

# United States Air Force

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Testimony

Before the Senate Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Defense

## ***Guard and Reserves***

Statement of  
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Chief of Air Force Reserve

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Chairman Cochran, Vice-Chairman Durbin, and distinguished members of this Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to talk with you today. I am honored to represent America's Reserve Citizen Airmen: men and women who live and work locally in your represented states, yet serve globally, providing operational capability and surge capacity ensuring unrivaled air, space, and cyber dominance.

For 69 years, this nation has called on the Air Force Reserve (AFR) to support national security objectives in all types of military and humanitarian operations around the globe. Today nearly 70,000 Reserve Airmen are postured to respond to any crisis or contingency when needed. In fact, there are currently 6,000 Air Force Reservists on active duty orders operating in air, space, and cyber domains, supporting overseas contingencies and other stateside operations. In order to remain viable for today's fight and postured for tomorrow's, it is critical, we not only improve but sustain our readiness and ensure we integrate into key mission sets to support the joint fight. However, constrained defense budgets and a lack of fiscal stability stress our readiness levels and threaten our ability to reach and sustain full-spectrum readiness. As a critical component of the One Air Force Team we will not be fully successful without proper and sustainable funding into the out years.

Today, I am going to affirm our current state of readiness, explain how we integrate into the joint environment, and describe what makes the AFR uniquely structured to support operational demands in air, space, and cyberspace.

## **STATE OF THE AIR FORCE RESERVE READINESS**

Over two decades of continuous operations coupled with decreased budgets have left us with a smaller force of seasoned airmen and strained the readiness of our force as we continue to

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support the unceasing demand for the operational effects of our airpower and other critical battle space operations. To help recover from the stress on our force we must align our manpower concurrently with the active component based on current and emerging mission requirements to best support our nations call. Reserve Citizen Airmen are crucial to meeting national objectives and combatant commanders' demands. We must continue to leverage our strengths and always partner with the Active Component to successfully field new weapon systems, as we have with the F-35 and KC-46, and support space, cyber, and Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) missions.

We define full-spectrum readiness as the right number of Airmen, trained and equipped to accomplish operational missions in support of joint forces in both contested and uncontested environments. Critical skills availability, training resource availability, flying hour programs, weapons system sustainment, and operational tempo measure our readiness. Congressional support within these critical areas is needed to strengthen our readiness. Specifically, my top four concerns are shortfalls in both full time support and critical skills manning, maintenance concerns due to operations tempo and aging fleets, ensuring concurrent fielding of aircraft and equipment and limited budgets under continuing resolutions.

### **Manpower**

With a force of nearly 70,000, we feel the pressures of the budget constraints as well as the pull from industry of our most skilled airmen. Our rated force is currently short 445 pilots and on average, our flying squadrons are 72 percent manned. As a comparison, the Air Force, with all three components combined, has approximately 17,000 pilots. A 2016 RAND study, modeled a potentially large growth in hiring in the airline industry over the next decade, which could require Air Force to significantly increase retention efforts. A downward trend in our pilot

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manning could continue if we don't take measures to recruit and retain pilots through bonuses and other quality of life programs. We cannot compete on the same pay scale with commercial industry but we must continue to leverage other means to retain the quality airmen we need to get the mission accomplished.

We are beginning to see similar industry dynamics with our maintenance force. Our full-time maintenance manning is 80 percent, with a shortfall of 1,500 full-time maintainers. We have been successful in retaining our traditional reserve maintenance force and are manned at 100 percent but our shortfall in full time maintainers, coupled with the unrelenting demand for air power, are contributing to our decrease in aircraft availability rates and training and support to all flying operations.

As demands for rapidly evolving space, cyber, and ISR missions increase, so does the need for increased manpower for these critical skill sets. Our 11 Reserve space units are aligned with either Air Combat Command or Space Command supporting space operations globally. We have over 700 space professional Individual Reserve Augmentees (IMA) supporting Major Commands, Numbered Air Forces, and Interagency staffs in 25 different locations around the world. The AFR represents 11 percent of the total force manpower in the cyberspace superiority portfolio with 14 Cyber Organizations supporting Major Commands and Combatant Commanders. In FY17, we increased our ISR manning authorizations by 222 to support coverage of full-spectrum ISR operations. We added one target system analysis squadron and two intelligence support to cyber mission forces squadrons.

For 16 consecutive years, the AFR has met its recruiting goals and our retention rate remains at 90 percent, which is a testament to the dedication and professionalism of our force, yet we know these success stories mask an underlying stress on the force. High demand Air

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Force Specialties are critically stressed and undermanned. Many of our seasoned personnel, such as pilots, maintainers, space, cyberspace, and ISR professionals, have chosen to leave the Reserve or transition from full-time to part-time service for various reasons such as pay and entitlement disparity, reduced funding, unpredictable budget and high operations tempo. Our shortages, especially in the Air Reserve Technician (ART) program, are compounded by Budget Control Act caps, Continuing Resolutions, and hiring freezes. We are very thankful for your support in programs such as recruiting, retention, and relocation (RRR) bonuses that allows us to target continued service for these individuals.

To effectively grow our force, we must attract, recruit and retain the highest quality Citizen Airmen. One of our top recruiting priorities continues to be capturing Airmen transitioning from the active component. We prefer recruiting prior service members who are already trained to make immediate use of their capabilities and minimize training costs. Retaining active duty Airmen results in a significant cost-savings and brings a wealth of operational familiarity and mission expertise. However, we are currently experiencing a downward trend in prior service recruiting. Last year, 38 percent of our accessions were non-prior service, a six percent increase from the prior year. Non-prior service recruits significantly increase our training costs and delay readiness.

While retaining pilot experience garners media attention, we must remember the combat-tested warriors across our other disciplines and career fields. In order to support the growing demand for space, cyber, ISR, and other critical Total Force mission areas, we will leverage our unique Reserve Citizen Airmen civilian sector experience to retain our competitive edge. Since we are postured through Unit Type Codes, we have to pull manpower from other areas to stand up emerging missions.

### **Training and Flying Hours Program**

A stable, predictable budget is critical to allow AFR Citizen Airman the ability to plan their participation for the year. This permits our people to stay proficient in their civilian career and qualified in their Air Force Specialty. Funding for Seasoning Training, Continuation and Proficiency Training, and Flying hours is vital to maintain our Air Force standards. By leveraging our high experience levels in the training environment, we minimize cost and set our newest Airmen up for future success, but we must have continuity in the form of stable funding to plan our participation.

Our Reserve Seasoning Training Program (STP) funding is critical to ensure new members are qualified. STP training normally occurs immediately out of Basic Military Training and Technical School. Without the availability of these funds at the beginning of every year, we cannot plan for training. Unpredictability damages the relationship between our Airmen and their civilian employers and communities, and we miss training opportunities which ends up delaying personnel readiness.

Training and funding of the flying hour program is crucial to maintain, rebuild and improve readiness. Air Force Mobility Air Force (MAF) flying hours are currently funded at 85 percent, with some platforms funded as low as 68 percent. If the Transportation Working Capital Fund (TWCF) shrinks, our MAF crews will need more Training, Test, and Ferry (TTF) or Operations and Maintenance (O&M) funds to offset training deficiencies. The Combat Air Forces (CAF) flying hour training program has also been impacted; specifically, Reserve allocations for formal training have been reduced. Resources and funding for the flying hour training program are critical to preparing for combat operations.

## **Weapon System Sustainment**

We require congressional support of our funding requests for our aircraft fleet and supporting systems, including our fleet modernization plans. Our weapon system sustainment baseline funding has been below 80 percent for the past few years. Additional OCO funding takes our sustainment funding to approximately 85 percent, but the system is still stressed due to aging fleets, depot modifications, corrosion and supply issues.

The average age of the Reserve fleet is nine years older than the Active Component's fleet. Modernization would help solve our legacy aircraft supply chain and test equipment issues, so funding of requested Reserve modernization projects, even in this fiscally constrained environment, must be a top priority until we can replace aging systems. Modernization and recapitalization are essential to ensure the AFR remains combat-ready today and relevant for tomorrow's fight.

Our current modernization efforts revolve around upgrading legacy systems to enhance situational awareness and improve combat effectiveness. While these upgrades ensure we maintain our combat capability and interoperability with the active component, the Reserve is not funded nor structured to maintain completely separate weapon systems or aircraft from our Active Component partners.

We must develop a concurrent mission design series fielding and divestment strategy for the Air Force. This is vital to ensure operational parity with Active Duty. We are facing non-current fielding issues as the F-16 bridges the gap until the F-35 reaches full operational capability. As the Air Force plans to grow, we must concurrently field the same mission design series to allow for synchronized training and resources. Similarly, as the Air Force divests from aircraft like the HC-130H and converts to J-models, the Reserve faces a situation where we will

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be unable to draw trained pilots and maintainers from the Active Component. As we plan to support new platforms, like the KC-46, we must focus on mission impact and ensure installations are sized appropriately. Concurrent fielding and divestiture increases our operational relevancy, improves our ability to provide combat-ready forces while making the most efficient use of our precious resources and dollars.

### **Infrastructure**

Reserve readiness also requires a look at our infrastructure. Without sufficient military construction funding, our ability to support mission requirements is limited. The AFR maximizes cost-effectiveness by sharing facilities and infrastructure with our active and joint partners rather than exclusively operating our own facilities. We leverage existing infrastructure at more than 58 partner installations, while only operating nine host installations. These shared facilities, such as aircraft hangars and maintenance shops, include more than 17.1 million square feet of infrastructure. As we expand into emerging missions and reevaluate legacy requirements, we see in many cases our infrastructure is not aligned to meet our needs.

Currently, the AFR has identified a \$910.0 million military construction backlog to address recapitalization, modernization and consolidation opportunities throughout the command. Due to limited military construction funding across the Future Years Defense Program, we are increasingly forced to use O&M funding for Facilities, Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization (FSRM) work to accommodate mission changes, increase building efficiencies and ensure facilities meet mission requirements. The AFR has a \$1.3 billion backlog for required FSRM. Our goal is to make every dollar count, and we will continue to use our Facilities Operational Capabilities and Utilization Survey program to determine the best use of military construction and FSRM funding. As we work through the planning and programming



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for FY18, we will request our priority MILCON projects. With Congressional support, we can smartly invest in MILCON and apply our facility savings to fleet modernization and readiness.

## **INTEGRATION**

### **Global Vigilance, Reach, and Power**

Operations tempo is one of our measures of readiness. Despite the high operational tempo of the last 25 years, our Airmen guarantee mission success. During 2016, Reserve Citizen Airmen integrated seamlessly with our active and joint partners, performing nearly 4.4 million man-days. Air Force Reserve Command was the fourth largest contributor to combat operations filling more than 3,200 Air Expeditionary Force tasks. Our professional Airmen provided Global Vigilance, Global Reach, and Global Power for national security to the joint forces. The Remotely Piloted Aircraft community collected over 35,000 ISR combat hours. ISR analysts contributed over 240,000 combat mission hours. 1,500 space professionals supported space operations worldwide, and 4,000 cyber operators engaged in total force cyber protection teams ensuring Global Vigilance. Air Mobility operations ensured Global Reach in over 80 different countries. Reserve crews flew over 4,000 missions, 7,000 sorties, and 32,000 hours delivering over 36,000 passengers, and over 34,000 tons of cargo. Our fighters, bombers, and Remotely Piloted Aircraft delivered Global Power by conducting precision strikes around the world on a daily basis supporting joint, special operations and coalition forces. As examples, the Reserve RPA community had over 1,000 kinetic strikes resulting in over 1,400 enemies killed in action and over 500 enemy high value targets destroyed while the 44th Fighter Group F-22's flew 161 combat missions and destroyed over 1,100 targets.

Our daily and continuous operational capability is part of what makes us a valuable partner for today and for tomorrow. But, as we fight today, we must shape our force for

tomorrow by focusing on retaining the competitive edge of our resilient Reserve Citizen Airmen and providing sufficient support for air, space, cyber, and ISR missions.

### **Associations**

The Reserve has 66 Classic Associations and 10 Active Associations. We have nine new associations awaiting approval. We've been engaged in Classic Associations for over 50 years. These associations support every Major Command providing sustained operations, strategic depth and surge capacity. Two thirds of the Air Force's Total Force Integration associations are with the Reserve. Classic Associations maintain about a 20 percent full-time force dedicated to serving and training the part time Reservist. They are 100 percent Unit Type Code postured for surge capability. The Reserve is dedicated to remaining cost-efficient, maintaining mission effectiveness, and fostering better communication with our active and joint partners. Building these associations champions Total Force initiatives and leverages the unique strengths of each component.

### **Space**

There are over 1,500 integrated Reserve space professionals and supporting staff in 11 associated units throughout Air Combat Command and Space Command. High Velocity Analyses support Air Force Reserve involvement in space operations to meeting the increasing needs of this expanding mission. The Reserve will grow in intelligence support to space operations, but future mission requirements will necessitate increased support to the Space Mission Force and the Ready Space Program, focusing on protecting satellite communications, offensive and defensive space control and space aggressor support to the Space Mission Force.

### **Cyber**

Cyberspace is arguably the most rapidly-evolving and highly contested domain in the current environment. Our network is constantly under siege as we protect our information and

our people from cyber-attacks. We must continue building a force that understands how to protect our networks to ensure mission success. The Reserve has over 3,500 cyber professionals throughout the Combatant and Major Commands. Under the Reserve Cyber Operations Group, there are seven Classic Associations to include the Cyber Operations Squadron that integrates over 100 personnel within Cyber Protection Teams. We plan to grow Mission Defense Teams, Cyber Command and Control, and Cyber Mission Forces aligned with the Active Component portfolio. As we develop our cyberspace technology, we must recruit, leverage the expertise and training opportunities in the civilian sector that uniquely benefit our part-time Reservists, and train a force with superior understanding of this domain.

## **ISR**

The Reserve has aggressively invested in full-spectrum ISR operations covering support to air, space and cyber domains. Our ISR capabilities are synchronized with Air Force strategy, responsive to the Air Force and Joint priorities. We currently have one ISR group with 11 classic associate units, three added in Fiscal Year 2017. Recruiting for ISR is successful at 112 percent of requirements which results in a backlog in our training pipeline.

## **UNIQUENESS**

### **People**

By preserving our part-time force structure, Reserve Citizen Airmen remain a superb financial value to the Air Force and the American taxpayer. The AFR is currently about 79 percent part-time, permitting us to remain cost-efficient and mission effective. A part-time Reserve Airman costs less than a Regular Air Force (RegAF) Airman. Over a career, our cost savings are significant; the 20 year life cycle cost for a part-time Reserve officer is approximately half of the active component, with a non-prior service member being even less. Another cost advantage of the AFR is the ability to capture prior-service RegAF members

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wishing to affiliate as a part-time Reservist. The Reserve is uniquely positioned to retain the Air Force's vast investment in human capital and maintain cost effective capability against unanticipated requirements.

The Air Force Reserve provides flexibility through our ability to adjust reservist participation rates based on demand. Our Selected Reserve force is made up of roughly 65 percent Traditional Reservist (TR), Full Time Support (FTS), to include 16 percent Air Reserve Technicians (ART) and 4 percent Active Guard Reserve, and 10 percent IMA. We have over 3,000 Civilians and 250 Active Component partners, part of our FTS cadre, who are 5 percent of our manpower. Our FTS personnel are responsible for preparation and administration of policies and regulations to organize, administer, recruit, instruct, train, or support the Air Force Reserve. Additionally, the Air Force Reserve has a strategic depth consisting of those members in the Individual Ready Reserve, Active Duty Retired, Retired Reserve (AFR and ANG), and Standby Reserve, who the President and Secretary of Defense may recall when needed. It is this flexibility and capacity which make the Reserve a unique and critical partner in our Total Force team. We deliver our diverse portfolio capability and Title 10 status as your federal reserve in order to meet the nation's requirements. It is my job to assure Reserve readiness, and I guarantee Reserve Citizen Airmen will remain operationally relevant to the joint fight by ensuring the right number of Airmen are available, trained properly and equipped appropriately.

Air Force Reserve TRs voluntarily serve this country and continue to positively impact your communities. Our Reserve Citizen Airmen balance their home life, their civilian job and their military commitment on a daily basis. Training and readiness require dedicated time, and most hold full time civilian jobs requiring them to coordinate with their employer and predict time for participation. Reserve Citizen Airmen leverage a diverse range of civilian careers,

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including attorneys, information technology professionals, health care providers, small business owners and corporate executives. These civilian skills make our Air Force team even stronger.

The Air Force Reserve IMA program exemplifies the Total Force Enterprise. IMAs provide the flexibility needed to support total force requirements at a moment's notice. IMAs train with their active duty counterparts and can easily expand and contract the number of duty days they work to support the joint force. In today's austere manning environment, IMAs can surge to help augment active component units who could otherwise not accomplish their mission. During normal manning times, IMAs revert to their minimum work schedule of either 22 or 36 days a year, providing a ready force at an extremely low cost. The IMA program provides exactly the degree of adaptability and reliability the Air Force needs to economically and reliably continue the Air Force mission, whether it's at the squadron level or the Combatant Command.

Reserve Citizen Airmen have been in continuous combat operations for the past 25 years, hindering their time to focus on full-spectrum readiness items. Some of our Airmen volunteer to deploy on 60-90 day rotations or 365 day deployed-in-place tours which does not allow enough dwell time for full spectrum readiness training. Many reservists volunteer to exceed the desired 1:5 mobilization-to-dwell in order to meet mission requirements. Deployments and mobilizations are not decreasing; in fact, a four percent increase is projected in Fiscal Year 2018. The Air Force Reserve is initiating eight six-month Reserve Component Periods to stabilize mobilization-to-dwell above 1:5 and dedicate more time at home base for required training and readiness requirements.

### **Mission**

The Air Force Reserve owns the sole responsibility to execute the mission of the Hurricane Hunters and Aerial Spray while sharing aerial firefighting duties with our Air National Guard (ANG) partners. Last year showed great success. The Hurricane Hunters flew 135

missions with more than 1,000 hours monitoring weather conditions in support of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Our Aerial Spray crews dropped 79,000 gallons of pesticides on over 191,000 acres to control disease and vegetation proliferation. The Reserve collaborated with the Guard to extinguish 16 raging wildfires, while amassing a total of 64 flight hours and 54 fire retardant drops which dispersed over 1.3 million pounds of retardant. These missions would not get done without the Air Force Reserve.

The Air Force Reserve owns significant equity, over 25 percent, in many other missions providing critical support to the joint fight. We provide 60 percent to Aeromedical Evacuation, 33 percent to Air Mobility Operations Squadrons, 56 percent of the Airlift Control Flights, and 100 percent of the C-5 Formal Training Unit. These missions would have critical failures without the support of Reserve Citizen Airmen.

In order to care for our Airmen, the Air Reserve Personnel Center (ARPC) was established. They are responsible for the mobilization of Air Force Reserve personnel and retired active duty members when directed. ARPC provides administrative, records maintenance, and personnel support for over 1.3 million members of the RegAF, ANG, AFR and retired personnel in all categories. ARPC manages the complex processes, status dependent, of the Air Reserve Component. ARPC professionals have experience and training to understand these complexities and ensure both Guard and Reserve processes are seamlessly integrated into Air Force operations.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Air Force Reserve will remain an integrated, flexible and combat-ready force providing accessible and sustainable capabilities as a viable Air Force Component supporting joint partners and national security objectives. Ensuring diverse, operational experience enables us to be a combat-ready force with continuity and depth. The key to our success in achieving

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balance between today's fight and tomorrow's threat is the right equipment, the right manning and stable, predictable funding. We must continue to build on our readiness and supporting systems and structures to handle current and future operational tempos. Armed with the right equipment and infrastructure we can continue to impact the fight every day. Essential to our future as a ready force, we must shape our journey to be ready for the next fight while preserving our strength as an agile, professional, sustainable, reserve citizen airmen force. Thank you for your tremendous support of the Air Force Reserve and for the opportunity to represent your Reserve Citizen Airmen in our discussion today. I look forward to your questions.