

For many, it's a challenge to balance the heavier operational schedule with employment and family responsibilities.

Total Force Never Stops

By Suzann Chapman, Associate Editor

ALMOST a quarter of a century has passed since the United States established its Total Force policy definition—formally integrating the Guard and Reserve with active-duty defense planning to meet national security objectives. Ever since, the citizen-airman has played a vital defense role, but it took the end of the Cold War and the resulting draw-down of active-duty forces to dramatically underscore that fact.

Today, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve chiefs use one word to characterize their outfits—busy. They are not just busy training for war; more and more, they are participating in real-world missions. Without these forces, the Air Force would have great difficulty meeting extensive peacetime obligations.

Gen. Ronald R. Fogleman, Air Force Chief of Staff, recently noted in a speech to the National Guard Association of the US that USAF force structure had been cut about thirty-three percent and tasking increased to four times the Cold War rate. He concluded, "The Air Force simply could not sustain the pace and stress on its active-duty personnel."

Last year, in a move to reduce the optempo of active forces and give real-world experience to reserve components, the Department of Defense launched a pilot program to increase use of reservists in peacetime operations. The Pentagon expects the program to continue through Fiscal 1997.

However, Secretary of Defense William J. Perry already has declared it a success, based on preliminary reports. He told the Adjutants General Association of the US that theater commanders last year called on reserve personnel for ninety-seven missions and that the number would go up to 167 this year.

The Air Force says its commitment to the extensive use of Guard and Reserve forces dates to the 1950s. Through the decades, it has consistently budgeted more heavily for its reserve components than have other services, and this has shown results.

General Fogleman said his measure for success in Total Force efforts is when the theater commanders are told that USAF is going "to swap out a unit, and they never bother to ask whether the replacement is a Guard, Reserve, or active-duty out-

Guard and Reserve units handle large chunks of USAF's mission. For example, ANG performs thirty-three percent of the KC-135 air refueling mission and provides 100 percent of the fighter-interceptor force.



Photo by Ted Carlsson

fit." Theater commanders have come to expect the same combat capability from Air Reserve Components that they receive from USAF active-duty units.

Busy, Busy, Busy

Maj. Gen. Donald W. Shepperd, ANG director, said Guard units "used to stay home to train for the big one," and "we still do that." However, he added, two brand-new elements have been introduced into Guard operations.

First, he said, "We are now taking regular rotations side by side with our active-duty and Reserve counterparts around the world." The second element, he said, is that ANG units "are immediately needed for every contingency of any size."

He explained, "Used to be, the active-duty [force] was big enough to handle it. If you went to war, you called up the Guard and Reserve. Now, they need us all the time—day to day."

In times past, Guard units would go to a few Air Force exercises every year. General Shepperd recalled that a heavy year might include five overseas deployments for training.

For 1996, that number is twenty. "We're involved in every exercise, because they can't do it without us, because of the downsizing of the active-duty force."

The average ANG aircrew member is spending 110 to 120 days a year with the Guard. For the average ANG support person in a flying unit, the figure is sixty to eighty days a year. General Shepperd characterized that as "a very, very heavy load."

Within AFRES, the annual average for aircrews is more than 110 days per year. AFRES Chief Maj. Gen. Robert A. McIntosh reports record levels of activity for flying unit support persons as well. "There were times in 1995 when as many as a thousand Air Force Reservists were deployed around the world on any given day, supporting US national objectives," General McIntosh said in May Congressional testimony. He said the average was 600 to 700 per day.

What is surprising to many is that the two Air Reserve Components reached these high levels of participation solely with volunteers.

According to an April 1996 report prepared by the General Accounting

Office, 18,000 personnel from six Defense Department reserve outfits voluntarily participated in peacetime operations from Fiscal Years 1992 through 1996. Of these 18,000, ANG and AFRES provided fully eighty percent.

The report said that "past success in obtaining volunteers is not necessarily predictive of the future" and expressed particular concern about the Air Force.

Rather than being concerned about this, General McIntosh called such participation in real-world operations critical to a successful Air Force Reserve. He told Congress, "Our people don't mind the extra work as long as it is productive and worthwhile."

In fact, a 1995 USAF survey showed that ninety percent of Air Reserve Component respondents would volunteer for overseas peacekeeping missions.

The one caveat for volunteer participation by citizen-airmen concerns length of deployments. Surveys have shown that Guardsmen and Reservists will continue to volunteer if their participation can be kept to thirty days or less.

Total Force Contributions

Air National Guard

| Activity | Percent |
|---|---------|
| B-1 bombers | 9 |
| C-5, C-130, C-141 airlift | 8 |
| Combat communications | 68 |
| Fighter-Interceptor Force/1st Air Force | 100 |
| F-15, F-16 fighters | 30 |
| HC-130/HH-60G rescue | 27 |
| KC-135 air refueling | 33 |
| Mobile Ground Station for space mission | 100 |
| Tactical airlift | 40 |

Air Force Reserve

| Activity | Percent |
|--|---------|
| Aerial port capability | 59 |
| A/OA-10 | 20 |
| B-52H bombers | 6 |
| C-5, C-141 airlift | 24 |
| C-5, C-141 airlift aircrews (shared aircraft) | 57 |
| C-9 aeromedical airlift aircrews (shared aircraft) | 27 |
| C-17 (shared aircraft) | 23 |
| C-130 airlift | 23 |
| F-16 fighters | 5 |
| Fixed-wing aerial spraying capability (DoD) | 100 |
| HC-130, HH-60 rescue | 38 |
| KC-135 | 14 |
| KC-135 aircrews (shared aircraft) | 7 |
| KC-10 aircrews (shared aircraft) | 41 |
| Medical flight crew capability | 92 |
| Space operations | 10 |
| WC-130 weather reconnaissance | 100 |

Reserve credits Air Force success to its aggressive efforts to seek employer support. Committee officials note also that, although USAF uses its reserve components far more than the other services do, it does not generate the most complaints.

General McIntosh said that it is necessary now "to communicate much more than we did in the past with our employers and tell them why people are having to go to training." He said AFRES is working harder now in some cases, particularly if the employer is in some sort of transition, "to reschedule training to fit the employer's requirement where we can."

The General said, "We have surveyed employers, opened up communication with employers using DoD's [Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve] program to help that communication, and then started to make arrangements with employers to make this whole thing fit together."

General McIntosh emphasized the need to continue to look at legislation that assists employers and motivates them to hire reservists. One proposal in the discussion stage is a type of tax incentive, particularly for small and medium-size companies, for employing Guardsmen and Reservists if they are mobilized, he said.

"We're trying to figure out how to do it," he continued, noting that "that is not in the DoD program right now, and there is no [existing] legislation in that regard."

General McIntosh pointed out that employers want reservists to work for them for two primary reasons: "Number one, they understand the necessity of the Guard and Reserve. Number two, they like hiring Guard and Reservists because they are drug free, motivated, professional, and disciplined."

True Total Force

Some twenty years before the official implementation of the Total Force policy, the Air Force began to address continuing problems within its reserve components. General Fogleman noted in his National Guard Association speech. Recommendations from a 1953 board headed by Lt. Gen. Leon W. Johnson—a World War II veteran, Medal of Honor recipient, and commander of Continental Air Command—gave a push

Plenty of Notice

General Shepperd said Guardsmen have been able to take ninety-day deployments alongside their active-duty counterparts by leaving their airplanes in place but rotating the people out every thirty days.

"We're at very high levels of participation right now," said the General, "but we are big enough, we have enough units that we don't go back to the same people all the time."

He continued, "Our ability to do things in the Guard and Reserve is controlled by the availability of our part-time people. 'They will give you all the free time they can, but what they can give you is determined not only by their own desire but also by their family and their employer.'"

He said some citizen-airmen are self-employed, and others, such as airline pilots, have jobs that make it fairly easy to schedule active-duty deployments. Many school teachers can use their summers for training and real-world contingencies, but they don't have that flexibility during the school year. Others use weekends or vacation time, sometimes taking leaves of absence from their jobs.

Guardsmen walk "a fine line of

cooperation" between their family and employer and their desire to participate in the Guard, said General Shepperd, adding, "Our job is to work carefully this balance . . . and we do that with planning."

In 1995, USAF held its first scheduling conference with AFRES and ANG participation. As a result, members of the reserve components have six to nine months of notice for deployments.

Guard and Reserve officials said that such planning time is key. "What we can't stand are short-notice pop-ups and short-notice cancellations," said General Shepperd. He added that schedulers can change a deployment location—say, from Saudi Arabia to Turkey, or from Turkey to Italy—but not the timing.

"We are learning to manage this new world," said General Shepperd. "It's very difficult, but it's working."

Gaining employer support for the increased optempo now being levied creates a unique challenge for the Guard and Reserve. However, recent surveys of key employers continue to show a very positive attitude.

DoD's National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and

to revitalization of the Air Reserve Components.

General Fogleman said the 1960s saw great improvement, but it was the implementation of the All-Volunteer Force in the 1970s that brought the reserve component forces onto the scope for national security planners once again. "As a result, our Guard and Reserve forces have achieved some of the highest states of readiness in the peacetime history of our nation. Units were provided with modern advanced weapon systems and some of the very best in realistic training."

Today, both Air Reserve Component leaders agree with that assessment.

"The Air Force is keeping us modernized with airplanes and equipment," said General Shepperd. General McIntosh maintained, "In the modernization effort and modification of older equipment, we're doing very well."

However, some problems do exist. General Shepperd noted three concerns about equipment: the need to equip Guard airplanes for precision guided munitions (PGMs), install Global Positioning System capability on all airplanes, and become proficient with night vision equipment.

"It's very difficult at a time when resources are going down to keep all that on track, but we're doing pretty well," he said.

General Shepperd told Congress that USAF has a near-term night ca-



Photo by Randy Jolly

AFRES also flies a wide variety of aircraft and missions. These A-10s from the 442d Fighter Wing, Whiteman AFB, Mo., are typical of all reserve component units these days—busy. Increasingly, their schedule includes overseas deployments.

pability upgrade for the ANG A-10 attack aircraft fleet. He expects similar support for F-15s and F-16s.

In addition, he said, the Guard needs continued support to add defensive systems to its C-130 airlift fleet, which provides forty percent of the total C-130 theater airlift forces. So far, only eight percent, or thirty-two aircraft, have been configured with defensive systems. The Air Force has provided funding to cover another twenty aircraft.

Reaping Benefits

AFRES, too, is reaping benefits

from front-line USAF equipment through its Reserve Associate program, which began in 1968. This unique program pairs a Reserve unit with an active-duty unit to share a single set of aircraft. Reserve Associate aircrews fly active-duty C-5, C-17, C-141, C-9, and KC-10 aircraft. The Reserve took on a space mission in 1993, helping provide spacecraft command and control at Falcon AFB, Colo. It also added two KC-135 associate units—the first will be fully operational this year—created an Airborne Warning and Control System associate unit this past March, and entered the Explosive Ordnance Disposal business.

Reserve Associate crews provide fifty-seven percent of USAF's C-141 and C-5 aircrew capability, forty-one percent of the KC-10 capability, and twenty-seven percent of C-9 capability.

In testimony to Congress, General McIntosh emphasized the importance of continually upgrading Reserve aircraft capability to maintain mission compatibility with the active force. He specifically mentioned night combat operations, precision munitions delivery, and integration into the modern digital battlefield.

He told lawmakers, "Congressional support has allowed us to maintain an acceptable level of parity in critical areas, such as airlift defensive systems, F-16 multitask trainers, night vision lighting modifications for our F-16s, A-10s, and



Gen. Ronald R. Fogleman notes that force structure is down by one-third and assignments have quadrupled and that, without ANG and AFRES, USAF "could not sustain the pace and stress on its active-duty personnel."

USAF photo by SrA Andrew N. Dunaway II



To keep up with their active-duty partners, ANG and AFRES constantly upgrade their equipment. The Florida ANG is moving from older F-16s (top) to upgraded F-15s, and reserve components are also improving munitions and other capabilities.

C-130s, and flare and chaff dispensing capability for the Reserve F-16 fleet." Other AFRES priorities included PGM capability for F-16s, better avionics for F-16s and A-10s, C-130 cockpit improvements, KC-135R engine upgrade kits, and unit-level training devices for A-10 and C-130 fleets.

Maintaining the Forces

Availability of modern and upgraded equipment has helped the Air Reserve Components maintain high readiness levels. Another key factor has been the high experience level of personnel.

General McIntosh said that combat readiness is at an all-time high and that the performance level on inspections meets or exceeds any that the reserve components have ever reached. He attributes this performance to a good retention rate and reaping "the benefits of recruiting good people as they leave the active Air Force."

During the past several years, both components took advantage of the active-duty drawdown. In 1989, AFRES enrolled 3,742 raw recruits, but from 1990 through 1996 the majority of new recruits had active-duty experience. During the drawdown, the Guard's standard experience ratio changed; whereas it once took in sixty percent prior-service and forty percent nonprior-service, it now takes in eighty percent prior-service and twenty percent nonprior-service.

However, the large influx of former active-duty members to the reserve components is over. Both components expect to return to business as usual next year, and recruiting and retention are high on their lists of likely challenges.

General McIntosh believes AFRES will be able to retain the former active-duty personnel.

"They came into the Reserve voluntarily because they like the camaraderie, they like the mission, they like being part of the Air Force, they like to be busy," he said. "I think we'll be able to retain these people that we've gotten over the last few years." The other part of the manning equation, he said, is to recruit "the brightest and best out of high school and college."

General Shepperd told Congress that ANG units are working "with the states to develop initiatives to ensure we reach our strength goals, while filling critical skill vacancies through the extensive use of enlistment bonuses and the highly visible incentives of the Montgomery GI Bill." He said the bill is a major motivator for six-year enlistments.

General Shepperd links future recruiting efforts to continued community support by the Guard, an element that has had an effect on force-structure decisions. Some Congressmen questioned his decision to reduce the primary aircraft authorized (PAA) in ANG squadrons to twelve in the Fis-

cal 1997 budget, rather than cut units. The Guard reduced its PAA increments during the past few years from twenty-four to eighteen, then down to fifteen in 1996.

Although he says it is clear that a twenty-four PAA unit is more efficient than a twelve PAA unit, General Shepperd sees other important considerations. One concerns support for the Air Force in the civilian community.

"We have civilian communities out there that have supported our noise, supported our recruiting, supported our deployments at the great expense of their employers for many, many years, and now our reward for them is to come and close the units in those areas," he said. "Well, nobody likes that, but if we have to do it because of budgets, we will do it."

He expresses concern that increased reliance on the Guard and Reserve for day-to-day operations might lead to the need to maintain the current number of units and even to "re-robust" those units back up to eighteen or twenty-four airplanes. Instead of eliminating some units now, General Shepperd said, "We have basically taken a pause."

The General said he wants to get through DoD's quadrennial review in 1997 and "find out where the force structure is going before we start closing units."

He pointed out that overhead for Guard units is very low compared with that of an active-duty base.

"We have eighty-nine flying units, most of them on . . . seventy-five to 120 acres leased on a civilian airport," he said. There are no facilities, such as exchanges, commissaries, or living quarters.

"We're not trying to do anything stupid and not trying to preserve units at all costs and not trying to do anything ridiculous," he added. "I've been criticized for that in some quarters, but quite frankly I am absolutely willing to take that criticism, because this is the right thing to do."

General McIntosh explained to Congress that AFRES has done some consolidation of units to try to ensure the most cost-effective number of aircraft. However, he emphasized, "You need to put Reserve and Guard units where the people are—where they work and where they want to serve." ■