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Framing a Strategic  
Approach for

# **Reserve Component Joint Officer Management**

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Harry J. Thie, Margaret C. Harrell, Sheila Nataraj Kirby,  
Al Crego, Roland J. Yardley, Sonia Nagda

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1776 Main Street, P.O. Box 2138, Santa Monica, CA 90407-2138

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## Summary

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The Department of Defense (DoD) management processes for active component joint duty assignments, education, and training were built around the solid foundation provided by the Goldwater-Nichols Act (GNA) of 1986. However, it is being increasingly recognized that the current approach to joint matters needs to evolve from its current static format to a more dynamic approach that broadens the definitions of “joint matters” and “joint qualifications” and allows for multiple paths to growing the number of joint officers. An important extension of the current strategic plan is a more explicit and strategic consideration of reserve component joint officer management. The need for a systematic examination of how reserve component joint officers are trained and developed is becoming increasingly urgent, given the dramatic increase in the use of the reserve forces.

Building on work done earlier for the active component with respect to joint officer management, this research focuses on framing a strategic approach to reserve joint officer management that (a) addresses the requirements for and the supply of joint officers for the reserve component and (b) accounts for the unique constraints of and challenges to reserve joint officer management. A strategic approach for reserve component joint officer management must deliberately determine which jobs require joint experience or which provide it. In particular, given the current strategic intent of the DoD with respect to jointness (“push it to its lowest appropriate level”), the need for joint experience should be measurable in a much larger number of billets, in particular in billets internal to the service. Moreover, valid joint experi-

ence might now be provided by service in billets internal to the services, particularly those associated with Joint Task Forces (JTFs), with service component commands, and with joint planning and operations.

## Producing Joint Officers

For active duty officers, a joint duty assignment (JDA) is defined as one in which the officer gains significant experience in joint matters. A list of such assignments, called the Joint Duty Assignment List (JDAL), is maintained. Moreover, if an officer gains education and experience of particular types for specified durations, he becomes a Joint Specialty Officer (JSO), or someone who is trained in and oriented toward joint matters. If an officer has completed the second phase of joint professional military education (JPME II) but not a JDA, he is considered a JSO nomination. The DoD instruction on reserve component joint officer management issued in 2002 introduces two additional terms to the lexicon, *Fully Joint Qualified* and *Joint Officer*. The first requires Advanced Joint Professional Military Education (AJPME) (the reserve component [RC] equivalent of JPME II) and sufficient time in a qualifying billet. This is not unlike a JSO. The second term defines an officer who has achieved Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) joint learning objectives<sup>1</sup> and has served or shall serve in a joint duty assignment-reserve (JDA-R) billet. For one who has served in a JDA-R billet, the difference between being a Joint Officer and Fully Joint Qualified appears to be in achieving CJCS learning objectives through a process other than AJPME.

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<sup>1</sup> The instruction does not define how this is measured. It could be through school attendance or self-study or other means.

## **Determining Demand for Reserve Active-Status List Officers with Prior Joint Education and/or Experience**

The current level of utilization of the RC and new missions, organizations, and structures stood up within the RC point to an increased recognition that the work required of reservists is becoming increasingly joint.<sup>2</sup> Like the JDAL for active duty list officers, the JDA-R is focused on the supply of officers with joint experience. Both lists designate positions that qualify officers with joint experience; neither shows where such experience might be needed. Although some services and components may have begun to make these determinations, we found no databases that routinely collected it.

Demand for prior jointness—joint education and experience—is likely to be very different across the different reserve categories. For example, the typical reserve unit staffed by drilling reservists is unlikely to have a demand for officers educated and trained in joint matters, with perhaps a few exceptions. More than 70 percent of O-4 and above selected reservists are in this category. The exceptions could be unit reservists who may volunteer for active duty for special work (for example, in a JTF) or Individual Mobilization Augmentees (IMAs) who are generally assigned to active component organizations including positions in joint organizations. This is also true of Active Guard/Reserve (AGR) officers who are serving in external organization billets, for example, at the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) or on the Joint Staff or in combatant commands. So we would expect that much of the demand for IMAs and AGRs with joint experience or education would be a derived demand from active component organizations, external to the military service, with little demand within service reserve component units.

Demand for prior jointness is also likely to be very different across the different reserve components. For example, Navy reserve officers

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<sup>2</sup> This is a result of several factors to include more military work being defined as joint, more service work being done in a joint operating environment, and reservists participating in such work and in greater numbers. Moreover, homeland security and homeland defense tasks (HLS/HLD) are increasing, especially with respect to interagency and intergovernmental needs.

have few opportunities to serve as IMAs in Navy organizations or in unit augmentations to Navy active component units. And thus the Navy Reserve is less likely to require or provide its officers with joint experience. However, Guard units have both federal and state missions and may be called up to coordinate homeland defense or disaster relief with a number of state and federal agencies. Thus state missions are more likely to provide interagency and intergovernmental joint experience and to benefit from such prior joint experience.

Indeed, demand for prior jointness is also likely to be very different across the different kinds of jointness. For active duty list officers, the greatest demand is for multiservice qualified officers, then multinational, and last interagency qualified officers. For the reserve components, especially the Army and the Air National Guard, interagency qualifications are likely to be in far greater demand than multinational qualifications. Moreover, intergovernmental experience at the state and local level also plays a role in demand for the National Guard that is not typically seen for active duty list officers.

## **Determining Potential Supply of Reserve Joint Officers**

We recognize that management of reserve active-status list officers is more of a “pull” system than a “push” system. There are not central assignment processes as there are for active duty list officers. As a result, individual officers must be heavily involved in decisions about their assignments and education. The concept of a formal opt-in system of reserve joint officer management is to be explored. Particularly, this might be useful for those who aspire to general or flag officer. Moreover, the assigning and educating processes, to the extent they exist, vary for the different reserve categories: unit-based officers, individual mobilization augmentees, and active guard and reserve.

The debate about how to obtain joint credit for both active duty list and reserve active-status list officers centers on which circumstances, whether formal assignment or ad hoc responsibilities, provide a valid joint experience for officers. The active component system is currently constrained by the GNA (as contained in Title 10 U.S. Code) as far as



the types of assignments (and the tenure required in those assignments) before an officer receives joint credit. Reserve component joint officer management (JOM) is not so constrained. Therefore, in our analysis, we explored a number of different systems that could be used for evaluating either processes or outputs/outcomes as a basis for qualifying officers—methods that provide the building blocks for a more flexible, accommodating, and valid joint officer management system.

If a billet- and time-based structure serves as the primary element for identifying joint experience, then the JDA-R could contain those assignments that are judged to consistently provide each officer who performs that job with a valid joint experience. Such a time- and billet-based system is administratively simple, albeit relatively inflexible. The required tenure might be consistent for all jobs, or it might vary by location or by characteristics of the job. However, there would be less pressure for the JDA-R to include all billets that might possibly, under some conditions, provide a joint experience, as the billet-based system could be complemented by an individual evaluation method that acknowledges the joint experience gained by officers in other, non-JDA-R assignments.

An individual-based system could provide joint credit to those officers who documented their proficiency in identified joint areas. This system might consider the valid joint experiences of officers who were serving in civilian positions<sup>3</sup> or positions in organizations external to the service that were not on the JDA-R, or who served in JDA-R assignments for less than the identified required tenure. Such a system might also acknowledge the valid joint experiences of officers who were serving in service-specific organizations if such billets were not on the JDA-R. The evaluation criteria that assess the depth or breadth of experience required might vary for those officers serving in internal service positions, or the level of authority required to approve the joint experience of officers in internal service assignments might vary from those in external organizations; but this system could flexibly acknowledge officers who received a valid joint experience in assignments that were otherwise not typically or consistently joint. To the extent that officers

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<sup>3</sup> DoD surveys reservists to determine their civilian skills.

in certain assignments were consistently applying for, and receiving, joint credit, such assignments should be considered for addition to the JDA-R.<sup>4</sup>

Regardless of the combination of accreditation structures used to identify officers who have received a valid joint experience, joint education, joint training, or even joint acculturation, there should be recognition in the system of different levels of joint proficiency. For example, while it is important to acknowledge those officers who are fully joint qualified, it is also important to recognize those officers who have received sufficient joint education to begin a joint position with some proficiency. Such proficiency levels could also acknowledge the relatively different levels of experience gained by reserve active-status list officers. These levels might be joint officer or fully joint qualified officers. Additionally, there may be value in separately identifying those officers who are proficient and experienced in multinational issues, multiservice issues, interagency issues, and intergovernmental issues. Doing so, however, should be decided after an assessment of the number of officers needed with these particular backgrounds.

### **Estimating Supply of Reserve Joint Officers**

Approximately 225 reserve active-status list officers have completed AJPME through January 2006, about 250 will complete AJPME in 2006, and another 400 will complete AJPME in 2007. Thereafter, the Joint Forces Staff College (JFSC) plans to provide AJPME for as many as 500 reserve active-status list officers on an annual basis. We cannot, however, estimate with current data the number of reserve officers who have obtained a joint experience or joint education and who remain reserve officers. It is likely that there is currently an insufficient amount of reserve active-status list officers with joint experience and education, even if they are tracked and assigned appropriately to maximize the utilization of reservists who might be considered joint officers, or fully

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<sup>4</sup> The process and outcome of providing joint credit to officers in an internal service organization should be carefully monitored and assessed, perhaps in a pilot study to determine what kind of officers were receiving joint credit and for what kind of job experiences. Moreover, the discussion, while focused on JDA-R and non-JDA-R positions is applicable to JDAL and non-JDAL positions for active duty list officers.

joint qualified, were such assessment practices in place. The relatively large demand for reservists<sup>5</sup> suggests that there is a need to assess the joint qualification level of reserve active-status list officers to ensure that the relatively scarce resource of reservists with joint qualifications are managed for the best utilization of those qualifications. An important step is to verify that there is an actual or incipient shortage of joint-qualified reserve officers.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

A framework of law and policy is in place for joint officer management. For active duty list officers, much of that framework is in law; for reserve active-status list officers, most of the framework is in policy. A strategic approach to joint officer management for reserve active-status list officers must assess the need for officers with prior joint knowledge, joint experience, and acculturation before assignment to certain positions. Those positions are not yet identified, nor are the needs for officers with multinational, multiservice, interagency, or intergovernmental knowledge and experience. Given identified needs, a strategic approach looks at the current inventory of available officers and projects the future availability given qualification, assignment durations, promotion, and retention rates. A current documented inventory of available officers does not exist. There are many officers who, because of current deployments and employment, have gained joint training and experience, but these qualifications are not visible within any data system.

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<sup>5</sup> The RC's joint demand is likely to vary widely over time. There is currently a large demand for the reserve component, some of it joint demand, and it may be a long-term demand. The active component has a (more or less) constant force structure with constant joint demands, but the RC is a "surge" force in transition (rebalancing more than the active force) that may continue to be more of an operational force. Even in its more "operational" form, the percent serving on active duty may vary from 25 percent (now), to 10 percent (pre-9/11), to something between in the future. Analysis within a demand and supply framework should allow for demand and supply (qualification) to vary depending on joint use.

## Recommendations

We offer several recommendations to help implement a strategic approach to reserve component joint officer management.

- First, data are needed about requirements and should be collected. The services should be directed to incorporate data about the needs for prior joint education, or prior joint experience, and thus for fully joint qualified officers and joint officers, into their manpower databases. At the same time, the Joint Staff (JS) should implement and maintain a stand-alone database for at least the JS, OSD, combatant commands, and other external organizations until such time that the manpower systems are changed. A one-time data collection<sup>6</sup> should be done to populate this database initially with updates as needed. In particular, the latter two sources of demand could vary most for the reserve component over time as they surge to meet changing geostrategic situations.
- Second, a supply-oriented database such as the JDA-R documenting the positions that provide joint experience should also be populated. Procedures for doing this for the JDA-R are laid out in the DoD Instruction and should be implemented.
- Third, OSD, the JS, and the services should specify policies and procedures for capturing information about qualifying knowledge and the experience of officers beyond that which will be captured by the billet- and time-based JDA-R system. We recommend that a points system or an accomplishment record approach be used, as discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.
- Fourth, the future supply of qualified reserve active-status list officers should be projected using modeling of JFSC AJPME seats, JDA-R positions, assignment duration, qualification by other means, and likely promotion and retention rates.
- Both current and projected inventory needs to be compared with the demand to determine where shortages and overages exist as a basis for formulating appropriate policy alternatives. This analysis

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<sup>6</sup> This process is outlined in Appendices B and C of *Framing a Strategic Approach for Joint Officer Management* (MG-306-OSD) and a similar process could be followed.

would determine the extent to which the need for officers with joint education and experience can be satisfied by the number of qualifying billets, other qualifying experiences, and educational seats combined with the use, promotion, and other management practices for officers of different reserve categories and occupational communities.<sup>7</sup> The strategic plan should lastly determine the policies and practices to align the amount of jointness available with the demand for jointness.

- Finally, the implemented strategic approach, which recognizes both the need for jointness among reserve active-status list officers and the complementary means to acknowledge and accredit joint qualifications for reserve officers, should be evaluated and considered for its application to active duty list officers.

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<sup>7</sup> Because of continuing change in the roles and missions of the reserve components, these assessments will need to be made periodically, if not continually, to avoid long-term management problems.