

**“ADF Reserves Capability – Where to now?”**

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**by Major General J E Barry AM MBE RFD ED (Retd)**

**National President - Defence Reserves Association**

**Introduction:**

This was the theme of our 2011 DRA Conference and even though much has changed the question is still pertinent today. I will make the presentation in three parts: first, the history and structure of the Defence Reserves Association; second, “integration” and what it means for the RANR and RAAFR; and finally, two major pieces of work that are changing the way Reserve Forces will be used in future. The first one is Plan Beersheba which outlines the implementation of the structure of the Army Reserve within a Total Force construct, whilst the second one is Plan Suakin, a large body of work that will impact on all three Services in the Human Resources area.

**The Defence Reserves Association:**

The DRA is a not-for-profit national association of like minded members. It is a representative organisation that seeks to support the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and in particular its Reserve components in the defence of Australia. The DRA is not a trade union, nor is it a welfare organisation, but it is prepared to be an employee advocate within the ADF, as well as on other matters. In simplistic terms the DRA is a pro-active lobby organisation for the benefit of Reserve Forces and Reservists.

The DRA has been active for more than 40 years, initially under the title of “The Citizen Military Forces Association” (CMF Association) with its focus on CMF/Army Reserve issues, but since 1992 under its DRA banner, very much focussed on tri-service and Defence Health issues. The Association undertakes discussions on defence issues; submissions to Government and the Australian Defence Force (ADF); consultations with Ministers, MP’s, and senior ADF officers, and liaises with like minded organisations. It also conducts an annual conference, pursues issues as above and provides information to its members, through its website at [www.dra.org.au](http://www.dra.org.au)

The Aim of the DRA is to achieve the best possible outcomes for the defence of Australia and its national interests, whilst within the ADF as a whole:

- that optimum and effective use is made of its Reserve Forces
- their capabilities are both fully developed and their potential exploited
- their manning, equipment\* and training is of the highest appropriate standard
- they are fully supported by all administrative and legislative procedures, and
- they have comparable conditions of service to their permanent counterparts.

\* the equipment area has been problematic through cut backs to equipment purchases.

**“Integration” - Naval Reserve:**

Navy is wrestling with a major people problem in its **totally integrated workforce** where from a Reserve point of view there is virtually no ab initio recruitment, or for those involved, no positive incentive to seek work or even remain! The Naval Reserve is currently a wasted asset and in fact “wasting”. The Naval Reserve badly needs a purpose. The official line is that the use of Reservists is based only on

individual capability outcomes. This is the correct approach; however, it has been and is currently constrained by its Reserve salaries budget! Navy is not interested in Reservist crews, but has to utilise individual augmentation to crew close to all their platforms. The Naval Reserve numbers are:

Naval Active Reserve = 4,493                      CFTS = 345              Standby = 4,185              Total = 9,023

The Head Naval People and Reputation (HNPAR) late last year advised as follows:

Funded Reserve Commitment (FRC) positions = 652 – down from > 900 FRC's

Short Term Reserve Positions (STRP) = 346

Total Positions = 998 with some multiple incumbents

meaning 1,165\* Reservists served > 20 days, leaving 3,328 Active Reservists without work and loss of "efficiency" re medals, promotion, health and home loans (DHOAS).

A further dilemma is the number of "specialist" personnel who require much more than 20 days employment, to achieve their life style and therefore have to quit the Service.

The Standby Reserve of 4,185 is a charade and is really "inactive" and with most personnel not interested. Add to the fact that > 90% are ex-permanents and that the retirement age has moved from the "forties" to up to 55 – 60 years, depending on their specialisation. It could be argued this "Inactive" Reserve should be done away with to be more factual about Navy's asset, however permanent personnel now must remain in the Reserve for five years, some of whom will have perishable skills, and irrespective of the age factor, they need to be held on some sort of list. Further this list appears to be neither monitored nor managed.

A vision for the Naval Reserve, emanating from our last Conference, is to have three levels for the Active Reserve as follows:

An Active "Working" Reserve - say 1200\* "efficient" of 1,800 – the balance biannually mustered and "certified" as efficient.

A "Specialist" Reservist Pool, as required - say                      700 with biannual mustering and "certified" as efficient.

A "Standby Surge" Reserve, as required - say                      2,000 with an annual mustering, but not certified as efficient.

Total Available "Active" Reserve = 4,500

The current Standby Reserve should be culled to those interested personnel and/or need to be legally retained. They should be managed via an annual "internet" mustering.

The cost for the above approach is negligible compared to the loss of a valuable people asset, but the Reserve must be monitored and managed within the capability space and not treated the same as permanents in the people space. I have not discussed the opportunities for employment which are boundless when you consider the platforms coming into service and the support therein required. That is for the naval experts to consider.

#### **"Integration" – Air Force Reserve:**

Air Force is in better shape within its **totally integrated workforce**, because it has retained its City Squadrons and merged them with Base Support Squadrons. This provides a traditional home for some Reservists whilst others have been posted to other Squadrons or positions, including interstate. The interstate postings are "shadow" postings and ineffective because of the necessary travel budget.

There is disquiet on the people front as they are not being managed well and further ab initio Reservists are expected to conform to their permanent counterparts in relation to training levels, length of courses and access to courses.

There has been a marked cut back in funded positions because of financial constraints e.g. CFTS from approximately 300 to < 100. The authorised strength of the Reserve is in the vicinity of 3,000 Reservists, yet the official figures listed below shows a disparity of some 500\* personnel. Their numbers are:

Air Force Active Reserve = 3,556\*                      CFTS = 91              Standby = 5,862              Total = 9,509

FY 2010/11 2,080 Reservists received >20 days, whilst 1980 Reservists, prepared to serve, received <20 days, making a total of 4,060\*Active Reservists.

Reservists are placed in Bands as follows:

Band 1 50 days - HRR

Band 2 32 days } Active Reserve

Band 3 20 days } " " " "

Band 4 1 day the majority of Reservists are in this Band

Note Specialist Reserves are on 7 days.

Their Standby Reserve is probably similar to the Navy's in age and level of interest. A similar three level "available" Active Reserve should be formed to manage a more appropriate sized personnel asset.

The DRA has established a working party to examine Air Force Reserves in detail and intend making those findings and suggested solutions known at the next DRA Conference on 28 July 2012.

**Plan Beersheba – Army:**                      Note: started out as ARes but became Army.

Its genesis came from the Defence White Paper 2009 (DWP'09) and replaced the Rebalancing Army Review Implementation Plan that was discarded by CASAC and the Government in late 2010, in favour of a Total Force Concept. A concept, "that restructured the Regular and Reserve components to complement each other, avoid duplication, and respond to the complexity of operations and readiness requirements, within a Whole of Government (WOG) construct." Sounds esoteric or complex? Let's unbundle it!

In late 2010 the Parliamentary Secretary for Defence, Senator David Feeney, directed the ADF

- "to develop a force rotational model that institutionalised the use of the Reserve component" and further
- "to review conditions of service to develop a model that optimised the Reserve component's contribution to the Total Force."

Army led with what is known as Plan Beersheba with the first part of the directive, while Cadet, Reserve and Employer Support Division (CRESD) dealt with the latter part of the directive, which became known as Plan Suakin. Referred to later on.

The new Chief of Army, LTGEN David Morrison, established a new position, parallel with to his DCA, namely Head Modernisation & Strategic Planning (HMSP-A) and appointed MAJGEN John Caligari to it, to develop a plan to optimise the Reserve component's contribution within a Total Force construct,

including incorporating the Reserve into **Army's Force Generation Cycle** (FGC). This Plan was developed through a series of Reserve Modernisation Workshops (RMW) and other oversighting committees; processed up through the chain of command and approved by Government in December 2011.

The Total Force Construct meant that there will be considerable hurt for the Regular Army as well; however let's deal with the Army Reserve role and tasks first.

The CASAC approved role for the Army Reserve is

"to deliver specified capability to support and sustain ADF preparedness and operations".

The core tasks are to:

- deliver specified war fighting capability (main) including stabilisation operations (STABOPS)
- provide domestic humanitarian aid (HADR) and domestic Security (DOMSEC) as part of WOG
- maintain and provide specialist individual capabilities, and
- contribute to Army surge capability.

There is however a dramatic change to the role of the three Regular Brigades in that they are to cease their specialisation and become "like" brigades. The changes are as follows:

|                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1 BDE – Mechanised - Darwin}         |  |
| 3 BDE – Light Infantry - Townsville} | All to change to Multi-role Manoeuvre Brigades (MMB) |
| 7 BDE – Motorised - Brisbane}        |  |

Each MMB is to have two "standard" Infantry Battalions plus a Cavalry Regiment which includes a Tank Squadron. Their third battalion is an ARES Battle Group raised from two aligned ARES Brigade's.

The Battle Groups are to progress within the respective Regular Brigade's three year Force Generation Cycle (FGC). The "Habitual Relationship" or alignments are as follows:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 5 BDE and 8 BDE is aligned to 1 BDE}   | Force  |
| 4 BDE and 9 BDE is aligned to 3 BDE}   | The Generation = "Reset", "Readying" and "Ready" |
| 11 BDE and 13 Bde is aligned to 7 BDE} | Cycle  |

This alignment model avoids **structural integration** which has been proven to be ineffective in Army; however it is an "**integration of effects**".

There are three Regular **enabling** Brigades that will require structural integration of ARES Units/Sub-units to optimise support to the Multi-role Brigades, which provides a major opportunity for the ARES especially in 6 Bde and 17 Bde. The enabling Brigades are:

|  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| 6 BDE – Combat Support (incl ISTAR, RFSU's and EW) | (HQ - VBS)                |
| 16 BDE – Aviation                                  | (HQ – Enoggera)           |
| 17 BDE – Combat Services Support                   | (AUS wide, HQ – Randwick) |

However the enabling Brigades do not fit the three year Force Generation Cycle, as they have to be "Ready" all the time to support the multi-role Brigades.

The down side for the ARes in the combat area is the loss, or contraction, of Unit Headquarters for Artillery and Engineer Construction Regiments as well as Monash University Regiment. This, except for MONUR, goes to the core of the new role and tasks, which is hard to argue against, however there are other DWP'09 issues such as longer lead-time capabilities which must be examined. The DRA has a role in these studies.

The Army Reserve after 60 years has moved from a mobilisation/expansion base of "just in case" to an operational role of "just in time", with a clearly defined role and tasks.

The time frame for implementation of Plan Beersheba is two years, but we have yet to see the Implementation Plan or the associated equipping of same.

### **Plan Suakin – for all three Services:**

Again the genesis for what became known as Plan Suakin was the DWP'09 and the Defence Budget Audit (DBA) 2009 which led to the Government's **Strategic Reform Program** (SRP) and its attendant **Reserve Reform Stream** (RRS); one of 15 streams.

The two key strategies from the DWP'09 were:

- "better integration of reserve and permanent components in order more effectively to utilise Reserves in generating Defence capability" and
- "smarter use of the Reserves, including rebalancing capability between permanent and reserve components, in order to reduce costs."

There were four initiatives emanating from the SRP Reserve Reform Stream that Cadet, Reserve and Employer Support (CRESD) analysed:

- Army Individual Readiness Notice (AIRN) – frequency for Reservists.
- Increase ARA transfers to the ARes rather than transition out.
- Reduce training wastage.
- Rationalise High Readiness Reserve (HRR) conditions of service.

Army's three star Governance Committee (GC) accepted CRESD proposals from that analysis and directed a body of work under "**Rethink Reserves**". They required CRESD to develop viable evidence based **Courses of Action** (COA) for short, medium and long term reform of the Reserve component capability construct within the Total Force. The outcomes to include:

- Employment options.
- Streamlined transfer process
- Utilisation of Reserve civilian skills
- More intelligent use of the Reserve component

There were several pieces of work already in the pipeline:

- **The Civilian Skills Database (CSD).** The aim was to record the civil skills held by Reservists in order to make better use of these personnel. Developed over the last two years, from a pilot study to now, a CDF directed program. The data to be held on PMKeyS on an ongoing basis.
- **Feasibility of introducing Sponsored Reserves.** This study has been closed as not suitable for Australian conditions of service.
- **Development of a Reservists' Personnel Cost Model (PCM).** The PCM had been developed over 2011 and captures the total cost associated with Reserve employment and is able to model cost changes in conditions of service against any deployment scenario.
- **Development of a Reservists' Predictive Behaviour Model (PBM).** The PBM was also developed over 2011 from a survey of > 10,000 personnel and though anecdotal and in the form of a "heat map" is a most useful enabling tool.
- **Implement Reserve workforce initiatives for each Service.** This in fact is Plan Suakin.

**The Aim of Plan Suakin** is to develop a model that optimises the Reserve Component contribution to the Total Force.

"It aims to enable the ADF to attract, support and retain the right people, with the appropriate availability, in order to achieve optimal interaction between employment constructs and integrated capability effects, having regard to capability requirements, cost effectiveness and cultural considerations."

The main effort of Plan Suakin was to develop a **contemporary employment model** with associated conditions of service based on the concept of an ADF career as a career for life. For this to be achieved CRESD require six complementary Courses of Action that are necessary to achieve the complete plan:

- **Service Spectrum** or continuum of expanded Service Categories (SERCAT) and Service Options (SEROPS) which involves adding two new SERCATs, namely "Non-permanent Part-time" and "Permanent Part-time". Also two new SEROPS for Projects and Dual Employment. This is the core element of Plan Suakin.
- **Remuneration Reforms** to support the above SERCAT's and SEROPS.
- **Simplified Transfer Processes** to facilitate ARA members moving across the SERCAT's of the Spectrum as their career and life needs change.
- **Improved Career Management** and opportunities for Reservists.
- **Develop a Whole of Defence Employment Offer** which offers flexible opportunities to serve in different SERCAT's throughout one's career and life stages.
- **Establish an internet based e-Portal** specifically for the Reserve community to receive and/or deliver information and services. In fact **ForceNet** is currently being implemented.

There are three other supporting lines of operation necessary to round out Plan Suakin and they are to:

- Investigate the **Cultural Barriers** that contribute to sub-optimal utilisation of the Total Force

- Address current inefficiencies in the management of **Funding** Reserve salaries, and
- Increase accessibility to appropriate, graduated, **Training for Reservists** by training only those who need it for the task and making use of civilian skills.

If Defence was a civil corporation, virtually all of the above would be in place within their Human Resources Department. Unfortunately large bureaucracies have their own legalistic constraints and Defence is no different! When Plan Suakin is approved by Government, it will require amendment to a large number of legislative Acts and this will take considerable time.

The key to Suakin's success is the acceptance of the new SERCAT's and SEROPS. When they are adopted all other COA's naturally cascade down.

The end-state for Plan Suakin will generate enormous benefits for Defence, including significant financial efficiencies and:

- Increase retention of trained personnel in the ADF
- Facilitate simplified administrative processes, and
- Improve data quality and communication with the Reserve community

All in all, a win, win situation which the DRA totally endorses.

The DRA has contributed to the above and had success in its advocacy, but that has been due to operational circumstances. With the increase in operational tempo commencing in 1999 with the East Timor, Reservists have been involved in every overseas deployment, since that time, out of necessity and more recently operating independently in stabilisation operations.

The "where to now" question for Reserve Forces is being answered.

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