

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

**FUTURE RESERVES 2020 WRITTEN MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**The Secretary of State for Defence (The Rt Hon Philip Hammond):** The Report of the Independent Commission to Review the United Kingdom's Reserve Forces led by Gen Sir Nicholas Houghton, Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, was published on 18 July 2011. I am most grateful to the members of the Commission, including my Honourable Friend the member for Canterbury, for their efforts in producing this invaluable report. The Government accepts the broad thrust of the Commission's recommendations, which encompassed the Army Reserves – the largest Reserve component – the Royal Naval and Royal Marines Reserves and the Royal Auxiliary Air Force.

To achieve the redesign of the Army required by Army 2020 will require us to expand the volunteer Army Reserve to 30,000 trained strength and better to integrate the Regular and Reserve components of the future Army. Army 2020 has defined the Army Reserves' role and we are establishing more predictable scales of commitment in the event that Reserves are committed to enduring operations. In the past, the Reserve was essentially designed to supplement the Regular Army; in future, the Reserve will be a vital part of an integrated Army. The principle of greater integration was established in the Commission's report and, based on their findings, our concept for Army Reserves sees them ready and able to deploy routinely at sub-unit level and in some cases as formed units. They will be trained, equipped and supported accordingly. Officers and soldiers will have command opportunities which have not always been available in the recent past.

The process of reshaping the Reserves for their future role has already begun: we are recruiting Reserves now for all three Services. The Army has started overseas Reserve training exercises at company level (26 this year, and increasing in number significantly by 2015); we are putting in place routine partnered training of Army Reserve and Regular units, including for operational

deployments. More equipment is arriving in the form of modern support vehicles, the Wolf Land Rover and Bowman radios. We plan that, over time, the personal equipment of Reservists will be on a par with that used by Regulars. The greater reliance on the Reserve envisaged in Future Force 2020, and the additional £1.8Bn over 10 years that we have committed to the Reserves, ensures that Reservists will receive the kit and the training they need. But in exchange we expect them to commit to specific amounts of training time and, for the Army in most cases, to accept a liability for up to 6 months deployed service, plus pre-deployment training, in a five year period, dependent on operational demand. There will be opportunities for shorter periods of deployed service commitment for those in some specialist roles.

The Navy's Maritime Reserves will expand to a trained strength of 3,100 to deliver a greater range and depth of capability, within its well established and integrated model, to provide individual augmentees to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines in specialist and generalist roles. Key areas of growth will be in a range of command and communication, intelligence and surveillance disciplines, including cyber, support to the Fleet Air Arm and the exploitation of niche capabilities in the role of maritime security. The aim is to build Maritime Reserves that are fully integrated and able to provide the Naval Service with a range of flexible manpower, including greater access to civilian skills. The expansion will be supported by an infrastructure programme to provide modern and efficient training facilities.

The Royal Auxiliary Air Force (RAuxAF) provides resilience and strength in depth to the Royal Air Force contribution to Defence capability by providing individual augmentees to Regular Forces. It will grow to a trained strength of 1,800. The principal growth will be in the specialist areas of logistics, flight operations, medical, intelligence, media, RAF Police and cyber; individual augmentees will be trained to a sufficient standard to be fully integrated with the Regulars as part of the Whole Force Concept. Five new Reserve Squadrons will be established: No 502(Ulster) Squadron will form at JHC Station Aldergrove; 611(West Lancashire) Squadron will form in Liverpool and 614(West Glamorgan) Squadron will form in South Wales, most likely at RAF St

Athan. These squadrons will be general service support squadrons representing various trades and branches from within the RAF. At RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire, 2624(County of Oxford) Squadron will re-form in the force protection role and 622 Squadron will stand-up as the Reserve unit for aircrew augmenting the RAF's air mobility force.

Delivering this step-change in the size and role of the Reserves will require a change in the relationship between Defence, the employer and the Reservist. Many employers already give excellent support to Reservists, for which we, and the nation, are grateful. But we need a new framework of partnership, with public and private sector employers, that gives us the confidence that trained Reservist manpower will be available when it is really needed. We are examining how this might work through, for instance, the 'Partnering for Talent' programme, which seeks to identify clear business benefits for employers who support the Reserves. The public sector is already a major employer of Reservists, and should set an example. Cross Government work, led by the Head of the Civil Service, is promoting the benefits of employing Reservists within Government.

This scale of change needs the support of society as a whole and of employers in particular. I intend therefore to publish a consultation paper in the Autumn, setting out our detailed proposals. Following consultation, we will be able to make informed decisions early next year on terms and conditions of service, employer engagement, the Government's own commitments as an employer, and on any legislation necessary to underpin and support our vision for the Reserves. I have also set up an independent external scrutiny team to assess progress in implementation of our vision for the Reserves. This will be led by Lieutenant General (Retired) Robin Brims, who will make his first report in the summer of 2013.

Thursday 05 July 2012



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