National Defence Défense nationale

Canadian Forces College

Collège des Forces Canadiennes

CANADA'S NAVAL RESERVE: STRATEGIC OR OPERATIONAL

Lieutenant-Commander N.H. Hanratty

JCSP 35

Master of Defence Studies

Disclaimer

Opinions expressed remain those of the author and do not represent Department of National Defence or Canadian Forces policy. This paper may not be used without written permission.

PCEMI 35

Maîtrise en études de la défense

Avertissement

Les opinons exprimées n'engagent que leurs auteurs et ne reflètent aucunement des politiques du Ministère de la Défense nationale ou des Forces canadiennes. Ce papier ne peut être reproduit sans autorisation écrite.

Canada

CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE – COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES
JCSP 35 – PCEMI 35
2008 – 2009

MASTER OF DEFENCE STUDIES – MAÎTRISE EN ÉTUDES DE LA DÉFENSE

CANADA'S NAVAL RESERVE: STRATEGIC OR OPERATIONAL

By Lieutenant-Commander N.H. Hanratty

Word Count: 19 122

Compte de mots : 19 122

ABSTRACT

As the nature of conflict has changed, so too has the manner in which many nations employ their military reserve forces. With the transition from Cold War operations to persistent asymmetric warfare, nations such as Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom have begun to use their reserve forces less as a strategic asset in case of a major, sustained war and more as an operational asset which is planned into operational tasks assigned to the nation's forces at large. In Canada, this transition happened throughout the 1980s and 1990s and resulted in a largely operational reserve across all three elements of the Canadian Forces – Army, Navy and Air Force. In the naval reserve, the assignment of a mission to provide people for a class of operational ships was the catalyst for becoming an operational reserve. In 2010, the Chief of Defence Staff at the time established his intent to return Canada's reserve forces to a primarily strategic reserve, focusing on part-time service. This paper compares the strategic and operational reserve concepts, examines Canada's history of reserve service since the Second World War and compares the trend of two close allies toward the use of operational reserves. The divide between the strategic and operational roles creates a competition for institutional support and resources that reduces the effectiveness of the reserve force as a whole. Without either a change in policy or in mission, Canada's reserve forces – and the naval reserve in particular – cannot effectively function as either a strategic or operational reserve.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

While reserves or citizen soldiers have been used since the times of the Roman Empires, they have traditionally been kept as a strategic asset – a force for a military general to use if attacked on another flank if one of his formations is defeated and reinforcements are needed or if drawn into a conflict suddenly. In modern times, these militias have proven a strong tie between a nation's military and the communities in which they are raised. With changes in warfare and the global economy, many nations have chosen to use reserve forces instead as an operational reserve; in other words, they assign operational missions to reserve forces and they employ them in long-term operations with their permanent or regular force counterparts.

The nature and character of reserve forces are bound to voluntary service and devotion to duty. This opens the door to a greater variety and complexity of tasks that are being given to reserve soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines. Key concepts such as strategic and operational reserves demonstrate these different types of tasks assigned to reserve forces and establish a context for the support and policies that must follow them. Employment of reserve forces in a number of nations since the Second World War show the evolution from the more traditional strategic reserve toward the operational reserve and some of the issues that have surrounded the changing missions. The choice between an operational and a strategic reserve indicates a nation's choice between immediate and delayed readiness for military action; between greater resources up front or when required for action in the future. Finally, piecemeal changing of concepts and policies of reserve forces in the Canadian context demonstrate how reserve employment has evolved

but creates confusion and ambiguity as to what the reserves can and should actually achieve. As presently structured, reserve forces in Canada are neither a fully strategic or operational reserve in the truest sense but instead represent a blend of the two. This is a very good position for the Canadian Forces but it may be unsustainable if policies do not change to support and retain the reservists that are expected to do the work.

Differences in national legislation governing the call-up and mobilization of reserves leads to unique roles for reserve forces, but Canada's closest allies have also begun to use reserves in a more operational sense. Nations such as the United Kingdom and the United States maintained a traditional strategic reserve through the Korean conflict of the 1950s, but have since adapted their reserve forces to refocus on specialized roles that are not resident in respective regular forces. This form of operationalization in the reserve forces can lead to reduced cost for training and maintenance of skill in information technology or medical reserve forces, for example, who are educated in civilian institutions but receive military training to integrate them into the military force. Costs associated with pay and other benefits can also be reduced because the forces are part-time. The United States maintains different types of reserves for those who volunteer from a civilian background and those who complete service in the regular forces. Both have requirements for service and liability for mobilization associated with them, based on the requirement and authority used to call them up. The United Kingdom maintains a similar structure and readiness of its reserve force, but has more flexibility and to call out reserve forces for on-going operations such as Afghanistan.

From the post-Second World War era through most of the Cold War Canada has generally kept support to operations – through augmentation of the regular force – as the

primary focus of the reserve forces in an attempt to prepare for a relatively large, conventional conflict. Employing the Total Force concept since the 1980s, Canada is one nation that operationalized their reserve forces throughout much of the 1990s and early in the 21st Century in response to the end of the Cold War and the trend toward smaller, regional conflicts with asymmetric threats. As the commitment to the NATO missions in the former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Libya (Air Reserve) and the ground conflict in Afghanistan (Army Reserve) grew, the need for more reservists in long-term, full-time positions grew to meet the extra demand placed on the regular forces. In the navy, however, the domestic mission of coastal defence (including naval mine counter-measures and cooperation and guidance of shipping) was the driving force behind the operationalization of the reserve. While the operationalization of the army and air force reserves was the result of a reduction of the size of the regular force and a corresponding increase in missions around the globe, the naval reserve was assigned a domestic operational mission and provided the platforms from which to conduct most of it.

Through many of the missions between 1980 and 2010, reserve forces represented a manpower pool to make up shortfalls and to offset the significant personnel tempo of operations on regular forces. In Canada, for example, three regular force regiments rotated the responsibility for sending a battle group to Task Force Afghanistan – The Royal Canadian Regiment, the Royal Twenty-Second Regiment, and Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. With each rotation lasting approximately six months in-theatre, this decision created a continuous 18-month cycle of train-deploy-regenerate. In an effort to avoid soldiers deploying every three rotations, reserve forces were solicited to volunteer for deployment; and, many answered the call from a sense of duty and a desire

for operational relevance. The training prior to deployment and the experience gained on deployment resulted in an overall increase in army reserve levels of proficiency and readiness, putting them almost on par with their regular force counterparts. But the cost of sustaining this increase in reserve forces was almost exactly the same as expanding the regular force to levels required for the effort – a strategy that provided no relative cost savings for the Canadian government – and arguably created a host of other problems such as physical and psychological injuries of reservists for which policies were not anticipated. This was an expedient manner of bolstering the personnel levels in the field during a climate of capped ceilings as the personnel levels in the Canadian Forces had been reduced but the missions to which the forces were committed increased.

A similar increase in naval reserve proficiency occurred after the 1987 Defence White Paper, which promised operational roles for the naval reserve, namely harbour defence (later re-named port security), naval control of shipping (re-named naval co-operation and guidance of shipping - NCAGS) and manning an entire class of vessels more or less full-time. These missions were unique to the naval reserve. While port security and NCAGS became specialties of primarily part-time reservists, manning of the *Kingston* Class Maritime Coastal Defence Vessels (MCDVs) required a cadre of trained and experienced full-time reservists, who developed a level of proficiency similar to that of regular force counterparts. This continuous, full-time mission resulted in a pseudo-mobilization of almost one-quarter of the naval reserve, as nearly 1,000 positions out of almost 4,000 are full-time.

While recruiting and training for naval reservists was developed to allow for a strategic reserve that could be further trained as required for a conflict, the nature of naval

warfare and the timelines needed to build the sophisticated ships that would be required to employ a strategic reserve are such that this strategic reserve is unlikely to be activated in a manner similar to World War II or even the Korean conflict. That said, recruiting and training systems have changed little since that time, and they are caught in the dichotomy between preparing reservists for part-time service and the navy's need for full-time sailors in the *Kingston* Class ships. Most recruits are processed at naval reserve divisions then managed and trained as if they will work in a traditional, part-time role. Many courses for naval reservists are kept to duration (or a series of modules) that the majority of part-time reservists may attend during leave from their civilian career. Today's naval reserve training is intended for sea-going naval reservists to become competent in sailing in the *Kingston* Class MCDVs. The demanding nature of operations in the *Kingston* Class requires greater training for all occupations, however, and the number of modules in many courses makes them at best a greater burden on the part-time reservist and at worst makes them achievable only over several years if at all. This situation has become a significant point of dissatisfaction for many part-time reservists. On the other end of the spectrum, full-time sailors seek greater depth of training to better enable them to conduct their missions and to gain parity with regular force counterparts. The lack of recognition and disparity in benefits between full-time reservists and regular force members has led to dissatisfaction among these reservists.

In 2010, the Canadian Chief of Defence Staff indicated intent to return the reserve force in Canada to a strategic reserve. In doing so, he hoped to reduce the excessive number of full-time reservists and rebalance the Canadian Forces in terms of the people, assets and funding for the post-Afghanistan period. His vision included employment of

some full-time, non-operational reservists, but they would be limited to missions and tasks that are directly related the selection, training and operational testing of reservists and teams/units to establish and maintain operational readiness.

It is the dichotomy of the strategic vision for the reserves and the Navy's appetite for operational effect that creates friction and threatens to fracture Canada's naval reserve. The Royal Canadian Navy wishes to return to a strategic reserve of mainly part-time sailors who may be mobilized in time of crisis and who may serve as *the face of the Navy* in over twenty-four communities throughout Canada. But the same leaders who wish to oversee the transition back to a strategic reserve also acknowledge that the *Kingston* Class conduct valuable (and comparatively inexpensive) work in maintaining Canadian sovereignty and support to other government departments and allies in the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and continue to assign these missions to the ships. Ironically, it is these missions that actually provide the venue for at-sea training of full and part-time reservists.

Both strategic and operational roles of the naval reserve can be accomplished, but not with the current organization and policies that are designed for a traditional part-time reserve. If the operational role of the naval reserve is removed to fit the organization and policies, the focus of recruiting, training and administration of the naval reserve will return to the part-time citizen-sailor, but the naval reserve may become marginalized and struggle for relevance in a navy that is in the midst of the largest re-capitalization in its history. Otherwise, the under-resourced operational reserve must be recognized and policies amended accordingly to relieve the strain on the individuals and the military training system. To continue to pursue both roles will deepen the dissatisfaction of both

camps of the naval reserve and until one path or the other is selected, the Royal Canadian Navy cannot fully succeed at either role.

COMPARISON OF STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL RESERVE

For most nations, the Second World War represents the last time a reserve force was mobilized for a prolonged, conventional war. Although this strategy persisted in military plans well into the 1980s, in many nations it has been replaced by a strategy of continuous employment of part of the reserve force in smaller scale operations, to provide depth to regular full-time forces that are allocated to the operation. The former strategy can be termed a strategic reserve while the latter can be thought of as an operational reserve. There are advantages and disadvantages to each, and most nations are evolving the organization and employment of their reserve forces to make best use of each. As Canada continues to adapt its reserve forces following the combat mission in Afghanistan (which represents a reduction from approximately 3,000 soldiers to 500), the nature of the reserves will continue to be a critical factor in the operational capability of the Canadian Forces. In particular, the navy must balance the advantages and disadvantages of the strategic and operational components of its reserve force and find the optimal blend within Canada's overall defence strategy and structure.

Does Canada need a reserve component to its armed forces? Thousands of years of history indicate that all nations need a reserve force at some point. But what function does a reserve actually fulfill? A reserve force is a fighting force that is not committed to action until there is a strategic need. In modern times, this has come to mean that part of a country's armed forces that are not on full-time, active duty but receive some training to be ready to respond when called upon. In the Canadian context, reserve force is defined as "a component of the Canadian Forces … that consists of officers and non-

commissioned members who are enrolled for other than continuing, full-time military service when not on active service."[1] This implies, then, that members of the reserve force are enrolled for primarily part-time service but that they may be called up for full-time, active service when required. The National Defence Act goes on to describe the manner in which members of the Canadian Forces may be placed on active service.

Essentially, the Governor in Council (the Governor General acting with the advice and consent of the Privy Council (i.e. Cabinet)) may determine when a reservist is required to engage in active service, but it must be only be for a national defence emergency or as a result of Canada's action as a member of the United Nations (UN), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or the North American Aerospace Defence (NORAD) Command Agreement or a similar treaty.[2] Members of the regular force are not always on active service simply by nature of their employment (as this must be authorised by the Governor in Council), but are enrolled for continuing, full-time military service whether on active service or not.[3] The main difference, then, between the regular force and the reserve force is the enrolment for the purpose of full-time service when not on active service. But why would a nation want military forces not on full-time service?

The value of having a reserve force – rather than an expanded regular or full-time force – is primarily the cost. As a traditional reservist is not required for full-time service, they are not paid a full-time salary. Also, most reserve units and personnel are training for readiness rather than actually going into combat, so they often are not allocated the most modern equipment. Cost savings are realized in this manner as well. When sent to

---

[1] National Defence Act, R.S.C., 1985, c. N-5, s. 15 (1985).
[2] National Defence Act, R.S.C., 1985, c. N-5, s. 31 (1985).
[3] National Defence Act, R.S.C., 1985, c. N-5, s. 15 (1985).

an active combat zone, the reserve troops will receive the proper equipment just as with their regular forces counterparts.

But other characteristics of a reserve force can be advantageous as well. For instance, reserve units are often spread throughout a nation and are a vital link between the military and the average citizens of the nation. As citizen-soldiers, reservists usually identify with a history of militia service dating back to the formation of the country and have the benefit of being members of their nation's armed forces but also members of a diverse set of communities within their city or town. As proud members of the military, reservists often portray the military ethos to a wider audience and achieve greater strategic effect than would an advertising campaign. This wide net of reserve units also positions military infrastructure throughout the nation for domestic need in case of emergency. Personnel and equipment are then in place for national emergencies such as natural disasters, major catastrophes or military action.

Of all Canada's allies, two are often conveniently used for comparison based on geographic/cultural similarity (the United States), and traditional/historical ties (the United Kingdom). It is useful to examine how these nations, who generally share western values originating from 18th century England, define their reserve forces. The United States, for example, states that…

> …the purpose of each reserve component is to provide trained units and qualified persons available for active duty in the armed forces, in time of war or national emergency, and at such other times as the national security may require, to fill the needs of the armed forces whenever, during and after the period needed to procure and train additional units and qualified persons to achieve the planned mobilization, more units and persons are needed than are in the regular components.[4]

---

[4] Armed Forces Act of 1956, 10 U.S.C. § 10102 (2004). (USA).

This definition indicates that the reserve components of the United States are liable to be placed on active service for an expansion of the armed forces as required in the event of a war or emergency. But this definition also adds that the reserve component has the purpose to provide "trained units and qualified personnel" which speaks to the mission and employment of the members of the reserve component more than the Canadian definition does. As specified in United States Code Title 10, Chapter 1209, some service in the United States' reserve components is voluntary, but some is a requirement following full-time service in the regular components of its armed services.[5] This form of reserve call up for active service allows the United States to activate individuals and units of its reserve components more readily than Canada, as a Canadian service member who serves in the reserve after regular force service is not obliged to serve based solely on previous service. Thus, the United States has one constant pool of trained reservists on whom they can depend for service.

The United Kingdom's law with respect to reserve service is very close to Canada's, in that the definition of reserve service is related much more to the duration and continuity of service rather than the mission or role. This distinction allows for the reserve force to be assigned a variety of missions or roles, which are generally found in national defence directives rather than the national law that serves as the legal basis to stand up a reserve component. The Reserve Service Act of 1996 defines how reserve forces may be called to active service and details not only a minimum period of service during the year[6] but also sets out how and when reserves may be called out in the event of

---

[5] Armed Forces Act of 1956, 10 U.S.C. c. 1209 (2004). (USA).
[6] Reserve Forces Act, 1996, c. 14, § 22, (UK), accessed 18 November 2012, http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/14/section/22.

a national danger or great emergency.[7] The United Kingdom has recently changed the role of reserve forces to focus on specialized tasks that are either too specific for their permanent forces to take on or that have a heavy training cost and so they try to retain the people in the armed forces by many means, including reserve service. These tasks rely upon the reserves to be there when required for operations, a position that accepts some risk with respect to the readiness of the reservists called out. Examples of the former roles are naval cooperation and guidance of shipping, which are specialized roles that are not widely used throughout the Royal Navy, so they are able to train a small number of reservists to cover the work involved. An example of the latter role would be medical support, as training and retaining doctors is a difficult process. Doctors are retained on reserve service and may be called upon when needed, rather than for continuing part-time service.

Both allies define their reserve forces in terms of mobilization and establish these forces as mainly part-time. But, significantly, their regulations do not limit the full-time employment of reserves outside a full-scale mobilization. Thus, the reserves are a labour force that may be trained to a lesser level than their regular force counterparts but may be given just enough training just in time to deploy for operations or to support regular functions at home. This ability to employ reserves on full-time service provides great flexibility for the nation and on the large scale can represent a significant cost savings over expanding the regular forces as the positions are not permanent.

When a nation considers mobilizing a reserve force, they are preparing for war or other emergencies through assembling and organizing national resources. Mobilization is

---

[7] Reserve Forces Act, 1996, c. 14, § 52, (UK), accessed 18 November 2012 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/14/part/VI.

the process by which the armed forces or part of them are brought to a state of readiness for war or other national emergency. Mobilization includes assembling and organizing personnel, supplies and material for active military service.[8] Canada and her allied nations take different approaches to mobilization of their reserve forces and assign levels of authority for mobilization to parts of the government. Following the Defence White paper of 1994, Canada's Department of National Defence was directed to develop a four-stage mobilization plan. This mobilization plan is supported by a contingency operation plan that discusses a four-stage plan to mobilize reserve forces, from individual mobilization to support a military task, to full-scale expansion of the forces in time of crisis or war. This four-stage plan is mirrored in the other nations, where reserve forces are activated and employed in many ways – from individuals to units – but none have conducted a full-scale mobilization of their reserve forces since the Second World War. But, the compared nations have employed reservists in smaller numbers and for specific functions on operations in the recent past. This prevalent employment of portions of the reserves for operations other than full-scale conventional war leads to the notion that the general mobilization of reserve forces may be out-dated. This difference in employment – general mobilization versus individual or unit activation – leads to the two types of reserves to be examined.

The reserve forces of nations were traditionally looked upon as a strategic asset in times of large-scale, conventional wars such as the First and Second World Wars. But

---

[8] Department of National Defence, "The Reserves and Cadet Issues - Minister's Monitoring Committee on Change in the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces. Interim Report – 1999," (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 2000): 103, quoted in Corinne McDonald, "PRB 99-11E – The Canadian Armed Forces: The Role Of The Reserves," (29 November 1999); accessed 21 November 2012, http://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection-R/LoPBdP/BP/prb9911-e.htm#(5).

there has recently emerged a notion that parts of the reserve force can be employed in operations on an on-going basis and be given specialist roles to support the overall military capability. The two concepts can be classified as strategic and operational reserves respectively.

There is no generally accepted, doctrinal definition of a strategic reserve, but there have been studies and papers that have explored the concept and framed it and its counterpart, the operational reserve, for consideration. In *Is The United States Army Reserve An Operational Force, A Strategic Reserve, Or A Mix Of Both?* Keebler synthesizes many definitions offered by leaders in the United States Army. Most definitions considered by Keebler refer to a strategic reserve in the sense of "availability, readiness, and the mobilization cycle."[9] The definitions generally referred to a strategic reserve as a Cold War concept of a force that maintains a basic level of readiness on a part time basis but could be mobilized and trained to relieve the active component soldiers in a protracted campaign. Most senior army leaders acknowledged that a strategic reserve was out-dated in the United States as many reserve component units were kept at higher levels of readiness to deploy and at least partially relieve the operational tempo of the active component units. The issue was also a discussion topic at the 21st Century Defense Initiative and the Strategic Studies Institute's seminar titled *The State of the U.S. Military Reserve Components* in March of 2008. Many definitions and concepts were discussed but they also noted that the strategic reserve tends to "combine various elements of… mobilization…, adding depth to the force…, and creating

---

[9] Howard Keebler, "Is The United States Army Reserve An Operational Force, A Strategic Reserve, Or A Mix Of Both?" (master's thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2009), accessed 21 November 2012, http://www.dtic mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA502096.

flexibility for planning and execution of war plans."[10] These all support the definition developed by Keebler and also tie in with factors used by other nations to define their reserves.

The factors of mobilization, depth and flexibility are similarly expressed in one use of the United Kingdom's reserve forces. In its *Future use of the UK's reserve forces*, the Directorate of Reserve Forces and Cadets describes one of the roles of the reserve forces as providing additional capability for large scale operations, both for individual reinforcements and formed Units, to add either depth to the pool of personnel or specialist capability. This type of mobilization is described as the situation where the largest number of reservists is likely to be required and includes the caveat that most reservists will be mobilised whether they have volunteered or not. The Directorate specifies that full mobilization is the type of operation undertaken least often.[11] This supports previous American concepts and indicates that the trend away from this type of mobilization is not restricted to the United States..

Both the United States and United Kingdom offer similar views of the strategic reserve. Essentially, it is characterized as a rarely activated military force that adds depth to a nation's permanent forces but is maintained at a lower level of readiness and training and must be mobilized in time of crisis or war. Thus, some of the advantages of a strategic reserve include low relative cost, relatively simple administration and training, a link to local communities through the citizen-soldiers in the reserves, and a large pool of

---

[10] Ralph Wipfli, and Dr. Dallas D. Owens, "State Of The U.S. Military Reserve Components," *Colloquium Brief*, 2008, accessed 21 November 2012, http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army mil/pdffiles/pub874.pdf.

[11] Directorate of Reserve Forces and Cadets, "Future use of the UK's reserve forces," (7 February 2005), accessed 21 October 2012, http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/3EB3D827-C128-4824-81BB-5DD4D7D88A5A/0/FutureReserveForcesFINAL31Jan05.pdf.

people who can serve on mobilization to support a major conflict. The corresponding disadvantages of the strategic reserve include relatively low level of training and readiness in comparison to the regular forces, a significant period of training required in the event of mobilization and the possibility of irrelevance or marginalization by the regular forces.

The relatively new concept of the operational reserve has also been studied and employed by many nations, including Canada. An operational reserve can be defined in similar terms of readiness, mobilization and depth to force. The United States army now looks at its reserve components as fulfilling two main elements of their operational role. According to Keebler the reserves fulfill certain roles: "The primary element of the operational role is participating in a full range of missions. The secondary element is the force concurrently participating in a cyclic force generation plan that is directed by the Service."[12] This enduring mission of maintaining readiness for operations – with the aim of reducing the time needed to prepare for a deployment – is one of the key characteristics of an operational reserve.

Increased readiness and conventional force generation activities have become key characteristics of the reserve forces of the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada in the last decade or more. With the increase in operational tempo around the globe, the reserve forces have become operationalized by having a greater percentage of people and units trained and then deployed with regular forces more frequently than any time since the Second World War. The United States Army has arguably the most operational reserves of our allies, as the regular frequency and duration with which reservists deploy

---

[12] Keebler, "Is The United States Army Reserve…," 2.

mean that some are performing two or three tours of duty to operational theatres in a number of years, when reservists of twenty years ago were unlikely to deploy more than once in their career, if ever. These deployments have also been significantly longer in the United States reserve components – up to eighteen months – than they typically are in the United Kingdom and Canadian reserve forces – normally six to nine months. But the army reserves are not the only service to become operationalized. All three reserve force services in Canada have seen an increase in operational demand since the Second World War, particularly in the last two decades.

An operational reserve can therefore be characterized as a frequently used military force that adds depth and flexibility to a nation's permanent forces and is maintained at a level of readiness and training that allows immediate deployment of individuals and formed units through the spectrum of military operations. The advantages of an operational reserve include relatively high level of training and readiness as compared to the regular forces, short time required to deploy, likely due to frequent force generation activities, and specialization of reservists that add flexibility to the regular force. The disadvantages of the operational reserve include a relatively high cost to maintain as service, training and benefits are close to the regular force's, often more complex policy and administration required to organize the reserve force for both part-time and full-time service and a smaller pool available for a full-scale mobilization as many will already be activated at the outset of hostilities.

The advantages and disadvantages of the strategic and operational reserves are summarized in Table 1. If we accept that both forms of reserves have a strong link to their communities, as those in an operational reserve are still recruited and generally

employed in their community, we can remove this factor from comparison. Similarly, if we accept that the size of the pool for mobilization is made irrelevant given the common understanding that the large-scale conventional war is highly unlikely in today's world, we can also remove this factor.

Table 1 – Advantages and Disadvantages of Strategic and Operational Reserves

	Strategic Reserve	Operational Reserve
Cost	Low – Advantage	High – Disadvantage
Administration/Training	Simple – Advantage	Complex – Disadvantage
Training/Readiness Level	Low – Disadvantage	High – Advantage
Time to Deploy	Long – Disadvantage	Short – Advantage
Relevance	Lower – Disadvantage	Higher – Advantage
Specialization	Low - Disadvantage	High – Advantage

The advantages and disadvantages can be used as the employment of reserves in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom are reviewed to determine common practices and areas that should be considered as Canada changes its reserve strategy. The experiences of the three allies will demonstrate that like-minded nations are moving toward an increasingly operational reserve will underscore some of the advantages and disadvantages of the operational reserves. With this comparison, we can then examine Canada's reserve employment since the Second World War to see how we compare with our allies.

OPERATIONAL RESERVES IN OTHER NATIONS

Many western nations, including Canada, have subtly different definitions of their reserves but for most, employment of their reserve forces – or parts thereof – has largely followed the global trend toward increasingly operational reserves. This decision has been made for good, practical reasons. Many of Canada's allies have experienced similar changes in the employment of reserves as participation in major operations such as Afghanistan and decreasing defence budgets have forced more wide-spread employment of reserves. An analysis of employment of reserve forces in the United Kingdom and the United States provides opportunities to identify strengths and weaknesses that Canada may use in shaping its own reserve policies.

The United Kingdom

The forces of the United Kingdom have come to be relied upon by their government for a variety of tasks around the globe. As the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan developed and the United Kingdom contributed significant contingents of troops (over 9,000 in Afghanistan in 2012, second only to the United States as a troop contributing nation[13]), a greater reliance on reserve forces to maintain an acceptable level of operational tempo for the soldiers grew. The Independent Commission to Review the United Kingdom's Reserve Forces summarized the significant contribution of reservists on operations by highlighting that at "the peak in 2004, reservists made up 20% of our

[13] North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "International Security Assistance Force (ISAF): Key Facts and Figures," accessed 24 October 2012, http://www nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/placemat.pdf.

forces in Iraq and 12% in Afghanistan."[14] This figure is all the more significant as the overall numbers of reservists in the United Kingdom has fallen over the past twenty years. A shocking estimate is that the Territorial Army (the main body of the army reserve) alone went from a size of 76,000 in 1990 to as low as 14,000 in July of 2011.[15] Thus, the high percentage of active reserve forces in Iraq and Afghanistan would represent a significantly larger portion of the Territorial Army in 2010 than it did in 1990. These statistics definitely indicate that the United Kingdom has operationalized its army reserve, at least, and started to employ them more consistently on operations.

The decrease in the reserve forces in the United Kingdom is the result of a number of factors. These factors were examined by the Independent Commission to Review the United Kingdom's Reserve Forces in their report *Future Reserves 2020* and include: financial pressures on the Ministry of Defence which led to budget cuts in the armed forces in general and an increase in the employment of the reserve force; a significant operational commitment for the United Kingdom's armed forces, which also increased the deployment frequency of reserve personnel; the wider issues of sustainability of Reserves being overlooked by the army to concentrate on other priorities; and situations that eroded the trust the reserve force has in the regular forces to manage their organization and their people.[16] But other issues are also affecting the health of the reserve forces. Young people are not as drawn by the call to serve their country,

---

[14] The Independent Commission to Review the United Kingdom's Reserve Forces, "Future Reserves 2020," July 2011, accessed 24 October 2012, http://www.army mod.uk/documents/general/88_FutureReserves_2020_%281%29.pdf.
[15] *Ibid*., 12.
[16] *Ibid*., 13.

and the lack of a coherent mandate or purpose to the reserve forces creates other challenges.

Several Ministry of Defence documents over the past twenty five years have seen different issues and had different direction for structuring the reserves, the constantly shifting policy indicating a lack of understanding of the true nature of the problems in the reserves. They have directed the removal of support weapons (Strategic Defence Review in 1998) and then the emphasis on support weapons as the major focus (Future Army Structures (TA) in 2006); they have envisioned the Territorial Army being used to augment the regular army in "large scale, mainly conventional, operations" (Strategic Defence Review in 1998) and then indicated that reserves "have evolved from a large, but little used force, to one that is structured to support more frequent expeditionary operations" (Strategic Defence Review in 2003).[17] Through the contradictions and confusion in policy and priorities, though, the Ministry did acknowledge that they had a *de facto* operational reserve in the Territorial Army, which they used for a large number of individual call-ups throughout their commitment in Iraq and Afghanistan. The strategic reserve component of the Territorial Army was seemingly eliminated in 2005 when "the requirement [for the Reserves] to support large scale operations was removed. However, the [Territorial Army] has not been restructured significantly to reflect this."[18] The shift of the Territorial Army from a strategic reserve to an operational reserve was not a concerted strategy but an unintended evolution. What it demonstrates, however, is that the move to an operational reserve is possible without a concerted effort. Rather,

---

[17] Ministry of Defence, "Strategic Defence Reviews, London, 1998/2003/2006," quoted in Independent Commission to Review the United Kingdom's Reserve Forces, "Future Reserves 2020," 14-15.
[18] *Ibid.*, 14.

circumstances and competition for resources can cause incremental change that force reliance on reserve forces in smaller, more specialized operations.

The United Kingdom's maritime reserves, comprised of the Royal Naval Reserve (RNR) and the Royal Marine Reserve (RMR), have also seen increased employment on operations over the past ten years. Once again the Independent Commission to Review the United Kingdom's Reserve Forces depicted the employment of the maritime reserves in its *Future Reserves 2020*: "Well over half of the trained strength of the RNR and the majority of the RMR have been mobilised since Operation Telic 1, with many individuals having deployed several times. In addition, 10% of the Maritime Reserve has been employed at any given point on Full Time Reserve Service contracts…."[19] This move toward an increased portion of the maritime reserves being employed on full-time service to support an operational mission serves as another example of the United Kingdom's trend toward an operational reserve. Overall, the Commission judged the structure of the maritime reserves as "a taut and effective Reserve, well structured, manned and deployed against a clearly defined and current operational requirement."[20] This assessment of the maritime reserves and their operational requirement is important when we view Canada's naval reserve in comparison to its army and air reserves.

The United States

The closest nation to Canada both in terms of geography and development, the United States is a very good nation with which to conduct comparisons. Although the

---

[19] *Ibid.*
[20] *Ibid.*

population, foreign policy and military might differ significantly between the two nations, Canada has a history of taking lessons from the United States and works closely with them in many areas, including defence. It is reasonable, then, that changes in the United States military would have some measure of effect on the Canadian armed forces, albeit on a much different scale. This emulation often has effects similar but different between the two nations and their armed forces.

Of the nations examined, the United States provides the most apparent shift from a strategic to an operational reserve. Since the beginning of Army Transformation in 1999, through the post-2001 offensive actions in Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States reserves have become an operational force. And this change is not a just a matter of opinion or interpretation – the Department of Defence has codified this role in its Directive 1200.17. This directive "organized all branches of the [Reserve Component] including, the Army, Navy, USMC, and Air Force as an operational force."[21] Subsequently, the United States Army has committed to a policy of structured force generation to continue the rotation of preparation-deployment-regeneration known as Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) for its soldiers and units, including the reserve component.[22] This framework has proven successful and doable in today's complex world and has supported the rotation of soldiers since 2001, as the major combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have required multiple deployments of regular and reserve force units and personnel. In his *Statement on the Posture of the United States Army Reserve 2007,* Lieutenant General Jack C. Stultz (Chief, Army Reserve and Commanding General, United States Army Reserve Command) detailed that since 11

---

[21] *Ibid.*, 3.
[22] Keebler, "Is The United States Army Reserve…," 2.

September 2001, "[the] Army Reserve had mobilized more than 166,000 Soldiers; more than 42,000 Soldiers have served on multiple deployments. Ninety-eight percent of Army Reserve units have provided mobilized Soldiers or have deployed in support of the Global War on Terror."[23] The United States is effectively unable to sustain the scale and tempo of current operations without the reserves.

With this formalized shift toward an operational reserve, the United States provides an excellent example for other nations to observe as the baseline for comparison to their own reserve forces. Unlike the United Kingdom, the United States has exerted a concerted and coordinated effort to re-structure reserve components over the past forty years, beginning with the 1970 implementation of the Total Force Concept (a concept Canada subsequently adopted in many aspects in the 1980s) which was envisioned as "a vehicle to promote a reduced response time for the reserves to back a small Active establishment in a national emergency."[24] The interdependence between the active and reserve components in this plan was supposed to build a relationship in peacetime that would carry through on operations. Not only were the components expected to learn to work together but they were to develop understanding and respect of the other component. This comprehensive approach to the use of the reserves had been in place for approximately twenty years before it was really tested during Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, when "the reserves of all the services mobilized and deployed, sometimes in advance of active forces."[25] This experience served as the

---

[23] Secretary of the Army, "2007 Posture Statement, Army Reserve: An Operational Force," accessed 26 October 2012, http://www.dtic mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA471367.
[24] Charles E. Heller, "Total Force: Federal Reserves and State National Guards," 1994, 1, accessed 21 November 2012, http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army mil/pdffiles/pub335.pdf.
[25] *Ibid.*, 2.

vindication of the total force concept, although some of the success may be attributed to the high readiness levels maintained throughout the Cold War in general. But even with the success of the deployment of the active and reserve components during the First Gulf War, challenges to the employment of the operational reserves remained.

Before and during the Gulf War, as was historically the case, there continued to be internal competition for resources and funding between the reserve component and the active component[26] as the active component was generally allocated the most stable budget for its peacetime readiness and material procurement. This allocation of assets is a hold-over from the Cold War when the active components of the various armed services were well-equipped and trained in preparation for a prolonged, large-scale battle with the communist nations and their allies. Because the size and function of the active component was relatively stable, budget estimates for its employment and deployment were made and justified to higher levels of review. With the greater operational employment of the reserve component, however, the United States has recently been discussing increasing the reserve budget allocation to better position the reserve component to contribute to operations.[27]

Canada's closest allies have begun to employ at least part of their reserve forces as an operational reserve. These nations have come to the realization that current and future conflicts must be fought using reserve component soldiers, sailors, air personnel and marines alongside regular forces. Of note, the United Kingdom has moved to an operational reserve partly out of necessity and circumstance, but without a coherent strategy. This has led to issues in the Territorial Army at least in terms of retention of

---

[26] *Ibid.*
[27] Reserve Forces Policy Board, "Annual Report 2011," 3.

troops. The United States, in contrast, has moved to an operational reserve as a national strategy and has changed the structure and policies of the reserves as part of the strategy. Some analysts now see the challenge as how to cost-effectively sustain what has become reliance on the reserve component.[28] These costs have increased to be nearly the cost of regular forces as full-time employment. The increase in the cost of the reserves is but one of the challenges facing nations, including Canada, that must choose between the capabilities and cost of an operational reserve or the state of readiness and savings of a strategic reserve. The military posture adopted by Canada following the Second World War was much different from the current posture. How, then, did Canada go from a primarily strategic reserve force after the Second World War to arguably having an operational reserve in the post-9/11 era? To answer this, the roles and responsibilities of Canada's armed forces – and its reserve forces in particular – must be examined to determine the factors affecting the nature of reserve employment through the decades.

[28] Wipfli, et. al., "State Of The U.S. Military Reserve Components 2008," 3.

RESERVE ROLES IN CANADA – WWII TO PRESENT

The Second World War was the last time that Canada mobilized its armed forces for a full-scale war, and they performed with great valour, courage and skill. The achievements of the Canadian Forces in the Second World War (including Newfoundland's forces, which were not yet part of Canada) belied the level of readiness and training throughout the army, navy and air force prior to the conflict. The forces sent to the European and Pacific theatres were comprised of a largely citizen army mobilized to support tiny pre-war regular forces. Since that conflict, Canada has relied on its reserve force in a number of conflicts to augment its regular force and provide flexibility to the government and the Chief of Defence Staff in terms of operational planning.

Following the Second World War, the next major conflict in which Canada was engaged was the Korean crisis. Although the Canadian Army Special Force was not technically a reserve mobilization, soldiers were recruited from civilian life and from the reserves and trained as part of the regular army. Many of the volunteers were veterans of the Second World War[29] (similar to the United States' Ready Reserve who are former members of the regular force) and were sent to operate in Korea under a United Nations mandate for eighteen months or more. Overall, 26,791 Canadians served in Korea and well over half would have been members of the Canadian Army Special Force. Essentially reservists, they joined and deployed on a volunteer basis so that the regular forces, who were reduced to a level of approximately 20,350 after the Second World

---

[29] Department of Supply and Services Canada, "Valour Remembered - Canadians in Korea", (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1990), accessed 13 November 2012, http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/history/KoreaWar/valour.

War[30], could maintain the defence of Canada. The formation of the Canadian Army Special Force is analogous to a level four mobilization as envisioned for today's Canadian Forces in the event of a full-scale, prolonged conventional war. As many soldiers with experience in the Second World War were still able to be called upon, many of those mobilized in 1953 required significantly less training than they did in 1939. The same was not necessarily true in the 1960s and 1970s, when Canada concentrated on a strategy of national survival (defence of Canada and recovery after a nuclear attack) and conducted peacekeeping missions around the world. During this period the two solitudes – the reserve world and the regular world – rarely mixed with each other.

In the era of the Cold War, many Western nations maintained large standing armies and Canada was no different until the 1990s. As the concept of peacekeeping developed and Canada took a founding role in its inception, the large regular force was generally able to maintain the pace and not rely on reservists to a large extent. The air force and navy reserves were not called upon heavily for peacekeeping as they had their own equipment and roles which they had to fulfill and were less able to easily integrate into units of their corresponding regular forces. But after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1990, the size of the army began to contract and the need to employ reservists began to grow as the demand peacekeeping missions around the globe also became greater. By 1990, army reservists were on full-time active duty in the Arabian Peninsula (in support of the First Gulf War) and in many other parts of the world on peacekeeping duty and the air and naval reserves were about to become heavily relied upon as well.

---

[30] *Ibid.,*

Following the terrorist attacks on the United States and the ensuing invasion of Afghanistan during Operation APOLLO, the Canadian Forces' commitment to the war in Afghanistan grew substantially to 2,830 troops in 2009, and was sustained until the combat mission ended in 2010.[31] While this deployment only placed Canada third in terms of NATO troop contributing nations, it represented a substantial commitment for the Canadian Forces to maintain, given its small size relative to the United States and United Kingdom, for example. The continuing requirement for a Canadian battle group in Afghanistan from 2002 to 2010 placed the army under significant strain to maintain the commitment while generating the next group of forces to deploy and allowing the last group sufficient time to regenerate after a deployment. Major-General Dennis Tabbernor, then-Chief of Reserves and Cadets, characterized the requirement to maintain 3,000 troops in Afghanistan as requiring a pool or 15,000 service people: 3,000 people in theatre, 6,000 in various phases of training to deploy and 6,000 recovering after deployment.[32] Throughout the mission in Afghanistan, many volunteers from the army, navy and air force – both regular and reserve – of the Canadian Forces volunteered to deploy to the area of operations to participate in Canada's commitment there. Very quickly after the first deployment, it was evident that reserve force soldiers were required to sustain the army domestically and on deployed operations. The use of reservists increased significantly and quickly during the combat mission in Afghanistan: "sometimes more than one in five of the troops was a reservist…. Major-General Tabbernor [then Chief of Reserves and Cadets] told the [Standing Senate Committee on

---

[31] International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), "Afghanistan – ISAF RC and PRT Locations," Last modified 7 April 2009, http://www.nato.int/ISAF/docu/epub/maps/index html.
[32] Dennis Tabbernor, "Reserves on Operations," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, 12, no. 4 (Summer 2010): 45. http://www.jmss.org/jmss/index.php/jmss/article/view/353/376.

National Security and Defence] that more than 14,000 reservists took part in overseas operations between 2000 and 2010."[33] The support to the combat mission was in addition to reservists being called upon to support domestic operations such as the response to the Swiss Air plane crash (Operation *Persistence*), and natural disasters such as floods (Operations *Lustre*, *Lotus* and *Lyre*) and wild fires (Operation *Forge*). Reservists also featured heavily in Canada's largest domestic operation, Operation *Podium*, the support to security of the 2010 Olympic Winter Games. Whether the dependence on reservists in domestic operations was a result of the credibility gained on international operations or out of need due to the deployed regular force, it proved once again that reservists were ready and capable to serve when and where Canada needed. And while the army reserve was becoming highly operationalized and gaining vast operational experience domestically and abroad, the air reserve was continuing to quietly support its regular force counterparts as well.

The air reserve has traditionally been made up of people who have served in the regular force and have retired but maintained their readiness and skills through part-time service. This model was adopted mainly because of the highly technical skills and lengthy training involved to become qualified in an air force occupation. Pilots, for example, would be almost impossible to train with only one night per week, one weekend per month and two weeks per year of training. With the complex and necessarily technologically advanced systems used by the air force, reservists are unable to maintain

---

[33] Senate of Canada, "ANSWERING THE CALL – The Future Role of Canada's Primary Reserve (Interim Report of the Standing Committee on National Security and Defence)," accessed 22 November 2012, http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/SEN/Committee/411/secd/rep/rep04dec11-e.pdf .

skills and keep current enough to augment their regular force counterparts without significant training.

Although the air reserve has not been the subject of significant media attention over the past fifty years, it has contributed significantly in effect to operations since the Korean conflict. After the Second World War, the 1950s saw a very active Royal Canadian Air Force Auxiliary (an operational reserve force). By the 1960s, drastic changes in roles and reduction of personnel continued the focus of the air reserve on operational roles, albeit in domestic roles such as light transport and search and rescue rather than the security roles they had previously filled. This reduction of personnel coupled with a shift in the mid-1970s toward twinning air reserve units so that members of the reserve force trained with personnel and equipment from adjacent regular force units (alleviating the requirement of buying and maintaining extra aircraft and equipment)[34] resulted in the air reserve remaining an operational reserve. Over the next thirty years, air reserve personnel were gradually integrated into regular force units so that they have now "become an integral part of the Total Air Force."[35] Although there was not a significant mobilization of the Air Reserve over the past 50 years, its personnel have contributed in smaller numbers to operations throughout the spectrum of conflict, from domestic contingency operations to major operations abroad such as Operation APOLLO in the Arabian Gulf. The small size, specific skill sets of the personnel in the air reserve and the significant integration into regular force units all support classifying the Royal Canadian Air Force Reserve as an operational reserve. The air force and navy

---

[34] Government of Canada, "History | Air Reserve," accessed 23 October 2012, http://www.rcaf-arc.forces.gc.ca/ar-ra/page-eng.asp?id=755.
[35] *Ibid.*

took different approaches to the organization and employment of their reserves, the air force preferring an integrated model while the navy tended toward a segregated model.

Following the Second World War, the naval reserve was quickly scaled back to pre-war levels and resumed the tasks typical of a strategic reserve. Through the Cold War, much of the navy's attention was on so-called blue water operations – those operations that would take place between formations of major surface combatants far off the coasts of Canada in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. The level of training and experience required in the destroyers, destroyer escorts and other major warships was largely unattainable by most naval reservists. Instead, naval reserve training and readiness activities were mainly carried out across Canada at naval reserve divisions, often located far from the coasts, or in minor warships such as the *Porte Class* Gate Vessels or the *Bay Class* Minesweepers. This training was generally of short duration and culminated in a practical examination of the basic skills of navigation, seamanship and emergency responses onboard the gate vessels over a weekend. As the 1980s progressed and a few more naval reservists were being employed on limited-duration periods of full-time service in major warships and on longer periods of service in administrative and recruiting roles, the navy began to see problems with recruiting and retention, and concluded that its reserve sailors needed a role to remain interested and engaged. This was a pivotal point as it led to a new and drastically different role for the naval reserve.

The Defence White Paper of 1987 redefined the role of the naval reserve and assigned it capabilities to be developed and maintained to support the overall naval mission. These capabilities included coastal defence, mine counter measures and naval control of shipping. Although homeland defence was a traditional role for reserve forces,

it had not been part of the naval reserve mandate in Canada during the Cold War era. These new tasks were intended to be conducted by the naval reserve on a mainly part-time basis. But one of the tasks included manning the Maritime Coastal Defence Vessels (the twelve *Kingston* Class ships which were commissioned into service between 1994 and 2001). There were a great number of full-time jobs that required a significant amount of training and experience to become proficient. To prepare for manning the Kingston class, the navy brought two former oil-rig supply tugs into service in 1989. These mine sweeping auxiliaries provided platforms in which naval reserve officers and non-commissioned members could gain training and experience in coastal defence and mine counter-measures. After only a decade in service, these ships were paid off and the crews were transferred to the new *Kingston* Class ships to continue providing domestic defence presence and support to other government departments (such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canada Border and Security Agency) that was part of the coastal defence mandate.

In just over ten years, the naval reserve's manning requirements expanded from a handful of full-time positions at sea in the *Bay* and *Porte* Class ships and ashore in naval reserve divisions to two full-time operational ships. By 1999, twelve operational ships were manned by reservists and split evenly between the two naval bases in Halifax, Nova Scotia and Esquimalt, British Columbia. This represented a nearly ten-fold increase in full-time manning requirements before considering the expansion of naval reserve headquarters and the Canadian Forces Fleet School in Quebec City, Quebec. The rapid expansion of personnel and desire to build experience at sea was a profound change in the navy's approach to employing its reserve force and led to a new generation of naval

reservists building careers based on full-time service in and around the *Kingston* Class ships.

As the personnel in the *Kingston* Class improved their abilities and became more professional, the navy's desire to use them for domestic tasks increased. While a great deal of naval reserve training took place onboard throughout the year, at the end of the 1990s the ships and their crews took another leap forward – the coastal defence vessels made their first trans-Atlantic crossing to participate in a mine counter-measures exercise organized and intended to train the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's Standing Naval Force Channel (today called the Standing NATO Mine Counter Measures Group One). This foray into training with NATO partners in the mine counter-measures role was a step into the light for many and gave full-time naval reservists a taste of the operational relevance that lay beyond the traditional sea training and patrol tasks, fuelling the desire of many to remain on full-time service.

While many chose to stay on full-time service with the naval reserve, as the Canadian Naval Centennial was celebrated in 2010, the *Kingston* Class manning situation was deteriorating after almost fifteen years of high-tempo activity. As the sailors became burned out from sailing significant amounts during successive years, they left the naval reserve for a variety of reasons. At the end of 2010, the naval reserve strength was at approximately 3,800 people, while the authorized establishment was 4,800. Although only 365 people were needed to man the *Kingston* Class ships at any one time, it became more and more difficult to find volunteers for continuous full-time service. By 2012, only eight of the twelve ships were fully manned. Although two were not manned due to scheduled maintenance periods, the other two were unmanned due to a lack of available

personnel. This trend highlighted the need for greater force generation to replace the sailors who had left, but ironically resulted in a reduction of the *Kingston* Class' ability to conduct regular training of reservists and operational roles such as arctic patrols and exercise deployments to Europe. The announcement of new Arctic patrol vessels, which are envisioned to have a reserve component to their crews but not necessarily an entirely reserve crew, will put further stress on the naval reserve personnel system.

It appears that Canada's operational naval reserve force had become a victim of its own success as the navy demanded more and more of these capable sailors. On the surface, there was little difference in the employment of the regular force and reserve sailors. But the reserve sailors saw their regular force counterparts serving fewer days at sea per year (a result of budget cut-backs and increasing fuel costs) with more benefits (health care, posting allowances and – until 2007 – a pension plan) and greater job stability (with multi-year or indefinite periods of service rather than two-to-three year contracts) which caused many to join the regular force and continue in operational roles with greater opportunities for advancement.

The shift to an operational reserve force was underscored in 2010, as over half of Canada's reserve force was employed on operations at one time. In his comments to the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, Vice-Chief of Defence Rear-Admiral Bruce Donaldson summarized the full impact of reserve service to the Canadian Forces: "At the height of our operations back in February of 2010 – which included not only major operations in Haiti and Afghanistan, but also the Canadian Forces' largest-ever domestic operation in support of the Vancouver Olympics – 15,000

of our 27,000 Primary Reserve members were on full-time service."[36] Of course, this number included members of all reserve services and concurrent commitments, but the large proportion of reservists was unprecedented outside of a world war and was in large part due to the reserve's level of participation and general success in domestic and expeditionary operations over the previous two decades. Along with this unprecedented level of reserve service came many lessons learned about the challenges of maintaining an operational reserve.

[36] Speaking notes for Vice-Admiral Bruce Donaldson, VCDS, for appearance before Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, 25 October 2011, quoted in Senate, "ANSWERING THE CALL," 16.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STRATEGIC RESERVE

The strategic reserve that has been used in the past and was largely effective for conventional, protracted and large-scale conflicts is much less effective today. One of the greatest limitations of the strategic reserve in today's world of threats that are "diffuse, contentious, frequent, and require many of the skills that you would think civilians could bring"[37] is the time required to mobilize, train and deploy a strategic reserve force. With a strategic reserve being maintained at lower levels of readiness and occupational training, the time required to train and prepare the reservists is relatively long, albeit shorter than training civilians who volunteer or are conscripted into service. There would also be a significant expense to expanding training centres and procuring equipment for this large force to receive their pre-deployment training. Changes in infrastructure, personnel and materiel support would all be required in the event of a full mobilization of the strategic reserve.

Conversely, the operational reserve is a middle ground – it is quicker and more flexible to deploy, but requires resources up-front and brings to light many issues of policy, compensation and benefits. Members of the operational reserve force serve in a full-time, operational manner that approaches the regular force in terms of service and compensation. As many of the policies dealing with the Canadian Forces reserves were developed before the 1990s and incrementally adapted as the situation warranted they are not well formed to deal with a larger group of full-time reservists. At particular risk are those reservists that are not deployed on domestic or expeditionary operations but

---

[37] Richard A. Weitz, quoted in in Senate, "ANSWERING THE CALL," 25.

involved in the training and administration that is required to prepare reservists for those operations.

In Canada and her allies such as the United Kingdom and the United States, the strategic reserve that was founded up to hundreds of years ago and supported through the Cold War was generally synonymous with a primarily part-time commitment (e.g. one night per week/one weekend per month/two weeks per year) and policies were developed based on this scheme of employment. This founding principle of reserve employment leads to one of the most important factors of choosing between a strategic or operational reserve – the cost of maintaining that reserve force.

In general, the cost of maintaining a strategic reserve is less than that of an operational reserve. This distinction is most directly linked to the amount of time a member is required to perform military service. In a strategic reserve, the readiness level of individuals and units is generally lower than that expected of the operational reserve. Thus, the people and units are required to undergo less training and exercising to maintain readiness. This state can be viewed in the example of a strategic reservist who conducts fourteen days of part-time service through a year with a two-week period of full-time service to participate in an exercise versus an operational reservist who might work full-time for three or six months to complete some pre-deployment training in anticipation of proceeding on an operation. The cost of the operational reservist in this case would be greater by a factor of at least three. For the reservist who maintains continuous full-time service to maintain readiness and gain experience to fulfill a domestic operational role or to lead other reservists, for example, the cost is greater by a factor of twelve – and 85% of the cost of the equivalent regular force member by

Canada's scale of pay. The Independent Commission to Review the United Kingdom's reserve forces summarized the financial factor as follows:

> In broad terms, our analysis has revealed that a [Territorial Army] unit, of comparable size to its Regular counterpart, costs about 20% of the latter's manpower bill when not mobilised. When mobilised, the same unit costs some 10-15% less than a Regular one. … the more reservists are used, the less cost benefits are derived from them….[38]

In Canada the rates of pay for regular and reserve forces are different, although the gap has closed marginally since 1990. (In 1990, a regular force general service officer of the rank of Lieutenant(Navy) had a Basic rate of pay of $40,827 per annum, while a reserve force officer of the same rank had a Basic rate of pay of $33,142 per annum – a difference of 19%, from the regular's perspective. Today, the rates are $72,960 and $62,020.80, respectively, a difference of only 15% from the regular's perspective. [39]) But as Commodore (Retired) Robert Blakely stated to the Senate Committee on National Defence and Veteran's Affairs, "Many people say, 'I am doing the same job; why do I not get the same pay?' Someone decided 85% was the number, based on the fact that a reservist did not have to take a posting. A reservist could refuse to go somewhere and basically volunteer every time he put on his uniform. Is it a real number? No."[40]

In addition to rates of pay, there are a number of benefits that regular force personnel have access to that not all reserve personnel do. For example, a member of the regular force is entitled to a posting allowance equal to one-half of their monthly rate of

---

[38] The Independent Commission to Review the United Kingdom's Reserve Forces, "Future Reserves 2020," 11.
[39] Director General of Compensation and Benefits, "Historical Pay Rates," accessed 3 November 2012, http://www.cmp-cpm forces.gc.ca/dgcb-dgras/ps/pay-sol/pr-sol/index-eng.asp.
[40] Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, 3rd Session, 40th Parliament, 18 October 2010, quoted in Senate, "ANSWERING THE CALL," 53.

pay[41] (an equivalent of $1375.50 for a Private at the basic rate of pay[42]), while a member of the reserve force is entitled to the reserve relocation allowance of $1,000[43]. Although not formally defined, this disparity is commonly linked to the same perception that once enrolled, regular force service and the postings that come with it are considered 'mandatory' by the Canadian Forces, while periods of full-time reserve service are considered 'voluntary.' Because of this commonly held perception, other personnel policies are different between the regular force and the reserve force. Part-time reservists may purchase health insurance for themselves while full-time reservists and regulars are covered by the Canadian Forces Health Services. In the case of members of the reserve force who became injured or ill while serving, however, care is extended to them until the illness or injury is healed, just as would be extended to a member of the regular force.

The preceding examples demonstrate how Canadian Forces policy is divided essentially between full-time regular force service, full-time reserve force service and part-time reserve force service. What it reinforces to the full-time reservist is that the work they do is worth less than the equivalent work done by their regular force counterpart. Although the systemic argument is that reservists are able to refuse postings if they choose, the reality is that regular force personnel have the same choice. All in all, each component is given the same choice: continued employment or the unemployment line. The only real difference is how fast that person can get to the unemployment line if that is their choice.

---

[41] Department of National Defence, "Compensation and Benefit Instruction 208.849," accessed 3 November 2012, http://www.cmp-cpm forces.gc.ca/dgcb-dgras/pub/cbi-dra/doc/208.pdf.

[42] Director General of Compensation and Benefits, "Historical Pay Rates."

[43] Department of National Defence, "Canadian Forces Integrated Relocation Programme Directive, APS 2009-2012," 136, accessed 3 November 2012, http://www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/dgcb-dgras/pd/rel-rei/aps-paa-2011/doc/aps-paa-2011-eng.pdf.

But there is more than simply the financial cost to consider in choosing between a strategic or operational reserve. To support an operational reserve means to increase the training and evaluation of those reservists. Although they may be trained at schools already established for training the regular forces, the infrastructure and staff must be increased to support the greater throughput of students that would necessarily attend courses. This requirement extends to operational team training as well, as the greater number of reservists – and the corresponding requirement for readiness tests such as Work-Ups or Brigade-Level Exercises – would require more frequent evaluations, but offsets can be found in this area. When operational reserve forces are assigned specialist roles such as medical, legal or information systems support, civilians with the requisite qualifications are recruited directly. This addition avoids the training and education aspect of supporting the operational reserve but not the operational readiness aspects.

The operational reserve will generally require compensation and benefits closer to the regular force than the traditional strategic reserve. With the increased training and readiness requirements, the members of the operational reserve are less "citizen soldiers… [than] soldier citizens," as Major General (Retired) Frédéric Mariage indicated to the Canadian Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence in November of 2010.[44] While he was addressing the shift away from the traditional citizen-soldier that has strong ties to his community, he was indirectly speaking to the fact that reservists were becoming more professional in their abilities, compensation and benefits. In the United States, significant effort has been expended to overhaul the benefits of reserve component personnel as most are deploying regularly and will continue to do so

---

[44] Senate of Canada, "Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, 3rd Session, 40th Parliament," 1 November 2010, quoted in Senate, "ANSWERING THE CALL," 25.

by policy. In their 2011 Annual Report the United States' Reserve Forces Policy Board made several recommendations to the Secretary of Defence related to equal access to benefits, education and advancement as their active component counterparts, largely in recognition of their shift to an operational reserve force.[45] These examples of enhanced compensation for reserve service are reflected in Canada's other allies as well.

In the United Kingdom, reserve forces have been widely used over the past twenty years, and the Independent Commission to Review the United Kingdom's Reserve Forces classified the operational commitment as "… [providing] additional capacity for large scale conventional operations, and support to enduring operations, as well as filling vital specialist roles and supporting some UK domestic operations."[46] To provide flexibility for the various levels of employment and deployment of its reserve forces, the United Kingdom has developed a complex system of compensation that can capture a number of different reserve service scenarios. But they still recognize that change is required to keep people in their reserve forces. The 2009 *Report on the Strategic Review of Reserves* commissioned by the Ministry of Defence recognized that members of the reserve forces deserved equal treatment in relation to terms and conditions of service, pension eligibility and career management to name a few areas. The commission recommended that the types of service be rationalized, partly to "to remove the barriers that make it difficult to move between engagements."[47] This greater attention to

---

[45] Office of the Secretary of Defense, "Reserve Forces Policy Board Annual Report 2011," R3-R4, accessed 4 November 2012, http://ra.defense.gov/rfpb/_documents/RFPB2011Final%2022SEP11.pdf.
[46] Independent Commission to Review the United Kingdom's Reserve Forces, "Future Reserves 2020," 11.
[47] Ministry of Defence, "Report on the Strategic Review of Reserves," 20, accessed 5 November 2012, http://www.sabre.mod.uk/News/~/media/Files/PDFs/Review_of_Reserves_report.ashx.

movement between types of military service is intended to provide flexibility and support to the reservists and, in turn, encourage retention in the armed forces.

A significant challenge of the strategic reserve is that of retention. There are arguments for increased retention in each type of reserve, and all of the nations compared have dedicated research to studying what those factors are. On the surface, the operational reserve may appear to have a retention edge because it offers the possibility of full-time military service (usually with commensurate pay and benefits), offers operational relevance (which offers parity with regular force counterparts and gives the reservist a sense of accomplishment) and specialization (in an area that already interests the reservist). As Chun observed in a study of retention in the United States Army Reserve and National Guard, between 1996 and 2002 retention generally held the same or increased among the reservists with one or two operational deployments.[48] And while some reservists are interested in putting their civilian skill to work in the military environment, others join for a unique experience, so working in the same field as their civilian career may actually be a detractor to continued military service. Some other operational reservists find that military service suits them quite well and they join the regular force. While this recruitment is a boon to the Armed Forces in general, the reserve force may then suffer from chronic shortages which undermine the capabilities that the Reserve or sub-units are intended to bring to an operation. The United States' Reserve Forces Policy Board has acknowledged equal opportunity as a factor in retention in their 2011 Annual Report, as their second recommendation to the Secretary of Defence

---

[48] Clayton S. Chun, "Who Stays And Who Goes: Army Enlisted Reserve And National Guard Retention," (Paper, United States Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, July 2005), 20, accessed 6 November 2012, http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army mil/pubs/download.cfm?q=612.

was: "Equal access to joint military education, promotions, and command, as well as advanced civilian education for Reserve Component officers and non-commissioned officers should be directed by the Secretary of Defense."[49] This sentiment was echoed in the Independent Commission to Review the United Kingdom's Reserve Forces' *Future Reserves 2020*: "[The stabilization and betterment of the reserves] will require enhancements to individual, collective and command training. It will also require increased command opportunities, in peacetime and on operations. The Reserve will require new roles, more viable structures and better mechanisms to integrate with the Regular component."[50]

In Canada's naval reserve, one of the greatest follow-on effects of manning the *Kingston* Class on a full-time basis with a relatively small recruiting base has been burn-out and high attrition rates. The combination of policies that make sea-going reserve service worth approximately 18-23% more than service alongside (based on the aggregate value of the Class C service pay increase and the entitlement to Sea Duty Allowance, which varies based on accumulated sea service) and the relatively few shore jobs available for reservists means that people were staying at sea for years at a time. And the service at sea generally included over 150 days at sea – and up to 200 days away from home port – per year. The high deployment rate and income differences combined to drive some sailors to other employment. In 2006, when component transfer to the same occupation in the regular force was streamlined and the process was expedited, many naval reservists took that option. This was especially true at the senior rank levels as full

---

[49] Reserve Forces Policy Board, "Annual Report 2011," 3.
[50] The Independent Commission to Review the United Kingdom's Reserve Forces, "Future Reserves 2020," 7.

time reserve employment opportunities were relatively scarce. But some occupations were unable to achieve parity with their regular force counterparts either based on ship-specific tasks (e.g. naval combat information operators, who conduct vastly different tasks in MCDVs and frigates) or occupational tasks (e.g. Marine Engineering Systems Operators, who are not trained to conduct maintenance and, thus, are not able to transfer to Marine Engineering Mechanic or Technician occupation). Nonetheless, between 2007 and 2012, some 770 reservists accepted transfers to the regular force[51] and, although many remained in the navy, a significant number of engineers chose other technical occupations and many senior non-commissioned members became officers in the regular force. Employment in the regular force satisfied many needs of the individuals, including stability, equity and opportunity, all of which are issues confronting a strategic reserve.

Another way to encourage stability and opportunity is to support those reservists who have civilian careers but wish to occasionally serve for extended periods. This support most often is manifested in legislation that protects the jobs of reservists while they are undergoing military service. Of the three nations compared in this paper, the full range of job protection legislation exists. As summarised by The Honourable David Pratt in his discussion paper for the Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute: "The [United Kingdom]… [has] employer support programs along with job protection legislation. The United States has only job protection legislation relying on the patriotic spirit of the employer to help in the support of reservists."[52] Similar to the United States, Canada has not established financial support programs for employers, but the federal,

---

[51] Offer, Alan, "Career Manager Visit," (Presentation, HMCS SCOTIAN Halifax, NS, 4 December 2012).
[52] The Hon. David Pratt, "Canada's Citizen Soldiers: A Discussion Paper," 72, accessed 6 November 2012, http://www.cdfai.org/sswg/PDF/Canadas%20Citizen%20Soldiers.pdf.

provincial and the Yukon territorial governments have enacted legislation to protect, to some degree, reservists while they undergo military training or service.[53] The federal legislation does not protect all reservists, as the Canada Labour Code only affects regulated industries (approximately ten percent of all workers)[54] and the Public Service Employment Act covers less than one percent (211,610 employees in March 2012[55]) of Canadian workers. But the legislation enacted represents an important step in protecting the employment of those that choose to serve – and it serves as another example of the importance of the operational reserve to federal law-makers. The federal and provincial governments have taken a significant step toward supporting its reservists to remain an operational force, but have some way to go to match allies like the United States. As nations move to more operational reserves, job protection becomes more and more critical for reservists to attend training, deploy on operations and, in the long run, remain operationally relevant in the armed forces and become institutional leaders in their reserve occupations.

In this era of increasingly operational reserves a final factor affecting the strategic reserve is that of operational relevance of the reserve force. With the opportunity to contribute to operational missions, reservists are able to relay their experiences within their units or to the general public. A medal for operational service is a powerful symbol of members and units of the reserve force. Without a defined and measurable operational goal, however, it is difficult for reserve force leaders to justify the effort to their

---

[53] Chris Madsen, "Military Responses and Capabilities in Canada's Domestic Context Post 9/11," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, 13, no. 3, (Spring 2011): 7, accessed 9 December 2012, http://www.jmss.org/jmss/index.php/jmss/article/view/409/417.
[54] Department of National Defence, "CFLC – Job Protection Legislation Guide November 2009," accessed 4 December 2012, http://www.cflc-clfc.forces.gc.ca/jpl-lse/jplg-glpe-eng.asp.
[55] Public Service Commission, "Annual Report 2011-2012," 4, accessed 4 December 2012, http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/arp-rpa/2012/rpt-eng.pdf.

subordinates or expenditures on training and equipment to their superiors. With constraints in defence budgets, it is often cost-effective to move equipment that is dated but functional to reserve units to get further use from it. But this allocation of antiquated assets can send a powerful, if unintended, message to reservists about their value in the overall defence organization. When the reserve force begins to appear irrelevant to the regular force or the reservists, the reservists will be marginalized during training and operations, leading to discontent and increasing attrition. The re-distribution of resources is a topic that must be discussed in Canada before committing to a return to a strategic reserve, and certainly in the naval reserve. The missions assigned to the naval reserve mean that there is a relatively high level of sophistication and support for equipment used by naval reserve forces. But gaps still exist and a return to a predominantly part-time reserve that simply augments the regular force could lead to a regression in personnel and materiel support.

THE NAVAL RESERVE – OPERATIONAL OR STRATEGIC

Canadian reserve forces are being used more and more in operational roles, although the army and air force have largely taken on the strategic function of augmenting the regular force in operations or operational support. From the First Gulf War in 1990 to Operation APOLLO in 2001 to today's Operation ATTENTION in Afghanistan, army reservists have been called upon to augment their regular force counterparts and have been given the opportunity to train and fight alongside them as equals. As the air force reserve is comprised mainly of ex-regular force personnel, it is almost exclusively an augmentation force which requires a high level of initial training on very complex systems to function at the right level. In essence, the air reserve provides the ability for former regular force personnel, already trained and experienced, to keep current in their skills and provide part-time service in supporting the regular air force mission. The naval reserve is different and has been since the government assigned it the responsibility to provide crews for the *Kingston* Class. But was this operational task enough to move the naval reserve from a classical strategic reserve to a more modern operational reserve?

Although the operational mandate "to provide a coastal defence and mine countermeasure capability"[56] was delegated to the Navy's coastal formations (Maritime Forces Atlantic, based in Halifax and Maritime Forces Pacific, based in Esquimalt) responsibility for training and preparation of the sailors was given to the naval reserve formation. The ongoing, domestic operational capability is managed and led by the

---

[56] Department of National Defence, "1994 Defence White Paper," accessed 4 November 2012, http://www forces.gc.ca/admpol/downloads/1994%20White%20Paper%20on%20Defence.pdf.

regular force as a whole, as the *Kingston* Class ships are allocated to and under the command of regular force Fleet and Formation commanders. But the reservists manning the *Kingston* Class took the operational mission on as their own and from 1996 onward, have been conducting their coastal operations on a regular and persistent basis, including the defence of Canada (in sovereignty patrols and support to other government departments such as the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police), the defence of North America (various bi-lateral exercises with US and other partners in continental North America) and in support of international alliances (participation in various NATO-sponsored exercises). The convenient and cost-effective ships provided the navy with an intermediate, littoral capability not available in the remainder of the fleet.

The *Kingston* Class began the business of coastal defence and support to other government departments and established a niche for conducting domestic tasks and deploying for mine counter-measures exercises. Mulkins asserts the *Kingston* Class conducts "a core naval function which every ship in the Navy conducts" which means the naval reserve has a "'niche platform', not [a] 'niche role'"[57] within the Navy as would be expected of an operational reserve force. This differentiation accepted, the fact that the manning of these ships is assigned to the reserve force means that naval reserve training is specialized in *Kingston* Class operations. The specialization of naval reserve training toward the *Kingston* Class means that there is very little capacity or capability to augment the regular force on an individual basis at sea – a key component of a strategic reserve. Although the sailors of Canada's naval reserve could be trained to operate systems in a

---

[57] Marta Mulkins, "A Fine Balance: Challenges to Canada's Naval Reserve," (Master of Defence Studies research paper, Royal Military College of Canada, 2010), 40.

major war vessel (e.g. a frigate or destroyer, normally crewed by regular force personnel) more readily than a civilian in the event of mobilization, they are currently trained and experienced in *Kingston* Class operations. This specialization – and the persistent operational tasks assigned to the *Kingston* Class – supports the naval reserve's classification as an operational reserve, even though only twenty-five percent of the naval reserve works full-time. This is because almost all other training and occupational experience in the naval reserve relates to *Kingston* Class operations or operational support.

But even with ten active ships of approximately forty people per ship, only 10% of the naval reserve was on full-time service. How did the transition to an operational reserve occur? How did a full quarter of naval reservists come to serve on full-time service? This trend resulted from the need for operational support and management of the naval reserve. In addition to the *Kingston* Class ships and the Fleet support required to operate them, in 1994 the naval reserve expanded its headquarters in Quebec City and in large part began manning the Canadian Forces Fleet School in Quebec. With a few other jobs in Ottawa to manage national-scope naval reserve issues, and the existing full-time jobs in the naval reserve Divisions in twenty-four Canadian cities, the level of full-time service rose to approximately 900 people. Another of the contributing factors to the boom in full time employment was the very success of these full-time reservists.

Through the end of the 1990s and into the new millennium, naval reservists in *Kingston* Class ships, headquarters throughout the Navy and on operations and exercises throughout the world demonstrated that they could be successful at core military and naval functions. As mariners, planners, administrators and commanders, they were

largely able to fill positions that had been left vacant from regular force manning shortages and new positions that the navy required to advance projects or policy development. In operations, the increasing scope of what the *Kingston* Class ships were doing translated to greater operational experience than had been seen since the Korean conflict. Within the navy and the Canadian Forces at large, a new attitude was developing as there was more comfort with reservists as professionals and mariners. This was supported by the fact that many reserve sailors had been working alongside their regular force counterparts for ten to twenty years. This relative boom in capability and competence helped to swell the numbers of full-time naval reservists well above 1,000, although many would be working outside of the naval reserve formation and outside the navy at large. From Adjutant at a local army reserve unit to United Nations Military Observer to environmental analyst for Defence Research and Development Canada, naval reservists were plying their variety of skills and uses across the Canadian Forces and beyond.

This increase in full-time jobs accounted for only one quarter of the naval reserve at any one time. The remainder were traditional, part-time sailors with families and civilian careers. They were the motivated, interested and intelligent people that joined at naval reserve divisions across Canada but did not have the flexibility in their lives to undertake full-time service. It was for the part-time reservists that the *Kingston* Class was originally conceived; with an operational focus, the part-time naval reservist would have a clear goal to train toward and interesting stories to tell at the civilian workplace on Monday morning. This theory was common thought during the formative years of the *Kingston* Class ships, but the operationalization of the ships led to operationalization of

the sailors in the ships and the requirement for training and experience grew beyond what was capable for many part-time reservists. What lagged behind was the operationalization of Canadian Forces policy regarding reservists, which would become a significant impediment to retention of the full-time cadre in the years to come.

As the army, air force and naval reserve forces became more and more operational through the 1990s and 2000s, the policy of the Canadian Forces changed slowly and incrementally. While policies relating to part-time service needed very little overhaul through these years, policy relating to full-time service needed a great deal of change and got only some of it. Although Canadian Forces personnel policy took a large step forward in terms of the ways that reservists were employed and given access to benefits, it maintained the three classes of reserve service and pay inequity for full-time service in non-operational jobs. This inequity would be a contributing factor in dissatisfaction and attrition of many reservists – although many would transfer to the regular force for a zero-sum loss for the Canadian Forces at large.

The operationalization of the reserve forces was acknowledged by Canada's Chief of the Defence Staff in a general message to the Canadian Forces (CANFORGEN) in November 2010, but he stressed that this increased level of full-time employment was "not sustainable in the long term and [needed] to be rationalized."[58] Although the increase of full-time employment was attributed to the commitment to the Task Force Afghanistan, the effects of the rationalization of the reserve force would affect all three services. The Chief of Defence Staff's vision for the Primary Reserve was "a force that consists of predominately part-time professional [Canadian Forces] members, located

---

[58] Chief of the Defence Staff, "Primary Reserve Management," (NDHQ Ottawa: CANFORGEN 299/10, 161556Z Nov 10).

throughout Canada, ready with reasonable notice to conduct or contribute to domestic and international operations to safeguard the defence and security of Canada. This force is fully integrated into the [Canadian Forces] chain of command."[59] The vision is realistic and definitely stresses the continuation of a strategic reserve, but it does leave significant latitude for a portion of the reserve force to be used as an operational reserve. In fact, the Chief of Defence Staff indicates explicitly that the Canadian Forces must "attract, develop, support and retain a ready, capable, motivated and relevant [Primary Reserve] force as both a strategic and operational resource for Canada and the [Canadian Forces] well into the future."[60] The priorities for full-time service were laid out by the Chief of the Defence Staff as "reserve force generation, support to [Canadian Forces] operations, reserve professional development, and support to the [Canadian Forces] institution."[61] This represented a significant shift from the previous decade, when full-time reservists had been widely used to fill shortages in many organizations within the Canadian Forces. The new priorities will narrow the scope of jobs for which reservists may be employed on full-time service.

In respect to the naval reserve, the first of the Chief of Defence Staff's priorities relates to training the next generation of sailors, both for full-time service in the *Kingston* Class and for part-time service in the naval reserve divisions. The second priority is contribution to operations such as fisheries patrols, search and rescue zone patrols, contribution to counter-drug operations and sovereignty operations in Canada's Arctic. While this prioritization may be the strategic vision, it is often amended by the

---

[59] Chief of the Defence Staff, "Chief of Defence Staff Primary Reserve Vision," (NDHQ Ottawa: CANFORGEN 172/11, 211449Z Sep11).
[60] *Ibid*.
[61] *Ibid.*

operational authorities to include the force generation tasks overlaid on the operational missions. This interpretation is understandable as the operational formations have missions they must complete and a finite level of resources with which to accomplish them. Tasking ships with only one task per deployment is not an optimal or even practical solution for stretching the resources available. In practical terms, operational planners must assess the added capabilities of a frigate or destroyer against that of a *Kingston* Class ship and then balance that against the relative costs (approximately 5:1 for fuel costs alone) of operating the different classes of ships. There are some missions for which frigates and destroyers are uniquely capable – such as maritime interdiction operations – and some theatres of operations for which the *Kingston* Class are unsuitable due to their design – any area with a threat from chemical, biological or nuclear weapons, for example. Thus, planners are often left with very little choice in how to cut costs, but opportunities like fisheries patrols present just the right case. On a fisheries patrol, the navy transports officers from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, who enforce Canadian laws regarding fishing. Whether the ship transporting the Fisheries Patrol Officers can travel at fifteen knots or thirty knots is often irrelevant, as is the capability to fire a surface-to-surface missile. Thus, the same service can be provided by a *Kingston* Class ship or, in future, an Arctic patrol ship as long as they can track and board a fishing boat by way of a small, fast boat. Thus, the task of fisheries patrols often falls to the *Kingston* Class so that the operational formation may instead deploy the frigate, destroyer, replenishment ship or submarine to an operation or exercise for which they are uniquely suited.

The priorities of professional development and support to the Canadian Forces institution remain important to the naval reserve as future leaders of the formation will require a higher level of understanding and experience and there will always be a need for specialist or incremental assistance throughout the institution. A good example is full-time service to attend a Command and Staff course, either in Canada or abroad. Leaders of the naval and Canadian Forces institution require strategic awareness and higher-level education to prepare them for working at that level, so it will always behove the institution to send reservists on this type of training or employment to gain experience and to develop professional networks that are key in operational and strategic leadership.

With a dogmatic shift back to a strategic reserve, there would be a risk of losing much of the ground that reservists have gained in the eyes of their regular force peers and the leaders of the Canadian Forces. The success of the operational reserve over the last twenty years has arguably been the catalyst for improved relations between regular and reserve forces in the new millennium. In the navy, the high ratio of service at sea for reserve sailors since 1996 has become a point of pride for reservists and significant respect from the regular force. While there is still a divide in terms of naval warfare disciplines, most sailors of the regular force acknowledge that *Kingston* Class sailors have a greater level of experience as mariners and seamen as the average sea time has been significantly higher for the *Kingston* Class than for the frigates and destroyers (except for those on international deployments of six to nine months).

Most of the success of the naval reserve (and reserve forces in general) over the last twenty years have been a direct or indirect result of the shift toward an operational reserve. The higher cost to maintain the larger operational reserve has forced the

Canadian Forces to shift back to a primarily strategic reserve but it must acknowledge the risk of returning to a marginalized and less relevant reserve force. The naval reserve has demonstrated that it can operate effectively as an operational reserve and conduct missions as assigned by the navy, and the depth of experience required has pushed the naval reserve to the point that *Kingston* Class sailors are essentially equal to their regular force counterparts. Without the compensation, benefits and opportunities offered to the regular force, however, reserve sailors will continue to grow disenfranchised and will continue to leave the *Kingston* Class.

CONCLUSION

For the Canadian Forces to return to a purely strategic reserve at this point in its history is impractical and ill-advised given the predominantly operational focus of reserve forces in Canada today. To underscore the need for an operational reserve force, the United Kingdom and United States have both moved to using their reserve forces as operational reserves – the United Kingdom in an *ad hoc* fashion and the United States as a deliberate, strategy. A return to a purely strategic reserve force discounts the significant investment made in the reserves over the past twenty years. To turn away from the successes of an operational reserve means that the Canadian Forces receives little or no return on their investment in developing the reserves as an operational force through the Afghanistan/*Kingston* Class era. If Canada returns to a purely strategic reserve, any future operationalization of the reserve force will need to begin from the ground up and the hard lessons learned will need to be learned again. Additionally, strategic leaders and scholars agree that the nature of conflict for the foreseeable future will require the use of reserve forces for nations to remain flexible and effective.

For Canada to abandon the successes of the increasingly operational reserves over the past twenty years, including the significant steps to becoming a truly Total Force, and return to the tiny forces of the 1950s would be a mistake on many fronts. First, the regular forces have come to accept and rely on their reserve counterparts for some of the operational tasks that they perform. Also, work in some areas that have been assigned specifically to the reserve forces (for example, naval mine counter-measures) has begun to gain the respect of allied nations and they rely on this expertise. Finally, the capacity

simply does not exist for the regular force to take over the operational tasks of the reserve forces. There are many reasons to maintain an operational reserve but there are challenges associated with it.

One of the challenges of an operational reserve is the cost to maintain it. As seen in the United Kingdom and the United States, a reserve force costs more to operate as it approaches the capability and employment of the nation's regular force. One of the reasons that military reserves were created and are still maintained is that they are less costly because they do not require large standing forces or the materiel to sustain them. So, as nations employ their reserve forces – or portions of them – in a manner very similar to their regular forces, the cost increases to be comparable (or equivalent) with the regular force counterparts. This formula ultimately led Canada's Chief of Defence Staff to decide to return to a strategic reserve. The consequence, however, is that policy and procedures will remain focused to the strategic reserve and those portions of the reserve force that carry out or support an operational mission will continue to be managed by exception rather than rule. Because a large portion of the naval reserve is employed as an operational reserve, it is being disadvantaged by policies and funding developed for the strategic reserve as most of these policies preclude building a viable career in the reserve force and centre around part-time service.

The other systemic argument in favour of a strategic reserve is that reserve service was never intended to be a career. The Canadian Forces' vision for reservists (specifically naval reservists) was to work full-time for a short to intermediate period (perhaps six months to five years) and then return to their civilian careers and part-time reserve service. The reality of the *Kingston* Class ships, however, is far more complex and –

thanks to the reservists that crew them – more operationally capable than first envisioned. The reality of any military unit is that senior leadership requires significant experience in the unit and in the staff functions ashore to continue to develop new generations of sailors. In this case, the operational requirements of the ships (including domestic operations, international exercises, Arctic sovereignty enforcement and force generation tasks) have required a level of tactical proficiency and leadership experience beyond what would be attainable with one or two years of experience. The senior leaders in the *Kingston* Class ships often need five to ten years of service in the ships and supporting headquarters/schools to compete for the qualifications or ranking to become a commanding officer, coxswain or chief engineer. Thus, the Royal Canadian Navy has the very scenario that the Canadian Forces leadership has stated should be avoided – reservists having a career of full-time service. Of course, this situation happened in the other services and the navy before the introduction of the *Kingston* Class, but in much smaller numbers so that the follow-on effects were not felt as severely. And, the prospect of a full-time career caused many people to transfer to the regular force after their service in the *Kingston* Class.

The increased attrition from the naval reserve is having the unexpected second-order effect of reducing the *Kingston* Class' capacity to train the next generation of sailors and the third-order effect of reducing attractiveness of the naval reserve to prospective recruits. With the dwindling numbers of experienced personnel in the *Kingston* Class, these ships will be unable to maintain operational tempo. As long-term career prospects become more and more untenable, senior members of the full-time naval reserve community will continue to find other employment and the role of the naval

reserve must inevitably revert to augmenting regular force personnel in training and operational tasks. To complete the return to a strategic reserve, then, it would appear that the Royal Canadian Navy must either give up its operational role for the naval reserve, or, the navy could accept the concept of a full-time reserve career and push for policy changes to support this designation. The path chosen will undoubtedly have a marked effect on the relevance of the naval reserve.

In examining the limitations of a strategic reserve, it is noteworthy that a strategic reserve force in peacetime (e.g. National Survival Training of the 1960s and 1970s era) is always at risk of being marginalized and irrelevant both within and outside the military. Within the military, strategic reserve forces (that is, those not training toward an ongoing operational task) are easy targets for budget cuts as their leadership may be concerned with other issues that they see as a higher priority for the funding. With decreased training and readiness, the reservists are at great risk of losing the respect of their regular force counterparts. This situation prevailed in Canada's navy during the 1970s and 1980s, as reservists sailed infrequently and were limited to small, old, coastal patrol ships that did little other than reserve training. These reservists were not regarded as a professional maritime force with a distinct operational mission and responsibility to the same admiral as the frigates and destroyers. The lack of an operational mission may not in itself be cause for marginalization in the eyes of the general public, but a truly significant community relations impact can be made by soldiers, sailors and airmen and women who have experiences in operations. These service members' stories resonate with veterans and the general public, as they provide a concrete reminder of the work that the individual and unit does for the country. Without that experience and link to the greater

Canadian Forces missions, it is difficult to leverage the support of the public in communities which is a key component of a strategic reserve.

The first option that should be explained to Canadian Forces leadership, then, is that they may have a fully strategic naval reserve, with the associated cost savings, but without the operational capability and relevance that the *Kingston* Class ships provide. A second option is to maintain a mainly operational reserve, with the associated high readiness and operational capability but deployment tempo and personnel costs that are equal or nearly equal to the regular force. This second option would require significant policy changes to enhance retention of full-time reservists. Finally, a blend of the two types of reserve forces may be adopted, again with significant policy changes to allow for all types of reserve service and a seamless transition between the reserve and the regular force.

In the event the Canadian Forces continues with a purely strategic reserve, the navy could consider re-assigning current *Kingston* Class tasks to *Halifax* Class frigates, but this change would have a significant impact on operating budgets of the coastal naval formations. The logical option to keep operating costs within budget would be to have sailors from the regular force sail in the *Kingston* Class ships to keep them at sea. A similar thought process must be followed for the future Arctic offshore patrol vessels, as manning is expected to include a reserve component and the ships are expected to have a heavy sailing schedule. To reassign sailors to the *Kingston* Class (or Arctic offshore patrol ships), the regular force would need to grow by approximately 600 regular force positions to man and support the ships; and, there would be a period of capability gap as

the new sailors assigned to the ships get to know the capabilities and limitations of the vessels and leaders get to know the capabilities and limitations of their crews.

But there is one more option to avoid this capability gap and a change to the size of the navy. Without amending the significant amount of policy that would be required to place full-time reserve service in support jobs on par with regular force service, the reservists who now serve in the *Kingston* Class and supporting units could be offered regular force terms of service for varying periods of time. As members of the regular force, with the service experience gained in the *Kingston* Class, they could compete for training and employment outside the *Kingston* Class if they or the navy so desired. An officer in a *Kingston* Class ship could complete his assignment as operations officer, for example, and be offered to attend the operations room officer course (the head-of-department level training for maritime surface officers) and compete for employment in a major war ship. If not found suitable, this officer could still compete for employment as an Executive Officer in a *Kingston* Class ship or for employment ashore. Shore employment would not be limited to units that support naval reserve training and *Kingston* Class operations, but any unit that is suitable to the person's abilities, training and experience.

Several options are open to the Canadian Forces to manage the issues of the strategic/operational reserve divide. To realize the Chief of Defence Staff's intent that the reserve force return to a strategic reserve, the operational missions assigned to reserve forces could be re-assigned to the regular force. The Canadian Forces could then amend the initial intent and strive for a predominantly strategic reserve, but change personnel policies to accommodate and retain those reservists who undertake continuous full-time

service to pursue the operational missions of the reserve forces. Or, the Canadian Forces could acknowledge the service of reservists on continuous full-time service by offering them employment in the regular force with the option to maintain a specialty in their area of expertise (i.e. the *Kingston* Class ships). To make this final option viable for retention of the people already in the *Kingston* Class, there would have to be an equitable ratio of jobs at sea and ashore as well as legitimate opportunities for advancement.

The examples of the United States and the United Kingdom underscore the fact that like-minded nations have moved toward operational reserve forces. Canada cannot ignore this evolutionary practice but must find the correct balance for operationalization of its reserve force. For Canada to maintain or expand the role of the naval reserve, reserve policies (such as employment, activation and compensation) of the United States and United Kingdom should be examined to take the best parts of each. Only a logical and comprehensive approach to organization and employment of reserve forces will bring out their potential benefits and make the Canadian Forces – and the Royal Canadian Navy – a stronger and more credible operational force. As our allies have done, Canada's employment, compensation and recognition of reserves needs to be sufficiently flexible to account for all the myriad of roles that they do, whether part-time or full-time, in service to the nation. The United States and United Kingdom strive to provide an experience as close to that of the regular force, while maintaining an acceptable balance of reserve service, civilian career and home life for their reservists. For Canadian reservists who opt for full-time employment, the challenge and compensation for that service should be the same as those in the regular force. With changes to personnel policy and human resource management systems (including administration, career management

and pay), equality could be accomplished by offering seamless transition between the regular and reserve forces. Then the reserve force could achieve balance and begin to re-generate a bona fide strategic portion of an otherwise operational reserve.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Canada. Chief of the Defence Staff. “Chief of Defence Staff Primary Reserve Vision.” NDHQ Ottawa: CANFORGEN 172/11. 211449Z Sep11.

Canada. Chief of the Defence Staff. “Primary Reserve Management.” NDHQ Ottawa: CANFORGEN 299/10. 161556Z Nov 10.

Canada. Department of National Defence. “1994 Defence White Paper.” Accessed 4 November 2012. http://www.forces.gc.ca/admpol/downloads/1994%20White%20Paper%20on%20Defence.pdf.

Canada. Department of National Defence. “Canadian Forces Integrated Relocation Programme Directive, APS 2009-2012.” Accessed 3 November 2012. http://www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/dgcb-dgras/pd/rel-rei/aps-paa-2011/doc/aps-paa-2011-eng.pdf.

Canada. Department of National Defence. “CFLC – Job Protection Legislation Guide November 2009.” Accessed 4 December 2012. http://www.cflc-clfc.forces.gc.ca/jpl-lse/jplg-glpe-eng.asp.

Canada. Department of National Defence. “Compensation and Benefit Instruction 208.849.” Accessed 3 November 2012. http://www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/dgcb-dgras/pub/cbi-dra/doc/208.pdf.

Canada. Department of National Defence. “Historical Pay Rates.” Accessed 3 November 2012. http://www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/dgcb-dgras/ps/pay-sol/pr-sol/index-eng.asp.

Canada. Department of National Defence. “The Reserves and Cadet Issues, Minister’s Monitoring Committee on Change in the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces. Interim Report – 1999.” (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 2000).

Canada. Department of Supply and Services Canada. “Valour Remembered - Canadians in Korea.” (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1990.) Accessed 13 November 2012. http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/history/KoreaWar/valour.

Canada. Government of Canada. “History | Air Reserve.” Accessed 23 October 2012. http://www.rcaf-arc.forces.gc.ca/ar-ra/page-eng.asp?id=755.

Canada. Public Service Commission. “Annual Report 2011-2012” (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 2012): 4. Accessed 4 December 2012. http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/arp-rpa/2012/rpt-eng.pdf.

Canada. Senate of Canada. “ANSWERING THE CALL – The Future Role of Canada’s Primary Reserve (Interim Report of the Standing Committee on National Security and Defence).” Accessed 22 November 2012. http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/SEN/Committee/411/secd/rep/rep04dec11-e.pdf.

Chun, Clayton S. “Who Stays And Who Goes: Army Enlisted Reserve And National Guard Retention.” Paper, United States Army War College Strategic Studies

Institute, July 2005. Accessed 6 November 2012. http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/download.cfm?q=612.

Heller, Charles E. "Total Force: Federal Reserves and State National Guards." 1994. Accessed 21 November 2012. http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub335.pdf.

Keebler, Howard. "Is The United States Army Reserve An Operational Force, A Strategic Reserve, Or A Mix Of Both?" Master's thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2009. Accessed 21 November 2012. http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA502096.

Madsen, Chris. "Military Responses and Capabilities in Canada's Domestic Context Post 9/11." *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 13, no. 3 (Spring 2011): 1-18. accessed 9 December 2012, http://www.jmss.org/jmss/index.php/jmss/article/view/409/417.

McDonald, Corinne. "PRB 99-11E – The Canadian Armed Forces: The Role Of The Reserves." (29 November 1999). Accessed 21 November 2012. http://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection-R/LoPBdP/BP/prb9911-e.htm#(5).

Mulkins, Marta. "A Fine Balance: Challenges to Canada's Naval Reserve." Master of Defence Studies research paper, Royal Military College of Canada, 2010.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization. International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). "Afghanistan – ISAF RC and PRT Locations." Last modified 7 April 2009. http://www.nato.int/ISAF/docu/epub/maps/index.html.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization. International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). "International Security Assistance Force (ISAF): Key Facts and Figures." Accessed 24 October 2012. http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/placemat.pdf.

Offer, Alan. "Career Manager Visit." Presentation to MARLANT Naval Reservists, HMCS SCOTIAN, Halifax, NS, 4 December 2012.

Pratt, David. "Canada's Citizen Soldiers: A Discussion Paper." Accessed 6 November 2012. http://www.cdfai.org/sswg/PDF/Canadas%20Citizen%20Soldiers.pdf.

Tabbernor, Dennis. "Reserves on Operations." *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 12, no. 4 (Summer 2010): 41-54. http://www.jmss.org/jmss/index.php/jmss/article/view/353/376.

United Kingdom. Directorate of Reserve Forces and Cadets. "Future use of the UK's Reserve Forces." 7 February 2005. Accessed 21 October 2012. http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/3EB3D827-C128-4824-81BB-5DD4D7D88A5A/0/FutureReserveForcesFINAL31Jan05.pdf.

United Kingdom. The Independent Commission to Review the United Kingdom's Reserve Forces. "Future Reserves 2020." July 2011. Accessed 24 October 2012. http://www.army.mod.uk/documents/general/88_FutureReserves_2020_%281%29.pdf.

United Kingdom. Ministry of Defence. "Report on the Strategic Review of Reserves." Accessed 5 November 2012.

http://www.sabre.mod.uk/News/~/media/Files/PDFs/Review_of_Reserves_report.ashx.

United States. Office of the Secretary of Defense. “Reserve Forces Policy Board Annual Report 2011.” Accessed 4 November 2012. http://ra.defense.gov/rfpb/_documents/RFPB2011Final%2022SEP11.pdf.

United States of America. Secretary of the Army. “2007 Posture Statement - Army Reserve: An Operational Force.” Accessed 26 October 2012. http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA471367.

Wipfli, Ralph, and Dallas D. Owens. “State Of The U.S. Military Reserve Components,” Colloquium Brief, 2008. Accessed 21 November 2012. http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub874.pdf.