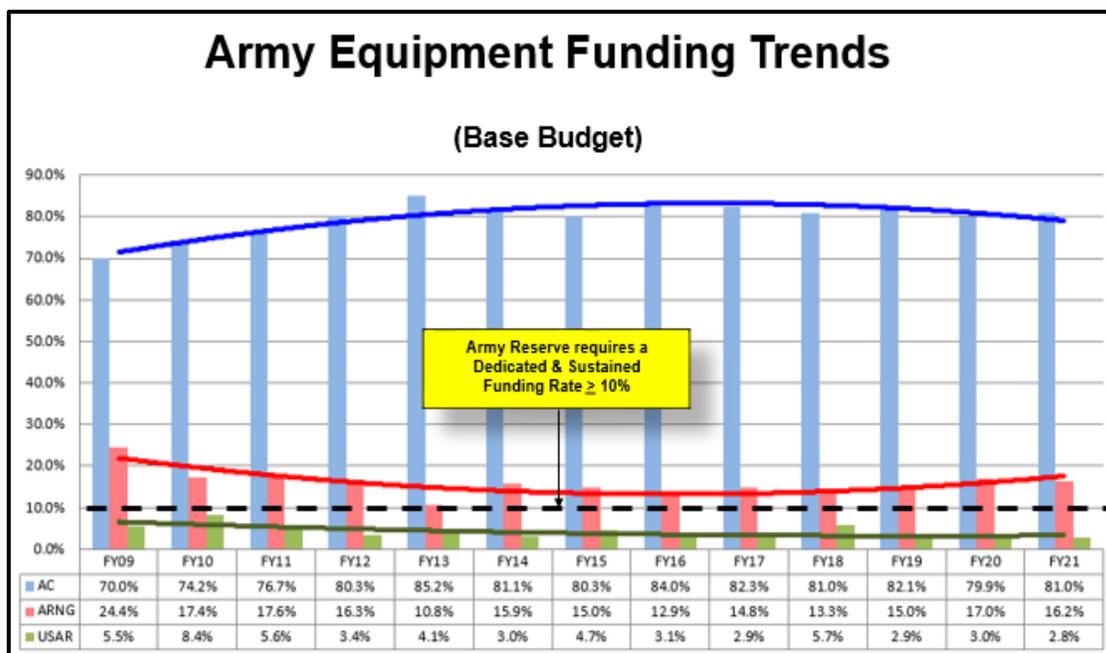


Figure 1. Army Equipment Funding Trends²⁸

“These funding imbalances are generating tiered procurements and widening modernization gaps thus complicating the compatibility and integration of the Operational AR with AC Joint Forces.”²⁹ Seventy-seven percent of all logistics

capabilities are provided by the Reserve Components to the Total and Joint Forces. The USAR early entry capabilities are critical to establishing a Joint Theater of Operations. For instance, forty-five percent of the Army's bridging assets at echelons above brigade and fifty-one percent of the assault bridging resources are provided by the AR. In addition, the AR provides ninety-two percent of bulk petroleum storage and delivery capacity to the Joint Force for potential non-permissive environments.³⁰ These legacy petroleum platforms need to be modernized to ensure they don't exceed their useful life. Not modernizing these assets will create major interoperability challenges "for critical joint enabling capabilities supporting the Total Army and Joint forces."³¹

To be operationally compatible with the AC, the AR cannot continue to patch together equipment. This issue pertains to a wide range of systems to include mission command communications equipment. Moreover, as the equipment sets age beyond their projected life cycle, maintenance and sustainment requirements increase and funds are either diverted from training and procurement accounts or overall unit readiness is reduced. This sustainment challenge is aggravated by a corresponding reduction in depot maintenance funding. Depot maintenance in 2012 for the AR was \$243 million, it has subsequently been reduced by seventy-six percent to \$59 million in 2015.³² This situation creates a perfect storm, placing the AR in the precarious position of trying to function as an "Operational Reserve" without the capability to be interoperable with AC or to provide required maintenance to upkeep aging equipment that may itself become obsolete. "Currently equipment identified as mission-essential is filled at 65 percent and creates a gap in critical enabler capabilities resident in the AR."³³ This decrease in funding to purchase new and replacement equipment and sustain

existing equipment operational readiness undermines overall RC readiness levels regardless of any successful management reforms designed to improve manning and training readiness. The Army and the USAR demonstrated their ability to solve the equipping and sustainment challenges during the recent conflicts; so it is largely an issue of adequate funding. For nearly every possible force generation approach, it is critical for the AR to maintain the readiness of equipment and continue to modernize capabilities to remain compatible with the AC; and be ready, relevant and ultimately enable the Total Force to perform its mission.

Manning

Army Reserves personnel strength management provides another challenge for maintaining an "operational reserve." As the AC draws down to an end strength of 450,000, the AR will likely see an increased demand for their capabilities. The USAR end-strength objective (ESO) will also continue to decrease through Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 but at a lower rate than the AC drawdown. The AR ESO is set by the National Defense Authorization Act. The ESO for FY2015 was 202,000 which was 3,000 less than FY2014.³⁴ The ESO for FY2016 is 198,000 with the actual AR strength currently being 199,180.³⁵ This reduction in ESO will continue through FY2017 with an ESO of 195,000.³⁶ Should sequestration-level spending caps be re-imposed, the force reductions could continue.³⁷ As the 2015 USAR Posture Statement reiterates, "Reducing the Army Reserve below 195,000 Soldiers increases risk and threatens our ability to meet our mission--to provide trained, equipped, and ready Soldiers and cohesive units to meet the Nation's requirements, at home and abroad."³⁸

Although overall end strength currently looks adequate, the shortage of field grade officers and mid-grade non-commissioned officer (NCOs) is alarming (see Figure

2 below).³⁹ As of 27 November 2015, the AR is only at fifty-five percent strength with Majors and sixty-five percent strength with Sergeant First Class's. Currently there are only 5,838 Majors assigned for 10,670 authorized positions and only 13,045 Sergeant First Class's assigned for 20,137 authorized positions. Staff Sergeants are at seventy-eight percent strength while Lieutenant Colonels are at seventy-four percent strength.⁴⁰ There are currently 2,424 Lieutenants filling Captain (O3) authorizations.⁴¹

These statistics do not reflect the actual deployable status of the soldiers so the actual manning levels are likely much worse. For instance, in FY2014, 44,507 Soldiers were not available or deployable for reasons like training, medical issues, pending administrative actions or non-participation. Unsatisfactory Participants accounted for over 10,000 of the unavailable Soldiers.⁴² This remains a major issue and the AR is continually adapting new and creative ways to bring these Soldier back into the fold.

| RANK | AUTH (TPU/AGR) | ASGN (TPU/AGR) | % ASGN | DELTA |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------|--------|
| PVT-PFC | 27,067 | 31,689 | 117% | 4,622 |
| SPC/CPL | 41,138 | 56,017 | 136% | 14,879 |
| SGT | 30,621 | 32,475 | 106% | 1,854 |
| SSG | 24,822 | 19,378 | 78% | -5,444 |
| SFC | 20,137 | 13,045 | 65% | -7,092 |
| 1SG/M5G | 6,072 | 5,146 | 85% | -926 |
| CSM/SGM | 1,441 | 1,427 | 99% | -14 |
| ENLISTED | 151,298 | 159,177 | 105% | 7,879 |
| 2LT-1LT | 3,964 | 8,017 | 202% | 4,053 |
| CPT | 12,160 | 10,385 | 85% | -1,775 |
| MAJ | 10,670 | 5,838 | 55% | -4,832 |
| LTC | 5,645 | 4,166 | 74% | -1,479 |
| COL | 1,183 | 1,398 | 118% | 215 |
| OFFICER | 33,622 | 29,804 | 89% | -3,818 |
| WO1-CW2 | 2,458 | 1,745 | 71% | -713 |
| CW3 | 1,107 | 828 | 75% | -279 |
| CW4 | 491 | 453 | 92% | -38 |
| CW5 | 85 | 63 | 74% | -22 |
| WARRANT OFFICER | 4,141 | 3,089 | 75% | -1,052 |
| USARC (BELOW LINE) | 189,061 | 192,070 | 102% | 3,009 |
| AGR (ABOVE LINE) | 3,384 | 3,673 | 109% | 289 |
| AGR (OCAR/USARC) | 618 | 676 | 109% | 58 |
| IMA (Minus GOs) | 3,248 | 2,651 | 82% | -597 |
| GO (Exempt Included)* | 125 | 108 | 86% | -17 |
| TOTAL SELRES | 196,436 | 199,180 | 101% | 2,744 |
| ESD | 198,000 | 199,180 | 101% | 1,180 |

* Includes GOs exempt from deployment due to joint assignment. Source - USAR GOMD

As of: 27 Nov 15

Figure 2. Army Reserve Personnel Strength as of 27 November 2015⁴³

These critical personnel shortages in the mid-career ranks are a major issue for “operational” readiness requirements within the AR. Lack of required assigned personnel leads to major cross-leveling practices between units to meet the readiness standards of operational deployments and mobilizations. As previously mentioned, the cross leveling disrupted unit cohesion and unit deployable strength. The cross-leveling also influenced retention and, as described above, mid-career officers and NCOs are leaving the USAR to provide predictability for their employers and their families. In order for the AR to become an "operational reserve" with significant sustained training readiness levels, the pre-mobilization deployable manning levels must be stabilized and maintained at requisite high levels. Adherence to these standards will then provide some predictability as individuals train, mobilize and deploy with their assigned units. In

this way, the readiness models can actually manage both individuals and “flags” while retention, morale and readiness will continue to improve.

Manning and maintaining end-strength and readiness is challenging. As LTG Talley recently stated in his 2015 AR Posture Statement, "If the Army Reserve is not properly resourced at the President's Budget levels, the overall risk could significantly increase and negatively impact our ability to quickly provide needed technical capabilities to the Total Army and the Joint Force."⁴⁴

Training

The next key ingredient and challenge to sustaining an "operational reserve" is conducting focused training on the priority mission task requirements both before and after mobilization. The AR is required to provide trained and ready combat service and combat service support capabilities to the Total Force. The Army Total Force Policy (ATFP) has integrated many AR units into Combat Training Center (CTC) Rotations with AC units. RC participation in these rotations require much longer periods than the traditional Annual Training of 14 days plus 1 day for travel. Although, extremely useful, these new training opportunities and requirements put a strain on AR Soldiers, families and employers. Additionally, these 21 to 29 day rotations are not always fully funded and the AR must sacrifice readiness of some lower level units to ensure they meet ATFP and Total Army Training Integration goals.⁴⁵ As with nearly every resource, these training events should be intensely managed, fully resourced, and rotated so as to synchronize the training opportunities with programmed deployments or sustain the readiness of high priority AR units. As indicated previously, there are a host of factors that relate to the development, resourcing and management of unit-specific training requirements for both sustainable pre-mobilization training and the duration of post-

mobilization training. Besides ensuring that units are manned and equipped to enable collective training, efficient management of an "operational reserve" requires the development of tailored training packages that considers what is attainable for that type of unit and accounts for the multitude of conditions affecting the duration of post-mobilization training.

Maintaining an "operational reserve" that is trained and ready to deploy remains a struggle for AR leadership and depends on balancing the accomplishment of required training tasks within available time and with other competing priorities. The majority of AR Soldiers are only funded for 39 days of training per year. This includes a two day battle assembly per month and the 15 day traditional annual training event. This is not enough time to prepare, coordinate and train for CTC Rotations and Collective Situational Training Exercises. Despite the scarcity of time, there are a multitude of competing training requirements. LTG Talley stated during a hearing before the Senate Committee on Armed Services that it takes 34 days to conduct individual Warrior Training Tasks alone. Not to mention approximately 40 additional hours of mandatory training (via online or in classroom) to comply with Army Regulations.⁴⁶ In addition to all the mandatory requirements, the constrained fiscal environment requires AR units to self-move to and from annual training exercises, thus potentially extending the number of travel days and increasing costs. For instance, during the June 2015 Quartermaster Liquid Logistics Exercise at Fort Bragg, "Every truck company traveled a minimum of two days on the front and back-end of a 14 day exercise with one company traveling 1000 miles from northern Michigan requiring 3 days of travel before and after the exercise."⁴⁷ In addition to extended travel, the administrative requirements of planning

and coordinating extended collective training events like Initial, Mid and Final Planning conferences add additional training days to the calendar for AR leadership. All these factors can constrain or limit training opportunities or make them overly cost prohibitive for their benefit.

The resourcing and readiness management challenges for "operationalizing" the RC requires innovative and, in many instances, different approaches from that of the AC. For instance, non-mobilized RC soldiers are relatively immobile. RC Soldiers are mostly limited to performing AR duties in the local area where they live and work. Most have civilian jobs that pay the lion's share of their living expenses, the mortgages on their houses, their utilities, groceries, etc. Success in their civilian job and profession is essential to their livelihood. Generally, they cannot or will not put their careers in jeopardy meeting routinely un-forecasted or disproportionate military training requirements not directly leading to an actual deployment. So any RC readiness management approach that requires excessive annual training not tied to a deployment will likely not be feasible across the full range of USAR units. Similarly, a readiness management approach that expends excessive funds on unusable or unwarranted readiness may not be acceptable or feasible to the Army within the existing constrained resource environment. However, a stratified force generation model could efficiently and effectively manage RC readiness and force generation so as to "operationalize" the critical portions of the USAR.

Force Generation Models

As the US military transitions from its war time rotational deployment requirements and continues the drawdown of forces, the Army will likely return to a post-cold war readiness model. Major portions of the AC and RC will sustain readiness

levels consistent with on-going force presence and engagements, programmed deployments, as well as units postured to respond to projected contingency requirements. The Army has already decided to discard the ARFORGEN model and is examining a more stable sustainable readiness model. Correspondingly, the RC needs to consider how it should posture its forces to effectively and efficiently manage readiness and generate forces to meet warfighting requirements. The development of a stratified readiness model that accommodates the unique aspects of the RC while efficiently allocating scarce resources to the highest priority RC units may be the most feasible and suitable means to manage readiness across the RC.

Recommended Stratified Readiness Model

Given the current resource constrained environment, a new stratified readiness model could target and prioritize the resourcing of RC units based on Total Force readiness requirements and mission objectives. Department of Defense and Army analyses have identified AC capability gaps for early-entry contingency force requirements. A memorandum written by LTG Gustave F. Perna, the Army Deputy Chief of Staff, G4, dated September 2015 states, "AC forces alone cannot support early-entry requirements."⁴⁸ It also proposes the Army maintain at least C2 readiness levels (the unit can carry out most of its wartime mission) for specific RC units that will fill the early entry gaps in the AC force structure. Operational essentiality and deployment timing *should* be the key factors when determining how to stratify readiness across AR forces.

Correspondingly, the identified gaps can serve as the foundation for establishing a three tiered stratified readiness model that would specify pre-mobilization readiness levels and the duration of the post-mobilization preparation period before deployment. A stratified readiness model could vary authorized manning, equipping and training levels

and associated funding. It should also specify the duration of pre- and post- mobilization preparation time and post-alert, pre-mobilization preparation periods.

For instance, Tier One (T1) could consist of early-entry capabilities that are continuously maintained at a high level of readiness and are deployable in under 30 days after mobilization to meet contingency force requirements. Tier Two (T2) could consist of rotational follow-on or theater engagement forces that would have the ability to mobilize within 90 days of an alert order followed by only an additional 30-60 days of post mobilization preparation. Tier Three (T3) could consist of rotational forces that could be programmed for known deployments with a six month to a year lead-in time and with an extended (60-90 day) post mobilization period to achieve the required collective level of training for the programmed mission. In theory, T1 and T2 units would make up the "operational reserve" while T3 units would constitute the "strategic reserve." Stratifying readiness levels and allocating the necessary resources to high priority units would optimize readiness for early deploying forces and save resources that would otherwise be wasted on sustaining unusable readiness for units not required early in the war effort. This model would sustain high levels of readiness for essential AR capabilities based on the Total Force contingency war-fighting requirements. These three tiers are further described below.

The aforementioned G4 Memo identifies selected AR units required for early entry operations. These include truck companies, Movement Control Teams and petroleum type units. When assigned to the T1 force pool, all would be required to meet mobilization and deployment training readiness levels of less than 30 days.⁴⁹ These units would require high fulltime and traditional reserve manning levels and be provided

additional training days considering each SRCs mission requirements and unit collective training needs. Importantly, T1 units would also require high manning levels that would enable them to deploy with very few cross-leveled individuals. The T1 commanders would actively identify and replace non-deployable soldiers. Those considered non-deployable and who were on temporary long-term profile would be required to transfer to a lower tiered unit or go into the Individual Ready Reserve and be permanently replaced by a deployable soldier. Likewise, the Army could experiment with different manning approaches that mitigate and compensate for the inevitable fifteen to twenty-five percent non-deployable soldiers that surface after mobilizing the unit. For instance, T1 units could be authorized over-strength manning levels by creating additional ten to twenty percent authorizations above their design Modified Table of Organization and Equipment; levels (similar to what was used in the old enhanced Separate Brigades during the 90s). These additional authorized positions could act as a trainees, transients, holdees, and students-like account allowing unit excess manning that could substitute for the inevitable non-deployable and/or non-available soldiers upon mobilization. Importantly, the continual manning presence of these additional soldiers would allow for T1 units to achieve pre-mobilization collective proficiency levels using soldiers who will actually be mobilized and deployed with the unit.

Clearly, the additional pre-mobilization training time needed to attain T1 unit readiness levels will compete with civilian employer requirements. However, there will still be opportunities to serve in lower tiered units for those individuals who must meet demanding civilian employment requirements. As an enabler, the Army and The Office of the Chief, Army Reserve could better geographically distribute various tiered units to

enable the easy transition of AR soldiers between different tiered units based upon the demands of their civilian employment. Conversely, there is a large cohort of “mobile” AR individuals who can move to where there is a requirement and are willing to perform increased man-days as was observed throughout OIF/OEF. These individuals generally have more flexible civilian employment situations and can and will move to locations and units offering increased training days. As opposed to these rather complex manning challenges, T1 equipping issues are arguably the easiest to address.

The T1 units will need nearly instantaneous interoperability with their AC counterparts and thus would need to be fielded and trained with modernized equipment sets to include all Army Battle Command Systems and other communications equipment. For T1 units, having the latest equipment that is also maintained in a fully operational status is an imperative. Correspondingly, T1 units will likely require additional full-time technician authorizations and increased Operation and Maintenance, Army funding to enable high levels of equipment readiness.

Differently, T2 forces would be postured between the readiness levels required for short notice deployments and that required to meet relatively long-range programmed requirements. These follow-on forces should receive traditional RC levels of resourcing to include the current 39-day training model. Units in this tier could be regionally aligned with a primary focus on meeting CCDR engagement and theater shaping requirements. T2 units should be resourced consistent with a liberal 90+ day pre-deployment alert period that is followed by a 30-60 day post-mobilization training period. These units could be manned at C2 or C3 level and could receive cross leveled soldiers from T3 units once alerted and mobilized. T2 units may have different steady-

state readiness levels based upon their organization and missions. For instance, a military police internment/resettlement unit might not require as many resources as an engineer bridging unit. Depending upon the SRC, units would be resourced as appropriate given the post-alert and post-mobilization periods. T2 units could suffice with in-lieu-of equipment or less modernized versions of what is in the AC, but should have sufficient quantities at the requisite maintenance levels to enable the accomplishment of mission-essential task list or deployment specific mission tasks.

T3 units would be resourced as a "strategic reserve." These units would possess or maintain only the minimum essential equipment required for individual and crew/team training and would likely possess cascaded equipment from the active component when the AC equipment was modernized. Most AR generating force units would reside in this tier as well as those late deploying units that provide strategic depth to earlier deploying AC, and AR T1 and T2 units. Non-deployable units, training units, and schools would all be a part of this tier. The T3 units would require the minimum amount of resources and would allow more resources to be focused on T1 and T2 units. Depending upon operational requirements, T3 units would provide a ready pool of personnel to cross level into deploying T1 and T2 units and selected other deploying T3 units, if required. When taken together, these three tiers provide a realistic, practical and cost effective approach for managing readiness across the USAR.

As the US Army continues its post-OIF/OEF drawdown, the RC needs to adapt its current readiness model to efficiently use its resources and effectively and realistically manage readiness to source those units according to their essentiality and timing of employment. The desired widespread application of measures to achieve what

is being termed as an “operational reserve” is not sustainable or practical within our reserve force manning/training context or in the current resource constrained environment. A stratified readiness model will provide a cost effective solution to help field a balanced and affordable force capable of meeting the full range of mission requirements. The proposed stratified readiness model would consist of an "operational reserve" with near-deployment-ready T1 and T2 units to fill the gaps in the AC force requirements and meet early entry requirements. Complementing the operational reserve are T3 forces, or the "strategic reserve," that provides both a pool of trained manpower to augment T1 and T2 units as well as provide redundant capabilities for strategic depth for both AC and T1 and T2 RC forces. The stratified readiness model allows for scarce resources to be focused on the most essential units while making provisions for the deliberate building of readiness over time for the follow-on strategic reserve. As we move into an uncertain future, the AR needs to continue to adapt its processes and procedures to remain trained, ready and relevant in the 21st Century.

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