

CHAPTER 6

RESERVES

Introduction

6.1 For many years, the ADF has pursued a ‘One Army’ Concept. This concept was originally proposed by Dr T. B. Millar in a Report on the Citizens Military Forces in 1974 and was designed to make full use of the total personnel asset available to the Army.¹ In accordance with this concept, the Army has created integrated Regular and Reserve units and standardised training. The release of the Defence White Paper ‘*Defence 2000—Our Future Defence Force*’ has confirmed the ‘One Army’ concept by emphasising a strategic role for Reserves to support and sustain the ADF.² However, the Committee noted that there are a number of recruitment and retention issues associated with the development of this strategic role for Reserves.

6.2 The Committee received many submissions from Army Reserve personnel. This prompted the Committee to conduct public hearings with individual Reservists in Perth, Sydney and Canberra, and conduct discussion groups with Reservists at 13 Brigade in Perth and Norforce in Darwin. There was also a sprinkling of Reservists among the discussion groups held on bases. Navy and Air Force Reserve personnel raised no significant issues. In this chapter, the Committee will, therefore, focus on recruiting, training, and management of the Army Reserve.

Background—roles and tasks of Reserves

6.3 Any discussion of the Army Reserve must be prefixed by an understanding of Project Army 2003. This project is reviewing roles, tasks, force structure and preparedness, mobilisation and expansion requirements and combat force development planning for the Army. Ultimately, Project Army 2003 will deliver a ‘sustainable and deployable combat force that draws on both Regular and Reserve components to meet and achieve operational requirements’.³ More importantly, Army expects that this project will ‘result in clear and decisive roles and tasks for the Army Reserve’.⁴

1 Department of Defence: *Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Citizens Military Forces*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, March 1974, Chapter 4

2 Australian Government, *Defence 2000-Our Future Defence Force*, December 2000, p. 69

3 Lieutenant Colonel Garry Heald, Director, Reserves Army, *Statement to Committee*, 21 September 2001, p. 2

4 Lieutenant Colonel Garry Heald, Director, Reserves Army, *Committee Hansard*, 21 September 2001, p. 765

6.4 Following Project Army 2003, it is likely that the Army Reserve will have three broad functions: reinforcement, round out and rotation.⁵ This means that Reserve formations and units are likely to be required to undertake generic tasks. It follows that recruitment and retention strategies for the Reserve must be able to support these tasks. The likely generic tasks are:

- Hold personnel or force elements at very high levels of readiness to meet Defence Aid to the Civil Community tasks;
- Hold personnel or force elements at high levels of readiness to provide round out to RDF and Enabling component Regular units;
- Hold personnel at high levels of readiness to provide reinforcement to Ready Deployment Force (RDF) units;
- Hold sub-units and units at longer readiness levels to provide forces to rotate with force elements of the RDF; and
- Develop and maintain mobilisation plans to meet Defence of Australia scenario and tasks.⁶

Reserve recruiting

6.5 Table 5.1 depicts Army Reserve recruiting targets and enlistments over the last four years. The Committee notes that the ADF has not achieved its Army Reserve recruiting targets since 1997/98. The recruiting results for the Navy and Air Force Reserve over the same period have also been poor.⁷ There is evidence to suggest that this has been caused by the centralisation of Reserve and Regular recruiting functions with DFRO.

Table 5.1 Army Reserve recruiting achievement⁸

Year	Target	Enlistment	Percentage achieved
1997/98	4655	4671	100.3%
1998/99	4235	2162	51%
1999/2000	4785	1566	32.7%
2000/2001 ⁹	4778	2097	45.5%

5 Lieutenant Colonel Garry Heald, Director of Reserves Army, *Statement to Committee*, 21 September 2001, pp. 2–3

6 Lieutenant Colonel Garry Heald, Director of Reserves Army, *Statement to Committee*, 21 September 2001, pp. 3–4

7 Department of Defence, submission no. 101, p. C–7

8 Department of Defence, submission no. 101, p. C–7

6.6 Numerous submissions and hearings criticised the centralisation of the Reserve recruiting function with the DFRO. These criticisms focused on the ability of the DFRO to correctly market and attract recruits to individual Reserve formations and units. One witness argued:

I joined in 1988 and, back in those times, you were able to go to a unit that you would like to join, see how it all ran and then you were able to join that unit. From what I have seen over the years, now you have to go through recruiting and, basically, they try to slot you in where they can.¹⁰

6.7 Recently, the ADF adjusted its recruiting functions to allow Army Reserve units to attract and prepare prospective recruits for the enlistment stages of the recruitment process. According to the Director of Reserves Army, this adjustment has proven to be a very positive initiative.¹¹ In addition, Headquarters DFRO has installed additional Reserve staff on full-time service to develop strategies and support Reserve unit recruiting. Overall, DFRO believe the emphasis on 'direct to unit' recruiting has contributed to a 30 per cent improvement in Reserve recruiting.¹² However, from its visits to Headquarters DFRO, Reserve units and the DSC, the Committee notes that more resources need to be allocated in support of this initiative. One small example is the fact that DSC Cooma staff require more information on Reserve unit locations in order to direct enquires.

Transition between Reserve and Regular Service

6.8 In Chapter 3, we discussed issues related to re-enlistment and Service transfer as part of the recruiting process. The Committee was interested to observe that many Reservists transfer to Regular forces. This led the Committee to investigate what schemes were available to encourage Regular personnel to transfer to Reserve forces at the end of their full-time engagement. A scheme of flexible transition between Regular and Reserve service was recommended as an Alternate Personnel Model in the 2000 Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Report on the Army.¹³

6.9 A Reserve service obligation at the conclusion of full-time service was considered by the Committee. Such a service obligation would enable high levels of experience to be retained in the ADF. This obligation could be linked to a financial or educational incentive and would cater for changing individual needs. As an example, a

9 Colonel Mark Bornholt, Director Defence Force Recruiting, *Statement to Committee*, 21 September 2001, p. A-2

10 Witness 1, *Committee Hansard*, 19 July 2001, p. 134

11 Lieutenant Colonel Garry Heald, Director of Reserves Army, *Statement to Committee*, 21 September 2001, pp. 2-3

12 Colonel Mark Bornholt, Director, Defence Force Recruiting, *Committee Hansard*, 21 September 2001, p. 766

13 Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade Report, *From Phantom to Force-Towards a More Efficient and Effective Army*, August 2000, p 148

soldier serves a three-year full time service engagement followed by a mandatory one year in the Army Reserve and receives assistance in university study fees.

6.10 The Committee, however, rather than support the introduction of a mandatory transfer from the Permanent Force to the Reserves would prefer to see an incentive-based voluntary transfer. There are many potential obstacles for a mandatory system. Disgruntled soldiers discharging from the Permanent Force may upset the harmony of a Reserve unit. The Reserve unit might be better off without them. If discharge is caused by family problems, those problems might continue during Reserve service. The location of the nearest Reserve unit might make attendance difficult or expensive. As the person discharged would have to find a new job, a new employer may not take a sympathetic view to the requirements of Reserve service, in spite of statutory obligations.

6.11 If a range of incentives was made available from which a discharging member of the Permanent Force could choose, it is likely that many would take the option of one or two years in the Reserves (and maybe stay much longer).

6.12 Given the shortage of personnel in the Army Reserve, the Committee believes that the Department of Defence should investigate providing discharging members of the Permanent Force with incentives to spend one or two years in the Reserves.

Recommendation 32

The Committee recommends that the Department of Defence retain and develop the capacity for ‘direct to unit’ Army Reserve recruiting.

Recommendation 33

The Committee recommends that the Department of Defence investigate and introduce an incentive program to encourage Reserve service following full-time service.

Retention of Reserves

Background

6.13 The Department of Defence provided evidence that, as at 15 May 2001, the Reserve wastage rate was the lowest it had been for many years (15 per cent). However, the Committee is of the view that this wastage rate is unacceptable given the fact that the overall strength of the Reserve is low and Reserve recruiting targets are not being achieved. The Committee noted that Common Induction Training (CIT) and poor levels of manning and equipment in units had combined to cause retention problems in the Reserve.

Competency Based Training

6.14 In the past, Reserve training was restricted to two-week modules and did not teach the same competencies as Regular courses. From 1998, the Army introduced

CIT as part of a total approach to competency-based training and assessment.¹⁴ In this approach, Army trains Reserve and Regular soldiers in the same competencies so as to ensure all members are appropriately trained to perform the tasks required of them. The problem that has arisen out of this approach is that many Reservists are not able to attend the longer CIT courses. This had caused a negative impact on Reserve recruitment and retention.

6.15 The Committee received considerable comment regarding CIT. Essentially, these comments referred to the difficulty Reservist encountered gaining access to and attending CIT. This was the case not just for recruit training but for all trade training, particularly medical assistants. One witness observed:

..it is harder and harder for reservists to go anywhere in the military, because it is hard to get on courses these days. A lot of the courses these days are ARA orientated. They will sometimes put you-if you are lucky and there is an operational requirement-on the reserve list, which means you might get told a week before a seven week course that you are on the course. You have then got to go to your employer cap in hand saying, 'I want seven weeks off.' It is not going to happen.¹⁵

6.16 The Government and the Department of Defence have introduced measures to assist Reservist undergoing CIT. Earlier this year the Government introduced legislation to protect reservists and employers for Army Reserve training and mobilisation.¹⁶ Meanwhile, the Department of Defence has permitted modular delivery of CIT for Reservists.¹⁷ However, the Committee received evidence that these measures were not entirely effective:

The modulisation (sic) of, say, Kapooka, is fine in theory, but the problem is: how many employers do you know will give six weeks off in a year? By the time these guys have completed their module training it could be three years down the line.¹⁸

6.17 The Committee took evidence from Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Larkins, Commanding Officer of 9th Combat Service Support Battalion, Adelaide, who advocated more flexibility in Reserve training:

One of the themes in my paper is the fact that we have to be flexible and we have to be prepared to offer a variety of options. The notion that there is a one size fits all solution does not recognise the difference between full-time

14 Lieutenant Colonel Garry Heald, Director, Reserves Army, *Statement to Committee*, 21 September 2001, p. 5

15 Witness 4, *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2001

16 Australian Government, *Defence 2000—Our Future Defence Force*, December 2000, p. 70

17 Lieutenant Colonel Garry Heald, Director, Reserves Army, *Statement to Committee*, 21 September 2001, p. 6

18 Witness 2, *Committee Hansard*, 19 July 2001, p. 137

and part-time service. Most part-time personnel have significant vocational or study commitments. Some have the flexibility to be able to attend a program such as the common induction training program but, by and large, it has been a significant disincentive. You have only to look at the enlistment numbers since the program was introduced to see that there is a direct correlation.

We need to be looking at a range of options. The ideal that everyone graduates after six weeks training at the same standard is certainly commendable but it is not realistically achievable. There is plenty of evidence to show that, certainly over the last six to eight years, large numbers of reservists have deployed on commitments of all kinds and by far the majority of them were inducted and trained under the old system, whereby they came in and did two weeks recruit training and then picked up a lot of on-the-job training in their units. That is the major difference between the reserve and the Regular Army. Reserve units have an ongoing training function, whereas regular units are set up. They receive soldiers from the training institutions fully trained and ready to be employed in their trade area, whereas in the reserve we take people basically straight out of recruit training and then they are imbued with those skills and qualifications over an extended period of time, recognising the fact that they are part-time personnel.¹⁹

6.18 The Committee received evidence in Perth that, even when the Reserve Brigade at Karrakatta was able to recruit Reservists, who had the time to attend CIT at Kapooka, quotas were applied to Kapooka courses, which only added to the frustration of the unit. As one witness told the Committee:

An issue that has come up in the unit since we have been doing a big recruiting drive is the number of people that we can send to Kapooka every week. We can send five people per month to Kapooka from WA. I seriously do not understand it - we recruit like crazy ...

Five per month that we can send away to Kapooka. We go out and we bust our butts to get all these people in and we cannot even get them away. We are putting them off. You cannot even get on a recruiting course that is six weeks long. So by the time these poor people get qualified it will be two to three years down the track. What kind of incentive is that for them to come in here? They would be on minimum wages the whole time. I certainly think that that is a hot issue here in WA for the reservists and the regs. It is both ARA and reserves, so it is not just reserves.²⁰

6.19 As there are still training facilities in Perth, it would probably be cheaper and more convenient to send a training team to Perth to conduct CIT training there rather than send all Regular and Reserve recruits to Kapooka. The same approach might also be applied in other places where training facilities were still available.

19 *Committee Hansard*, 6 August 2001, p. 506.

20 *Committee Hansard*, 19 July 2001, p. 143.

6.20 It is clear that there will be long-term recruitment problems for the Reserves while CIT is required for all Reservist recruits, even if it is done on a modular basis. Even recent changes in legislation are not the panacea for Reserve CIT and trade training. It may simply deter employers from employing Reservists. Alternative ways of providing training on a State-based level should be considered.

Manning and equipment for Reserves

6.21 All of the units visited by the Committee commented on shortages of manpower and equipment. Lack of live ammunition and restrictions on access to training areas were also cited as detrimental to Reserve morale.²¹ Invariably, these shortages prompted many Reservists to elect discharge. One witness quipped:

I am from a supply company. We call ourselves the supply section, because that is how many people show up on a regular Tuesday night.²²

6.22 Many Reservists complained about the lack of understanding of Reserves by Regulars, including by Regulars attached to Reserve units. Others complained that the pay and allowance they received barely covered their expenses in attending Reserve parades, especially if they live a long way from the Reserve unit. One Reservist in Perth drew attention to the problem of slow Comcare payment of medical expenses when a Reservist is injured on Reserve duty.

6.23 Short-term reviews of equipment and manning entitlements for all Reserve units will be conducted as part of Project Army 2003.²³ The Committee looks forward to observing the results of these reviews and the redistribution of manpower and equipment to remove the 'hollowness' of the Army Reserve. However, as the report of Project Army 2003 is yet to be released, more equipment must be made available in the meantime to Reserve units.

Conclusion

6.24 Previous reports have noted that the issue of the Reserve Forces 'represents the most intractable issue within the Army in the last 30 years'.²⁴ The Committee feels that this situation has not changed. Indeed, recruiting and wastage statistics for the Army Reserve over the last few years suggest that this issue has reached a critical point. Many of the recruitment and retention problems faced by the Army Reserve have been given short-term attention in anticipation of a strategic solution being produced from Project Army 2003. The Committee concluded that more emphasis might be placed on direct-to-unit recruiting and flexible CIT given the likely tasks for

21 B. Reed, submission Number 34, p 3

22 Witness 5, *Committee Hansard*, 19 July 2001, p 142

23 Lieutenant Colonel Garry Heald, Director of Reserves Army, *Committee Hansard*, 21 September 2001, p 765

24 Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade Report, *From Phantom to Force-Towards a More Efficient and Effective Army*, August 2000, p 135

Reserve units under Project Army 2003. For example, does a unit that is required to conduct Aid to the Civil Community tasks need to contain soldiers that are trained and equipped for war fighting? The Committee is of the firm view that Project Army 2003 provides the ultimate opportunity for the ADF to finally address 'the most intractable issue'.

Recommendation 34

The Committee recommends that the Department of Defence restructure the manning, equipment and training of the Army Reserve to match the new roles and tasks outlined by Project Army 2003, taking into account the difficulties for recruitment and retention of CIT training.