

Be Ready – Chief of Navy Reserve

*By Journalist First Class (SW) Mike Kramer
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VADM John G. Cotton, Chief of Navy Reserve, talked to over 400 Reservists about the changes taking place in the Navy's Reserve Force when he held a town hall meeting in the base gym 4 Dec.

Throughout the meeting, VADM Cotton reminded the service members of the two-word directive President George W. Bush issued to the Armed Forces 12 Sept. 2001: "Be ready."

"Every one of you is on watch," said VADM Cotton. "You're all in the Navy. You're not in the Reserve anymore," VADM Cotton said. "There's the Active Component, the Reserve Component, the civilian component, and the contractor component. Every one of us serves in the Navy. It doesn't matter whether you wear the uniform two days a month or 30 days a month; every one of you is on watch, all 30 days."

VADM Cotton outlined to the crowd the Department of the Navy's 2004 objective to create a more responsive and integrated Reserve Component. He explained that to achieve this objective, the Reserve Force had to define its structure and determine an Active Component/Reserve Component structure mix that supports the Fleet Response Plan and the Flexible Deployment Concept. This structure must also be able to meet new Navy assignments such as antiterrorism and force protection.

The redesign of the Navy Reserve will establish common training and readiness standards for regular and Reserve forces,

improve Reserve access to current equipment and tactics and optimize command and headquarters relationships between regular and Reserve forces, said VADM Cotton.

"I think the changes that have happened, and are going to happen, are positive ones that have needed to happen for a while. The One Navy concept has us all working toward the same goals," said Yeoman 1st Class (AW) Anna Crawford, Naval Air Reserve Willow Grove's Administrative Department leading petty officer.

"By implementing a 'One Navy' concept, the Navy will become more efficient and effective by retaining fewer people in uniform and using them more wisely," said Cotton. He pointed out that as the Navy gets smaller, a larger percentage of its ships and its Sailors, from both the Active and Reserve Components, can expect to be forward deployed.

"In the 1980s, the Navy had 495 ships. On an average day, 98 of those ships were underway. Today, we're down to 289 ships, of which 110 are underway. We have less, but we're more effective. The taxpayers are paying less, but we've gotten more capability."

The Navy's Reserve Component can expect to be an increasingly important part of the more effective force. VADM Cotton challenged all Reservists to be ready to deploy on short notice and to be integrated fully with the Active Component.

"The realignment of the Navy is an important aspect of accomplishing our nation's strategic goals and objectives," said

Aviation Electrician's Mate 3rd Class David Hazelton of Naval Reserve Naval Air Station Keflavik 0393. "It's going to create tremendous opportunities for Sailors, regardless of rank or rate, to excel. I look forward to being part of the new, more efficient and effective force."

"We beat fascism; we beat communism; and we are going to beat terrorism because you, the Navy's Reserve Force, are ready," said VADM Cotton.

VADM John G. Cotton, Chief of Navy Reserve, stresses a point about the changes taking place in the Navy's Reserve Force when he held a town hall meeting in the base gym 4 Dec. VADM Cotton also challenged all Reservists to be ready to deploy on short notice and to be fully integrated with the Active Component. (Photo by Senior Chief Journalist (SW) Doug Hummel)





“Forward OSCAR Group” reports for unique duty: Over 400 Navy Reservists Mobilized to Support First-Ever Customs Inspection Mission

By *LT Mike Randazzo, NAVELSF Public Affairs*

Williamsburg, VA – On 12 December 2004, over 400 Navy Reservists mobilized by the Naval Expeditionary Logistics Support Force (NAVELSF) here will begin six weeks of intensive training to fulfill a customs inspection mission in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. This is the first time that this requirement is being fulfilled by the Navy.

Customs inspectors are the first line of defense against the introduction of foreign plant and animal pests and diseases to the United States and help prevent contraband from entering this country. These Sailors, who are being drawn from nearly 60 Navy Reserve activities across the U.S. representing almost every state, will serve as Department of Defense customs inspectors in Iraq.

“The customs inspection mission is a concrete example of maximizing the Navy’s human capital resources to meet the needs of this very unique and important requirement,” said Vice Adm. John Cotton, Chief of the Navy Reserve.

As members of the newly formed NAVELSF Forward OSCAR Group, they will execute a two-fold mission: ensure returning military equipment conforms to United States Department of Agriculture standards; and ensure all gear returning with personnel serving abroad in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom complies with United States customs regulations.

The battalion is organized into three “companies” ranging from 70 to 180 personnel. Companies are organized as follows: a company commander, who is a Navy lieutenant commander; assistant company commander, a Navy lieutenant; a company chief petty officer; up to six platoon leaders, led by Navy chief petty officers; and customs inspectors who are Navy E-6 and E-5 enlisted personnel.

“Navy personnel will work directly for the Army to provide this first-ever combat service support mission,” said Group Oscar’s Commanding Officer, LTCOL Gerry Guerrero, a Marine Corps

Reservist. These Sailors will relieve Air Force personnel who have performed the mission for the past year. “We view this not as a Navy mission but as a mission for this country.”

The Reservists, who represent a diverse array of Navy job specialties, reported to their Reserve Centers on or about 30 November 2004. From there, they traveled to the Naval Mobilization Processing Site in Norfolk, VA, for mobilization briefings and medical screenings.

The customs inspections training, which will take place at NAVELSF facilities at Cheatham Annex and at Army training sites in nearby Fort Eustis, includes weapons; chemical, biological, and radiological defense; self and perimeter defense; HMMWV vehicle operation; combat lifesaving and first aide; and customs and agriculture inspection.

“When it comes to training, good enough; it will never be good enough. We have to always be better and the training cycle will continue even when these Sailors are deployed,” Guerrero said. “We are committed to making sure that each Sailor receives the training he or she needs to meet, or exceed, the mission requirements,” he added.

ABOUT NAVELSF: NAVELSF is an operational force of the Navy’s U.S. Fleet Forces Command organized and staffed to deliver expeditionary logistics capabilities with mobilization ready Naval Reserve Force Sailors and equipment to theater commanders in support of the national military strategy. NAVELSF consists of a Full-Time and Selected Reserve support staff, Navy Cargo Handling Battalions, Navy Supply Support Battalions, an Expeditionary Logistics Response Cell, and Deployable Ammunition Handling and Reporting Teams. The command supports over 4,000 Naval Reservists located throughout the United States, encompassing over 90 percent of the U.S. Navy’s Supply and Transportation Expeditionary Units. ⚓