



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
RESERVE FORCES POLICY BOARD

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SEP 30 2015

CHAIRMAN

INFO MEMO

FOR: SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

DepSec Action _____

FROM: MajGen Arnold L. Punaro, USMC (Ret), Chairman, Reserve Forces Policy Board

SUBJECT: Report of the Reserve Forces Policy Board on the Need for Improvements in the Individual Ready Reserve

- The Reserve Forces Policy Board (RFPB) is a federal advisory committee established in law to provide you with independent advice and recommendations on strategies, policies and practices designed to improve and enhance the capabilities, efficiency, and effectiveness of the reserve components.
- The RFPB met on September 2, 2015 and voted to recommend the Department establish a Joint Working Group to conduct a comprehensive review and pursue policy and legislative changes to improve the efficiency and relevance of the Individual Ready Reserve.
- As we continue to navigate a period of declining budgets and reduced force structure while simultaneously dealing with increasing personnel costs and instability around the world, your "Force of the Future" recognizes new approaches in personnel management are necessary to maintain an effective fighting force. During this period, critical capabilities that reside in the Reserve Components, which come at reduced cost to DoD, should be increasingly relied upon. We must also take this opportunity to reform the Total Force by realizing needed reforms in the reserves as well as the Active Component (AC). One place to start is with the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR). The IRR contains trained and talented manpower and has suffered for years from neglect and inefficient management. As the active force gets smaller, according to current budget plans, the IRR will increase in size and importance (many of those leaving will have remaining Military Service Obligations and be placed in the IRR) as efficient use of all available talent will be critical.
- The IRR contains a manpower pool of previously trained personnel with and without remaining service obligations. It includes individuals with highly technical skills (e.g. cyber) and very expensive sunk training costs. Members of the IRR are not obligated to drill and are generally not paid. However, they can volunteer for training or active duty assignments, and they can be involuntarily mobilized for Full or Partial Mobilizations as well as for Disaster Response, as was the case during certain phases of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. There is no IRR in the Army National Guard or the Air National Guard but the Army Guard does contain a similar category called the Inactive National Guard (ING).
- IRR/ING manning has declined from 800,000 service members in 1993 to just under 273,000 today, and comprises nearly 25 percent of the Ready Reserve. Reserve Component (RC)

members not assigned to Selected Reserve units, Individual Mobilization Augmentee positions, Active Guard and Reserve duty, the Standby Reserve, the Retired Reserve, or on extended active duty, will be placed in the IRR or ING. This includes:

- Members separating from Active Duty (AD) or leaving the Selected Reserve with a remaining Military Service Obligation or other commitment to serve in the Ready Reserve but not placed into or designated as a member of the Selected Reserve
 - Members without prior service awaiting training before beginning service in a regular component or the Selected Reserve
 - Members in the delayed entry program
 - Members awaiting basic military training before beginning service in the Selected Reserve who are not authorized to attend inactive duty training (IDT)
 - Certain personnel participating in officer training programs, such as chaplain candidates and participants in the Armed Forces Health Professions Financial Assistance Programs
 - Members leaving Selected Reserve or AD status who are eligible for and desire to maintain or obtain status as a member of the Ready Reserve
- The RFPB's Subcommittee on Supporting and Sustaining Reserve Component Personnel took an in-depth look at the Services' IRR programs to gain a better understanding of longstanding issues in managing the IRR. What was found is not new. The IRR is difficult to manage (for a variety of reasons); access is a cumbersome and lengthy process; and there is no central strategy in regard to best utilization of the IRR's skilled manpower.
 - The IRR is difficult to manage. Managing the IRR efficiently is an enduring problem and all components experience significant screening and tracking issues of IRR personnel. Accurate data bases are difficult to maintain due to outdated technology and lack of frequent contact with members. Physical musters are often not mandatory and cost-prohibitive, leading to increased use of "virtual" mustering or "snail mail" as the primary means of keeping contact and updating member information. IT systems are not interconnected with other agencies (such as the IRS), who could assist in locating members when services lose contact. These systems also contribute to delays in transitioning from other components into the IRR. Difficulty in assessing, screening, and tracking of personnel often leads to issues filling contingency requirements because of poor awareness of force readiness. Numerous members are required for call-up to source a single set of orders (sometimes as many as eight to ten notifications for every one set filled) as many are unable to execute orders due to medical issues, poor physical fitness, inability to locate, or other disqualifiers. Members who are difficult to find are also hard to train and often lose qualifications. In addition, most IRR members who desire to train are not issued Common Access Cards (CAC) which are required to complete training which is increasingly done on-line.
 - Access is a cumbersome and lengthy process. Members of the IRR are difficult to access. For example, mobilizing an IRR member for service in a deploying National Guard unit often took between 120-150 days to accomplish. Lengthy and cumbersome processes lead to members being out of sync with their units and may deter the Services from using their IRR personnel when they might otherwise be able to reduce strain on the force. Since 2001, neither the Air Force nor the Navy significantly accessed their IRR populations. The IRR

comprises half of the Navy's Ready Reserve but fewer than 100 members were mobilized and all were volunteers who filled admin-oriented billets. During this same period, the Navy uprooted thousands of AD personnel from their normal career fields to use as Individual Augmentees in Iraq, Afghanistan and other locations. The Air Force, who had mobilized 1,133 IRR members for Desert Shield/Storm (with less than 7 days notice), mobilized none for Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Noble Eagle. The US Coast Guard, while boasting a very small IRR of just under 1,500 personnel, has never involuntarily mobilized IRR members and is currently cutting nearly 70 percent of their manpower pool for lack of participation. While the Army and Marines have done much better, mobilizing nearly 30,000 members between them, the Army activated less than 4 percent while the Marines used just over 10 percent of their IRR members since 2001.

- There is no central strategy in regard to best utilization of the IRR's skilled manpower. As the Department strives to meet our defense strategy and global force requirements while also becoming more efficient, consideration and integration of the IRR as part of the Total Force Solution has not been a priority of the Services or the Department. The Nation has invested heavily in the capabilities and readiness of the Reserves over the last 15 years but prioritization of reduced resources, cancellation of the OSD-sponsored IRR conference in 2011, and recent organizational changes in OSD reduce oversight and priority of the Reserves as a whole during a time we must leverage every available resource, to include the skilled personnel residing in the IRR.
- The RFPB recommends the Department establish a Joint Working Group comprised of subject matter experts from each of the Services, the Reserve Components and OSD to gather best practices, seek quick wins and explore alternative management structures and methods to improve efficiency and enable more effective use of the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) in support of the Total Force. OSD should then develop policies and legislative proposals aimed at implementing these changes and improving the effectiveness of the IRR.
- Innovation in IRR management will contribute to SECDEF's current initiative to build a Force of the Future with reduced personnel system inefficiencies and increased career opportunities while attracting and retaining the best and brightest in military service. Potential change areas for research and consideration should include but are not limited to:
 - Re-establishing the OSD-sponsored, annual IRR Conference. Reviving this conference, even if required to use Information Technology (e.g. Visual Teleconference), would enable better sharing of best practices and policy ideas and potentially be the best tool to ensure an effective IRR moving forward. In the past, this annual 2-3 day conference was attended by senior leaders from each service and provided an in-depth review of IRR management, utilization and strategic focus. Participants employed working groups to develop recommendations for the Services and the Department aimed at improving the overall management and relevance of the IRR. The conference was discontinued in 2011 due to budget reductions. As a result, there has been little coordination between the Services and OSD regarding best practices and policies for IRR management.
 - Expanded use of the IRR as a Continuum of Service option for members of the Selected Reserve as well as AD members. Currently, the Navy and Air Force use the IRR for their

Career Intermission Pilot Programs which provides a sabbatical for AD members for up to three years. Forty personnel in each service may participate in this competitive program but not all Services embrace the program equally. The Navy is requesting an expansion from Congress to 400 members in an effort to retain more skilled personnel and provide greater choice in career options. Expansion to include reservists would further assist in retaining critical skills and increased return on investment.

- Transferring IRR management responsibilities and resources to their respective Reserve Components. This would place the readiness and management of the IRR in the hands of those who know them best. However, conflicts over control of resources are likely.
- Affiliation of IRR personnel with Selected Reserve (SELRES) units. Affiliation of members with actual units could improve screening and accountability, training and readiness, increase participation opportunities and provide predictability for members and units during unit mobilizations and deployments.
- Providing TRICARE Reserve Select coverage to IRR members. This could incentivize continued service of Selected Reserve members who might otherwise depart the service altogether. Currently IRR members are not eligible for this optional coverage. This would also assist the Department in reaching its goal of insurance coverage for all service members.
- Providing incentives to IRR members to maintain current screening and contact information, immunizations, physical fitness, etc. By law, members attending muster duty in person are only entitled to a fixed per diem amount as compensation to cover travel, subsistence and other special costs associated with absence from home, but they are not entitled to IDT compensation or given credit toward retirement pay. While some additional cost could be incurred by the Services, changes to these laws could encourage increased participation in muster duty and aid in member screening, readiness, and efficient administration of the IRR. Also, the Marine Corps currently conducts physical “mega musters” (in addition to smaller events) throughout the country that provide career training and other member services such as medical screenings, information on VA entitlements & benefits, IRR opportunities & responsibilities, Veteran support organizations, education, and available employment opportunities. While other services are trending toward virtual musters because of budget constraints, maximizing use of physical muster events are beneficial to IRR members and increase screening and tracking efficiency which improves member readiness and accessibility.
- Improving member access to virtual muster and distance learning sites through development of a CAC card substitute and mobile device compatibility for accomplishment of on-line training and member screening. Most IRR members are not issued CAC cards since they are not entitled to many of the benefits associated with SELRES members. However, the primary method of training IRR members is through on-line courses that require secure access which is only provided through use of CAC cards. Without a CAC substitute or some other solution, member training and readiness will continue to suffer, frustrating members and the Services alike.
- Updating and improving IT systems and data sharing to improve information flow between components/agencies. This would allow for easier transfer of personnel into the IRR and reduce redundant information collection requirements, medical screenings, etc. Numerous inefficiencies and difficulties in assessing personnel occur because of outdated systems which lack data sharing capabilities between Services, Components or Agencies.

- Mandating and maximizing the collection of civilian skills information to enable better decision making while sourcing current and future requirements, in and across services. There is an acknowledged need by the services for easier methods of identifying members with specialized skillsets as well as requirements development of specific skills needed by the services.
 - Reviewing mobilization laws and policies for potential improvements that would improve access to IRR personnel to support mission requirements in peace time as well as contingencies.
 - Allowing IRR members increased ability to freeze promotion or high-year tenure (HYT) clocks for improved career flexibility without penalty. In the last year, the Navy began imposing HYT caps on its IRR sailors who, per regulations, cannot advance in rank while in the active service pool (these members do not drill or get paid and can earn retirement points only). While having the benefit of trimming the force and reducing the number of future retirees, this policy and others like it, imposes “up-or-out” standards on trained personnel who could still provide value. Members most affected are junior enlisted sailors and the only way for many to avoid discharge is to join a Voluntary Training Unit or become a SELRES in hopes of promotion. If service limitations (many are forced into the IRR because they can no longer drill as a SELRES) or other life commitments prevent them from doing that, they are forced out.
 - Lessons learned and best practices from other allied and partner nations regarding past and most efficient use of their IRR personnel. A practice that would have some utility and is used by the United Kingdom is called the Sponsored Reserve. Under this concept, a service normally provided in peacetime by contractors, would also be provided by the contractor’s workforce during operations. Contractors providing operational support would be reservists activated as part of a reserve unit supporting contingencies.
- The United States Marine Corps has commissioned the Center of Naval Analysis (CNA) to conduct a study titled “Managing the Individual Ready Reserve.” The study is estimated for completion in February 2016. The RFPB also recommends the Department monitor the progress and review the results of this study for applicable policy and legislative changes that could reform the IRR across all services.
 - As required by the Federal Advisory Committee Act, the recommendations were deliberated and approved in an open, public session. The briefing presented to and approved by the Board [TAB A] will be posted to the RFPB web site. Background information about the RFPB is at TAB B.

COORDINATION: NONE

Attachment(s): As stated

Prepared by: CAPT Jay Gagne, 703-681-0600

TAB A



***Subcommittee on Supporting and Sustaining Reserve
Component Personnel***

As approved by RFPB – 2 September 2015

***RADM Brian LaRoche, USN
Subcommittee Member***



***Subcommittee on Supporting and Sustaining Reserve
Component Personnel***

***RADM Brian LaRoche, USN
Subcommittee Member***



Subcommittee Review of IRR Programs



The Personnel Subcommittee conducted in-depth review of Services' IRR programs to gain an understanding of longstanding issues in managing the IRR

- Met with numerous Reps/SMEs from the Services, RCs and OSD
- Purpose:
 - Learn how each component manages it's IRR
 - Identify potential areas for policy and legislative improvements
- Findings
 - The IRR is (still) difficult to manage; access is a cumbersome and lengthy process; and there is no central strategy in regard to best utilization of the IRR's skilled manpower



Draft Recommendation for RFPB Consideration, 2 Sept 2015



Recommend the Department establish a Joint Working Group to conduct a comprehensive review and pursue policy and legislative changes to improve the efficiency and relevance of the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR)

The RFPB also recommends the Department monitor the USMC's CNA study titled "Managing the Individual Ready Reserve", estimated for completion in February 2016



Recommendation - General



- Joint Working Group should be comprised of subject matter experts from each of the Services, the Reserve Components and OSD
- Should seek quick wins and explore alternative management structures and methods to:
 - Improve program efficiency and more effectively use the IRR in support of the Total Force
- OSD should implement changes through policy and legislative proposals

Innovation in IRR management will contribute to SECDEF's current initiative to build a Force of the Future



Working Group Focus Areas



Potential change areas for research and consideration should include:

- Re-establishing OSD-Sponsored annual IRR Conference
- Expanded use of IRR as a Continuum of Service Option for SELRES
- Transferring IRR management responsibilities and resources to their respective Reserve Components
- Affiliation of IRR personnel with Selected Reserve (SELRES) units
- Providing TRICARE Reserve Select coverage to IRR members
- Improving member access to virtual muster and distance learning sites with a CAC card substitute and mobile device compatibility
- Updating and improving IT systems and data sharing to improve information flow



Focus Areas cont...



Potential change areas for research and consideration should include:

- Providing incentives to IRR members to maintain current screening and contact information, immunizations, physical fitness, etc.
- Mandating and maximizing the collection of civilian skills information to enable better decision making while sourcing requirements
- Reviewing mobilization laws and policies for potential improvements that would improve access to IRR personnel to support mission requirements
- Allowing IRR members increased ability to freeze promotion or high-year tenure (HYT) clocks for improved career flexibility without penalty
- Lessons learned and best practices from other allied and partner nations regarding past and most efficient use of their IRR



Questions?

***Rear Admiral Brian LaRoche, USN
Subcommittee Member***

TAB B

The Reserve Forces Policy Board – Basic Overview

The Reserve Forces Policy Board (RFPB) is a federal advisory committee mandated by law in the Office of the Secretary of Defense to "serve as an independent adviser to the Secretary of Defense to provide advice and recommendations to the Secretary on strategies, policies, and practices designed to improve and enhance the capabilities, efficiency, and effectiveness of the reserve components." As required by statute, the board also produces an annual report which the Secretary of Defense transmits to the President and Congress on reserve component matters the board considers appropriate to include in the report.

The board consists of 20 members; a civilian chairman, a general/flag officer from each of the seven reserve components, a two-star military executive, a senior enlisted advisor, plus ten other U.S. citizens, who may or may not be government employees, with significant knowledge of and experience in policy matters relevant to national security and reserve component matters.

The board is supported by a staff consisting of a Colonel or Navy Captain from each of the six DoD reserve components. There is also a Coast Guard staff officer. These officers also serve as liaisons between their respective components and the board. The law requires them "to perform their staff and liaison duties under the supervision of the military executive officer of the board in an independent manner reflecting the independent nature of the board."

Established in 1951, the board is one of the oldest advisory committees in the Department of Defense.

In the National Defense Authorization Act of 2011, Congress significantly revised the operating framework and membership of the RFPB. Previously, other than the chairman, the board included only DoD officials and made recommendations through the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. In 2008, the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves recommended that the RFPB's governing statute (10 USC 10301) be amended because the board was not structured to obtain and provide directly to the Secretary of Defense a wide range of independent advice on National Guard and Reserve matters due to the nature of its membership and its subordination to other offices within DoD. The revised law was effective 1 July 2011.

On 12 September 2011, retired Marine Corps Major General Arnold Punaro was sworn in as the first chairman of the board under the revised structure. Other new members were sworn in at an organizational meeting on 13 October.

The board is organized into three subcommittees: Ensuring a Ready, Capable, Available and Sustainable Operational Reserve; Enhancing DoD's Role in the Homeland; and Supporting and Sustaining Reserve Component Personnel. Subcommittees meet as required. The full board meets quarterly. The RFPB website is at <http://rfpb.defense.gov/>.