

**SENATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE
REFERENCES COMMITTEE**

**INQUIRY INTO RECRUITMENT & RETENTION
OF DEFENCE PERSONNEL**

SUBMISSION

Submission No: 64

Submittor: NAME WITHHELD

Address:

Telephone No:

Fax:

E-Mail:

No. of Pages: 15

Attachments: NO

Recruitment and Retention within the ADF

The Army Reserve, and how with common sense, it can work.

Introduction

1. I am grateful for the opportunity to prepare a submission to the inquiry into recruitment and retention of ADF personnel, having recently had the opportunity to complete the Army Reserve retention survey (a worthless document in my view) about a month or so ago. I am preparing this document in the hope that I have not wasted more than fourteen years of weekends, Tuesday and Wednesday nights, and girl-friends in an irrelevant effort to train as a soldier.

Scope

2. I hope to demonstrate in this document some of the difficulties faced by ADF Members as a whole, and Army Reservists in particular to demonstrate logically to the reader why the ADF is not effectively recruiting and retaining it's members. Much of the problem from a reservist's perspective is in the period between recruitment and discharge: training.

All too often recruitment is targeted as being something that the ADF must address, and usually the response is another slickly produced Television campaign that works well for about six months or so, and then loses appeal. By this stage many have been attracted to military service, and are in the training phase of their military career, something that effectively continues until the day they are discharged from service. It is here that the battle for retention is waged, and all too often the ADF does not even commit to battle, consequently sustaining many casualties in the process. If the inquiry does not examine the way that ADF members, especially reservists, are trained, then I believe that it cannot hope to address retention.

4. I will concentrate mainly on issues relating to reservists rather than those relating to full time members, because it is there that I have the most experience. I also have an interest as a taxpayer to ensure that money is spent more wisely than it has been in the past, and for this reason the term "cost-effective" may appear frequently. I use the term to try demonstrating that using logic as a test, several methods, procedures, policies and approaches are not, have not and will not be as effective as common sense might be.

General

5. It would be easy to address the issues associated with recruitment and retention if the ADF as a whole had some sort of cohesive policy relating to Recruitment, Training and Retention. Regrettably, no such coherent policy exists. The ADF spends in excess of \$50 million dollars a year on advertising, many more millions on training but pitifully little on hanging on to the very resource that it has created. Moreover, ADF attitudes and approaches to recruitment and retention have not grasped that whereas once we spent 3% of GDP on defence, now we spend only 1.8%, and many of our "just replace him" attitudes are no longer appropriate. Our attitude has to be one of "just retain him".
6. Worse than this, there is no training given to commanders at any level about retaining good, effective personnel. This is partially due to the policy of posting ADF members to different jobs every two to four years, with the expectation that they will be replaced by "the system". The Posting Cycle is supposed to replace members when they move, and enables the ADF members to develop a wide variety of skills, and meet new contacts, which it is hoped will enhance the overall effectiveness of the ADF. This is a positive thing in principle.
7. Unfortunately, the skills that members are being asked to absorb are becoming more complex, and require more time to absorb effectively. The posting cycles have not increased to accommodate this

fact, and so members are being asked to move on before being able to adequately absorb their new skills, and more importantly, use them in their jobs. The result is that there is a drain in experience in given jobs as people are swiftly moved on. In the reserve forces where resources are not adequately allocated, this effect is compounded.

8. In order to address the major reasons as to why as a whole the ADF (reservists included) have problems in recruiting and retaining members, it is necessary to examine the process of joining the ADF (either the full or part time). There have been many problems that exist between the Recruiting units or Manpower, and some cannot easily be overcome. Some reserve units now try to recruit for themselves because it is perceived that Manpower is not trying to recruit reservists hard enough. Some of the issues that a reservist faces are very different from that of a full-time member. For instance, seeking leave from work from school or work to undertake training is often a difficult task, specially when training times are as long as they are.
9. The ADF as a whole also is confronted with difficulties associated with recruitment, training and retention, some of which could be easily fixed by adopting changes in the way the problems are approached. Others will require either a complete reappraisal of what the ADF is expected to do and how that capability should be funded as a whole. As I have already stated, much of the problem relating to retention can only be addressed by addressing the way that soldiers are trained and then shifted between jobs. A failure to accept this proposition will mean that any approach used to rectify perceived problems will, given time, fail.

Role

10. The role of the reserve is one that will fundamentally affect how it should recruit, train and retain its members. If the reserve is only to provide Private soldiers to the full time army to reinforce it for operations, then the structure and role of the Army reserve will have to be significantly altered to reflect this. It will make some types of training irrelevant and unit structures should be revised completely. It will make it much harder to retain soldiers if such a policy is adopted, because there will be no incentive to progress through the organisation through promotion or transfer. Why would you aim to get promoted if you will not be employed as a Corporal or Sergeant in a Regular Army Unit because there are already ARA soldiers in those positions? Why would you transfer to a new unit if it offers nothing new and different? All of these factors have an impact on how effective retention measures will be.
11. It can be argued from a reservist's perspective that retention has been affected as a result of the East Timor Operations. Here, many reservists volunteered for active service, but many were not considered because they were Officers, Warrant officers, Sergeants and Corporals. Eventually some private soldiers went to 6RAR, but from a reservist's perspective, what good is it doing promotion courses if you are not even considered for deployment? Should you just get out on reaching the dizzy rank of Corporal?
12. Something that has not been commented on about the reserves reinforcement of 6RAR deployment to Timor is this: a significant proportion of those reservists had not done the 6 week recruit course and 10 week trade training. Many had gone through the earlier 3 or 4 week combined course and then completed unit training. At my unit, only one of those soldiers out of the more than 40 failed the barrier test to go to join 6RAR. Can it be concluded that we are spending too long teaching the basics?
13. Currently there are no plans to use Reserve units in East Timor, denying many units experience of combat operations. The offer of a composite unit for deployment might be an alternative worth exploring. Reserve units have been successfully deployed to Butterworth in Malaysia, and on exercise to New Zealand and the United States. Admittedly, a shorter rotation of three months would be more suitable for a reserve composite unit, and a much higher training tempo would be

required. Some form of compensation for employers would also be required to provide security for the reservist. But it would have the benefit of increasing experience across the ADF, and give an increase in pride and morale to the reserve as a whole. Much depends on the state of the economy: if unemployment is high, then reservists might be reluctant to risk leaving full-time employment to participate.

14. If real roles are allocated to reserve units, perhaps as it is done in the United States where Reserve and National Guard units are tasked with overseas deployments cost-effectively, then the issue of retention can be more realistically addressed. In such units, technology has been employed to ensure that such units are combat capable and effective enough for deployment (even with little lead-time) to do real jobs. Reservists in the United States are given the opportunity to fly and fight late model aircraft, ships and armoured vehicles, and are given real jobs in the order of battle. Some (probably most) soldiers in my unit have not even seen a Leopard tank despite the School of Armour being located in our major training area, and almost none have had the opportunity to see either a fire-power demonstration or fly in a Blackhawk or Chinook.

Recruitment

15. Less than half the population want to be part of the military. Many of the remainder will fail entry requirements due to health, height, weight, psychological, criminal or age barriers. Essentially the population sample that can be recruited from is small. It gets smaller still when each of the various services are competing for the same individual, and smaller again when some do not want to be part time members. When the requirements of training and policy (e.g. no woman is to serve as a rifleman or commando) is added to the equation, the sample gets very small indeed, making the recruiters goal difficult. When part of Australian Defence Force Recruiting Unit-Melbourne (ADFRU-M), we worked on a basis of 0.5%, when recruiting for Riflemen (i.e.: 1 out of 200 Australians would want to be, and were able to be a Part-time Rifleman). When it is realised that on average only one out of five to eight applications are eventually successful, the numbers become very daunting indeed.
16. This proportion is quite small, and it is therefore imperative that the "pool" that is suitable for employment is carefully handled. But the recruiter must also wage a war on the ex-members, the ones who have left and tell their mates that it was a waste of time and energy. Those who have left, through word of mouth, also "bag" military service to their mates and this process continues (much like the old advertisement of "and they'll tell two friends, and soon, and so on and so on"). This poisons the pool from which the potential recruits are drawn, because so many have heard bad things about reserve service from friends.
17. Another factor, not well understood, is that people join the part-time forces often for completely different reasons from those that join full-time forces. At the very beginning of a career, the motivations for being where they are differ. "Career" is a term that sometimes does not have much meaning to a reservist for a variety of reasons, the least of which being that often he already has one outside of the ADF that usually pays him more than the reserve can. He may join because he wants to be part of the military, because he wants to belong to something important, to meet new friends, to gain new skills, to gain pocket money or for any one of many other reasons, but chances are, "Career" is not one of them, and will not usually affect his motivation.
18. The reasons that a person may join directly as a reservist are many and frequently different to those that motivate someone to join as a Full-time member, but media advertising by the ADF rarely differs significantly from that used to attract full time members. Small wonder then that it works so poorly in attracting potential reservists. The old 1812 overture advertisements suggesting the teamwork and the history and achievements of the army worked well, and certainly drew people to reserve service: they were also distinctly different to the regular army media advertisements. But other factors also mitigate against potential reservists joining the ADF.

19. The reserve is essentially a community organization in the sense that a reservist will often choose which unit he belongs to on the basis of it's location relative to where he lives or works, not so much on what it does. This changes for Officers, Warrant Officers and Senior NCO's because they are posted to a unit, but the diggers and Junior NCO's generally are not moved from the units that they initially join, except by their own choice. If the Army moves a unit, it cannot expect that the soldiers from that locality will also follow it. Equally, someone looking to join the reserve will often walk into a depot off the street and declare that he wants to join, rather than enlist and then see where he ends up (as a full-time soldier may do). If the potential reservist cannot find a suitable unit that appeals to him and he is prepared to travel to, then we will never get or keep him in the Reserve.
20. One such factor is that there are only so many jobs within the various units. A rifle company is entitled to a certain selection of trades and jobs, as well as a total overall strength. The ADF frowns on units that are over-strength (not that this happens very often any more) even in regions where recruitment is strong. While this may not be a major problem in an area where there are many units to choose from, it is more difficult in the country where there may only be one depot every few hundred kilometres. It means that people that want to be, say, tank drivers, will not join because the nearest unit is a medical one, and there is no provision to change or take on someone that does not have a trade suitable for employment for that type of unit. This example is extreme, but there are such cases. I have encountered reservists that travel vast distances simply to be in a unit that appeals to them. More flexibility, within reason, may help attract more people to units.
21. This is especially true in the country, where the distances involved can be quite enormous. Small towns do have people in them that may consider part-time military service, but perhaps do not have units nearby.
22. The potential recruit may not even know where the nearest reserve unit is, and this is why the 131901 numbers are great: by phoning recruitment, the prospect is able to find out what he or she can do, and where the local units are. However, we found that the phones were very quiet during working hours, because the Television advertisements didn't start until the evening. When the ads were shown, the phones lit up, but there was never enough staff available to answer the inquiries, and many calls may have been left unanswered. I don't know if this has been addressed under Manpower, but certainly no call rotation system was installed while I was posted at ADFRU-M.
23. There have also been occasions where the relationship between the recruiters and the gaining units has been strained. Often it is because commanders and staff at either unit simply don't understand the nature of the procedures and difficulties associated with either recruitment or the subsequent training of the potential soldiers. ADFRU-M and the unit I was recruiting for had a very good relationship most of the time, and we co-operated well, but I know of several units that seemed to constantly experience difficulties. Often commanders do not know that the success rate in application is perhaps 1 in 5 or worse, and they get frustrated when they perceive that recruiting is not going smoothly, replacing their losses.
24. For recruiting to work well, the recruiters and the liaison staff between the two organisations (the gaining unit and the recruiting unit) must be of high quality. Too often units put their "spare" (read not so talented) people into the recruiting cells rather than those who are good at dealing with people. The units throw together poorly thought-out recruiting displays, usually not coordinated with anyone outside of the unit, often at locations like shopping centres on Saturdays (when the target prospect is at home in bed or at the footy). The results are predictably bad. A coordinated, cooperative approach with smart, well trained people works so much better.

25. The recruitment issue is made more difficult because often Army Reserve units are spread across a city or state with lots of depots (which is usually necessary). Different areas have different population compositions. For instance, recruiting in a well-off area is a different problem to recruiting in a less well off or industrial area. Some areas have a higher proportion of older Australian, unsuitable for employment in some units, where others are located in country towns, smaller now than they were when the depots were put there fifty or so years ago.
26. The solution most often adopted to solve this issue is the Multi-User-Depot or MUD. Here, several Army Reserve Units share a single depot, which seems on the surface to be a good idea (it is cheaper to run one rather than several). The downside is that in that one area, several units now compete for the potential soldiers and the pool in that area is only so deep. So most often, no unit at a MUD has a full strength. If a MUD is in a poor area recruiting-wise, the problem is severe. Most reservists, at least initially, tend to be locals.
27. Recruiting also is specifically affected by some policies relating to employment. For example, because women are not to be employed in direct combat roles, many women are turned away from rifle companies that can only have a handful of women in the supporting medical, clerical, administrative and transport. I do not make judgements about soundness of this policy, and rather I use it only as an example of the difficulties in recruitment. Nor am I suggesting that women should be used to fill combat positions simply because it is too hard to recruit enough men.
28. Some units prefer to recruit from other units rather than the general public, because of the nature of their jobs. The Commandos, Intelligence and Military Police are good examples because in each of these types of units; the members must have a good understanding of the ADF before they can be most effectively employed. This affects retention more than the recruitment problem, but increasingly, because of poor retention in units, people are being recruited from the street into these employment's.
29. Another factor, often not well grasped by many, is that reservists are frequently fairly intelligent, and can hold jobs of great responsibility out of the ADF. I am not suggesting that full time members are not intelligent, but I am making the point that often the skills already possessed by reservists and potential reservists are enormous, and additionally, they are not confined to the Officer ranks. More than just a few of the other ranks are either studying for, or hold qualifications well beyond VCE/HSC. Yet frequently, these skills are not regarded as relevant by recruiters or the ADF. Often the students and workers who want to be reservists are relatively easily trained, and can bring skills to the ADF that are not already there. For instance, computer operation, nursing and financial management are some that are not well exploited by the ADF. A failure to appreciate what skills someone already possesses makes it harder to attract him into service.
30. The most significant problem facing the potential recruit is the time he is expected to spend away from school or work being trained. He will spend at least six weeks at Kapooka, doing exactly the same course as a Full time soldier, gaining exactly the same competencies. This is part of the "One-Army" concept, which causes severe difficulties in attracting young people that are already working. It is especially so when trying to attract specialists like mechanics and fitters.
31. The solution the army looks like applying is modularizing the Kapooka course. So instead of being there once for six weeks, the solution is to go there three times, each time for two weeks. So potentially, a unit may have several "tiers" of recruits waiting to return to Kapooka when they are able, and these soldiers are Training Force Establishment or T.F.E. (i.e. untrained, unusable by the military and not deployable or productive).
32. I would question the cost-effectiveness of this policy on several levels: firstly, how much money does the ADF have to keep shuttling people back and forth on course. Secondly, is it cost effective

to train everyone to the same standard if a part time soldier only uses the skills once a week? Thirdly, has anyone asked employers, particularly small businesses, what sort of time they can afford to have their employee (or student) away? Does the ADF expect part-time units to effectively manage the several "tiers" of recruits that are partially finished their recruit course, as well as those partially through their Initial Employment Training? Lastly, just how cost-effective is this "One-Army" concept when reservists do not get the same opportunities, or benefits that full time members access?

33. An employer of the potential reservist, must now be convinced to release the soldier for either a six week period or three two-week periods, before the soldier can return to his unit, qualified to do nothing more than salute, shoot, do some first-aid and march. He will stay in this state (untrained) until his initial employment training is arranged and conducted. That requires more time away for continuous training. It is hard to attract working people to the reserve if such conditions exist. This means that the targeted section of the population comes down to two main groups: the unemployed and students.
34. Unemployed people present a real challenge for all Australians, including ADF recruiters. Many unemployed do not want to be part of the military, and a great many that do, in my experience, fail the barrier testing for enlistment usually due to educational, medical, aptitude or other reasons. The concept of mutual obligation may help attract the unemployed, but will it help retain them once they find employment outside of the Army Reserve? While military training might help, if you were unemployed and attracted to military service, surely you would look at joining full-time over part-time?
35. Students are the other demographic that can complete a six week continuous block of training in one go. In addition they usually sail through the educational barrier tests to entry, and are also easily trained. But their availability for long-term training is often restricted to the Christmas breaks each year, leading to a surge in demand for places on recruit courses. Often staff for the courses must be stripped out of units around Australia to provide support at this time of year. There are other issues associated with the retention of students beyond recruit training as well, that I will examine later. Training beyond recruit course and Initial Employment Training is also difficult, and eventually, these students become employees.
36. Targeting the student for the Christmas course series must begin early (July/August/September), well before exams begin and start to interfere with the enlistment process. Media advertising must begin early, with good co-operation between the units and recruiters to ensure that suitable people are eventually recruited for the available jobs. Given that students have been identified as a prize pool from which to recruit from, it is surprising that there are so few specific incentives to attract them in the first place. More surprising, given the difficulties with finding good people, is that there are no incentive programs ADF wide to retain them.
37. When I was part of ADFRU-M some years ago, we were given our unit recruitment goals and then told that from then on, there would be a six-week common recruit course rather than a two week one staged for reservists. We were staggered and horrified. My unit target was more than 150 as part of the revitalization effort. Nothing like this had been done before, and at the outset, it looked as if it would be difficult to make the new system work. Moreover, it was apparent to many of us that there had been no real effort to figure out how to train and hang on to these new members beyond their recruitment. On voicing our objections we were told to "fight your mission, not the green" or in other words, training and retention is not your problem, recruitment is.
38. Revitalization worked at my unit, in that, with lots of unit support, we actually met our goal. We presented information to more than 800 people and enlisted more than 100 of them into the unit we were responsible for. Suddenly, the unit was confronted with more than 100 soldiers that had to be

trained, and the additional resources needed had not immediately been allocated to make this possible. The delays and difficulties meant that many of the recruited left, unqualified beyond recruit training.

39. But revitalization also had another, very detrimental effect. It drained the pool of potential recruits badly. Remember, this pool is not that deep and big to begin with, and the effort dried it out badly. (My unit spoke to more than 800, had just over 300 applications to join filled out and got eventually more than 140 out of the effort, the best exchange rate I have ever encountered). Those that left disappointed have probably helped poison the pool by telling all that will listen, what a waste of time it was.
40. Five years ago, reservists did an abridged recruit course of two weeks usually in their home state. This course gave reservists enough training to be useful to a unit, and also was not too severe on either study or work commitments. Recruitment, while still difficult, was substantially easier when the effect of effect media advertising is considered, although retention was still difficult. As I have already stated, skills have become more complex, and training is now not as intense as it once was. So could perhaps a three-week course be enough to get reservists qualified for service in a unit? Do they really need to spend as much time on a drill square as they do at Kapooka? A more common sensed approach to requirement-driven training will make a big difference.

Training and Retention

41. The next phase of military existence is the training phase. The soldier participates in weeknight training (once per week for most units), weekend training (generally 8-10 times per year) and at least one two week camp once per year. Evening training gives a great sense on continuity, and makes the soldier keep touch with people in the unit on a regular basis. Carefully planned training can be effectively conducted, but too often the training is disrupted by administrative demands. Weekend training allows soldiers to work in teams, learn new and consolidate previous skills, often in the field or on the range. Two-week continuous training allows entirely new skill sets to be taught, or unit exercises to be staged on a larger and integrated scale. Generally continuous training is where new qualifications are gained, although many units are trying to get people trained on weekends and Tuesday evenings to reduce the pressure on what type of two week activity should be conducted.
42. Most of the training conducted by a unit has to be resourced out its allocation of Army Reserve Training Day Salaries (ARTDS), CLAE, fuel food and ammunition allocations. All too often these resources are not increased to allow for the fluctuations of training. A great deal of effort, usually by full time staff, is spent balancing the resource allocation against the training demands and requirements. This can be compounded by the cost of actually moving people around the country to participate on courses being run interstate, because they are not run locally. The result is that activities are cancelled, scaled back or compromised, usually with the result that the reservist suffers.
43. Assuming that eventually our soldier can get enough time off to go to Kapooka (thus owing his employer a really big favour), his next task is to go through what is called I.E.T. or Initial Employment Training, which is designed to actually give him a trade or qualification. Until he has passed IET in his chosen trade, he is TFE or Training Force Establishment, essentially an untrained administrative burden to the unit he belongs to. He cannot participate in most unit training, and is not deployable until he has completed IET.
44. I.E.T. is an important part of a soldiers training because it gives him an increase in his pay rate, and for a reservist a place within the unit which is specifically his. He now belongs to that unit, and given that he is treated fairly and can participate in the training being conducted, he is more likely to remain. He is also useful to the unit and can participate in more advanced and demanding

activities. He can participate in Unit exercises and activities and can look forward to doing advanced courses and eventually promotion courses. This is important because the more a reservist has invested in training, the more likely it is he is retained.

45. Just how long I.E.T runs for depends on what sort of unit and what job in that unit the new soldier has been slated for. Some I.E.T. courses are short, others are very long, and some can be done in modular form. Some types of jobs affect what a given unit can actually do. For instance, a rifle battalion needs riflemen on operations and given enough ARTDS, CLAE, Ammunition and other resources, can run I.E.T. courses for riflemen. But usually, it cannot conduct some types of training unless it already has enough qualified specialists like drivers and medics and approval to run the courses from the appropriate command. Incidentally, to become a BASIC medic in the reserve, a member has to now spend something like 32 weeks on continuous training. This makes it hard for members of the reserve to get qualified as medics.
46. This has serious ramifications for retention because the unit training will now be restricted due to a lack of specialists. The lack of medics will mean that a unit cannot conduct some types of range practices, thus making it impossible to qualify people with new skills or simply fire weapons that they are supposed to be able to. Because soldiers can no longer train progressively (and soldiers love to train) over time they will see that they are learning nothing new and stop attending citing other, often fictional, reasons. Eventually they will discharge.
47. There is also the friction that exists between Land Command and Training Command, especially in relation to the allocation of resources. Reserve units are now often told to provide more of the ammunition, CLAE, ARTDS and ration allocation towards trade qualification training, from an existing allocation of resources, designed to allow the unit to conduct advanced training (which helps retention!). The units then have to try and fund the training for the T.F.E. soldiers from resources originally destined for other tasks. Training Command basically hands unqualified soldiers to units and tells them to train them.
48. There is usually a delay between Kapooka and I.E.T. and this delay can be either short or long, depending on the reservists ability to do another course quickly, and the Army to provide a course that is suitable for the reservist to complete. Many reserve units loose soldiers in this delay period, even if there is relevant training organized for the soldier. From the soldiers perspective there is not enough of an incentive to see this phase through. So the ADF has just wasted a sizeable advertising, recruiting and training effort before the soldier even becomes useful! So why do units loose these fresh soldiers?
49. Firstly, expectations are quite high, that having put up with what recruit training, they might now actually get to do what is shown in the media advertisements. Most are disappointed that they don't see tanks and ride in helicopters and get to do the active stuff every weekend. When they discover just how rarely such things occur (my infantry unit last flew in helicopters in 1993!), it makes them feel like they have been lied to. This often gets people off on a poor start.
50. The Rifleman course (as were most others) in the Army Reserve was once two weeks long. As a result of the One Army Concept it now up to TEN weeks long. It can be completed in modules, but it takes a long time to get people qualified. No wonder they give reserves away, if for every holiday they have for the next few years is spent chasing a basic rifleman qualification. It takes even more time to produce a specialist like a medic, a mortar-man, a pioneer and so forth. Is it any wonder that the Reserve is struggling to qualify and deploy people under this constraint?
51. The same is true of promotional courses. Subject 2 for Corporal (one of two courses required for promotion) is now 42 days long, where once for a reservist it was 16 days! To become a Warrant Officer, one now needs to complete 12 weeks of training. It can be done in modules, but generally,

most people looking at doing the courses are full time workers. If you get two weeks off to do military training a year, it takes six years (assuming you pass everything), during which you cannot do a unit exercise! It restricts some from completing the courses meaning that they cannot contribute at higher levels. Compounding the insult is that on some courses, you get weekends off, and so rather than being able to finish earlier (by working on the weekends), you are trapped on an extended course!

52. As an example, through a friend I discovered that if I had joined at 18, and passed Kapooka, and then joined an Intelligence Unit, it would take a while to get promoted. By the time I would have passed all the courses I needed to be a Warrant Officer Class 2, at the rate of 2 weeks per year, I would be 72 years old! Of course I would have been retired automatically at 55 as a senior Corporal or Junior Sergeant, and in that time, I would NEVER do a single unit exercise! I would also be too old to deploy into combat or overseas.
53. Training variety also impacts on how long a reservist will continue to attend. After all, these people give up time with their families, study or work to train as soldiers, inside effectively their own "free-time". Full time soldiers have no choice, but part time soldiers, if given a better offer or alternative will find other things to do. If a unit starts to break up the tempo of it's training continuity by reducing how often it trains, the reservist will find something better to do. This is especially true for members with young families or those that are starting out in the work force.
54. Training also affects retention in other ways. Some years ago, I was told a story by a friend: at one Reserve Unit in Melbourne, Full-time staff at a Part-time unit were dismayed that some reservists turned up late to training on Tuesday nights. This was despite many of the "culprits" coming straight from work or other, external responsibilities, being otherwise good, trained soldiers. The solution chosen to fix the problem was that anyone not at Army on time was not to be paid. The unit strength fell by more than 25% in a month. Reservists figured that, if they were not going to get paid, why bother, and would often turn the car around half-way to the unit and drive home to watch television rather than get hassled for being late due to circumstances beyond their control. Some of the them held critical positions and within 2 months, unit strength fell another 20%.
55. Once, a full time member of my unit confided to me that he did not expect that many reservists to come away on a given weekend, because the forecast predicted cold, wet weather. Sure enough, few reservists came away and he took this as being a sign that reservists were fair weather soldiers. The training scheduled for that weekend had been exactly same as the previous two or three weekends, and no new skills were to be taught or practiced. Why would a reservist sit out in the middle of the bush and freeze to gain nothing except a fairly feeble pay rate?
56. Twelve months later, at exactly the same time of year, in the same weather, the unit had 300% more soldiers involved in a training activity because it involved new and different skills. Training variety impacts hugely on attendance.
57. On another occasion a full time member of a part time unit set up a fabulous training program, it being well resourced (for once), well planned and conducted. Unfortunately, the culmination of the program sat astride a weekend around exam time. Almost no reservists that were students attended, not because they didn't want to, but because the course they were studying for what will one-day feed them and pay their rent. Because the timing of the training was inopportune, sadly, it failed to be most effective.
58. Some months ago a reservist handed back her kit and headed overseas. She was employed as a theatre-nurse in a major hospital in Melbourne, but despite trying for almost three years, had not been able to get the Army to recognize a single qualification that she had. She was effectively a T.F.E. despite being qualified as part of a surgical team at a major Melbourne hospital. While she

may have still left to go overseas, the fact that the ADF had not been able to recognize her capabilities and qualifications was certainly a contributing factor to the unit losing another soldier.

59. My unit has been confronted with a lack of resources, especially ARTDS and CLAE on several occasions, most recently as a result of Operation GOLD, or the support to the Olympics. Most units in 2 Division found that they lost a significant amount of vehicles, fuel, food and ARTDS as the Olympics approached making it difficult to train at all, and thus retain the soldiers not involved on Operation GOLD. On other occasions the lack of resources has meant that the unit parade every other Tuesday or Wednesday night, disrupting the units cohesion. When that happens, morale suffers and retention becomes extremely difficult. The disruption leads to soldiers looking for other things to do instead, and having found them, it is easier to give being a reservist away.
60. I use these examples to demonstrate the effect of poor training, resourcing or policy enforcement. Reservists do what they do because they want to do it and enjoy it, and not so much because they feel obligated to train. That sense of obligation is easily undermined if they are not learning new skills, or simply poorly managed. It is easy to decide that you've had enough if you have done it all before and been kicked around in the process. Uniquely perhaps, reservists can and will "go on strike" by not attending training when presented with what they consider to be, stupidity.
61. This can be exacerbated when Regular Army staff "upset" Reservists. Direct Regular Army methods can be counter-productive when trying to inspire the Part-time members. Sometimes the Regular Army cadre members have brilliant ideas, and awesome experience, but this matters little if they have alienated the Part-time members, who have decided that they don't think that the cadre give a stuff. Certainly, I have dealt with cadre members that are everything except supportive. But by the same token, I have worked with many that have tried long and hard to make units better.
62. There are specialists like lawyers, surgeons and others that can be best employed as reservists. But equally perhaps, there are financial and contract specialists within the reserve that might be able to assist with aspects military purchasing and financing if given the opportunity, even if it is only in an advisory capacity. As far as I know, no such effort has been made to even identify such people.
63. It is understood widely that people leave the system for a variety of reasons, some of which cannot be affected by any decision or action made by the ADF. But there are things that the ADF could be doing to help reduce the scale of the problem.

Addressing the problems: Making it work.

64. Reservists are not well compensated for what they do. They do not get overtime, and are sometimes penalized by employers by being reservists. They do not qualify for some of the benefits full time members are entitled to, and are often not aware of the ones that they are entitled to. All give up time with friends or family, forego holidays, birthdays and other celebrations to participate in training. They give up their free time to train. As far as I can gather, we are the only employees in the country over 18 that do not get superannuation payments, and where a full time soldier could at one stage qualify for a pension, reservists have never been able to qualify for even a fraction or proportion of such a benefit. Where is the incentive to stay a reservist? Financially, many often lose out training because employers grant only unpaid leave.
65. The issue of pay is often raised in the Army Newspaper, and usually the answers about the relatively poor pay of the reservist are based on the equivalent ranks net pay rate divided by 365. But Full-time members get 4 weeks annual leave, and many get most weekends off, whereas reservists have to work on those very weekends. Taking into account these factors, the actual rate of pay, before allowances should be something like the equivalent net pay rate divided by 241 (365 - weekends - 20 days annual leave, and then less the required tax), or 1.5 times what is actually is.

Some reservists don't do service just for the money, but being adequately, and fairly compensated might help keep some in.

66. The pressures of working strange hours and places is also a common suffering to many that are full-time members. This can place pressure on the reservists family causing him to stop training or suffer more dire consequences. I can pick many reservists out in my unit that have suffered divorce or the loss of relationships due in part to reserve service. Yet there is little done in most units to encourage the support of family members or employers due to a lack expertise. Contact people, trained and experienced in such matters may help reduce pressures, and thus increase retention.
67. We also risk being incapacitated in training, and thus not being able to go back to work on the Monday after the weekend. While the reservist is covered for injuries sustained on service, he isn't when training to keep fit in his own time, and his employer isn't in either case. Reservists risk not being able to return to work for several days, eating into sick pay and incurring that wrath of employers who do not like losing their people. A process that would cover the employers when a reservist is hurt may help with retention. As far as I know, no such process exists. Perhaps a form of insurance could be set up to compensate employers and members.
68. It is important to understand that reservists are often pressured by employers (particularly in small-business) not to stay in the reserve, or not to train. There is not enough protection or support to change this. A recent benefit offered to employers was that for the third and subsequent weeks of continuous training, the employer would be paid more than \$800 per week to compensate (or hire an interim replacement). The only problem is that last year, few units had anywhere near enough ARTDS to plan a three or four week exercise, leave alone enough resources (Food, fuel, ammunition) to conduct it. I have not even been told how an employer actually gets paid the amount, or where or who applies for it. My guess is that the scheme will be regarded as a failure, because no unit can plan to effectively use it.
69. There is no incentive to stay in the reserve, nor for that matter is there a compulsory period of service for a reservist on enlistment. Many years ago, you signed on for a fixed period of time but this no longer applies. Psychologically this can be important because it commits you to something for a fixed period. Bringing such a scheme back may be helpful. Enforcing the commitment expected on reservists might also help, providing that there are guidelines established for units to act sensibly under such circumstances.
70. The longer someone stays, the more they can be trained and the more useful they become, but there are no incentives offered to try to retain soldiers. A bonus paid the end of each five-year period may help retain soldiers for longer periods of time. Such an incentive worked in the Ready Reserve scheme fairly well where a bonus ensured that reservists attended a certain amount of training time. Such a measure might be balanced against a reduced need to recruit and spend vast amounts of money on media advertisements, as well as training new soldiers only to lose them again and again.
71. For students, perhaps a better approach could be a substantial reduction in HECS for each block of 50 days training that they achieve in a financial year, instead of a cash incentive or bonus. Access to cheaper student loans or anything that might help them with their studies may work better than nothing. Ensuring that training is programmed not to interfere with the exams at schools and university might also help in the longer term, but this is more of a unit problem than a policy issue.
72. Some reservists also spend a significant amount of time outside normal parade timings trying to keep fit, or preparing lessons or conducting other administration without any form of compensation, because the system has not found a way to compensate them. During revitalization, some units paid for gym memberships, but only under certain conditions, and at certain gyms.

73. The AIRN program is compulsory for reservists as it should be, but on reaching exactly the same standards required by regular soldiers does not give the same opportunities for overseas deployment to reservists. This would be called discrimination in the civil sector, because reservists are often not considered for deployment overseas simply because they are reservists. AIRN was sometimes ignored for Full-time members in the initial Timor deployment, when reservists, AIRN compliant, were not even considered to replace the non-AIRN Full-time members. If the Full-time army starts taking the Part time army seriously, then perhaps the Part-time army might take the army seriously. That means a level-playing field, especially if we have meet exactly the same standards.
74. It would be fair to say that there are those that despair that policy changes can be made to make the Army Reserve into something other than a "Ghost Army", but the reality is that some reasonably simple changes could make Reservist retention an easier task than it currently is. Reducing the length of continuous training, and making sure that a variety of training is available would help as would adequately resourcing the reserve to conduct such training. Trying to gain access to the glamour gear like helicopters, tanks and the like may also positively assist by giving the reservist a sense that we are valued, being trained with enthusiasm and can use or work with complex equipment. The United States has reserve and guard units that use equipment far more complex than our full-time units: is our reserve regarded as being too stupid to operate this type of equipment? I am not suggesting that Regular army access should be reduced in favour of reserve access, but increasing exposure to the glamour gear would probably help. It might also help to make the reserve more combat capable and thus cost-effective.
75. Importantly, Reserve units need to be better resourced with ammunition, fuel, ARTDS and the like. It is hard for people to plan to conduct effective training if the resources are not there in the first place, or additional, and apparently more important obligations are suddenly handed to a unit, without a corresponding increase in the necessary resources. This already happen far too frequently, and it makes planning effective training extremely difficult. It also causes confusion when activities are suddenly scrapped, or the continuity of training is interrupted. Too often, training is restricted because of a lack of resources, and then magically, at the end of a financial year, units are suddenly trying to spend every thing they have so that their allocation next year is not reduced.
76. There needs to be effective communication between the recruiting units and the gaining units. Perhaps it should be made mandatory that recruiting organisation/unit provides a liaison officer at the headquarters of the gaining units or instead that the Commanding Officer, Second-In-Charge or the Operations Officer of the unit has spent time in a recruiting unit (if they are re-introduced). Understanding the nature of the problem might encourage lateral thinking to help solve these problems.
77. The problem is that under the "One-Army" concept currently in force, that such changes may be unacceptable to the commanders of the ADF. The question really boils down to just how much continuous training is a reservist expected to do and how do we make it possible for him to do it, if the "One-Army" policy is to remain. From my observations, I would conclude that most reservists believe that "One-Army" does not work in its current form and will lead to the extinction of the Army Reserve because we cannot recruit and train people under this policy. This has already begun.
78. "One-Army" is basically one-sided, and while it is policy, the reserve will automatically continue to shrink. This is a pity, because it is popular within the community. The Ready Reserve, contrary to perception, did not work as well as some would have you believe, and it caused a great deal of resentment within the Full-time and Part-time forces. It was far more expensive than the "pure" reserve and not really that much better trained or deployable. But it did force people into an

obligation, something that the reserve currently does not do. By introducing a fixed period of service, some people may be encouraged to train.

79. It is also curious that "One-Army" has not been built more flexibly. Full-time members sign on for a given period, and are given much more opportunity for training than Part-time members yet no real effort is made to get them into the Army Reserve at the end of their service period to maintain their skills. Surely this is not cost effective?
80. The policy may be able to accommodate this more flexibly by demanding that a full time member wanting to get out early can do so by completing two or three years service in the reserve for each year that he has not completed. This might increase the skills base, particularly if an effort is made to post these members to training units. Similarly, it might expand the capabilities of the ADF by having pilots, tank crew members, gunners and other specialist able to help expand existing skills. It might allow the issue of more complex equipment (like tanks and helicopters) to reserve units and allow them to work with these assets, making retention easier. It might even appeal to some full time members seeking an early out from the service. We as tax-payers spend millions of dollars on pilot training throughout the ADF, and then have no real reserve units to put them in when they leave full-time service. This is criminal when the ADF has the pilot shortage that it does.
81. Of all of the issues facing the reserve and its recruitment and retention I would argue the most essential change required is a careful revision of the "One-Army Policy" to ensure that reservists are actually given some voice in how we are trained, recruited and retained. The reserve has effectively no say in how almost what was once more than 20,000 people were recruited, trained, deployed and equipped. The fall in reserve numbers has been inevitable when it has been managed so badly, and with so little input from the reservists and their employers.
82. The way to best increase retention, and skill levels is to reduce the length of courses from "full-time" duration to "part-time" ones, more suited to part-time members. The Army is now demolishing the reserve in favour of a very, very small reserve force. This force will have undergone more instruction, but still not have practiced those skills any more than it currently does, because units cannot train without resources and other supporting personnel (we still only work one evening a week and one weekend per month). There should be shorter courses, with more emphasis on developing unit training to increase skills. Raising a staffed training cell, with appropriate resources (e.g. ammunition, CLAE, ARTDS etc) at Army Reserve Units to help coordinate this effort would be of enormous benefit. Conducting training that reservists can do is the key to aid retention, and currently, this is not possible for the vast majority of reservists.
83. An irony associated with the difficulty with retention is that it is easier now to give training opportunities to reservists than ever before. Technology has allowed things like the Weapon Training Simulation System (WTSS) to make marksmanship training more accessible than ever before, and CD-ROM's can be burned to provide training packages to reservists preparing for course training. A wider application of these types of technology will enable higher standards to be attained, if only it can be embraced more widely.
84. This sort of approach will allow more non-continuous training to be conducted within units, if they are equipped with a dedicated training cell especially tasked with running such training. With the right sort of approach, units might well gain skills that they have never had access to before. It might mean that the courses that are currently far too long for the Part-time members to contemplate completing might be reduced in duration, by making the course not so much a teaching exercise, but more of a testing one to ensure that the knowledge has been absorbed.
85. The reserve by its very nature is much cheaper to run than the full time army, because it is paid on attendance. It can even be deployed at reasonably short notice if the circumstances demand it, but it

is not a persistent solution because with reservists away for an extended time, ultimately the national economy suffers. The way a war is fought has evolved, with no World War 2 type build-ups anymore. Governments in democracies cannot win long, drawn out conflicts because the expectation of the nation will be that the war must be won quickly. Governments will not have time to build up additional full-time units to ensure a win, and will have to go with what they have, or accept terms from the aggressor. Therefore, reserve forces must be deployable and capable.

86. It makes sense therefore that the reserve must be well trained and equipped so that it can be used quickly. But it cannot train effectively without adequate resources, but more importantly, it will not have members at all within a very short-time frame with the current policies active

Conclusions and Recommendations

87. The reserve is a viable part of the ADF if it is allowed and encouraged to train effectively. Reserve members give up significant opportunities and time to participate, but they are increasingly being frustrated in this aim because of the policies of the Army, most of which cannot be cost-effective, especially when employing someone one or two days per week. Some of these frustrations can be mollified if common sense is applied to policy development, training and management. Such an approach will need to be forced on the policy makers, because it is hard to believe that the reserve forces are given any sort of priority in resources, planning, policy development or training. The major points that must be addressed are:

ROLE:

What does Australia reasonably want the Reserve Forces to be able to do, and what is it prepared to spend to achieve this aim? The role that is chosen will ultimately determine the training, recruitment and retention strategies of the Reserve forces.

RECRUITMENT:

Unless the Army recognises that we are now recruiting from a tiny proportion of the population, it is destined to continue to fail to meet it's recruiting goals. It should either aim to reduce the recruit training duration at Kapooka to make the reserve more accessible to members of the working community, or look at ways and means to attract and retain the students and unemployed. Unless this is done, the Army reserve will die due to attrition as time goes on. It must also look at specifically look at targeting potential reservists rather than as an alternative to full time service. Signing on for a fixed period (say three years initially) may help, but only if in this time the soldier can hope to complete the training set out. As I have already stated, at least some of the reservists deployed to East Timor did not do the 6 week recruit course, the 10 week IET and apparently coped all right. It must also realise that the approach and processes it uses may not be cost-effective, when we are spending less on defence now than we did when the approach was introduced.

RETENTION:

Poor training policy and inadequate resources in training is the primary reason that the Army Reserve cannot retain soldiers. Courses are too long, units are poorly resourced, and opportunities far too limited for reservists to train effectively. Unless "One-Army" is modified to better suit reservists and rebuilt to attract ex-Full time members the reserve force will continue to die from natural attrition. Technology can help solve problems in training if it embraced. Training variety is something beyond the scope of this document, but this can dramatically affect attendance and ultimately capability. In addition, it is nothing short of criminal that we spend vast amounts of money on some selected full-time members, and then do not put them into Reserve service somewhere. Offering incentives to stay in the reserve might help, along with making training accessible. Remember, the reserve is cheaper to run than a full-time component, especially when you consider how rarely much of the full-time component is actually used! I am not suggesting that the Full-time forces are a waste of money: they are for the most part superb people, doing a

difficult job well, but they are expensive to maintain. Reservists can be cheaper substitutes for some Full-time members if they are trained appropriately, retained and given the same opportunities. The current policies do not allow this to be the case.

88. Recruitment and retention is going to be an ongoing problem for the ADF because the expectations of Australians have changed over the past 40 years or so. People do not accept the same work-place conditions as they once did, and there has not been enough done to make the decision-makers aware of this. Twenty-five years ago Australia spent more than 3% of it's GDP on defence, and now we spend 1.8%. Clearly we cannot afford the same recruitment, training and retention methods as we once did, and yet many of those policies, approaches, and importantly, attitudes have not been altered to deal with the new funding reality. Is it any wonder that using old tactics we are loosing new battles?
89. Some points I have covered do not require a large injection of money to gain a benefit: sometimes the change of a policy or process can make a huge difference. In other cases, a lack of money is the source of the problem. The question really is, what do we have to spend to reduce what need to spend to replace those that we loose?
90. I believe that the Army Reserve can be far more valuable that it is. It can be very good value for money, well trained, enthusiastic and able to deploy faster than it currently is, if some simple common sense is applied in the areas of recruitment and retention. At the start of this diatribe I suggested that the retention survey was a wasted effort and that perhaps I have wasted my time and efforts in trying to keep and train soldiers in the Army Reserve. If the current policies, approaches and thinking prevail, I will conclude, unfortunately, that I have.
91. I also believe that what I have stated will not be popular, and could well result in me being punished at some future stage. For this reason, I wish for myself and my unit to remain unidentified from Defence Force personnel that might be able to undertake such actions. This has been prepared independently of my unit, and it too should not be held responsible for any views or opinions that I submit: they are mine alone.