

THE EFFECTIVE USE OF RESERVE PERSONNEL IN THE U.S. MILITARY: LESSONS FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM RESERVE MODEL

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In the current age of economic austerity, there is increasing pressure for the military in the United States and the United Kingdom (UK) to be streamlined, so as to be able to deliver more for less cost. The challenge is that this must be achieved against the background of the new security environment characterized by its complexity. This in turn requires a whole new approach to warfare supported by additional skill sets, many of which are not currently readily or widely available within the military. Furthermore, skills that once existed during the Cold War period, such as linguists capable of operating effectively as international relations experts, have diminished. These skills have become even more vital in the current security environment of networked global insecurities. As such, there is a need for the military not only to re-establish lost skills, but to develop new skills to enhance its ability to tackle the emerging security threats of the 21st century.

One way in which such skill shortages can be addressed is by accessing existing skill sets within the civilian workforce, which can be achieved through the recruitment of Reservists. Reservists have been utilized not only by the U.S. Army, but also by numerous armies around the world including the UK, where the reliance on Reservists has increased significantly in recent years. However, recent reviews carried out by the UK Ministry of Defence (MoD) identified a range of deficiencies highlighting the need for UK Reserve Forces to be modernized so that they can be utilized in a manner that is efficient, cost effective, and sustainable.

A key to the successful recruitment and retention of Reservists is to create roles that optimize the use of relevant skill sets in a way that works not only for the

military, but also for the Reservist. Consequently, this monograph explores the various types of Reservist roles and deployment options, as well as factors that are both detrimental and beneficial to the recruitment, retention, and use of Reservists, highlighting areas where the UK experience is of potential relevance to the U.S. Army's future options.

It is recognized that U.S. Reserve Forces are bigger, better funded, and more integrated with the Regular Army compared to the UK. However, there are also many similarities between the two forces, such that the cross-fertilization of experiences can be of mutual benefit. For example, both the United States and the UK have suffered the effects of the economic downturn, one side effect of which has been the need to cut defense spending. As a result, each has recently made a decision to reduce the size of its Regular Army, compensating for the reduction by a greater reliance on the use of Reserve Forces. This decision has met with criticism in both the United States and the UK, with many questioning the extent to which Reservists can be used to "replace" regular forces. Some have expressed serious concern regarding over-reliance on Reserve Forces, viewing this as potentially weakening and endangering defense capabilities as a whole.

On the other hand, others have argued that such concerns are not based on evidential data, but instead on prejudice, and that it is the culture of the Regular Army that needs to be addressed. This debate has encouraged further research and analysis into numerous aspects of Reserve Forces so that an assessment can be made as to the validity of the concerns expressed. In order to contribute to this assessment, the aim of this monograph is to highlight the lessons learned by the UK Reserve Forces, both in terms of successes

and challenges, as well as to explore the feasibility of achieving the proposals set out by *Future Reserves 2020*. This may be useful for the United States moving forward, as the need to further cut defense spending is likely and the UK may serve as a good model of how to operate with a smaller budget. The assessments are intended to assist the United States to consider the successful elements of the UK model and its reform program, while avoiding the errors and unintended detrimental consequences identified.

This is achieved through case studies with a focus on the use of Reservists with specialist skills. One case study examines the use of medical professionals such as doctors, while another examines the use of subject matter experts through the recently established Specialist Group Military Intelligence (SGMI) unit, whose principal strength is its ability to utilize the breadth of Reservist capability to provide a depth of expertise to the Field Army, defense, and the wider government that would be both uneconomical and untimely to develop within a regular unit; and prohibitively expensive to contract from the private sector. In addition, negative outcomes of reform processes in the UK are highlighted, in particular the disastrous effect on recruitment and retention of the outsourcing of key programs to the private sector. The analysis leads to recommendations to enhance the overall capability and utility of the U.S. Armed Forces; better harness the talents and the volunteer ethos of the U.S. population; provide the U.S. Army with better inte-

gration with, and understanding by, the society from which its manpower is drawn; and improve the cost-effectiveness of defense.

ENDNOTES

1. M. Evans: "From Kadesh to Kandahar: Military Theory and the Future of War," *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 2003, p. 132.

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