



# NATIONAL DEFENSE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
EDUCATION AND THE ARTS  
ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT  
HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE  
INFRASTRUCTURE AND  
TRANSPORTATION  
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS  
LAW AND BUSINESS  
NATIONAL SECURITY  
POPULATION AND AGING  
PUBLIC SAFETY  
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
TERRORISM AND  
HOMELAND SECURITY

The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis.

This electronic document was made available from [www.rand.org](http://www.rand.org) as a public service of the RAND Corporation.

Skip all front matter: [Jump to Page 1](#) ▼

## Support RAND

[Purchase this document](#)

[Browse Reports & Bookstore](#)

[Make a charitable contribution](#)

## For More Information

Visit RAND at [www.rand.org](http://www.rand.org)

Explore the [RAND National Defense  
Research Institute](#)

View [document details](#)

## Limited Electronic Distribution Rights

This document and trademark(s) contained herein are protected by law as indicated in a notice appearing later in this work. This electronic representation of RAND intellectual property is provided for non-commercial use only. Unauthorized posting of RAND electronic documents to a non-RAND website is prohibited. RAND electronic documents are protected under copyright law. Permission is required from RAND to reproduce, or reuse in another form, any of our research documents for commercial use. For information on reprint and linking permissions, please see [RAND Permissions](#).

This product is part of the RAND Corporation monograph series. RAND monographs present major research findings that address the challenges facing the public and private sectors. All RAND monographs undergo rigorous peer review to ensure high standards for research quality and objectivity.

# Reshaping the Army's Active and Reserve Components

---

Michael L. Hansen, Celeste Ward Gventer,  
John D. Winkler, Kristy N. Kamarck

Prepared for the Office of the Secretary of Defense  
Approved for public release; distribution unlimited



RAND

NATIONAL DEFENSE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The research described in this report was prepared for the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). The research was conducted in the RAND National Defense Research Institute, a federally funded research and development center sponsored by OSD, the Joint Staff, the Unified Combatant Commands, the Navy, the Marine Corps, the defense agencies, and the defense Intelligence Community under Contract W74V8H-06-C-0002.

#### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Reshaping the Army's active and reserve components / Michael L. Hansen ... [et al].  
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-0-8330-5038-0 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. United States. Army—Reorganization. 2. United States. Army—Operational readiness. 3. United States. Army—Reserves. 4. Military planning—United States. I. Hansen, Michael L.

UA25.R46 2011

355.6'8670973—dc23

2011048003

The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis. RAND's publications do not necessarily reflect the opinions of its research clients and sponsors.

**RAND®** is a registered trademark.

© Copyright 2011 RAND Corporation

Permission is given to duplicate this document for personal use only, as long as it is unaltered and complete. Copies may not be duplicated for commercial purposes. Unauthorized posting of RAND documents to a non-RAND website is prohibited. RAND documents are protected under copyright law. For information on reprint and linking permissions, please visit the RAND permissions page (<http://www.rand.org/publications/permissions.html>).

Published 2011 by the RAND Corporation

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

1200 South Hayes Street, Arlington, VA 22202-5050

4570 Fifth Avenue, Suite 600, Pittsburgh, PA 15213-2665

RAND URL: <http://www.rand.org>

To order RAND documents or to obtain additional information, contact

Distribution Services: Telephone: (310) 451-7002;

Fax: (310) 451-6915; Email: [order@rand.org](mailto:order@rand.org)

# Summary

---

## Background

During the Cold War, the reserve components (RC) were viewed primarily as a strategic reserve—an expansion force and a repository for capabilities that might be needed in support of major combat operations. In response to recent operational demands, the Army reorganized its forces based on a modular unit construct and implemented a cyclic activation and deployment model under the rubric of the Army Force Generation model. The Secretary of Defense’s objective is for active component (AC) units to have a deploy-to-dwell ratio of 1:2. Both the Army Reserve and Army National Guard were reorganized to fill the role of an operational reserve, with an expected activation-to-dwell ratio of 1:5.

In recognition of these new demands, the Army made significant adjustments to its AC and RC forces, adjusting and rebalancing authorizations within and across components and converting many positions from military to civilian. Even with these adjustments, however, the current levels of deployment/mobilization of the active and reserve components are believed to exceed planning objectives. Furthermore, although future mission demands are uncertain, many believe that they will be higher than pre-9/11 levels.

Given these beliefs, DoD needs to determine whether further adjustments in force mix and utilization guidelines are needed. The goal of this study was to assess the utilization of Army active and reserve forces and to analyze policy options to adjust the balance and mix of capabilities and assist achievement of planning objectives for deploy-

ment and mobilization of Army forces. We examined three underlying questions:

- Are some personnel being deployed/mobilized more than others? Which occupational categories are most-heavily and least-heavily deployed/mobilized?
- Do these rates of utilization exceed the planning objectives set by the Secretary of Defense?
- How much could high rates of utilization be reduced if the Army rebalanced its forces from areas where utilization rates are low to areas where utilization rates are high?

To answer these questions, we reviewed DoD policy for managing the active and reserve components and identified different measures of utilization. We then examined the variation in utilization of capabilities across Army components and considered ways in which the Army could adjust the balance of capabilities to rebalance the burden of deployment/mobilization on Army personnel.

## **Measuring Service Member Deploy-to-Dwell and Activation-to-Dwell Ratios**

The Secretary of Defense has outlined planning objectives that set individuals' expectations for the extent to which they will be deployed/activated. For AC personnel, the expectation is that, for every year that an individual is deployed, he or she will spend two years at home station. For RC personnel, the expectation is that, for every year that an individual is mobilized, he or she will spend five years demobilized. Current levels of use of both the active and reserve components are believed to exceed these goals. Given the importance of the planning objectives for the individual service member's use, it is important that DoD understand whether it is meeting its goals.

While conceptually straightforward, accurately measuring these statistics for individuals is not trivial. The central challenge is that, in order to identify whether individuals exceed the planning objective,

their experience must be measured over a period of time. However, at a specific point in time, there are many individuals for whom not enough time has yet elapsed to determine whether they will exceed the planning objective. In other words, some individuals have not yet exceeded planning objectives but will eventually do so. Similarly, some individuals have had lengthy deployments/activations but have not yet had sufficient dwell time to offset these deployments and activations. Developing component-wide measures of deploy-to-dwell and activation-to-dwell ratios requires assumptions about the extent to which individuals who have not exceeded the planning objectives will eventually do so and the extent to which individuals who have exceeded the planning objectives will eventually fall within these guidelines.

Therefore, while metrics and databases do exist to provide information on deployment, activation, and dwell histories, reliable metrics that describe the extent to which individual service members will meet or exceed the planning objectives do not yet exist. Furthermore, developing a predictive model of deployment and mobilization for individuals is beyond the scope of this current analysis. However, doing so remains a significant task for future research, since it is critical that DoD and the services understand how well they are (or are not) doing in managing the force.

## Current Utilization of Army Capabilities

Our analysis focuses on current utilization of service members by component, occupational category, and career field. Our assumption is that current utilization of a skill reflects the demand for that skill. Since we cannot measure deploy-to-dwell and activation-to-dwell ratios by skill group, we focus on four different statistics that measure utilization. Each captures a slightly different aspect of deployment/mobilization.

Our analysis suggests that the Army Reserve is the most *unbalanced* of the components—that is, the extent to which service members in its high-utilization career fields are currently mobilized is disproportionately high relative to the component average. However, this imbalance is not limited to the Army Reserve. In fact, several career fields are

highly utilized in multiple components. Therefore, it could be difficult to successfully rebalance those career fields through cross-component trades—shifting personnel from a career field in one component to the same career field in another component.

## **Rebalancing Within Components**

It is feasible to rebalance the Army components through increases in end strength, converting billets from low- to high-utilization career fields, or some combination of these two strategies. While both the active component and the Army National Guard have experienced recent growth, substantial numbers of additional personnel in all components would be required to bring utilization levels of high-utilization skills into alignment with Army averages. Our assessment is that the Army is not likely to be provided sufficient manpower authorizations and resources to completely reduce utilization in high-utilization career fields.

Converting billets from low- to high-utilization career fields could partially, but not completely, rebalance the reserve components. This is because the number of billets needed to bring all high-utilization career fields to the component average exceeds the number of available billets in low-utilization career fields. Furthermore, individuals in low-utilization career fields are still doing work, and the Army will probably not want to convert all those billets to high-utilization career fields.

## **Factors That Affect Rebalancing Across Components**

It is also possible to rebalance *across* components, converting billets from a low-utilization career field in one component to a high-utilization career field in another component. Such rebalancing remains an option as the Army makes decisions about how to size and structure its components.

However, additional factors, not just the current operational environment, should help determine whether any rebalancing should occur.

Most important, components are sized and structured not only to meet current demands but also to meet anticipated future demands. Rebalancing a component by converting billets essentially depletes strategic depth in one functional area and places it in another. Many anticipated future scenarios seem to require capabilities and skills similar to those needed in current operations. If these projections are accurate, rebalancing might be appropriate. However, if existing strategic depth is important to meet emerging unanticipated demands, additional challenges will arise.

Our analysis reveals that some considerations are important in the assignment of specific missions but play less of a role in decisions about reshaping across components. One set of issues concerns the potential suitability of various missions for reserve forces. It is DoD policy that both the AC and the RC contribute to meeting defense requirements across the full spectrum of operations. This implies that both components maintain some depth in all functional areas. However, a mission's timing considerations will play a role in its assignment. If a mission requires an immediate, high state of readiness, or has a short lead time, it is best suited to the active component; missions that are more limited in duration and that allow for a longer dwell period are more suitable for the RC. Any rebalancing across components should be cognizant of preserving these characteristics of each component.

Another set of issues concerns the relative cost of AC and RC units. Contrary to conventional wisdom, the data suggest that, for brigade combat teams, there are unlikely to be significant cost savings from placing operational capabilities in the reserve components instead of the active component. Rather, the literature suggests that the costs are roughly identical, although this conclusion is sensitive to a number of assumptions. The implication is that any rebalancing of operational units should be done for reasons other than cost.

## Conclusions

Taken together, our analysis suggests a four-step process for policymakers as they consider opportunities to reshape the Army's active and reserve components:

1. *Are high-utilization skills likely to be in high demand in the future?* If so, then these skills are candidates for rebalancing. If not, this implies that current demand is only temporary, and our analysis suggests that an all-volunteer force can sustain above-average utilization.
2. *Are there significant risks associated with too little strategic depth in high-utilization skills?* Even if high-utilization skills are not likely to be in high demand in the future, policymakers might determine that the risk of too little strategic depth is significant. If so, these skills are candidates for rebalancing.
3. *Will converting billets from low-utilization skills result in a substantive decrease in the ability to meet demand for those skills?* Assuming that high-utilization skills are identified as candidates for rebalancing in step 1 or step 2, policymakers need to identify the specific way in which to rebalance. If converting billets from low-utilization skills will result in a significant decrease in the Army's ability to meet demand, policymakers should try to identify other options. If the risk is low, these skills are candidates for rebalancing.
4. *Are there significant risks associated with less strategic depth in low-utilization skills?* Finally, policymakers should identify whether there are risks associated with less strategic depth in these low-utilization skills. If not, these skills are candidates for rebalancing. More generally, policymakers need to identify whether the risks associated with less strategic depth in these low-utilization skills are fewer or greater than the risks associated with too little strategic depth in high-utilization skills.