

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
PRESENTATION TO THE PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
UNITED STATES SENATE

SUBJECT: AIR FORCE RESERVE

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MARCH 25, 2009

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED  
BY THE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
UNITED STATES SENATE

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today and discuss the state of the Air Force Reserve.

The Air Force Reserve is a powerful manifestation of the finest American qualities; pursuit of happiness and dedication to nation. It is an organization of ordinary working people, wedded to the fabric of our great nation through their individual pursuits. Reserve Airmen are linguists, utility technicians, police, railway engineers, entomologists, school teachers, salespeople, analysts, aviators, and nurses, to name just a few. All are dedicated to the greater purpose of serving our nation; all are essential.

The Air Force Reserve provides these dedicated individuals the opportunity to be a citizen and an Airman. Like the Reserve Components from our sister services, we perform the essential task of bringing citizens to service. In doing so we gain from them their civilian skills, capabilities and experience; alternative approaches to solving problems; and expertise and judgment. Civilian employers benefit from Air Force Reservists who are instilled with the enduring values of the Air Force – integrity, service before self, and excellence in all we do.

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates recently remarked that if we are to meet the myriad of challenges facing our nation, we must strengthen and fully integrate other important elements of national power; that military success is not sufficient to win in conflict; that we must urgently devote time, energy and thought to how we better organize ourselves to meet these challenges.

The Air Force is already recognizing the benefits of using all of its resources from the Reserve, Guard, and Regular Components as it increasingly relies on Reservists to support operational missions throughout the world. Moreover, the Air Force is encouraging the Reserve and Guard to integrate more fully with the Regular Air Force in a whole host of missions, adding tremendous value to the forces the Air Force provides to the joint warfighter.

As the nation looks for ways to strengthen its organizations and integrate all of the untapped resources it will need in facing the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, we submit that a model by which ordinary people, dedicated to serving their country in a way that meets both their needs and the needs of the nation, is already manifest in the US Air Force everyday -- in the extraordinary Americans of the Air Force Reserve.

I'm proud to serve along side these great Airmen and as Chief and Commander of the Air Force Reserve, I have made a promise to them that I will advocate on their behalf for resources and legislation that will allow them to serve more flexibly in peace and war with minimum impact to their civilian career and employer. I will work to eliminate barriers of service, so that they can more easily serve in the status that meets their needs and those of the Air Force. And, I will work to efficiently and effectively manage our Air Force Reserve to meet the requirements of the Joint warfighter and the nation.

## **RECRUITING AND RETENTION**

Over the last eight years, the Air Force Reserve has exceeded its recruiting goals. Our success in great part has been due to the accessions of experienced Regular Air Force members upon completion of their active duty commitments. Indeed, recruiting highly trained individuals is essential to lowering training costs for the Air Force Reserve. For the past couple of years we have been able to recruit experienced Airmen from the Regular Air Force as a result of force structure changes and program budget decisions.

We no longer have the luxury of large numbers of experienced Airmen leaving Regular service. As both the Regular Air Force and the Air Force Reserve once again build end strength, we expect we will face some recruiting challenges in the near future: not only will the Air Force Reserve

have access to fewer prior service members, but we will be competing with all other services for non-prior recruits.

We are also facing challenges with retention. The Air Force Reserve continued to execute force structure changes in FY 2008, to include BRAC and Total Force Initiatives, which prompted a reduction of over 7,000 positions. As a result, we again missed our historical officer and enlisted retention targets but met end strength requirements. Second Term reenlistments and extensions fell slightly for the third straight year—we also attribute this to the large population of Airmen affected by the Air Force drawdown over the past few years. There is, however, a bright spot: in Fiscal Year 2008, for the first time in three years, we saw a dramatic upswing in reenlistments/extensions for First-Termers and a modest gain for Career Airmen.

Nevertheless, our forecast models indicate that we will continue to face challenges. Accordingly, as outlined in our Air Force Reserve priorities discussed below in greater detail, we are striving to improve Reserve Airmen awareness of benefits, incentives and policies affecting deployments; we are emphasizing the importance of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) program and the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP); and we are striving to better understand this very complicated dynamic by surveying the attitudes and beliefs of our Airmen on the array of policies, benefits and incentives that affect them to determine what appropriate adjustments can be made to improve our retention outlook. The Department of Defense and the Air Force have improved our ability to make deployments more predictable. And as I discuss below, I believe we need to take a hard look at the number of Airmen held in Reserve.

I am confident that as we act on not only our Air Force Reserve priorities, but those of the Air Force and the Department of Defense, and with the continued support of this committee and Congress, we will be able to continue to meet the needs of Combatant Commanders and the nation with a viable operational and strategic Air Force Reserve.

## **PRESERVING, LEVERAGING AND IMPROVING AIR FORCE RESERVE VALUE AND OUR PRIORITIES**

The Air Force Reserve is a repository of experience and expertise for the Air Force. Air Force Reserve Airmen are among the most experienced Airmen in the Air Force. Air Force Reserve officers average roughly 15 years of experience, and enlisted members average 14 years of experience, compared to 11 years and 9 years for Regular Air Force officers and enlisted respectively. In fact, roughly 64 percent of Air Force Reserve Airmen have prior military experience.

Airmen of the Selected Reserve remain mission-ready, training to the same standards and maintaining the same currencies as those in the Regular Air Force, and are capable of deploying within 72 hours of notification. These Airmen provide the insurance policy the Air Force and the nation need: a surge capability in times of national crises.

Reserve Airmen are a cost-effective force provider, comprising nearly 14 percent of the total Air Force authorized end-strength at only 5.3 percent of the military personnel budget. Put differently, Air Force Reserve Airmen cost per capita is 27.7 percent of that of Regular Air Force Airmen, or roughly 3.5 Reserve Airman to one Regular Airman.<sup>1</sup>

The Air Force leverages the inherent value of the Air Force Reserve in furtherance of its priorities, which are to: reinvigorate the Air Force nuclear enterprise; partner with the joint and

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<sup>1</sup> FY08 Budget, figures derived from ABIDES (Automated Budget Interactive Data Environment System), the budget system currently in use by the Air Force and recognized as the official Air Force position with respect to the Planning, Programming and Budget Execution (PPBE) system. Inflation data used for any constant dollar calculations were based on average Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) rates for the past ten years: roughly 2.6 percent average annual rate of inflation. Medicare Eligible Retirement Health Care (MERHC) is an accrual account used to pay for health care of Medicare-eligible retirees (age 65 and beyond). Cost per capita figures were derived dividing cost of Selected Reserve program by Selected Reserve end-strength. When MERHC figures are included, the cost of Air Force Reserve Airmen to Regular Air Force Airmen increases to 30.4 percent.

coalition team to win today's fight; develop and care for Airmen and their families; modernize our air and space inventories, organizations and training; and recapture acquisition excellence.

Preserving, utilizing and improving this value in pursuit of Air Force priorities underlie each of our Air Force Reserve priorities. We must provide an operational, combat ready force while maintaining a strategic reserve. We must preserve the viability of the triad of the relationships Reservists must sustain with their families, the Air Force Reserve and their employers. We must broaden Total Force Initiatives. And we must modernize our equipment and facilities. Each of these priorities is vital to preserving our value and sustaining our forces as we meet the needs of the nation.

### **OPERATIONAL, COMBAT READY FORCE WHILE MAINTAINING A STRATEGIC RESERVE**

The Air Force Reserve is first and foremost a strategic reserve, providing the Air Force with a surge capacity in times of national crisis. Over time, the Reserve has become a mission-ready reserve force capable of serving operationally throughout the world. Since Desert Storm, Air Force Reserve Airmen have been continuously engaged around the world supporting ongoing contingencies, serving side by side with the joint team.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Airmen of the Selected Reserve are mission-ready, capable of performing on-going operations. Collectively, they have met the operational needs of the Air Force for decades—largely through volunteerism, but also through full-time mobilization. For example, Reserve and Guard Airmen have continuously supported Operation Coronet Oak in Southern Command year-round, 24/7, since 1977. Between 1991 and 2003, Reservists supported the no-fly areas of Operations Northern and Southern Watch. Since the attacks on 11 Sept 2001, 54,000 Reservists have been mobilized to participate in Operations Enduring Freedom, Noble Eagle and Operation Iraqi Freedom—6,000 remain on active duty status today. It is a fact that the Air Force, more than any other time, now relies on members of the Reserve and Guard to meet its operational requirements around the globe.

Our Reserve community continues to answer our nation's call to duty with large numbers of volunteer Reservists providing essential support to Combatant Commanders. Forty-six percent of the Air Force's strategic airlift mission and 23 percent of its tanker mission capability are provided by Reserve Airmen. We currently have over 450 C-17, C-5, KC-135 and KC-10 personnel on active duty orders supporting the air refueling and airlift requirements.

In Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom, Reserve C-130 crews flew over 6,000 hours in 2008; Reserve F-16 and A-10 crews flew over 3700 hours. The Air Force Reserve provides 24 crews and 12 fighter aircraft to USCENTCOM in their regularly scheduled rotations for the close air support mission.

The Air Force Reserve maintains sixty percent of the Air Force's total Aeromedical Evacuation (AE) capability. Reserve AE crews and operations teams provide a critical lifeline home for our injured warfighters. Our highly trained AE personnel fill 39 percent of each AEF rotation and fulfill 12 Tanker Airlift Control Center tasked

Using Reservists in operational missions makes sense: it leverages the experience and comparatively lower costs of a predominantly part-time force. Moreover, it improves relationships between Regular Air Force and Air Force Reserve members—it gives Airmen of each component an opportunity to demonstrate their capability and relevancy to each other, as well as sister Services and coalition forces; it provides Airmen of each component the opportunity to lead each other. Equally

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AE channel missions each quarter—all on a volunteer basis. On the home front in 2008, the Air Force Reserve provided 21 of 24 AE crews, 88 percent of the mission requirement, for the response to Hurricane's Ike and Gustav. Additionally, the Reserve provided 4 standby crews, 100 percent of the mission requirement, in support of the Democratic and Republican National Conventions.

In 2008, the men and women of our Combat Search and Rescue forces have been heavily engaged in life saving operations at home and abroad. Since February, Airmen of the 920<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing at Patrick Air Force Base, Florida, and their sister units in Arizona and Oregon, flew over 745 hours and saved more than 300 U.S. troops on HH-60 helicopter missions in support of U.S. Army medical evacuation operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. While mobilized for 14 months in support of combat missions abroad, the 920th continued to provide humanitarian relief in response to natural disasters at home, as well as provide search and rescue support for NASA shuttle and rocket launches.

The Reserve made use of its organic ISR and fire fighting capabilities to protect the lives and property of our citizens threatened by an especially severe fire season. Defense Support to Civilian Authorities engagement started with planning and directing exploitation and analysis of the first Global Hawk imagery to support Incident Analysis & Assessments. In fact, the first Distributed Ground System Mission Commander was an Air Force Reserve Officer that directed analysis of the areas devastated and movement of the fire lines. Aircrews in the 302nd Air Expeditionary Group (AEG) flew more than 980 airdrops and delivered in excess of 1.3 million gallons of fire retardant to help firefighters on the ground and mitigate further damage and destruction. The AEG is a Joint unit made up of eight C-130 Hercules aircraft equipped with the Air Force Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System, six Marine Corps helicopters, and two Navy Reserve helicopters. Two of the C-130s belong to the Air Force Reserve's 302nd Airlift Wing at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado. Reserve and Guard personnel helped fight the more than 2,000 fires that ravaged the California wilderness this past summer.

The Air Force Reserve provides 100 percent of the airborne weather (hurricane hunting) capability for the Department of Defense. This past hurricane season tied as the fourth most active with 16 named storms and five major hurricanes. Throughout the year, Air Force Reserve "Hurricane Hunters", C-130J aircraft flown by citizen Airmen of the 403<sup>rd</sup> Wing at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi flew over 1,000 hours, collecting life-saving data that was sent directly to the National Hurricane Center in Miami, Florida, contributing to better forecasts and landfall predictions. Following the end of the hurricane season in the Caribbean, the 403rd deployed 2 aircraft and 4 crews to the Pacific region to continue its support of storm research.

In addition to our hurricane mission, the Air Force Reserve provides 100 percent of the aerial spray mission in support of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Centers for Disease Control, and state public health officials. Air Force Reserve aircrews and C-130s from the 910th Airlift Wing, Youngstown Air Reserve Station, Ohio, sprayed more than a million storm ravaged acres of land with pesticides to control the spread of disease.

Our intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance professionals are providing critical information as they answer the nation's call to service. In 2008, 192 intelligence personnel deployed in support of world-wide contingency missions to include Afghanistan and Iraq. For the foreseeable future, Reserve intelligence professionals will continue to be deployed throughout the Combatant Command theaters, engaged in operations ranging from intelligence support to fighter, airlift, and tanker missions to ISR operations in Combined Air Operations Centers and Combined/Joint Task Forces.

These are but a few examples of the dedication and contributions our Air Force Reserve Airmen have made and will continue to make around the clock, around the world, each and every day.

important, operational duty provides Reserve Airmen the benefit of operating as a member of the joint team in diverse environments. Operational taskings also improve unit morale and enhance unit pride—important factors in achieving and sustaining high performance.

Yet, for all of our operational capability and contributions, we must not lose sight that we—along with our Air National Guard brothers and sisters—are also a strategic reserve that must be available to surge in times of national emergency. For us to serve as both an operational and strategic reserve, it is critical that we find the right balance between the two. Too few Reserve Airmen means a higher operational tempo for all Airmen—Regular or Reserve; it means less capacity to surge in times of national emergency; it means exhausting our people and jeopardizing the cornerstone of Air Force Reserve service.

We are now 18 years in continuous combat operations, and in our eighth year of Operation Enduring Freedom; soon to be in our sixth year of Operation Iraqi Freedom. By any measure, our Airmen are performing admirably. But, our retention rates are dropping, our experience levels are dropping, indeed the Air Force is “going deep” into the Inactive Ready Reserve and Retired Reserve with its Limited Pilot Recall Program. Are these anomalies that can each be explained; or are they the signposts of a more serious problem? My concern and challenge, indeed our collective challenge, is to ensure we are able to refocus, reconstitute and recapitalize while remaining engaged in the full spectrum of operations- in a word, our efforts must be “sustainable” over the long run.

Volunteerism is vital to the overall capability of not just the Air Force Reserve, but the entire Air Force—today we meet roughly eighty percent of our taskings through volunteerism. Without it, I do not believe we can sustain this level of commitment indefinitely. From this essential fact flow all of my other priorities.

**PRESERVING THE VIABILITY OF THE RESERVE TRIAD  
(Family, Air Force Reserve and Employer)**

Air Force Reserve Airmen must strike a balance between their commitments to the Air Force, their families and their civilian employers, i.e. their main source of income. We must be ever mindful of these commitments and the balancing act our Reservists undertake to sustain these relationships. We must strive to preserve these relationships through open communication with each of these essential partners. And, we must strive to provide predictability in deployments, and parity with benefits. Doing so is critically important in ensuring we provide ready and capable Reserve Airmen to the nation.

This past year, the Air Force Reserve has endeavored to improve communication with Reservists by rolling out awareness campaigns concerning the differences in benefits Congress has provided over the past few years, and how these accrue for those who voluntarily deploy and those who are mobilized. We have also put a spotlight on other important benefits such as reduced eligibility age for retirement pay, improved availability of health benefits, and lower premiums for TRICARE Reserve Select. We have begun surveying focus groups within the Air Force Reserve to better understand the needs of our Reservists and whether we are meeting these needs. And I personally send emails to all of our Selected Reserve members to highlight important issues concerning their service. In the coming months, as we learn more, we will be rolling out an awareness campaign on the Post 9/11 GI Bill and how it works vis-à-vis other education benefits.

We have worked with the Small Business Association to provide Reservists and Employers awareness of improved access to increased, uncollateralized, low interest loans that Congress authorized last year. We have made it a point to educate our Airmen about the importance of the ESGR program, and we have asked that they nominate their employers for ESGR recognition and

take time to accurately fill out employer data in the DoD employer database. I am pleased to report that we have increased our nominations by 149 percent this past year.

We are moving ahead with implementation of the Air Force Reserve Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) to support Reserve members and their families throughout the entire deployment cycle. Prior to the enactment of this program, Air Force Reserve Wings dedicated time and a notable level of effort to support their deploying Airmen and families, as evidenced by the number of deployment support and reintegration activities in the past. In 2008, the Air Force Reserve hosted 58 YRRP events that served over 1,250 Airmen and 500 family members.

In addition, the Air Force Reserve Command has formed a Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Office. This multi-functional team has begun identifying challenges, assessing strategic, operational and fiscal gaps, and evaluating effective and implementable options. We're working towards full implementation of Department of Defense directives.

In the future, the Air Force Reserve will publish an overarching YRRP strategy that optimizes benefits to service members and their families. A key component of this strategy will be to support and unify the current independent efforts, and identify the successes of those efforts.

As a Total Force, we continue to work through Continuum of Service challenges to better enable varying degrees of service commitment that members can provide as their life circumstances change throughout their career. The Air Force and the Air Reserve Components are taking a coordinated approach to identifying the issues that make reserve component members disinclined to frequently volunteer for active duty tours. We're identifying barriers and options for reducing or removing impediments to service. These impediments range from financial, cultural, technological to policy and legislative. Through this program the services have thus far identified dozens of impediments, three of which were mitigated by improving policies concerning enlisted promotion, chaplain service age waiver, and security clearances. Although still in its formative stage, the Air

Force – developed CoS Tracking Tool is gaining wider DoD acceptance and we hope will continue to gain momentum as all services look to act on this important reform initiative.

Thanks to the help of this committee, the FY 2008 National Defense Authorization Act included legislation to authorize reimbursement of travel expenses not to exceed \$300.00 for certain Selected Reserve members who travel outside the normal commuting distance because they are assigned to a unit with a critical manpower shortage, or assigned to a unit or position that is disestablished or relocated as a result of defense base closure, realignment or another force structure reallocation. Because of this authorization, the Air Force Reserve has been able to retain trained and qualified personnel, rather than having to recruit and train new personnel.

## **BROADEN TOTAL FORCE INITIATIVES**

The Air Force leverages the value of its reserve components through association constructs. The basic model is an associate wing in which a unit of one component has primary responsibility for operating and maintaining equipment (such as aircraft), while a unit of another component (Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard, or Regular Air Force) also operates and maintains that equipment.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The Air Force uses three types of associations to leverage the combined resources and experience levels of all three components: “Classic Association”, “Active Association”, and “Air Reserve Component Association”.

Under the “Classic” model, so-called because it is the first to be used, a Regular Air Force unit is the host unit and retains primary responsibility for the weapon system, and a Reserve or Guard unit is the tenant. This model has flourished in the Military Airlift and Air Mobility Commands for over 40 years. We are now beginning to use it in the Combat Air Forces (CAF): our first fighter aircraft “Classic” association at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, attained Initial Operational Capability in June of 2008. This association combined the Regular Air Force’s 388th Fighter Wing, the Air Force’s largest F-16 fleet, with the Air Force Reserve’s 419th Fighter Wing, becoming the benchmark and lens through which the Air Force will look at every new mission. The 477th Fighter Group, an F-22 unit in Elmendorf, Alaska, continues to mature as the first F-22A associate unit. This unit also achieved Initial Operating Capability in 2008 and will eventually grow into a two-squadron association with the Regular Air Force.

The Air Force Reserve also established its first Intelligence Squadron Association with the 50<sup>th</sup> Intelligence Squadron at Beale Air Force Base, California. This unit of Reserve and Regular Airmen delivers real-time, tailored intelligence to combat forces engaged in missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, with data derived from theater Predator/Reapers, Global Hawks and U-2s, in partnership with the Total Force team. The Air Force is considering additional associate intelligence units for Beale and Langley Air Force Bases. These new capabilities create a strategic reserve force ready to respond to the call of our nation, capable of being leveraged as operational crews ready and willing to support the Regular Air Force in everyday missions around the world. This model has proven itself and is the basis for the growth of associations over the last five years.

This arrangement effectively places more people against a piece of equipment, thereby gaining more utility from each piece of equipment, and the ability to surge as needed, and pull back when not.

Beyond fiscal efficiencies, however, associations use the inherent values that each component brings to the mix. For example, less experienced Airmen from Regular Air Force can be more favorably balanced against higher experienced Reserve Component Airmen. Moreover, these constructs can foster mutual respect among components, and can lead to a cross flow of ideas. Regular Air Force Airmen can bring a wider perspective of Air Force operations to an associate unit based on their ability to change assignments on a regular basis. For their part, Reserve Airmen lend stability and continuity to the organization and the mission. The ultimate goal is to provide the Air Force and COCOMs the best possible capabilities with fewer physical resources by leveraging the combined resources of the Regular Air Force, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserve.

The Air Force has been using associations modestly, with varying degrees of success, since 1968, primarily in the air mobility missions. However, during the last five years we have aggressively pursued fundamental change to maintain our war fighting capabilities. Our central

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Under the “Active” model, the Air Force Reserve or Guard unit is host and has primary responsibility for the weapon system while the Regular Air Force provides additional aircrews to the unit. The 932<sup>nd</sup> Airlift Wing is the first ever Operational Support Airlift Wing in the Air Force Reserve with 3 C-9Cs and 3 C-40s. Additionally, the Air Force Reserve will take delivery of an additional C-40 in FY 2011, appropriated in the FY 2009 Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance and Continuing Appropriations Act. This additional C-40 will help to replace the 3 C-9Cs, which are costly to maintain and fly. To better utilize the current fleet of C-40s at the 932<sup>nd</sup>, the Air Force created an Active Association. We also are benefitting from our first C-130 Active Association with the 440<sup>th</sup> AW at Pope AFB.

Under the “Air Reserve Component (ARC)” model, now resident at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (ARS) in New York, the Air Force Reserve has primary responsibility for the equipment while the Guard shares in the operation of the equipment and works side by side with the Reserve to maintain the equipment. The Air National Guard has transitioned from the KC-135 air refueling tanker to the C-130, associating with the 914<sup>th</sup> Reserve Airlift Wing. The 914<sup>th</sup> added four additional C-130s, resulting in 12 C-130s at Niagara ARS. This ARC Association model provides a strategic and operational force for the Regular Air Force while capitalizing on the strengths of the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve. Additionally, in this case it provides the State of New York with the needed capability to respond to state emergencies.

The Air Force Reserve has 9 host units and is the tenant at 53 locations. There are currently more than 100 integration initiatives being undertaken by the Air Force and Air Reserve Components.

strategy is to use integration/association initiatives to leverage the strengths of all three components to make one strong Air Force in many mission areas. Failing to consider the Air Force holistically risks unbalancing the contributions of each component, which are central to the success of the efficient and effective delivery of combat capability to the war fighter.

Associations also present new challenges in the way we develop plans to meet the needs of combatant commanders. It used to be, and in some cases still is, that our mobilization plans were developed for a unit and its equipment to deploy together in support of a given operations plan. Associations now must be worked into those plans. We have made progress in developing war mobilization plans that deploy equipment separately from the units that deploy. But we will undoubtedly encounter difficulties in the execution of these plans. We still will have to find the sweet spot in the Regular Air Force/ARC manpower mix when allocating our people against various missions within the Air and Space Expeditionary Force construct. We will have to determine how long and how best to access ARC personnel—i.e., mobilize or volunteer—to meet that mix so that we can give combatant commanders the most effective force. And we should consider measuring taskings by associations instead of wings.

If it is to succeed, the Air Force must educate Airmen about the unique challenges of associations— at all levels, within and among each of the components. Advancement within each service is premised upon joint education and experience; advancement should also be premised on joint component education and experience. Candidates for leadership in associations should be screened and selected based on their experience and abilities to lead and work well with other components.

Force integration is not a process unto itself; it has a purpose, an end state. Properly understood, an integrated force is a unified, harmonious, effective entity. We are merely at the beginning of this process; it will take many, many years before we approach the end state. We must

look beyond the fiscal efficiencies touted as the basis for our undertaking, roll up our sleeves, and get to the hard work needed to make us a more effective combat force. Should we do so, we will some day look about us and recognize a truly integrated Air Force.

## **MODERNIZE EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES**

The Department of Defense's goal is to fully equip Reserve Component units, thereby providing a trained and ready force at every stage of the service's force rotation plan. The Air Reserve Components, along with the Regular Air Force, face significant modernization and recapitalization challenges, for both our aircraft and infrastructure. Some Air Force Reserve platforms remain out of the fight due to lack of defensive and countermeasure systems needed in the CENTCOM Theater, including some of our C-5A, A-10 and C-130 aircraft. In addition, as with the Regular Air Force, we are facing unpredictable fatigue, corrosion, and structural component availability concerns on platforms that even our superior maintainers cannot correct forever, as we have seen in our C-5, KC-135 and A-10 fleets. While we continue to meet the requirements of the Air Force and the Joint team, the current high operations tempo has led to our current reality – the increasing uncertainty of our long-term fleet viability. Similarly, continued risk in the Air Force Military Construction (MILCON) program has caused a significant growth in the Air Force Reserve Command's facility project backlog. Timely modernization is critical to remaining a relevant and capable combat ready Reserve force.

### NGREA

The National Guard Reserve Equipment Account (NGREA) appropriation has resulted in an increase in readiness and combat capability for both the Reserve and the Guard. For FY 2009, we received \$37.5 million in NGREA appropriations which resulted in the Air Force Reserve Command's ability to purchase additional upgrades for Reserve owned equipment. Some of the

items that we purchased using NGREA funding include: Defensive Systems for C-5s, Line of Sight/Beyond Line of Sight capability and new upgraded radar for our C-130 aircraft, and an upgrade to the F-16 Commercial Fire Control Computer. Many of these new capabilities are directly tied to better air support for our Soldiers and Marines in Iraq and Afghanistan. NGREA funding has helped the Air Force Reserve to remain relevant in today's fight as well as the ability to remain ready and capable in future conflicts. We thank you for your support with this critical program.

#### MILCON AND FACILITIES MODERNIZATION

Along with challenges in modernizing our equipment, we face challenges modernizing our facilities. During the FY 2008 budget formulation, both the Regular Air Force and the Air Force Reserve took risk in MILCON appropriation in order to fund higher priorities. This reduction coupled with past shortfall funding in MILCON has resulted in a backlog nearing \$1 Billion for the Air Force Reserve.

We will continue to work within the fiscal constraints and mitigate risk where possible to ensure our equipment and facilities are modernized to provide a safe and adequate working environment for all of our Airmen.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Mr. Chairman and Members of this Committee, I am excited to have been able to take on this role as Chief of the Air Force Reserve and Commander of Air Force Reserve Command. I take pride in the fact that when our Nation calls on the Air Force Reserve, we are trained and ready to go to the fight. Over 67,000 strong, we are a mission-ready reserve force capable of serving operationally through out the world with little or no notice.

The rapidly changing security and economic environment will cause Congress, the Department of Defense, and the Air Force to make some difficult choices in the year ahead. The Air

Force Reserve is highly experienced, cost-effective force provider well-suited for this challenge. I submit it is a hedge against the uncertainties we are facing for which you pay a relatively small premium. I firmly believe paying this premium will enable the Air Force to achieve its force integration goals and address not only its priorities, but also help Congress address the more pressing issues we will face as a nation in the years to come.

I appreciate the support of this committee for the authorization and legislation it provides to our readiness and combat capability. I look forward to working with each of you in the future on the challenges facing the Air Force Reserve, the Air Force, and the nation.