



## Coast Guard Flag Voice 62

### SELECTED RESERVE FORCE MANAGEMENT

In September, the Coast Guard attained its goal of reaching its Congressionally authorized strength of 8000 Selected Reserve members. This achievement -- closing a 10% Reserve workforce shortfall in less than a year and a half -- is the result of phenomenal efforts by Headquarters, field workforce managers, Coast Guard Recruiting, field units, and individuals from every Team Coast Guard sector.

In reaching this point so quickly, to meet accession and retention goals the Office of Reserve Affairs (G-WTR) implemented a "laundry list" of interventions, including monetary and educational incentives, mobile recruiters, innovative advertising, and an expanded recruiting force. These efforts included:

1. Automatically placing RELADs with a remaining military service obligation into a 59-day SELRES status (pool) to facilitate voluntary drill participation;
2. Short-term waivers of "time-in-service" limitations, allowing retirement-eligible reservists to continue to perform duty; and
3. Relaxing RPAL billet assignment policy, allowing over-billet assignments where justified by local workload and training capacity to accommodate many reservists' geographic constraints.

Now that we have attained authorized SELRES strength, it is necessary to ensure our SELRES end strength remains within its statutory ceiling (2% over authorized strength of 8000). As we manage strength levels, our goal is to learn from the past and avoid radical personnel actions. While such actions may make sense from a short-term budgetary standpoint, they inevitably create far more costly force management problems over the long term and simply do not treat our people with the respect and consideration they deserve.

First among the strength management options available to maintain an 8000 SELRES is eliminating the RELAD "pool." While its objective was to enhance RELAD affiliation, the pool did not achieve the level of success (drill participation) we had hoped for. Local pre-RELAD counseling programs are more successful in attracting drilling members from the RELAD pool. These programs involve one-on-one interviews addressing the value of membership in the Reserve Component for active duty members who already have decided to leave active service. Effective September 1999, G-WTR terminated the pool, though we will continue to aggressively seek SELRES accessions from those leaving active duty as the preferred method of obtaining talented reservists.

Historically, the Coast Guard has had the lowest active-to-reserve affiliation rate compared to all other Services. Our active duty personnel leave the Coast Guard for further education, lucrative civilian employment, family and/or geo-stability reasons, or some combination of those reasons, not because

they are unhappy with their Coast Guard experience. However, we have not yet succeeded in tapping this resource as a major accession source for the Reserve Component. These individuals, in whom the Coast Guard already has invested tens of thousands of dollars for training and education, possess skills critical to the Service in both augmentation and surge operations. To retain a greater proportion of these valuable members, unit commanders are strongly encouraged to make a priority of counseling members who already have decided to leave active duty to inform them of the benefits of Coast Guard Reserve duty. The Reserve Command Master Chief and Coast Guard Career Development Advisor networks are knowledgeable and available to supplement this pre-RELAD counseling.

Secondly, we will look at Reserve officers in an "over-billet" status. As a result of overall SELRES personnel shortages, the Service has benefited from the ability to fund additional work provided by our Reserve officer cadre. The Coast Guard Reserve currently has 110 officers, many at the senior level, in an over-billet status. We anticipate phasing out all officer "over-billets" during FY00. Officers assigned in a paid, over-billet status will have to compete for existing RPAL billets. Those not placed in billets will have the option to retire, transfer to the IRR (a non-participating status), or drill for non-pay (points only).

Third, we will focus force management attention on reservists serving on waivers. Currently 443 reservists perform on a variety of "time in service" waivers. We appreciate these members have voluntarily chosen to postpone retirement to help the Coast Guard meet its many workload commitments in a time of great OPTEMPO and PERSTEMPO stress. While we still need to retain some individuals on waivers for the short term, we will significantly reduce our reliance on waived personnel in the third and fourth quarters. When we get to the point where we need to reduce the number of reservists on waivers, we will provide ample notice and time-phase the reduction to the fullest extent possible.

In addition, we will examine the RPAL itself. Reservists represent a low-cost force multiplier and an invaluable surge capability that allows the Coast Guard to meet its many diverse missions. However, our Reserve force may not be employed most effectively and efficiently. G-WTR will more systematically apply workload, geography (a recruiting and retention factor), and mission priority variables to the RPAL structure. We envision a formal Reserve Workforce Structure Board (RWSB) comprised of HQ program and operational stakeholders to optimize Reserve billet deployments across the Coast Guard.

We also will turn our attention to sizing the SELRES to the full requirement defined by Coast Guard contingency plans, improving SELRES training systems, and developing better HR information systems, e.g., a comprehensive SELRES military and civilian skills database, all to better develop and tap the Reserves' full skill inventory and surge capability potential.

In the meantime, to maintain a viable, responsive Reserve, we will continue to pursue the "3R" strategy that produced full SELRES strength: focused Recruiting, RELAD affiliation, and Retention efforts. I ask your continued support and assistance in these vital areas.

Regards, FL Ames



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