

United States Air Force



Presentation

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Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces

Army and Air Force National Guard and Reserve Component Equipment Posture

Statement of
Lieutenant General Charles E. Stenner, Jr.
Chief, Air Force Reserve

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Introduction

The 21st Century security environment requires military services that are flexible -- capable of surging, refocusing, and continuously engaging without exhausting their resources and people. The United States Air Force continues to present capabilities in support of joint operations, and the Reserve Component has evolved to the point that we are critical to those operations. In an increasingly limited fiscal environment, Reservists remain efficient and cost-effective solutions to our Nation's challenges.

In this dynamic environment, the Air Force Reserve (AFR) excels. Reserve Airmen support our Nation's needs; providing operational capabilities around the globe. Today, Air Force Reservists are serving in every Area of Responsibility (AOR), and there are approximately 4,300 Air Force Reservists activated to support operational missions. Despite increased operations tempo, aging aircraft and increases in depot-scheduled down time, we have improved fleet aircraft availability and mission capable rates. We have sustained our operational capabilities for nearly twenty years—at a high operations tempo for the past ten. We accomplish this while continuing to provide a cost-effective and combat ready force available for strategic surge or on-going operations.

This year brings continued opportunities. Air Force Reserve Airmen are integrated into a wider variety of missions across the full spectrum of not only inherently Air Force operations, but joint operations as well. The Department of Defense (DoD) continues to seek innovative ways in which to gain greater access to, and leverage the unique experiences and skills of, Reservists. This effort recognizes our Citizen Airmen have talents that have been developed in the Air Force Reserve, but are strengthened in employment with civilian employers.

While we remain focused on the Air Force's five priorities¹, we are also guided by the following Reserve Component-unique focus areas that could be applied to the Total Force and will serve as the basis for this testimony: Force Readiness, Force Rebalance and Force Support.

¹ The Air Force Priorities are: 1) Continue to strengthen the nuclear enterprise; 2) Partner with the Joint and Coalition team to win today's fight; 3) Develop and care for our Airmen and their families; 4) Modernize our air, space, and cyberspace inventories, organizations, and training; and 5) Recapture acquisition excellence.

Overview

The Air Force Reserve is helping to lead the way in improving Air Force capability for Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 and beyond. The FY12 President's Budget Request would fund Air Force Reserve requirements of approximately \$5 billion. It provides for the operation and training of 34 wings, funds 117,769 flying hours, maintains 344 aircraft, and provides for the readiness of 71,400 Reservists and 4,157 civilian employees. Our budget request is about 4% of the total Air Force budget, and includes \$2.27 billion for operations and maintenance for air operations, service support and civilian pay; \$1.7 billion for military personnel; and \$34 million for military construction.

Not only does our FY12 budget request ensure Air Force Reservists are trained and prepared to support Air Force and Combatant Command requirements, but it also demonstrates our commitment to the DoD's focus on efficiencies. Through better business practices, by leveraging new technology, and by streamlining our force management efforts, we identified \$195 million in efficiencies for FY12 alone. With your continued support and assistance in the coming year, we will be focused on rebalancing our force, recapitalizing our equipment and infrastructure, and supporting our Reservists and the balance between their civilian and military lives.

Force Readiness

Reservists continue to play an increasing role in ongoing global operations. This reliance can be seen during surges such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan. Properly equipping the Reserve Components will ensure the Nation continues to have a "Force in Reserve" to meet existing and future challenges.

Air Force Reserve Modernization

A number of trends continue to influence dependence on Air Force Reserve forces to meet the operational and strategic demands of our nation's defense: sustaining operations on five continents and the resulting wear and tear on our aging equipment; increasing competition for defense budget resources; and increasing integration of the three Air Force components.

The Air Force leverages the value of its Reserve Components through association constructs in which units of the three components share equipment and facilities around a common mission. Increasing integration of all three Air Force components requires us to take holistic approach. To ensure our integrated units achieve maximum capability, the precision attack and defensive

equipment the Air Force Reserve employs must be interoperable not only with the Guard and Active Component, but the Joint and Coalition force as well.

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 example, using FY09 NGREA, FY09 OCO and FY10 NGREA funds, the Air Force Reserve responded to a Combatant Commander Urgent Operation Need (UON) related to the capabilities of our A-10 and F-16 fleet. Through acquisition of the Helmet Mounted Integrated Targeting (HMIT) system we were able to enhance our pilots' capability to cue aircraft sensors and weapons well outside the Heads-Up Display (HUD) field of view of their aircraft. This commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) system is a common solution for both the A-10 and F-16 aircraft. Additionally, HMIT incorporates color displays in its system and is compatible with current night vision goggle systems to enhance night time flying capabilities. These capabilities have the potential to increase the situational awareness of our A-10 and F-16 pilots by 400% and to decrease incidents of fratricide caused when pilots move their heads away from their controls to see targets on the ground. Actual purchases are expected to start at the end of FY11 with delivery in FY12.²

Since the start of combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, the majority of our equipment requirements have been aircraft upgrades. These upgrades provide our aircraft with better targeting, self protection and communication capabilities. As legacy aircraft are called upon to support operational missions, the equipment is stressed at a greater rate. As new equipment is identified that will satisfy our capability shortfalls, we begin procurement, normally buying enough assets with "first year" dollars to equip a single unit of aircraft. With subsequent year funding we continue purchasing until our requirements are met. This method of procurement allows the expedient fielding of capabilities to our deploying units, but equipment levels, especially in the first few years of a program's execution, are not at sufficient levels to meet our overall requirements.

In FY08, we modified our requirements process to align with the Air Force Reserve corporate process. This alignment provides total visibility and support for our modernization

² In past years, the Air Force Reserve purchased HC-130 8.33 radios to upgrade 5 AFR HC-130 aircraft. This upgrade allows these aircraft to comply with Certified Navigation System - Air Traffic Management (CNS-ATM), world-wide air traffic rules and requirements. The 8.33 radios also provided a situational awareness datalink that allow crews to better identify "friends" versus "foes" and prevent "friendly fire" incidents. Without this upgrade, the movements of AFRC's HC-130s were limited and in some cases prevented in certain restricted airspace around the globe.

needs from identification of a requirement until it is fully mission capable. The process also incorporates input from our units received through Combat Planning Councils (CPCs). Our unfunded requirements, after being vetted through our corporate process, reside on our Modernization List. Each year we review the list to determine where the best use of the allotted amount of NGREA will make the most impact. Additional supplemental funding has helped in procuring our needed equipment; however, we could almost always use additional funding to help secure our critical equipment needs.

While our requirements are identified and tracked on our Modernization List; the NGREA process does not allow for the programming of these equipment needs. Current levels of NGREA and supplemental funding has allowed the Air Force Reserve to make significant strides in meeting urgent warfighter requirements. This level of funding will be needed in the future as we continue to keep our equipment combat effective and relevant.

Historically, the Air Force Reserve has been a prudent steward of NGREA funding with an average obligation rate of 99.7% prior to funding expiration.³ We are currently involved in a cooperative effort with the Air National Guard and the Active Component's acquisition communities to review our obligation processes and develop improvements to bring our obligation rates more in line with the Department's standards of 80% and 90% in the first and second years of execution. Air Force Reserve NGREA funding of at least \$100 million per year will provide parity and greatly enhance readiness. We truly appreciate and thank this committee for its continued support of this critical program.

Military Construction (MILCON) and Infrastructure Modernization

Along with challenges in modernizing our equipment, we face challenges modernizing our infrastructure. During the FY11 budget formulation, both the Active Component and the Air Force Reserve continued to take risk in military construction and facilities maintenance in order to fund higher priorities. Over time, this assumption of additional risk has resulted in a backlog exceeding \$1 Billion for the Air Force Reserve.

³ From FY1997 to FY2008, Congress provided the Air Force Reserve the following amounts in NGREA funding (associated obligation rates): 1997 - \$39,552,000 (99.05%); 1998 - \$49,168,000 (99.99%); 1999 - \$20,000,000 (100%); 2000 - \$19,845,000 (99.75%); 2001 - \$4,954,000 (99.98%); 2002 - \$75,224,000 (99.88%); 2003 - \$9,800,000 (99.84%); 2004 - \$44,666,000 (99.96%); 2004 - \$39,815,000 (100%); 2006 - \$29,597,000 (99.75%); 2007 - \$34,859,000 (98.67%); and 2008 - \$44,695,000 (99.60%).

The Air Force Reserve's budget request was \$7.8 million in FY11 MILCON funding. This request would fund our highest priority project; the construction of a Weapons Maintenance Facility for the 920th Rescue Wing at Patrick Air Force Base, Florida as well as necessary planning/design and minor construction. In FY12, our budget request of \$34 million will fund the construction of an airfield control tower at March Air Reserve Base, California, and a RED HORSE⁴ readiness and training facility at Charleston Air Force Base, South Carolina. As we continue to work within the fiscal constraints, we will optimize space allocation with increased facility consolidation and demolition. We will continue to mitigate risk where possible to ensure our facilities are modernized and provide a safe and adequate working environment.

Air Force Reserve Manpower

To meet the current needs of the Air Force, the Air Force Reserve will grow to a programmed end strength of 71,200 this year. In the FY12 Budget, we have requested an end strength of 71,400. These manpower increases are placing a premium on recruiting highly qualified and motivated Airmen and providing them with the necessary training. The Air Force Reserve recruiting goal for FY 2011 is 10,480. While we exceeded our highest goal ever of 10,500 new Airmen for FY 2010, with tightening budgets and cuts in advertising, our forecast models indicate we may continue to face challenges in some aspects of the recruiting process.

To provide a single point of entry for accessing Air Force Reserve forces, we recently established a Force Generation Center (FGC). This organization modernizes our force management practices to provide a unified picture of our combat capability, our total support to the Air Force and Combatant Commanders, and provides our customers with a single point of entry with a consistent set of business rules. We now have visibility and accountability of reserve forces in categories where we previously had limited or no real time information. Additionally, the Force Generation Center allows the Air Force Reserve to be more responsive to the needs of individual Reservists, providing them greater predictability while making participation levels more certain. This ultimately provides Combatant Commanders with more operational capability. Collectively, these actions will contribute to the overall health of the Air Force by improving the sustainability and operational capability of the Air Force Reserve required today and tomorrow.

⁴ Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadrons (RED HORSE) provide the Air Force with a highly mobile civil engineering response force to support contingency and special operations worldwide.

A recent survey highlighted the fact that one-in-three Air Force Reservists has volunteered to deploy. Since 9/11, more than 60,500 Air Force Reservists, which equates to 76 percent of our current force, have answered our nation's call and deployed to combat or supported combat operations on active duty orders. We cannot take this high-level of commitment for granted, and must do our best to ensure their continued service is used appropriately and efficiently. Accordingly, these enterprise-wide actions will make Air Force Reservists more accessible and should provide Reservists with a greater sense of satisfaction about their service.

Force Rebalance

Total Force Initiatives are not just a priority for the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard, but the Air Force as a whole. All three components to aggressively examining Air Force core functions for integration and force rebalancing opportunities. This is critical in an environment focused on efficiencies. As weapons systems become increasingly more capable but expensive, their numbers necessarily decrease. Aging platforms are being retired and are not replaced on a one-for-one basis. As a result, the Air Force is required to maintain the same combat capability with a smaller inventory. To this end, we are integrating wherever practical, exploring associations across the Total Force. We have established a wide variety of associate units throughout the Air Force, combining the assets and manpower of all three components to establish units that capitalize on the strengths of each component. There are currently more than 90 Associations across all Air Force mission areas.

The Air Force uses three types of associations to leverage the combined resources and experience levels of all three components: "Classic Associations," "Active Associations," and "Air Reserve Component Associations." Under the "Classic" model a Regular Air Force unit is the host unit and retains primary responsibility for the weapon system, while a Reserve or Guard unit is the tenant. This model has flourished in the strategic and tactical airlift communities for over 40 years. We are also using this model 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 Air Force

Reserve F-22A associate unit. This unit also achieved Initial Operating Capability in 2008 and will eventually grow into a two-squadron association.

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 932nd Airlift Wing is the first ever Operational Support Airlift Wing in the Air Force Reserve with 3 C-9Cs and 3 C-40s. To better utilize the fleet at the 932nd, the Air Force created an Active Association of the C-40s.

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

Associations are not simply about sharing equipment; they enhance combat capability and increase force-wide efficiency by leveraging the resources and strengths of the Regular Air Force, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserve. But, they accomplish this while respecting unique component cultures and requirements. Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard members train to the same standards and maintain the same currencies as their Active Component counterparts. These Airmen also provide the insurance policy the Air Force and the nation need: a surge capability in times of national crisis. As we have seen with the increased requirements in Afghanistan, the Air Force Reserve continues to play a vital role by mobilizing our strategic airlift resources and expeditionary support to provide capabilities needed for the joint effort.⁵

To better accommodate the Air Force-wide integration effort, the Air Force Reserve is examining its four decades of association experience. With Regular Air Force and Air National Guard assessment teams, we developed analytical tools to evaluate different mixes of Reserve,

⁵ In FY10, Air Force Reserve C-5 and C-17 associate flying units flew 31,913 hours of overseas contingency support worldwide.

Guard, and Active Component forces in any given mission set. This process for rebalancing of forces will give the Air Force a solid business case analysis tool for evaluating future associations and may lead to force decisions that support Reserve Component growth.

For the Operational Reserve construct to remain viable, we must continue to use the long-term mobilization authorities that have been in continuous use for the past ten years. If not, the Services will revert to volunteerism as the sole planning tool for force generation to meet Combatant Command requirements.

The strategic nature of the Reserve Components historically made us vulnerable to reductions in resources and budgets. This often resulted in rebalancing resources among the components based on a strategy that favored near-term operational risk reduction over longer-term cost effectiveness and wartime surge capability. This was a logical approach to allocating risk at the time because Reserve Component daily operational capabilities depended almost exclusively on volunteerism, which was difficult for planners to quantify with a desired degree of assurance. That legacy model is now the exception rather than the rule, since risk associated with the Reserve Components can be both measured and controlled through management and integration of volunteerism with sustainable mobilization plans based on the force generation model construct. This allows the Services to make force rebalancing decisions today based on business case analysis rather than focusing exclusively on near-term risk avoidance.

The traditional approach to rebalancing during a budget reduction has been to reduce Reserve Component force structure to preserve Active Component operational capabilities, or to reduce all components through some proportional or fair-share model to spread risk across the force. It is now possible to quantify and plan for a predictable level of access to operational support from the Reserve Components in critical capability areas, the traditional approach is no longer valid. Because access to operational support capability is quantifiable, it is possible to do reliable cost/capability tradeoff analyses to quantify both cost and risk for options placing greater military capability in the Reserve Components. This does not mean that Reserve Component growth will always be the prudent choice, but it does mean that the choice can be made based on measurable outcomes of cost, capability, and risk, rather than using arbitrary rules of thumb or notional ratios.

A new approach to rebalancing allows for a force that is agile and responsive to uncertainty and rapid changes in national priorities, and mitigates the loss of surge capability and

the high cost associated with the traditional approach to adjusting force mix. Any approach should acknowledge the Reserve Components have become and will remain a responsive operational force. Such a force necessarily allows the Services to respond quickly and efficiently to funding reductions without decreasing warfighting capability or incurring large Active Component recruiting and training costs.

Force Support

While the Air Force meets the needs of new and emerging missions, we face significant recruiting challenges. Not only will the Air Force Reserve have access to fewer prior-service Airmen, we will be compete with other services for non-prior service recruits⁶. In the past year, the Air Force Reserve has experienced the most accessions in 16 years and the highest amount of non-prior service recruits in over 20 years. To improve our chances of success, we have increased the number of recruiters working in the field to attract quality candidates. While we focus on recruiting, we must remain mindful of the experienced force we need to retain. Air Force Reserve retention continues to show positive gains in all categories. In FY10, both officer and enlisted retention rates increased, with career Airmen retention at its highest level since 2004 and officer retention recovering to FY 2007 levels.

With Congressional support, we have implemented a number of successful programs to increase and maintain high recruiting and retention rates. For example, we implemented a “Seasoning Training Program”. This program allows recent graduates of initial and intermediate level specialty training to voluntarily remain on active duty to complete upgrade training. Since its implementation, nearly 13,000 Reservists have become trained and available at an accelerated rate. With the increased number of non-prior service recruits coming into the Air Force Reserve, seasoning training has become a force multiplier and ensures the Air Force Reserve maintains its reputation for providing combat-ready Airmen for today’s joint fight.

The Bonus program has also been pivotal to recruiting and retaining the right people with the right skills to meet our requirements. The Bonus program enhances our ability to meet the

⁶ According to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Personnel & Readiness, only about 26% of today's youth are qualified to serve without obtaining a waiver. Shrinking numbers of qualified youth, coupled with AFR's increased reliance on Non-Prior Service members, and a highly competitive recruiting atmosphere will continue to challenge our recruiting force.

demand for “Critical Skills”—those skills deemed vital to mission capability. Ordinarily, critical skills development requires extensive training over long periods of time, and members who have these skills are in high demand within the private sector. Your continued support, allows us to offer the appropriate combination of bonuses for enlistment, reenlistment, and affiliation. The Bonus Program is effective; 2,676 Reservists signed agreements in FY10. This figure is up 31 percent from FY09.

Preserving the Viability of the Reserve Triad

Reservists balance relationships with their families, civilian employers, and the military-- what we like to call “The Reserve Triad.” To ensure continued sustainability, our policies and actions must support these relationships. Open communication about expectations, requirements, and opportunities, will provide needed predictability and clearer expectations among sometimes competing commitments.

The Air Force Reserve is proud of the close ties we have with our local communities. According to recent statistics provided by the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), civilian employers continue to support and value the military service of their employees.⁷ Maintaining employer support and stability is critical to retaining the necessary experience at the unit level.

The President has made supporting military families a top national security priority.⁸ Military families support and sustain troops, care for wounded warriors and bear the loss of our fallen heroes. The well-being of military families is a clear indicator on the well-being of the overall force. Less than one percent of the American population serves in uniform today. While the impact on war has had little direct impact on the general population, re-integration challenges faced by military families can have far reaching effects on local communities. We are committed to supporting our military families. Strong families positively impact military readiness and preserve the foundation of the “Reserve Triad.”

We have placed added emphasis on suicide prevention and resiliency. Airmen in high-stressed career fields undergo a two-day decompression program at the Deployment Transition Center. Additionally, at each home station installation, we implemented a tiered system of

⁷ ESGR USERRA case resolution statistics

⁸ The President of the United States released the final report on Presidential Study Directive-9 (PSD-9) on 24 Jan. The report identified the Administration’s priorities to addressing challenges facing military families.

suicide prevention to address mental health concerns. The well-being of our force is a priority and we will continue to give it our undivided attention.

Thanks to Congressional initiatives, our Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Office is up and running and fully implementing Department of Defense directives. Our program strives to provide guidance and support to military members and their families at a time when they need it the most, to ease the stress and strain of deployments and reintegration back into normal family life. Since the standup of the program in August 2008, we have hosted 125 events across 39 Wings and Groups. Nearly 21,000 Reservists and 15,000 family members have attended these events. From Yellow Ribbon event exit surveys and through both formal and informal feedback, we know attendees feel better prepared and more confident about the deployment cycle. The Air Force Reserve is leaning forward in meeting pre-, during and post- deployment needs of our members and their families.

Conclusion

We take pride in the fact that when our nation calls on the Air Force Reserve, we are trained and ready for the fight. As an operational force over 70,000 strong, we are mission-ready and serving operationally throughout the world every day.

In a time of constrained budgets and higher costs, in-depth analysis is required to effectively prioritize our needs. We must understand the vital role we play in supporting our nation's defense and concentrate our resources in areas that will give us the most return on our investment. Optimizing the capabilities we present is a top priority, but we must simultaneously support our Airmen, giving them the opportunity to have a predictable service schedule that meets the needs of Reservists, their families and their employers.

The Air Force Reserve must also remain flexible, capable of surging, refocusing, and continuously engaging without exhausting resources and people. Approaching FY12 and beyond, it is imperative that we preserve the health of our strategic reserve and improve our ability to sustain our operational capability. Going forward, we need to continuously balance capabilities and capacity against both near-term and long-term requirements. The actions we initiated in 2010 and those we advance in 2011 will preserve the health of our force.