

Usage High for New Reserves

By CAPT Ike Puzon, USNR (Ret), Director of Legislation

By the time you read this article, Congress will, in fact, have completed the authorization bill by mid-December, and hopefully, the Defense Appropriations Act as well. What's wrong with this picture? Two months have passed in the FY06, and our service members, their families, and unit commanders are operating under a continuing resolution. For those who operate in the military, this is almost a totally untenable position. Your involvement with your Congressional delegation can change these types of things, including obtaining legislative goals.

For the “new” Navy Reserve, it is more of a hole to be in, since, in FY06, the Navy Reserve will take a cut of 10,300 billets in end-strength; and no one will care or blink an eye – or even remember the cut. Recently, CNO announced the disestablishment of the last three Reserve VP squadrons; and few have paid attention. There are other pending resource cuts in the Senate appropriations version of the Defense Appropriations Act. Why? Few have paid attention to the cuts, even though GAO-06-125 reports (www.gao.gov) that Navy did not use the most cost-effective mix in considering the cuts. We all agree that change has to take place; and one way to do it for the Navy is to make sure the Navy Reserve is changed, or is that “transformed,” or is that “resource cut”?

This week, we saw the roll out of the concept of the “New Reserves – Strategic

in Peace, Operational in War.” This term has as much meaning as the old term – Total Force – has had for the last 30 years. Many smart people and groups tried to define a “Total Force.” At the recent conference, The Duke of Winchester (Major General for UK reserve forces), and Dr. Thomas Barnett – the author and former professor at the Naval War College – both showed a willingness to look outside of the old traditional DoD noninnovative box and to challenge old ideas and the new ideas. The one thing we all know for sure from this conference: Guard and Reserve forces will be used more, and any change in benefits will be resisted by OSD and the Services more and more! The mantra is – stop thinking in the Cold War syndrome, and look into the future. We agree! But, perhaps we all have to get past Cold War syndromes.

The Duke used a refreshing tactic that has been lost in our world of Power Point rangers, he did not use Power Point slides to get his idea across! Some of his ideas:

- Culture of volunteerism is alive and well in the Reserves – for now!
- Guard & Reserve have a lower burnout point, so we have to pay attention to this.
- Guard and Reserve are doing this not for the money at first.
- The meaning of Total Force has been lost over time, due to nondefinition.

- People and equipment are important to Reserve Components and to our countries.

- We are not likely to stop calling on our Reserve forces, so we have to get it right or risk losing these people and our national support in mass!

If you care about our National Military Strategy, and the National Guard and Reserve Components, then you may want to read Dr. Barnett's books, *The Pentagon's New Map*, and his new book, *Blueprint for Action*. They are more than worth your time to read and ponder. He presents some new common sense approaches to what we have been doing and, in reality (perhaps), to where we are going.

From recent DoD briefs, of the 828,000 members of the Selected Reserve members in all Services, we have used 524,000 of them at least once since 9-11-01. This is an interesting point when you look at the numbers that are involved in Operation Iraqi Freedom or deployed throughout the world for one operational mission or another. These numbers speak for themselves. Remember, the goal of DoD and the Services is to use Guard and Reserve at least one year in a six-year period, or less. I believe anyone in the Guard and Reserve who stays understands the change and is ready. The question remains, are the Services, DoD, and the Nation ready for what that does to the Guard and Reserve member and their families? ↴