

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
PRESENTATION TO THE COMMISSION  
ON THE NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVES

SUBJECT: AIR FORCE RESERVE SENIOR ENLISTED ADVISOR  
PERSPECTIVE

STATEMENT OF: CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT JACKSON A. WINSETT  
COMMAND CHIEF, AIR FORCE RESERVE COMMAND

15 June 2006

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED  
BY THE COMMISSION ON THE NATIONAL GUARD  
AND RESERVES

Chairman Punaro, and distinguished members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today. I want to thank you for taking the time to collect the thought and impressions of the Senior Enlisted members of our nations' Reserve Components. I am proud to appear before you today representing the nearly fifty-nine thousand enlisted men and women of our United States Air Force Reserve.

Our enlisted force is as dedicated as I have ever seen. They are dedicated to their country, their families, and their employers. They sacrifice more today than ever before. For that we owe them a debt of gratitude. It is for these dedicated individuals that I stand before you today to address the issues near and dear to their hearts.

### **Roles and Missions**

The mission of the Air Force Reserve is to provide Citizen Airmen to defend the United States and protect its interest through air and space power. I am proud of the fact that our Reservists contribute directly to the warfighting effort every single day. Air Force Reserve accomplishments since 11 September 2001 clearly demonstrate that the Air Force Reserve is a critical component in the security of our nation and a vital member of the Total Force team. The Air Force Reserve has made major contributions to the "long war" with more than 80,000 sorties, and 360,000 flying hours flown in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle. These contingency support missions include fighter support, Combat Search and Rescue, Special

Operations, Aerial Refueling and Tactical and Strategic Airlift. These missions mirror, and are in conjunction with, Total Force operations. This past year, C-130 and C-17 aircraft flew the majority of Air Force Reserve missions in the AOR. As you may know, 61% of the Air Force's C-130 aircraft are assigned to the Air Reserve Components. Senator Lindsey Graham witnessed the preponderance of Reserve Component airlift first hand and mentioned this during the Commission's first hearing back in March. Senator Graham stated that of the 20 sorties he flew in the OEF and OIF area of responsibility, only one sortie was flown by an active duty crew!

The Air Force Reserve began the transition from a strategic reserve to a daily operational warfighting partner back in 1968, with the inception of the Associate Program. The Classic Associate Program provides trained crews and maintenance personnel for Regular component owned aircraft and space operations. The success of this program has occurred through the active and reserve component working side by side to achieve a common objective. Today, we share in most Air Force mission areas.

Our Airmen are involved in meaningful participation, engaged in operations that employ their skills and training. From a single squadron association in 1968 on the C-141, today's reservists provide associate aircrews flying the C-5, C-17, KC-10, KC-135, T-1, T-6, T-37, T-38, AT-38, F-15, F-16, MC-130E/P, E-3, Predator, and Global Hawk aircraft. Reserve associate crews account for nearly 35 percent of the Air Force's C-5 aircrew capability and 43 percent of KC-10 aircrew capability. The Air Force Reserve also accounts for 34

percent of C-17 aircrews. Reserve associate units also provide aircraft maintenance personnel to maintain the Regular Component aircraft. The Air Force Reserve Command provides up to 44 percent of C-5 maintenance manpower capability and 37 percent of the KC-10 maintenance manpower capability.

Space associate units operate Defense Meteorological Satellite Program (DMSP), Defense Support Program (DSP), Space-Based Infrared System (SBIRS), and Global Positioning System (GPS) assets. Space units also conduct Command, Control, Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance (C2ISR), aggressor, test, network security, force protection, and Air and Space Operations Center (AOC) activities.

In spite of all these associations, the AFR still conducts several unique missions. The 403 Wing at Keesler Air Force Base, MS, provides 100 percent of the DoD weather reconnaissance capability and the 910 Airlift Wing (AW) at Youngstown Air Reserve Station, OH, is the only fixed wing aerial spray unit in the country. The 302 AW along with our Guard partners provide 100 percent of the DoD Airborne Fire Fighting support to the U.S. Forest Service. Additionally, the 920 Rescue Wing at Patrick AFB, FL, provides primary rescue support for NASA space shuttle missions, launch support for the Eastern Missile Range at Cape Kennedy and assists drug enforcement agencies in counter-drug operations.

The Air Force Reserve will continue to transform into a full spectrum force for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century by integrating across all roles and missions throughout the

Air, Space and Cyberspace domains. Integrating our force ensures the Air Force Reserve is ready to perform tomorrow's missions today. Bringing Air Force front line weapon systems to the Reserve allows force unification at both the strategic and tactical levels. Indeed, we are a unified Total Force.

Future mission considerations into new and emerging missions must be consistent with Reserve participation. Reachback capabilities enable Reserve forces to train for and execute operational missions supporting the Combatant Commander from home station. In many cases, this eliminates the need for deployments. The Associate Unit construct will see growth in emerging operational missions such as: Unmanned Aerial Systems, Space and Information Operations, Warfighting Headquarters, Air Operations Centers, Battlefield Airmen, Red Horse Units and Contingency Response Groups. The Active/Air Reserve Components mix must keep pace with emerging missions to allow the Air Force to continue operating seamlessly as a Total Force. This concurrent development will provide greater efficiency in peacetime and increased capability in wartime.

Today's Air Force Reserve is designed, structured, missioned, and resourced to conduct operational missions on a continuous basis, assuming full-time roles and functions, while retaining an inherent surge capability. Whether it's our airlifters or fighter aircraft in Iraq, rescue crews, aero meds or weather reconnaissance folks during a hurricane, or all the reachback missions flying satellites, predators or intel, a portion of our force is mission-tasked and engaged at all times. We are an indispensable part of defending this nation.

## **Homeland Contingency Support**

The engagement of our Air Force Reserve in the Homeland Security mission provides for air and space forces in defending the homeland with federally directed support to local civilian authorities for national and natural disasters as well as national security special events. The Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard and Regular Component, each brings special capabilities and expertise to the Homeland Security mission. Our recent humanitarian efforts are as impressive as our wartime operations. The hurricane strikes to the coastal United States in 2005 required a response unlike anything seen in our modern history. The Air Force Reserve was fully engaged in emergency efforts; from collecting weather intelligence on the storms, to search and rescue, and aeromedical and evacuation airlift. Hurricanes Katrina, Ophelia, Rita and Wilma drew heavily on the expert resources of our component to assist in relief efforts. Almost 1500 Air Force Reserve personnel responded to these efforts within 24 hours, including members from the 926<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing at NAS New Orleans, Louisiana and the 403<sup>rd</sup> Wing at Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi who struggled to protect their unit's resources from storm damage. The Hurricane Hunters from Keesler flew 59 sorties with their new WC-130J aircraft into the eye of hurricanes and tropical storms in 2005, though their own homes were being threatened and in many cases, destroyed. The 920<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing, the first unit on the scene, flew more than 100 sorties in their HH-60G helicopters, recovering 1,044 people who were threatened by the rising water.

## Our People: Mobilization

As these tremendous efforts clearly demonstrate, the backbone of the Air Force Reserve is our people because they enable our mission accomplishment. The Air Force Reserve has begun to rely more heavily on volunteerism versus significant additional mobilization to meet the continuing Air Force requirements since 11 September 2001. There are several critical operational units and military functional areas that must have volunteers to meet ongoing mission requirements because they are near the 24-month Presidential Partial Mobilization Authority. These include C-130, MC-130, B-52, HH-60, HC-130, E-3 AWACS, and Security Forces. During CY2005, the Air Force Reserve had 6,453 members **mobilized** and another 3,296 **volunteers** who served in lieu of mobilization to support GWOT. At the beginning of June 2006, the Air Force Reserve had 1,351 Reservists **mobilized and deployed** for contingency operations and 3,141 **volunteers** serving full-time to meet contingency requirements. We expect this mix to become increasingly volunteer-based as this "Long War" continues.

The key to increasing volunteerism, and enabling us to bring more to the fight, is flexibility. The Air Force Reserve has several on-going initiatives to better match volunteers and skill sets to the combatant commanders' mission requirements. For example, the Integrated Process Team we chartered to improve our volunteer process recently developed a prototype web-based tool. It gives the reservist the ability to see all the positions validated for combatant commanders and allows the AF Reserve to see all qualified volunteers for

placement. The core capability to always match the **right** person to the **right** job at the **right** time is a tool that has always worked for the Air Force Reserve.

Another important aspect of volunteerism is predictability allows more advanced planning, lessens disruptions, and ultimately, enables more volunteer opportunities.

### **Our People: Demobilization**

A critical issue we are continuing to work through with regard to demobilization is the difficulty of providing financial and medical assistance to a member should there be medical issues that possibly relate back to the original mobilization. For a Reserve Component member tracing back to the cause ends up being the member's responsibility because medical records are fragmented between military and civilian physicians and between places of duty. If the diagnosis is a disqualifying condition with a 4T physical profile, the member must be processed through the Disability Evaluation System. The question then becomes, should the member be authorized prior year Military Personnel Appropriations funding for medical orders to cover the timeframe between demobilization and the present disqualifying diagnosis.

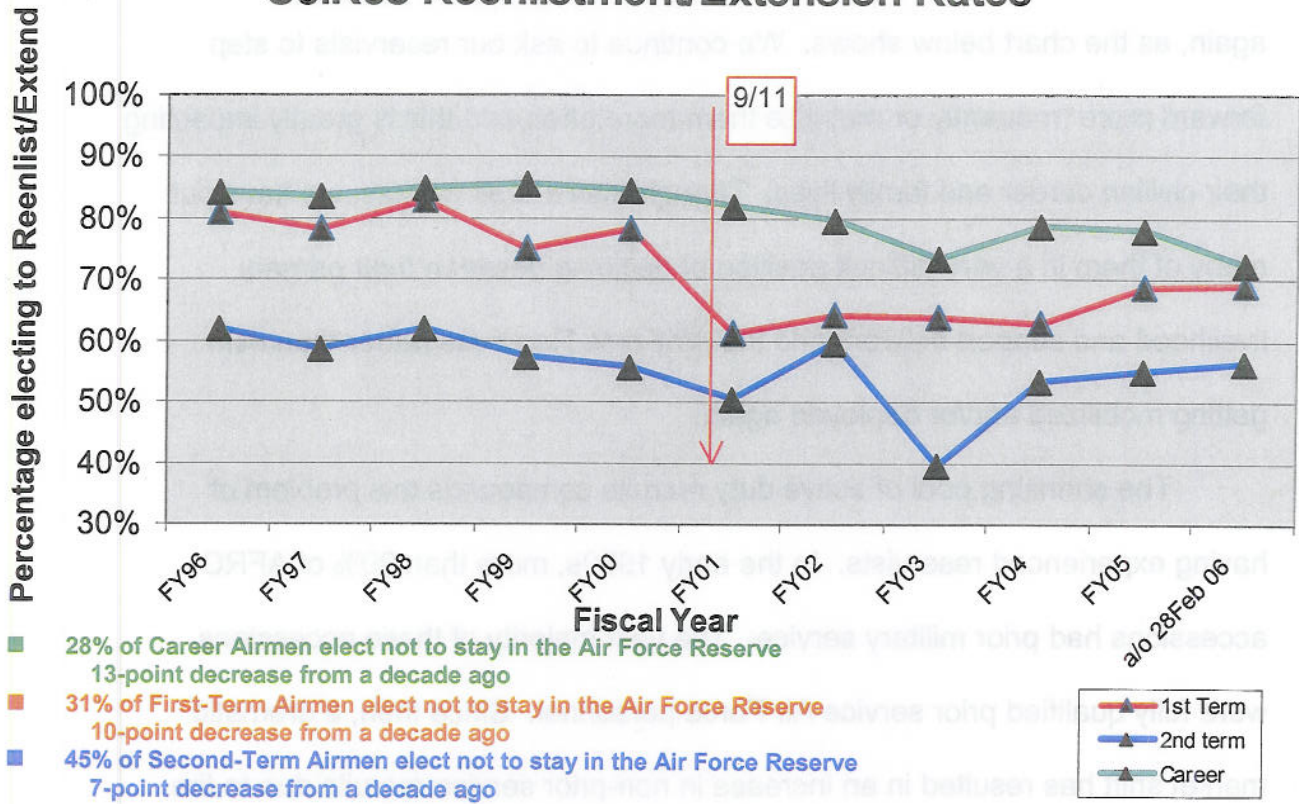
Another important concern is the ability to retain those personnel who have been mobilized for and/or volunteered to support contingencies since September 11, 2006. While our Air Force Reserve recruiting and retention have met our overall AFRC targets during the last 5 years, we are encountering a trend where our levels of expertise are diminishing due to more of our



experienced personnel electing to retire or discontinue their reserve service, after completing a mobilization or volunteer rotation rather than possibly be called up again, as the chart below shows. We continue to ask our reservists to step forward more frequently or mobilize them more often and this is greatly impacting their civilian career and family lives. Though they are all patriots, we have put many of them in a very difficult position of deciding between their primary livelihood and support network and the Air Force Reserves rather than risk getting mobilized and/or deployed again.

The shrinking pool of active duty recruits compounds this problem of having experienced reservists. In the early 1990s, more than 90% of AFRC accessions had prior military service. The vast majority of these accessions were fully qualified prior service Air Force personnel. Since then, a dramatic market shift has resulted in an increase in non-prior service recruits due to the declining prior service pools. Projected new accessions to the AFRC will be 45% prior service AF, 20% prior service other, and 35% non-prior service, of which 65% of new accessions will require retraining.

## SelfRes Reenlistment/Extension Rates



### Readiness and Equipment

We in the Air Force Reserve pride ourselves on our ability to respond to any global crisis within 72 hours. In many cases, including our response to the devastation during the hurricane season, we are able to respond within 24 hours. We train to the same standards as the active duty for a reason. We are one Air Force in the same fight. With a single level of readiness, we are able to seamlessly operate side-by-side with the Regular Air Force and Air National

Guard in the full spectrum of combat operations. As an equal partner in day-to-day combat operations, it is critical we remain ready, resourced, and relevant.

Equipment modernization is our lifeline to readiness. As the Air Force transitions to a capabilities-based force structure, the combination of aging and heavily used equipment requires across-the-board recapitalization. The United States military has become increasingly dependent on the Reserve to conduct operational and support missions around the globe. Effective modernization of Reserve assets is vital to remaining a relevant and capable combat ready force. While the Air Force recognizes this fact and has made significant improvement in modernizing and equipping the Reserve, the reality of fiscal constraints still results in shortfalls in our modernization and equipage. Funding our modernization enhances availability, reliability, maintainability, and sustainability of aircraft weapon systems; strengthening our ability to ensure the success of our warfighting commanders and laying the foundation for tomorrow's readiness.

Absent funding for a Reserve procurement account, the Reserve relies heavily upon the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account (NGREA). NGREA resolves some of these AFR equipment deficiencies. The items we purchase with NGREA are prioritized from the airmen in the field up to the Air Force Reserve Command Headquarters and vetted through the Air Staff. The cornerstone is innovation and the foundation is capabilities-based and has been for many years.

During steady state peacetime operations we are able to keep our personnel trained and ready at all times. However, due to the Global War on

Terrorism and corresponding steady state operational participation we face today, it is a challenge to keep our reservists fully qualified. Upon their return from deployment, we incur "personnel reconstitution costs" in order to get them trained to the required skill levels, which keep them operationally ready to participate when called.

### **Funding**

The Air Force Reserve is part of the Air Force process for establishing funding requirements within the President's Budget. In order to meet current and future missions it is important for the Air Force Reserve to be funded at levels stated in the President's Budget. The biggest challenge for the Reserve Components (RC) in the past few years has been how to cope with constrained budgets and reductions taken by Congress. Shortfalls are over \$100M per year from FY04 through FY08. Most particular has been the impact of school and special training funding shortfalls. The accounts represented in these areas pay for skill development and on-the-job training necessary to attain proficiency, qualification, certification and task currency as well as progression from one skill level to the next. Without training Reserve Component members cannot attain the skills necessary to meet active duty operational requirements. As of March 06, approximately 43 percent, not quite half of the enlisted population of 58,576, and 2,200 officers out of 16,000 are less than fully qualified

In the past the issue of training dollars was at a much lower level of requirement because of the number of prior service that came from active duty

into the reserves. Since FY1999 non-prior service has increased substantially as prior service accessions have decreased. Current figures show an increase in prior service by 8,670 from FY2002 to FY2006. The ripple effect is that more of the force is in training and fewer members are available at any one time to provide operational support. Additionally, aggregate costs of training have risen steadily as has the training backlog.

These shortfalls are further exacerbated when you take into account the following:

- Reconstitution training after mobilization has risen
- Airframe and weapon systems conversion and modernization training must be met in response to force shaping
- Increased accession training or retraining increases during a BRAC to cover losses when personnel don't transfer
- Specialty code training changes due to consolidations has increased training requirements

The Air Force Reserve has met the most critical needs through reprogramming to offset shortfalls but the result of that action is the problem moves from one area to another. Under-execution/cost avoidance reductions and accession of substantial numbers of non-prior service personnel have seriously impacted Air Force Reserve ability to fund upgrade and conversion training, qualification, certification and task currency activities, as well as ensure personnel are able to progress from one skill level to the next. The AFR training backlog is substantial and growing.

## **Compensation and Benefits**

The Department of Defense (DoD) has been able to use sustained operations in Iraq and Afghanistan for identifying compensation and benefit changes needed for long-term active duty tours. For example, the past years have seen several legislative changes in the National Defense Authorization Act:

- Enhanced Retention of Accumulated Leave for High-Deployment Members
- Eligibility for Dependents of Certain Mobilized Reservists Stationed Overseas to Attend Defense Dependents Schools Overseas
- Payment of Selected Reserve Reenlistment Bonus to Members of Selected Reserve Who Are Mobilized
- Payment of Lodging Expenses of Members During Authorized Leave From Temporary Duty Location

Increases have been given in many areas such as hostile fire pay, family separation, hazardous duty pay, and imminent danger pay. These were done in recognition that sustained operations put a special burden on families as they cope with losses of pay, reduced partner support, school changes, and in some instances complete changes of residences.

In response to the amount of time RC members were spending on mobilization the Montgomery GI Bill for the Selected Reserve maximum period that a member of the Selected Reserve could use educational benefits was extended from 10 to 14 years.

Congress has especially been concerned with enabling TRICARE for Guard and Reserve members along with their families and several provisions were passed over the years.

- Continued TRICARE Eligibility of Dependents Residing at Remote Locations after Departure of Sponsors for Unaccompanied Assignments and Eligibility of Dependents of Reserve Component Members Ordered to Active Duty
- Medical and Dental Screening for Ready Reserve Members Alerted for Mobilization
- Extension of Transitional Health Care Benefits
- TRICARE Beneficiary Counseling and Assistance Coordinators for Reserve Component Beneficiaries

These are just a few of the changes made by the Department of Defense and Congress to reduce the differences between regular and reserve components when providing operational support.

How benefits and compensation figure in increasing operational support by the Guard and Reserve is an issue being looked at now as the services morph from mobilization to volunteerism. It would be an easy answer to look at increasing benefits and compensation but the first step must be a review of what legislative tools are already in place that would enable increased volunteerism. Some of these provisions may need no changes and some may need minor changes. It is important to remember that the Reserve Components have been

providing operational support for some time so the question at this point is what the impact is when that support increases significantly.

**Closing**

I, along with the enlisted men and women of the Air Force Reserve, thank you for the opportunity to share the concerns of our citizen airmen with you today. We proudly profess that we are "One Air Force....same fight." We pride ourselves in being a ready force and an "Unrivaled Wingman" in the Total Force. I look forward to your questions.