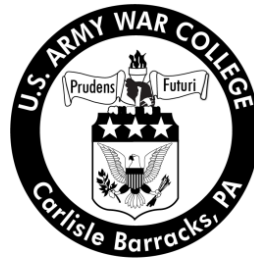


The Challenges of Staffing an Operational Reserve with Citizen Soldiers

by

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United States Army War College
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Abstract

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The U.S. has been a nation at war for well over a decade. As it continues to wage the war against terror, it also deals with significant fiscal challenges which help facilitate a change in military strategy. This change in strategy includes the utilization of the National Guard as an operational reserve. The operational reserve concept makes economic and strategic sense for America and the citizen Soldier is perfectly willing and capable to carry out that mission. As a result, future requirements of the National Guard are anticipated to remain high, relative to any peacetime period in recent history. The subsequent operations tempo, deployments, and required training time will create increased challenges for the citizen Soldier and their employers. This paper will examine the history and evolution of the National Guard from a strategic reserve to an operational reserve. It will explore the associated challenges and offer recommendations to assist in overcoming those challenges.

The Challenges of Staffing an Operational Reserve with Citizen Soldiers

When you call out the Guard, you call out America. Never in the Nation's history has this been more true, from our response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, to our reaction in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, one thing stands: America's National Guard has transformed from a strategic Reserve force into a fully operational force multiplier for the Department of Defense.¹

—LTG H. Steven Blum, 2006

The National Guard has been an integral component of the nation's defense since its founding. Throughout its' deep history, U.S. militia have been called on to serve in a plethora of events; they have performed admirably during their 375 plus years of existence. This force has morphed from a militia to a force that is able to serve the nation's interest at the highest level. Once a strategic reserve that would be activated in times of national emergency, it has now transformed into an operational reserve that stands ready and capable of performing alongside the active component military in defense of the nation. Utilizing an operational reserve will assist the country as it deals with budget issues and attempts to contain debt. With this transformation come challenges that will provide opportunity for strategic leaders to consider as this operational reserve is further developed and maintained. Once the obligation of the current engagement in Afghanistan ends and the U.S. military is no longer at war, the demeanor and attitude of the American people, especially citizen Soldier families and employers, will be of significant interest. The relationship between employer and service member will impact the Soldier's ability to remain an active member of the operational reserve force, thus impacting the ability to sustain the force. This paper will analyze the rich history of the National Guard, its evolution into an operational reserve,

the current operational tempo, the challenges associated with staffing the force, and provide suggestions on how to address these challenges.

History of the National Guard

Pre World War I

“Starting in 1636, American militiamen embodied the citizen-soldier concept and protected the nation by repelling invasions, suppressing insurrections, and enforcing the laws of the land. From the militia’s earliest roots arose the National Guard.”² The actual birth of the organized militia, later named National Guard, is considered to be December 13, 1636. This is the date “when the Massachusetts Bay Colony passed an ordinance authorizing the creation of the first American militia regiments.”³ During the infancy of our country, organized militia such as these, were critical in protecting early American settlers from Native American raids. The citizen soldier battled successfully as the colonies fought the French and Indian War from 1754 to 1763. Colony organized militia would take the fight to the redcoats during the fight for independence from Great Britain. During the entire colonial period, the organized militia experienced its finest work at the battles of Lexington and Concord, where they soundly defeated the British regulars.

“This organization of citizen soldiers developed its own unique traits and characteristics. The militia was a geographically-based, local defense force designed for limited service during short-term emergencies.”⁴ Some 150 years after the organized militia was established, the regular Army was created by the Continental Congress on June 14, 1775. During the creation of the U.S. Constitution, the founding fathers realized the importance of the militia to our independence and future defense and “formally established the militia as a permanent part of the nation’s defense establishment.

Furthermore, the Constitution identified the militia as an instrument of power for both the

states and the federal government.”⁵ It provided that militia would be called up during time of emergency and be commanded by the President. The Militia Act of 1792 gave primary control of the militia to their state and created the adjutant general position - the senior state military officer in charge of the militia. One of the more famous instances of militia domestic service came in 1794 as George Washington mustered members to go to Pennsylvania to enforce the taxation of whiskey that was being used as a medium of exchange. The militia would again come to the defense of the nation during the War of 1812 and then years later during the Mexican War of 1846. Upon the end of the Mexican War in 1848 and the follow on expansion of the United States into the huge land mass that would ultimately become the western States, the citizen soldier would help provide security against bandits and vigilantes. The militia contributed to both union and confederate forces during the Civil War and, shortly afterwards, began to promote “itself by taking on an appearance more like that of the regular Army. The increase in the nation’s population and the experience of the Civil War convinced citizen-soldiers to make regiments the basis of their post-bellum organizations rather than separate companies.”⁶

World War I to Pre- 9/11

Organized State militia began the evolution of looking and training more like the regular Army. They went from being a volunteer force to receiving funding from the States and, via the National Defense Act of 1916, changed their name to the “National Guard”. The reserve force intent of the National Guard was exercised precisely during World War I and World War II as the country had limited numbers of active forces and needed the members of the guard in order to amass the necessary strength. As a part of the post World War II military reorganization, the National Guard was given an initial

strength of 425,000. The National Security Act of 1947 facilitated a dramatic change as the Department of Defense was established as well as the National Guard bureau (NGB). “On October 1, 1948, the modern NGB headquarters came into being. Chief, NGB, retained a staff to coordinate legislative, public affairs, budget, and administrative functions. Army and Air Divisions, both under the direction of National Guard major generals, handled all matters for the Army National Guard (ARNG) and Air National Guard (ANG).”⁷

“According to the National Guard Bureau in Arlington, Virginia, about one third (138,600 men) of the Army Guard’s total strength was mobilized when war broke out in Korea.”⁸. The Vietnam conflict has been the largest exception to wartime mobilizations as the Johnson administration activated very few National Guard units for overseas service. Several thousand members of the National Guard, however, volunteered to mobilize and serve in Vietnam during the crisis. Tens of thousands more guardsman would be activated during this timeframe as domestic disturbances erupted from the civil rights movement and war protests.

The Total Force Policy and all volunteer force concept began in 1973. To deter the draft and assist with the unpopularity of war, this policy directed the services “to integrate fully their active and reserve forces into a homogeneous whole. Without a draft, the Guard and Reserves were to be the initial, primary, and sole augmentation to active forces. The Total Force Policy drew the National Guard and the active Army and Air Force into closer harmony.”⁹ The 1980’s would bring about a massive military buildup resulting from the Cold War strategy of the Reagan administration. This expansion, in part, enabled the continuance of the National Guard to act as a strategic

reserve. Broad cuts in military spending followed the conclusion of the Cold War. Known as the peace dividend by many, the US looked to produce economic gains by reducing its active force. This change in strategy placed much more dependency on the capabilities of the reserve component.¹⁰ Naturally, this created a dramatic increase in combat deployments for the National Guard – in addition to its state mission requirements. “In 1990, the Total Force concept was put to its first real test when the United States responded to Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait. 51 of 54 States and territories activated National Guard Soldiers from more than 398 units. Over 62,000 Army National Guard Soldiers were mobilized in support of Desert Shield and Desert Storm.”¹¹ “Since the mid-1990’s, the reserves have been continuously mobilized to support operations worldwide, including those in Bosnia and Kosovo as well as operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.”¹²

9/11 to Present

The terrorist bombings of September 11, 2001 served as a catalyst to further increase the nation’s overall reliance on the National Guard. The subsequent global war against terrorism quickly progressed into limited conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. Not since the Korean War has the U.S. activated more of the reserve component force. Since the onset of these two wars, we have mobilized more than 500,000 National Guard Soldiers. This period also seems to serve as the genesis of the conceptual operational reserve force. “Today, the Reserve component continues to serve as a strategic hedge, but is far more integrated into day-to-day military operations and participates at a higher level in operational missions than ever before.”¹³ Since 9/11, the nation has also required dramatic increases in support from the National Guard relative to homeland defense. Operation Noble Eagle, the homeland defense operation

immediately following the attacks, mobilized nearly 10,000 reserve component Soldiers for up to two years of service in order to perform security missions protecting possible terrorist targets such as airports, military installations, and other vital infrastructure. Congress also “funded the formation of joint weapons of mass destruction (WMD) civil support teams within the National Guard. These teams were designed to provide direct assistance to civilian emergency responders in the event of a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high yield explosive (CBRNE) attack on the homeland.”¹⁴

In addition to mobilizations for global conflict and homeland defense, National Guard support for civil authorities during disaster response has dramatically increased. “On average, seventeen United States governors call out their National Guard each day to protect life or property, and the Guard responds immediately, effectively, appropriately, and in force.”¹⁵ These modern domestic missions include relief efforts of natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, floods and fires, to name a few. During hurricane Katrina in August of 2005, over 40,000 guardsmen from Louisiana and surrounding states were activated to support the civil authorities. During the aftermath of the catastrophic storm labeled “Super Storm Sandy”, which hit the east coast in October of 2012, over 10,000 Soldiers from the National Guard supported the relief efforts. The combination of federal and state missions make the National Guard unique and displays the value placed on the nation’s oldest military institution.

Benefits of the Guard as an Operational Reserve Force

According to the National Guard Bureau, the mission of the National Guard is to be “a community-based Operational Force and the primary Combat Reserve”¹⁶ of the military that “provides ready units to support global and domestic requirements.”¹⁷ This fact, along with the rich history of the National Guard, illustrates the nation’s reliance on

the citizen Soldier. Beyond the thoughts of our nation's forefathers, there are many advantages to maintaining an operational reserve force. Among the most important advantage is the cost effectiveness. The United States is in a fiscally challenging environment and is dealing with rising debt and out of control spending that continues to suppress its economy. As a way to address the proposed 500 billion dollar military cut over the next ten years, also known as sequestration, the operational reserve strategy will help reduce military spending without negatively affecting its' capability. "Unless activated for combat service, fully trained traditional National Guard members cost approximately 25 percent of their Active counterparts."¹⁸ Realistic efficiencies "include: fewer "pay days" per year, lower medical costs, significantly lower training costs beyond initial qualification training, virtually no costs for relocating families and household goods to new duty assignments"¹⁹ and other significant entitlements and allowances. Relative to the Army, for example, "the Army National Guard has 358,200 personnel and provides 32 percent of the Total Army end-strength for only 11 percent of the Total Army Defense Budget."²⁰ When analyzing the benefits of utilizing the National Guard, the realization is that "supporting capability in the Army National Guard makes good business sense, and is a twofer – that means that the same force is available to the governor of the state, territory and district as well as the president of the United States."²¹ As sequestration arrives and the military is required to find over "half a trillion dollars in cost savings over the next decade"²², utilization of reserve component forces as an operational reserve, vice active component forces, could make a significant impact toward reaching the savings goal.

By incorporating the reserve component, the capabilities of the total force are dramatically enhanced and increased. With more than 10 years of combat experience, the National Guard and reserve component forces have proven themselves in some of the most extreme environments and have developed into a mature fighting force. “Forty-six percent of the uniformed military forces are comprised of guard and reserve members”²³ and it is vitally important we continue to capitalize on this experience. Another helpful byproduct of this gained experience is the National Guard is a force now very well trained. “At the start of the wars, reservists faced lengthy deployments stretched by six months or more at a mobilization site readying for war. Many saw the equipment they would fight with for the first time at the site.”²⁴ This lack of equipment and proficiency was problematic during the infancy of the conflicts. The resulting increase in operations tempo and increased training opportunities improved military duty occupational skill qualifications (DMOSQ) proficiency throughout the force to a level significantly higher than prior War on Terrorism levels. National Guard Soldiers also bring extremely valuable skill sets acquired through their civilian occupation to the force. Information technology, attorneys, law enforcement officials, electricians, and carpenters are just a few examples.

The State Partnership Program is another exclusive capability the National Guard provides the total force, including the Combatant Commander and the respective US ambassador. This initiative was “created in 1993 with only a handful of partner nations. Today, these mutually beneficial relationships are established with more than sixty foreign nations. They work together to improve regional security, stability and prosperity.”²⁵

During recent operations, especially the Global War on Terrorism, the National Guard has been instrumental in increasing the interest, engagement, and acceptance of the American people. Arguably, through the early activation of the National Guard during operation Iraqi Freedom, President George W. Bush was able to gain quicker, broader, and sustained acceptance of the decision to overthrow the Saddam Hussein regime. The Army National Guard, as an example, “maintains facilities in all States, Territories, Commonwealths and the District of Columbia. The ARNG has a presence in over 2,800 communities”²⁶ and from these communities, has deployed in excess of 500,000 Soldiers since 9/11. Those 500,000 Soldiers represent millions of vested Americans with additional incentive to support the mission of their deployed friend or family member.

Evolution of the Total Force

As the operational reserve and Total Force concept continue to evolve, the composition of the force will continue to change. “However, DOD and Congress have had no serious public discussion or debate on the matter, and have not formally adopted the operational reserve. Steps taken by DOD and Congress have been more reactive than proactive, more timid than bold, and more incremental than systemic.”²⁷ The strategic guidance released by President Barrack Obama clearly states the US must “examine the mix of Active Component (AC) and Reserve Component (RC) elements best suited to the strategy.”²⁸ The resulting force mix will probably not be determined until after the nations’ resource challenges and fiscal constraints are sufficiently addressed by Congress and the administration. The current National Guard and Reserve total strength stands at more than 800,000 selected reserves. Congress, per the FY2012 National Defense Authorization Act, has authorized up to 857,100²⁹

selected reserves. The selected reserve, as determined by the Secretary of Defense and the respective services, is defined as a group of reserve component forces that are “essential to initial wartime missions that they have priority over all other Reserves.”³⁰ This compares to the active force authorized strength of 1,422,639.³¹ The proportion of strength authorizations of reserve component versus active component is expected to increase as a result of Congress seeking economic efficiencies. Ultimately, expectations are that the total force will reduce up to 20% in the next 5 – 10 years with the active component taking the brunt of reductions. Another influence, relative to the sustainment or increase of the reserve and National Guard forces, is the fact reserve components “possess capabilities required for the types of operations that the U.S. military is likely to perform over the next 20 years”³². The reserve component contains capabilities that are not part of the organizational structure of the active force. “RC Soldiers make up all of the Army chemical brigades and heavy helicopter units and >80% of the psychological operations units, water supply battalions, and civil affairs units. RC soldiers make up all of the Army’s railway units, Internet brigades, Judge Advocate General units, and training and exercise units.”³³

Future requirements of the National Guard are anticipated to remain high. Between the mission to support Combatant Commands, homeland defense, and natural disaster response, the operational tempo promises to remain significantly increased over any peace time in history. The vision of the National Guard is to maintain “a premier unit-based force comprised of resilient, adaptable, relevant and ready Citizen-Soldiers accessible for war and domestic crises”³⁴ The path to this readiness has improved dramatically. During the early years of the Global War on Terror, National

Guard units were mobilized on an inconsistent basis with very little warning. As citizen Soldiers, employed by civilian companies, this placed significant stress on both Soldier and employer. Significant improvement, relative to awareness, preparation, and training, is now experienced due to the inclusion of National Guard forces into the Armed Forces Generation (ARFORGEN) model. “ARFORGEN is the structured progression of increased unit readiness over time to produce trained and ready units prepared on a rotational basis for operational employment in support of the Combatant Commander and Governor.”³⁵ This process spans a 5-year period of which the first year serves as the reset year immediately following a units’ re-deployment from service. The second through the fourth year are identified as training years that are used to prepare the force. The fifth year is the period that the force is ready and available for deployment. Once the fifth year is complete, units return to the reset phase. During the training years, it is expected that many units will participate in various exercises including Mission Command Training Program sponsored “Warfighter” exercises and Combat Training Center (CTC) rotations. The training received during CTC rotations provide a realistic, doctrinally based, joint training that resembles actual combat situations. Not only does the CTC experience generate unit readiness, but it also provides critical leadership training at the tactical level. Incremental training requirements will arise as state and federal authorities continue to identify needs. Homeland defense and security missions, along with preparation required for state emergencies and support to civil authorities, will demand additional training which will often occur at home station.

Challenges for the Citizen Soldier and Employer

As the war in Afghanistan draws to a close and the military transitions to one of preparation, the resulting environment poses many challenges to the citizen Soldier. Among the challenges is the additional time requirement. Prior to being used as an operational reserve, members of the National Guard expected to train one weekend a month and two additional weeks of annual training. This requirement, post Global War on Terrorism and 9/11, has dramatically increased. There is no official policy change, but reality suggests a much greater commitment is now required. Additional weekend training, annual training periods in excess of two weeks, and miscellaneous training throughout the year have morphed the commitment into something much more. The “part time job” aspect, which has served as a great recruiting tool and attraction to the youth of America, has evolved into a challenge for the Soldier, family member, and employer.

This challenge is not experienced by the active component Soldier, the Active Guard Reserve (AGR) Soldier or the dual status military technician. According to the FY 2012 National Defense Authorization Act, the Army National Guard has an authorized strength of 358,200. More than 15%, or 59,270, are authorized to be either AGR or dual status military technician. Military service is the sole occupation of these Soldiers whereas the traditional National Guard Soldier has a primary occupation often not associated with the military and, of course, requires the majority of the service members’ focus. In addition, many of the support structures inherent to the active Soldier and family is non-existent, or significantly reduced, due to the broad geographic disbursement of the reserve component Soldier. These facts have attributed to the retention challenges experienced by the force, especially post mobilization. Recent

studies on the retention of military reservists suggest “about a third of soldiers who were likely to stay in the National Guard reported that they would leave the service if their active duty training commitment increased significantly because of the conflicts with family and employer obligations.”³⁶

Soldiers, in the form of job discrimination, now realize a type of fatigue displayed by employers. Considering the recent history of high operational tempo, some employers are negligent in ensuring citizen Soldiers are recipient of equal opportunities, as peers, once they return from duty. The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) of 1994 make it illegal to disadvantage a military member, in their civilian career, due to military service. Among potential violators, the federal government appears to be one of the leading violators. It employees over 120,000 currently serving reservists which accounts for roughly 14 percent of the more than 800,000 reserve component forces. Additionally, up to one fourth of their employees are veterans. 18 percent of the reported complaints to the Labor Department in 2011 involved the federal government. The government has had little incentive to comply with the law as they, unlike civilian employers, are exempt from penalty for non-compliance. Officials within the government admit they have challenges meeting the spirit of the law and claim the shortfall is due to lack of education on behalf of their supervisors. In order to improve the situation, the Veterans Affairs office has been charged to educate government leadership in the proper administration of the law.³⁷ Employers at the state and local level, as well as civilian employers, face similar challenges. Part of the difficulty for the service member is having the burden to prove negligence on behalf of the employer.

Another way in which service members are feeling negative impacts from employers is through associated employer hiring biases. With the unemployment rate surpassing 8% for most months since 2009³⁸, employers have thousands of applicants and can be very selective. Recent statistics reveal the unemployment rate for veterans ages 20 to 24 is in excess of 30 percent. Veterans that retire or leave the service have high job placement rates, but those that remain in the Guard or reserves realize difficulties finding meaningful employment. While testifying before the US House of Representatives committee on Veterans' Affairs on the topic of lowering the rate of unemployment for the National Guard, the director of Family and Employer Program and Policy, Ronald G. Young, stated that the unemployment rate of the junior enlisted Soldier is currently at 23 percent.³⁹ This is, in part, due to the operational tempo of the service member and the knowledge of the employer that the potential employee may be away from the workplace a significant amount of time. During the application process, an employer is acting within the law to ask about military service. Employers are knowledgeable enough to realize they cannot reveal non-selection based on service and it becomes very difficult to prove when they do. Relative to remaining an active service member, many Soldiers are strongly considering separation from the service due to these scenarios.⁴⁰

In addition to service member challenges, employers too are facing difficulties as a result of the increased operations tempo, deployments, and training time required of the National Guard Soldier. "Some argue that the cost savings by the government of not having to maintain a large professional force has been shifted disproportionately to the employer. This is true when the military increasingly relies on temporary personnel

who draw regular pay and benefits while on active duty, but get nothing when deactivated.”⁴¹ This burden is more easily absorbed by large companies with thousands of employees and significant resources. Small, locally owned businesses and local governments are significantly impacted due to limited resources and staff. “It is estimated that seventy percent of reservists called to active duty come from small or medium sized companies in the civilian labor force. Additionally, eleven percent of them work in family businesses or are self-employed.”⁴² In a recent study conducted by the Institute for Defense Analysis (IDA) to determine the effects of mobilizations on employers, it was found “that among small businesses, one common consequence of reservist mobilization was lost business. Loss of a key employee might mean reduced marketing, diminished productivity, the inability to seek large-scale jobs, or shifts in a firm’s output. Some of the respondents to the initial survey reported that they had been driven out of business by their reservists’ activations.”⁴³ The activation of the employee often disrupts the work environment, causes reduction in the morale of co-workers, and occurs at the most inopportune times.⁴⁴ The negative effects of having mobilized employees on staff have also impacted local governments. The National Association of Counties conducted a survey that found “sixty nine percent of counties with populations below 10,000 that responded to their survey indicated a hardship due to military deployments since September 11, 2001.”⁴⁵

The attacks of 9/11 brought about a heightened sense of patriotism on behalf of the entire country, including employers. That increased patriotism has motivated employers to accommodate the citizen Soldier. Many laws have been established to assist the service member, relative to preventing them from being disadvantaged, but

very little legislation has been directed toward benefiting the employers. Laws, such as USERRA, require civilian employers to hold service member positions during absence, accept them at a similar position upon return, and provide them pay raises they would have possibly achieved had they been present. “The Hope at Home Act of 2005, called for federal employers to provide pay differential to absent guard and reserve personnel. It also proposed a business tax credit for civilian employers who voluntarily give their guard and reserve personnel a pay differential while those employees are called to active service.”⁴⁶ Other legislation has been proposed but failed to address expenses associated with the employers’ obligation to re-employ service members. Most arguments related to such legislation suggest the cost would offset the intended savings of having an operational reserve. The current perception is there is little to no financial benefit for businesses to comply or be motivated to hire service members. The ability and continued willingness, of even those employers who are more able, will be challenged as the U.S. becomes a nation no longer at war. The time away from the employer will continue beyond levels experienced while a strategic reserve was the national strategy and the challenges for employers will continue. The same economic pressures that are felt by government are also impacting the private sector. These pressures will cause civilian employers to scrutinize the benefits of having citizen Soldiers included in their workforce.

Recommendations

The operational reserve concept makes economic and strategic sense for America and the citizen Soldier is perfectly willing and capable to carry out that mission. As the nation realizes efficiencies and cost reductions from this dramatic change, it should allocate a portion of those savings into programs to enhance the program and

thus make it more sustainable over the long term. To ensure success, the U.S. must also realize the significant differences between the inherent requirements of a strategic reserve versus those of an operational reserve and change its methodology to reflect those differences. The operational force will require more time, energy, coordination, and education on behalf of the citizen Soldier, his family, employer, and the American public. The personnel and staffing arena provides several opportunities that deserve increased attention.

Define the Operational Reserve Construct and Mission

Congress, the Administration, and the Department of Defense must identify the composition and mission of the new reserve component operational force structure. Homeland defense and defense support to civil authorities are the foundations to the force and the subsequent mission sets must be clearly defined.⁴⁷ As these missions gain clarity, the resulting training requirements to maintain a competent, capable, and ready force must be identified. The next step is to pass legislation to execute. Studies looking at the challenges and opportunities of the operational reserves are complete. Subsequent conclusions and recommendations were submitted to Congress and the Secretary of Defense for consideration. However, no significant legislation affecting the reserve component was enacted. The most recent legislation of any consequence, relative to the Department of Defense, was the Goldwaters-Nichols Act of 1986. The roles of the Department, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and the combatant commanders were adjusted as a result, but the legislation failed to address any of the issues or concerns of the reserve component.

Compensation and Benefits

In addition to pride and the desire to serve ones' country, the compensation and benefits has always been a key driver relative to recruiting and retaining service members. By all indications, an operational reserve will require a significant increase in commitment from the Soldier and therefore a related increase in support from family members. The work life balance was previously difficult and will only become more challenging. We must make considerations in light of these facts and enhance the current pay and benefit package. This potential enhancement demands more research be completed in order to develop an equitable and fair program.

Incentivize Employers

History has shown that Congress has been very reluctant to remove any financial burdens of the employer. While approved legislation has been targeted to assist the Soldier, the employer has been ignored. They are often viewed as doing their patriotic duty by sustaining the costs of employing citizen Soldiers. The U.S. must change this through some form of tax credit to help offset the costs of re-employment. "The employer's biggest complaint is loss of efficiency and production due to frequent and extended military service. A tightly controlled regulation that requires employers to mitigate their losses, but allows for tax relief, may bring some economic incentive and generate good will among employers."⁴⁸

Communication

As these changes are approved and implemented, a strong communication plan must be executed to ensure broad, clear, and concise dissemination of the new construct. This communication must focus on the reasoning behind the plan and what advantages it offers to all Americans. It must communicate to potential recruits –

describing the benefits and the way ahead for the reserve component and what is expected of someone willing to join. There will be significant changes from what was previously understood and we must make those changes well known as the nations' youth contemplate the decision to serve their country. This plan must also communicate to employers of service members. The new legislation must be fully understood by all organizations that could potentially employ service members and communication must include their newly approved benefits and subsequent responsibilities.

Summary

The National Guard has a rich history that dates back prior to the foundation of the country. The citizen Soldier has participated in every major conflict the U.S. has waged. From its inception and through the Cold War, the National Guard's purpose was to meet the needs of their respective state and to facilitate the rapid expansion of the military during a major war. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 began the National Guard transformation into a reserve component force that is destined to become fully integrated, at all times, with the active military. As the country continues to navigate through the residual challenges of the 2008 recession and the fiscal restraints of today, the potential savings from utilizing citizen Soldiers vice career Soldiers can serve as a vehicle to assist in economic recovery.

Traditional citizen Soldiers and employers, alike, are experiencing difficulties while adjusting to this new strategy and subsequent increases in operational tempo. It is undeniable, in order for the U.S. to adequately address its' fiscal challenges, that cost reductions must occur within the military while continuing to maintain a ready, capable force. Consequently, the reserve component will continue to play a major role within the

total force. This change in strategy requires the senior leaders of the National Guard and federal government to consider these challenges and fundamentally change the way we conduct business. A portion of any realized savings must be committed to programs that enhance employer and service member benefits. The willingness of employers to accommodate citizen Soldiers in the workplace, and the motivation of citizens to serve, hang in the balance. Modifications such as these will allow Citizen Soldiers to fight the new fight and continue to effectively serve the greatest nation in the world.

Endnotes

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