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# Joint Reserve Forces:



# An Evolution in Military Affairs

By DONNA L. HOPKINS

A phenomenon is occurring within the Armed Forces that portends a sea change in thinking about the Reserve components. As military leaders respond to widening nontraditional operations, shrinking resources, and congressional pressure to find efficiencies, they rely increasingly on the capabilities afforded by both jointness and the use of Reservists. The coincidence of these trends has given impetus to establishing joint Reserve units (JRUs)—a concept whose time has arrived. Employing such units could introduce major changes in Reserve component personnel assignment policies, professional development, mission areas, and basic force structures. The implications of joint training, command and control, and assignment of Reservists to combatant commands could alter a number of U.S. military paradigms.

## Maximum Value

Coherent jointness<sup>1</sup> and seamless integration of the total force<sup>2</sup> have taken root as the value added of both concepts has become apparent. Myriad military operations during and since Desert Shield/Desert Storm have demonstrated the wisdom of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, which requires commanders to plan and execute operations in a joint environment. Political and military leaders have acknowledged that war as well as military operations other than war must be conducted with joint forces and that neither can

be carried out without the participation of the Reserve components. One implication of this situation is that combatant commanders, who are charged with planning and executing missions directed by the National Command Authorities, must be capable of integrating the Reserve assets of each service on every level of command. New approaches to organization, management, integration, and training of the Reserve components are emerging as these commands recognize and demand the benefits of using this previously neglected resource.

One innovation is the emergence of joint Reserve units. In 1991 the commander in chief, U.S. Transportation Command (TRANSCOM), formed a joint transportation Reserve unit to meet strategic mobility requirements in the face of dwindling assets. Moreover, not long after U.S. Atlantic Command (ACOM) was created in 1993 and assumed the mission of joint force integration and training of most combat forces, it organized a JRU to assist in joint planning, exercises, and crisis action response. Both U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) and U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) use assigned individual mobilization augmentees (IMAs) and service Reserve units, collectively known as joint IMA programs. Elsewhere, U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) has appended all Reserve billets to its official manning document and U.S. European Command (EUCOM) has established an entire staff directorate to manage Reserve issues for theater campaign planning. Each unified command has its own approach to Reserve use in the joint environment, but all seek the greatest accessibility to a manpower resource suddenly in demand.

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## the Reserves need policy and organizational reform to function in the joint arena

Regardless of how joint Reserve units are organized, commanders gain better awareness of and access to the time and talents of trained Reservists in their theaters. As commanders rely more on these assets, service components will experience greater pressure to provide more people,

better joint training, and expanded joint professional military education (PME) for Reservists serving in joint assignments. Just as the active components have begun assimilating the spirit and let-

ter of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, so the Reserves need policy and organizational reform to provide the men and women who can function in the joint arena.

### Breaking Ground

"The Concept and Implementation Plan to Establish the United States Transportation Command Joint Transportation Reserve Unit (JTRU)" was submitted to the Director of the Joint Staff in 1991. This document presents the rationale for the initiative.

*The concept development was predicated upon the performance of the existing Naval Reserve unit's support of the crisis action team operations. The command's ability to rapidly update these previously trained Naval Reservists, and the Reservists' full integration into Desert Shield/Desert Storm deployment management operations, has proven the viability of utilizing Reserve personnel to enhance TRANSCOM operation.*

[Deputy CINTRANS] directed establishment of a joint Reserve unit that would mirror mission and structural characteristics of the unified command environment; e.g., joint chain of command, joint operations, and balanced service representation.

[The] chiefs of Army and Air Force Reserve also confirmed their personal support for the JTRU concept . . . they provided enhanced interim funding for individual mobilization augmentee (IMA) drills to begin Reserve unit billet recruiting and joint unit integration. All assigned Reserve elements will be integrated into the JTRU, and there will no longer be assigned IMAs.

*Long-range benefits of establishing the JTRU will result from training as a joint unit in a joint environment. . . . Further, the joint unit concept affords the opportunity to provide training in content and quality comparable to that received by active duty counterparts. . . .*

The JTRU commander advises the CINC on matters of planning, readiness, training, and use of Reservists within the unified and subordinate transportation component commands as well as on issues related to mobilization-driven

civilian/industrial bases. Within each service element, the senior line officer provides guidance for service-specific Reserve administration and exercises Article 15 authority over enlisted personnel. But the JTRU commander, and not the senior service element officer, is the reporting senior for JTRU personnel. This change acts to promote jointness as much as any other issue.

Under this model, service elements are not uniformly placed under the peacetime command and control of combatant commanders, and personnel administration is provided by components since no joint organic headquarters section exists to service all unit members. It does, however, create a sense of unity among Reservists from different services augmenting the headquarters, offer a vehicle for promoting joint operations precepts within the Reserve community, and provide command visibility on available Reserve assets. It is also leading to related initiatives within other unified commands.

### One-Stop Shopping

The ACOM JRU is organized differently. Its stated mission is to "provide trained Reserve component personnel and fully integrate into ACOM staff, leveraging military experience, civilian skills, and availability to meet peacetime, crisis, and wartime requirements on a timely basis." Like TRANSCOM, Reservists from every service are assigned. The primary organizational distinction between units is the addition by ACOM of a JRU chief of staff and a subordinate headquarters staff to provide one-stop shopping for Reservists. Administration (check-in/database records/finance, personnel, and medical processing), training (security/joint training), and requirements (personnel assignment, funding, and liaison with directorates) are organic to JRU and consolidate overhead by three service Reserve component staffs at TRANSCOM into a single staff. Within directorates, active and Reserve points of contact are assigned to manage drills, annual training, directorate-specific training, contingency tasking, performance evaluations, and mobilization requirements for assigned Reservists. More than six hundred Reservists work directly for directorates on mutually agreed drill schedules with little interference or supervision from the headquarters staff, and their performance evaluations are signed by active duty directorate heads. They are afforded the benefit of uniform administrative policies and training and a sense of joint identity that is fundamentally different from that of service slice augmentees.

Marine Reserve fighter over target range.



U.S. Navy Reserve (Bruce Trombecky)



Naval Reserve  
"SeaBees" training with  
Air Force aircrews.

4th Combat Camera Squadron (Joe Cupido)

In addition, ACOM established a Reserve Component General Officer Steering Committee with representatives from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, Reserve Forces Policy Board, subordinate component commands, and ACOM headquarters staff. The committee is charged with integrating Reserve forces into the joint team, providing an array of capabilities to support command strategies, promoting effectiveness among the services, creating a seamless (Reserve component) information system, and adding value to ACOM and its service components. As this concept matures, the steering committee will be helpful in sharing the lessons learned from JRU employment with other commands seeking efficiencies in Reserve management.

One innovation at ACOM is the degree to which Reservists are integrated into routine staff work. Assigned Reservists meld with the active duty staff on a daily basis—not just on scheduled weekends—to accomplish the command's mission. This departure from the paradigm of Reserve training-oriented drills and annual training is gaining attention from commands whose workload is increasing despite manpower reductions. Active service components could seek similar integration of Reserve units into normal daily operations. The spread of this practice across the Nation may necessitate changes in Reserve component training and administration policies by the services and possibly in management structures as the mission of Reserve components is expanded to include peacetime support as well as mobilization capability.<sup>3</sup>

U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) began standing up a JRU in September 1997 in conjunction with its headquarters move from Panama to Miami. It will be organized much like the ACOM unit, in part because it was determined that the command would be better served if Reserve organizations and individuals reassigned from ACOM to SOUTHCOM for the Caribbean mission were transferred to a similar organization. Full-time support billets have been authorized in the *Joint Manning Document* to support the unit

Naval Reserve Force  
guided missile frigate  
*USS Clark*.



U.S. Navy (John Bouvia)

and, like ACOM, a headquarters element will provide one-stop shopping for administration, training, and operations for all Reservists.

Under the original SOUTHCOM organization, Reserve component commanders are dual-hatted as respective service component heads and as members of the command Reserve Affairs Directorate. This Miami-based JRU will be dedicated only to the command headquarters,

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its major focus being staff augmentation through improved man-day management across the components. While located in Panama, SOUTHCOM was unable to utilize many authorized man-days because travel and per diem costs for Reserve augmentees had to be absorbed by staff sections. Relocation to Miami enables greater use of Reservists for fiscal reasons.

#### Tradition by Any Other Name

CENTCOM and SOCOM each manage traditional service IMA and Naval Reserve units, referred to collectively as joint Reserve IMA programs. They do not constitute JRUs as the term is understood in this context. Each service administers Reservists, who report directly to respective

staff directorates for assignment, scheduling, training, and evaluation. Without the administrative overhead normally associated with unit organizations Reservists can devote themselves to training with a command. Administration is supported by a full-time manpower and personnel staff to deal with Reserve issues and coordinates actions among service elements, commands, and individual Reservists. The Reserve Forces Readiness Division within CENTCOM functions similarly to a unit headquarters and offers Reservists one-stop shopping, thereby making further reorganization unnecessary. SOCOM is mulling the relative merits of alternative models as experience is gained at other command headquarters.

PACOM has taken a different approach to integration. All Reserve component billets, full-time support and selected alike, are placed through coordination by the manpower staff across the directorates on the JCS-approved *Joint Training and Mobilization Document* and are authorized and service funded. Personnel administration is handled by service components, and a small Reserve Forces Division manages mobilization and other Reserve-specific issues. The command's position is that Reserve component integration at headquarters is effective and no additional infrastructure is necessary. The Army Reserve has proposed a JRU with a full-time Army Reserve/National Guard leadership element over all Reserve component



55th Signal Company (Eduardo Guajardo)

Army and Marine Corps Reservists in Lithuania, Baltic Challenge '98.

assets, but it has little momentum. This approach is appealing in its simplicity and transparency of Reserve administration to the staff. But it is not clear that it furnishes commanders with an appreciation of what capabilities are available if rapid Reserve augmentation in depth is needed, nor does it provide uniformity in the training, education, management, and administration of Reserve assets across the services.

### The Next Iteration

Although EUCOM does not yet have a JRU, the concept is under study. The headquarters manages, through its manpower and personnel directorate, a combination of Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps individuals and Naval Reserve units that augment the headquarters staff. This may not optimize the use of Reservists, given that manpower pools do not necessarily provide the right mix of trained, available, and sustainable augmentation. Since events within Europe are driving an unprecedented reliance on Reserve augmentation from all services, various resourcing approaches are being studied. Also, the location of the headquarters and long traveling distances for assigned Reserves pose different challenges for JRU integration and management.

The Directorate of Mobilization and Reserve Component Affairs (ERCA) at EUCOM is the only stand-alone staff organization devoted to Reserve affairs within a joint command. It manages the command Reserve component campaign plan that supports the EUCOM strategy of engagement and theater objectives. More specifically, the plan is intended to “fully involve the National Guard and

Reserve in the implementation of this strategy and its strategic concepts: engage in peacetime, respond to crisis, and fight to win.”<sup>4</sup> The relationship between the newly established ERCA and the existing Reserve Programs Branch is still evolving and may eventually produce a new and quite different joint Reserve management structure.

Moreover, U.S. Space Command is moving toward greater integration of full-time Reserve support personnel into the staff and increased Reserve contributions to space missions. Emphasis is placed on developing an organization to provide more responsive peacetime access to Reservists under active duty command and control. Toward that end, the command staff participated in a joint working group to produce recommendations for the Chief of Air Force Reserve on the appropriate processes and policies for service augmentation of joint commands.

### Senior Staff Perspectives

The Manpower and Personnel Policy Directorate (J-1), Joint Staff, is observing rather than advocating the development of JRUs. Unified commanders are best situated to determine needs in this area, and the Joint Staff is inclined to support their recommendations. Individual commanders should be allowed to develop parameters for the formation of affiliated units—the why, when, and how. Senior staffer members agree that although it might be worthwhile to produce a format for submission of concept and implementation plans, it would not be advisable to determine the particulars of JRU organization and employment. Also, unified command staffs do not have identical internal structures, and thus directed organization of joint Reserve augmentation might be inappropriate. The political and geographical realities of each unified command differ, as do service cultures and the preferences of individual theater commands, and each should be able to exercise the prerogative of organizing and employing its assigned forces.

The Office of the Secretary of Defense, which makes policy for the Reserve components, has expressed particular interest in joint information warfare and command and control as it relates to Reserve units, whereby highly specialized civilians can apply technological skill to military ends via the Reserves. Network technology will enable new paradigms of participation. The Reserve intelligence community is a leader in this regard; its members are connected to national intelligence commands via computer systems and can contribute real-time analysis from disparate locations. Job-sharing between active and Reserve personnel via networks could lead to the creation of a new category of Reservists who work part time in the private sector and part time for gaining military

commands. This concept has great potential for revolutionizing the organization and management structure of every Reserve component, and the implications for expanded employer support of the Guard and Reserve are enormous.

A related issue is appropriate PME for Reserve officers. The desirability of a joint career path and joint subspecialty qualification is under study. Today the services send Reserve officers to war colleges and command and staff colleges to satisfy the first phase of joint PME. It would be appropriate to complete joint education through follow-on assignment to the Armed Forces Staff College and obligatory service at joint or unified commands to

**there is strong interest in organized joint Reserve augmentation among unified commands**

create a nucleus of joint expertise in the Reserves as an operational and training resource. This personnel management issue will grow more critical as JRUs become both more widespread and centrally managed. It would be desirable to develop a means to capture in personnel systems all joint staff and joint task force experience acquired by Reservists in each component.

JRU advocacy is neither unqualified nor unanimous. One might argue, for instance, that such units produce Reservists who are too parochial for individual theater commanders and are not easily transferable to other theaters, or that JRUs represent nothing more than manpower pools for staff assignment. Service components will retain a significant role in the evolution of these units, with responsibility for organizing, equipping, and training Reserve components within funding and legislative constraints. For example, there are statutes restricting the use of training dollars for the Army Reserve and Army National Guard to support operations conducted by active forces. Personnel assigned to joint units must maintain service competency and promotability; therefore, modifications to Reserve career paths and training doctrine, which are expensive, may be required. Each service must continue to exercise responsibility for JRU personnel under Title 10, and a dual chain of command—service administrative and joint operational—will require close management.

The most obvious advantage of JRUs is focused visibility on and rapid access to specially trained individuals with recent theater-specific joint experience on short notice. Once the principal driver for forming headquarters units, accessibility to Reserve assets of any service is no longer the difficult and contentious issue it once was.

Approval of a Presidential selected Reserve callup may now be achievable within 48 hours. A recall is managed via service components, though assigning Reserves directly to joint units will probably further streamline accession. Moreover, Presidential recall authority does not solve the issue of shortfalls in peacetime support requirements.

**The Wave of the Future?**

There is strong interest in organized joint Reserve augmentation among unified commands which want trained, experienced augmentees with minimum administrative exertion. Reservists, who prefer an active role in the missions of gaining commands to merely conducting mobilization training, are aggressively competing for assignments to these new joint units. Aside from the fact that they bring considerable expertise and perform substantial work, Goldwater-Nichols directed specifically that “The Secretary of Defense *shall establish* personnel policies emphasizing education *and experience* in joint matters for Reserve officers not on the active duty list [emphasis added].” Therefore it is not only desirable but legislatively mandated that Reserve officers (who comprise a majority of joint Reserve billet authorizations) should have joint staff and operational experience. If combatant command staffs are to train together as they intend to fight the need is obvious.

Yet different models may be relevant to the missions and theater realities of geographic and functional unified commands and driven by the personal preferences of their commanders. This is reasonable and manageable; policy guidance and doctrine need not be so inflexible as to preclude distinct approaches to similar (but not identical) requirements. Enough contemporary experience with contingency planning and execution has been gained for commanders to determine where joint staff augmentation is likely to be required in their theaters, particularly in military operations other than war, and to permit them to organize and train accordingly.

There may be commands in which formation of JRUs is neither required nor desirable, but that is becoming less common. Reserve augmentation of joint task forces has been used with great success during the Persian Gulf War, Haiti, Somalia, Bosnia, and other operations. Organizing Reserves into joint headquarters units allows commanders to train, observe, and access them as known quantities. Increasingly, as Reserves become a valuable source of manpower for routine tasks where reductions make staff workloads excessive, effective management by JRU leadership can supplement joint staffs and also improve joint education and training for Reservists.



1<sup>st</sup> Combat Camera Squadron (Greg L. Davis)

South Dakota and Iowa Air National Guard fighter aircraft.

One could argue that JRUs are uncalled for if the Reserve components are providing trained personnel to unified commands. But what the Goldwater-Nichols Act sought to encourage—synergy among those who work and train together in a joint environment—cannot be achieved easily if Reservists are assigned and administered as service contributions to individual directorates rather than members of joint commands. One advantage of JRUs is that they provide an efficient mechanism for accomplishing joint training through and on the joint command level, relieving the pressure on individual services to provide joint training to those assigned to joint commands.

A recent DOD directive specifically outlined training readiness oversight responsibilities of commanders of combatant commands to include specific authority to:

- provide guidance to service component commanders on operational requirements and priorities to be addressed in military department training and readiness programs
- comment on service component program recommendations and budget requests
- coordinate and approve participation by assigned [Reserve component] forces in joint exercises and other joint training
- obtain and review readiness and inspection reports on assigned [Reserve] forces
- coordinate and review mobilization plans (including post-mobilization training and activities and deployability validation procedures) developed for assigned [Reserve] forces.

The expansion of the authority and responsibility for Reserve training and readiness on the part of unified commanders will undoubtedly result in their increased involvement in a number of Reserve component issues. Integrating Reservists into the joint arena is a major step toward actual seamless integration of the total force. The advent of JRUs portends improved mutual training and

interoperability between the active and Reserve components, facilitating joint operations on the unified command level. In this regard, these units represent a valuable vehicle for moving toward a real total force—which constitutes a genuine evolution in military affairs. **JFQ**

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Specialized* joint denotes multiservice, multidimensional, multifunctional operations driven by a common operational objective. *Synergistic* joint means common, mutually supporting doctrine orchestrated for a common tactical objective. *Coherent* joint describes common tactical and operational objectives within natural service rhythms and cycles. See John J. Sheehan, “Next Steps in Joint Force Integration,” *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 13 (Autumn 1996), p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> The concept of seamless integration is driving many initiatives on every level of military organization. The RAND Corporation conducted a study in 1996 for the Commission on Roles and Missions entitled “Greater Integration and Cooperation Is Required Between Active and Reserve Components” which recommended changes, both cosmetic and substantive, that will undoubtedly resurface in debates over Reserve policy in the next decade.

<sup>3</sup> The Secretary of the Navy issued instruction 1001.37A (April 8, 1997) which explicitly includes peacetime contributory support to the missions of the Naval Reserve in recognition of the shift in Reserve force utilization since the Cold War.

<sup>4</sup> George A. Joulwan, “Reserve Component Campaign Plan, ROA,” *National Security Report* (October 1996), p. 23.