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In the Army Reserve, there is an ongoing ethical dilemma occurring. Soldiers with a minimum of two to four years of training and experience are being enticed by outside civilian contractors with offers for positions within their companies. Thus, making the Soldiers decide whether to stay in the military or leave. Throughout this paper I will discuss five main issues; the Army Reserve and the capacity in which today's reservist serve, their military training, pay comparisons between a reservist and an active component Soldier, the tough decision Soldiers have to face when contemplating leaving the military and the effects it has on the military.

Army Reservist Capacity To Serve

The Army Reserve is not just one weekend a month and two weeks in the summer time anymore. Reservists are called upon to apply themselves much more than before. Often, weekend Battle Assemblies start on Friday night and end on Monday night. The two weekends in the summertime has turned into four weeks throughout the year. In this time of war, there is no such thing as a traditional reservist anymore; reservists are committing to 15 month long deployments and have more responsibilities that require more time to accomplish. Tens of thousands of reservists are on active duty, either at their reserve sites or within the United States performing the same duties they would be doing if they were over seas. Reservists raised their right hand and committed to one weekend a month and two weeks in the summer. They did this to maintain their current civilian positions, to supplement their income, obtain educational benefits and to serve their country. However in this time of war, the call from their country has dominated their lives, their family lives and changed their entire existence. Despite the change, reservists are proud and willing to serve. Even though it is not what they signed up to do, you will still find thousands serving all over the world right now. Their obligation has changed but

the level of dedication has not. They simply went from being a part time Soldier to full time Soldier.

Reservist Training

Today's Reservists train right along side active component Soldiers. Our military schools and training environments are some of the most sophisticated in the world. Any Soldier within a 12 to 18 month period can obtain the training in the Military Intelligence Field with some of the most high tech equipment available to the United States. By the time, a Soldier completes his training; he or she has under gone several hundred thousand dollars of technical training. The military can train far better then most civilian companies can. Soldiers not only have the technical knowledge to work equipment most of us have no idea exists; they also receive training in other areas. Currently Soldiers receive training in leadership, moral, and professional ethics, courtesy, and working as part of a team, all qualities any civilian agency looks highly upon. Once a Soldier has completed his training and worked in his field for two to four years, he or she is now a highly trained and experience professional. Here in lies the problem.

Reservist Pay

The average pay for a reservist on active duty with a minimum of two to three years, as an E4/specialist is approximately 3,700.00 dollars a month before taxes. Annually, that is approximately 44,400.00 dollars, which he may have to support a family with, pay a mortgage, car notes, and credit card bills. With an average salary of less then 45,000.00 dollars a year, it is very difficult in today's society to survive. Civilian contractors offer approximately 125,000.00 dollars a year plus benefits, to do the same job. That is roughly three times, what the military offers. The six-figure income with the civilian contractor is only to start; even if the Soldier were to complete 20 years of service, he still would not arrive at the same amount. As unfortunate as it

is, the military cannot compete in the area of salary and benefits to a civilian contractor that requires the same skills. Civilian contractors have plenty of money and are willing to pay large sums for a militarily trained Soldier. These companies are notorious for recruiting within the military. In fact, when they are bidding for a contract from the government they sell themselves by offering militarily trained people, to work the contract

Effects On The Military

A reserve Soldier has to ask himself, do I stay in for the next four to six years with minimal raises, some promotions, more responsibilities, and 15 month long deployments, or go with the civilian contractor, but now earn almost three times more in salary to do the same job?

By accepting these high paying positions, Soldiers place the reservist unit in an unstable position. They often leave the country to work, which makes them not available to attend scheduled Battle Assemblies, train with their unit or mobilize with their unit in time of deployment.

“Ghosting” is another problem the Army Reserve is facing with civilian contractors enticing Soldiers away. Ghosting is a term the Reserve Component calls a reservist who is currently holding a position on the Unit Manning Roster (UMR) but is never there physically. Civilian contractors are very willing to allow a Soldier to work at their facility on the weekends, verify their work hours and report them to the Reserve Unit. The process is called Request for Absence from Scheduled Battle Assembly (RST). The Soldier who is requesting to be absent from the scheduled Battle Assembly but will make up the hours missed at a latter time. As long as the Soldier makes up the time within 30 days either before or after the scheduled Battle Assembly, the commander will mark him as an excused absence. When a Soldier completes the required hours and has his employer validate the time, the Soldier then has meet his reserve

obligation and will receive full pay for the weekend. The Soldier has now worked for his civilian contractor for 16 hours, doing his civilian job, but being paid by the military. The contractor has figured out a way to keep the Soldier happy by allowing him to work extra hours to fulfill his reserves obligation, retain the Soldier within his company to do the job but have the military train and pay for it. The RST process is a great tool for the reservists who may have an occasional conflict with the scheduled Battle Assemble. It is when a Soldier is out of the state or country and is not capable of attending, that this process is abused. Not attending battle assemblies poses a number of other problems for the unit. The greatest of which is, the missing Soldier or ghost is taking up a position and blocking other potential new recruits who want to attend battle assembly from attending. New Soldiers cannot find an empty position on the Unit Manning Roster (UMR) to fill, preventing him or her from joining the unit and being an active contributor to the mission. Next, the constant absence or lack of manpower is crucial to the mission at times of deployment and to maintain the units missions. The Soldier cannot deploy which leaves a hole in the ranks. Many times a Soldier is out of the country performing the same job he or she would be doing for the military.

Tough Decision

Soldiers have become a very hot prospect for outside contractor because of their skill set. They introduce the Soldier to the world of higher income for doing the same job the military has trained them to do. In their hearts, Soldiers want to continue to serve their country. Their level of dedication and honor to uphold the vows they promised and fulfill their obligation is vital. On the other hand, the idea of making more money for doing the same thing is tough to walk away from. It would mean a more comfortable life, not only for himself but for his family also. The prospect for a brighter future and financial security sooner in life is extremely attractive. Leaving

the military is not easy. Soldiers know they would be breaking a commitment they made and leaving their fellow Soldiers to fill the void, they created. Quitting is not what a Soldier does; it contradicts all training. Here in lies the ethical dilemma; should a Soldier leave for a higher paying position or stay in the military and complete his obligation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper discussed the Army Reservist's capacity in which they serve, their level of training, pay comparisons to their active component counterpart, the decision Soldiers are faced with when civilian contractors offer high paying positions to do the same job they do in the military and the effects it has on the military. In my opinion, this is an ethical dilemma and a tough one for the individual. Most Soldiers who enlist want to serve their country. Their intentions are pure and their actions were originally to fulfill their contract. However, after being in the military for a few years and experiencing the difficulties of living on a limited budget, money becomes a stressful factor. Once a Soldier realizes there are other opportunities available to him, based on his military education and experience, the choice becomes a necessity. I do believe it is not an easy choice but one of obligation to his family and financial situation.

If the military were to offer comparable salaries to that of the civilian sector, Soldiers would stay to honor their commitment to the military. The military would also do well with increasing salaries and benefits currently being offered, such as housing, subsistence allowance, education, and bonuses. Instead of awarding the civilian contractors and outside agencies huge amounts of money to do the job of a Soldier, the government should invest within and offer it back to the Soldier bearing arms.