

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE

STATEMENT OF
VICE ADMIRAL JOHN B. MUSTIN, U.S. NAVY
CHIEF OF NAVY RESERVE
BEFORE THE
SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
FISCAL YEAR 2024 NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE BUDGET
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Vice Admiral John B. Mustin
Chief of Navy Reserve
Commander, Navy Reserve Force

Vice Admiral John Mustin is a native of Alexandria, Virginia. He is a graduate of the United States Naval Academy, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Weapons and Systems Engineering and was commissioned in 1990. He holds a Master of Science in Operations Research from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA, and a Master of Business Administration (cum laude) in Finance and Management from the F. W. Olin Graduate School of Business at Babson College. He earned his Joint Professional Military Education from the Air University's Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base.



Mustin's sea duty assignments include command of Expeditionary Strike Group 2/Task Force 29; commissioning operations officer on USS Donald Cook (DDG 75), and aboard USS Vincennes (CG 49), where he served as combat information center officer, navigator and the Air Warfare Commander of the Independence (CV 62) Battle Group.

Affiliating with the Navy Reserve in 2001, Mustin served at Navy Reserve (NR) Carrier Strike Group 2 / USS George Washington (CVN 73) Strike Group during Operation Enduring Freedom. Other staff assignments include NR Chief of Naval Operations for Operations, Plans and Strategy (N3N5) at the Pentagon Navy Command Center; Maritime Expeditionary Security Squadron 14; NR Carrier Strike Group 10 / USS Harry S Truman (CVN 75) Strike Group; and Personnel Mobilization Team 101. Additionally, he served as the inaugural Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) Navy Reserve Enterprise Director, responsible for the reserve manning, training and equipping of the 1000-billet LCS surface reserve force.

Other command tours include NR Joint Staff South; NR U.S. Fleet Forces Command Maritime Operations Center, Greensboro; NR Maritime Expeditionary Security Squadron 6; and Inshore Boat Unit 22, including a mobilization to Kuwait during Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. His other flag assignments include deputy commander of Naval Surface Forces, spanning the Surface Type Commanders of the U.S. Pacific and Atlantic fleets; as a plankowner and the deputy commander of the re-established U.S. Second Fleet; and as Vice Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command.

Mustin became the 15th Chief of Navy Reserve on 7 August 2020. As Commander, Navy Reserve Force, he leads approximately 57,000 Reserve Component personnel who support the Navy, Marine Corps and joint forces.

His awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Commendation Medal, Navy Achievement Medal, Navy Battle Efficiency 'E', Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal and various service, expeditionary, unit and campaign awards.

Introduction

Chair Tester, Ranking Member Collins, distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding the contribution of the Navy Reserve to national defense, both as it stands today and as we prepare for the threats of tomorrow. On behalf of Navy Reserve Sailors, civilians and their families, thank you for your continued leadership and support as we optimize the warfighting readiness of your Navy Reserve Force for strategic competition.

In 2020, the Navy Reserve began a transformation to improve and modernize the way we organize, man, train, equip, and mobilize to generate the combat power and critical strategic depth the Navy requires to prevail in conflict. We have embraced the imperative to redesign the Reserve Force – structurally, procedurally, and operationally – to align with strategic priorities calibrated for a competitive security environment. With a singular focus on generating warfighting readiness, this generational transformation will provide the most capable force possible to our Navy’s Numbered Fleets and deliver integrated all-domain naval power to the Joint Force in competition, crisis, and conflict.

Throughout its rich 108-year history, the Navy Reserve has proven to be an elite fighting force – a deep well of strategic depth from which our great nation has drawn time and again to prevail in competition, crisis and conflict. The talent our Navy Reserve Sailors bring to bear provides an unequivocal asymmetric advantage. As we transform the organization, training, and mobilization processes of the force, we have not lost sight of our collective responsibility to recruit and retain our nation’s precious talent. I remain in awe of the dedication and professionalism of Navy Reserve Sailors, civilians and the families that support them. They

provide the foundation that underwrites more than a century of successful contribution to the Navy and our Joint Force, and the reason I gaze optimistically to the future.

Timely, predictable and relevant funding from Congress is critical for the Navy Reserve to meet mission requirements and, as always, we are grateful for your continued support and enduring interest. Keeping the Reserve Personnel Navy account funded at President's Budget levels enables the Reserve force to deliver trained Sailors ready to fight and win in the early stages of conflict as readily as they are to sustain combat operations. The National Guard and Reserves Equipment Account (NGREA) affords the Navy Reserve agility in rapidly acquiring and implementing equipment solutions that fill mission-critical shortages and generate readiness. Continued Congressional support will ensure the Navy Reserve provides relevant, modern capability and capacity, keeping parity with active duty service members in training, facilities and equipment, and a resilient surge force today and into the future.

Design the Force: Capabilities

For the two decades following the unprovoked attacks of 9/11, and during our global fight against violent extremism, the Navy Reserve provided operational support in land-based combat environments. The recent strategic shift to address peer adversaries in the maritime domain has forced an evolution to address the ready force the Navy Reserve must deliver. With the resurgence of a global pacing challenge, generating warfighting readiness requires a force design process focused on modernization and accelerated delivery of relevant, current capabilities.

Multi-domain warfighting capability and capacity relevance remains an imperative guiding principle in the modernized Reserve Force. As such, we are investing heavily in

capabilities that directly align with winning future wars, including Maritime Operations Centers, contested logistics, surge maintenance, integrated fires, and Naval Special Warfare. New technologies and capabilities in space, cyber, imagery analysis, battle damage assessment and repair, autonomous and un-crewed platforms, artificial intelligence, machine learning, data analytics and additive manufacturing represent growth areas that capitalize on the unique skills and experiences of Reserve Sailors and the civilians that enable the Reserve Force.

The Navy Reserve delivers these modern capabilities through three employment models: readiness units that augment active Navy units with trained, warfighting-ready Reserve Sailors, individual Sailors with unique skills that enhance the Total Force, and stand-alone operational units that supplement active component capabilities. The Navy Reserve's operational units require investments in modern equipment to ensure strategic depth in logistics, aviation, security, medical, special warfare as well as investments in critical capabilities.

Navy Unique Fleet Essential Airlift (C-130J)

The Chief of Naval Operations' Navigation Plan identified Distributed Maritime Operations (DMO) as one of the Navy's key operating concepts necessary to prevail in conflict. In Navigation Plan 2022, the CNO emphasizes resilient logistics in contested environments as a critical Force Design Imperative and directs recapitalization of the C-130 fleet, a reserve-only capability, by 2030. The C/KC-130T aircraft are the Navy's only long-range aerial logistics platform capable of transporting bulk cargo, such as boats, diver recompression chambers, submarine masts, and all modules of the F-35 engine. Operated entirely by the Navy Reserve, Navy Unique Fleet Essential Airlift (NUFEA) consists of 27 C/KC-130T and 17 C-40A aircraft that comprise the Navy's organic intra-theater air logistics capability.

Last year, NUFEA aircraft transported 96,105 passengers and 18.8 million pounds of cargo for the Navy and the Department of Defense. This capability saved the Department \$1.14 billion in expenditures relative to alternative means of transportation. Despite their demonstrated necessity and value, the C-130T's age, lack of available parts due to obsolescence, and increasing cost of flight hour, drive a growing gap between Fleet's demand for this mission and the Navy's capability to fulfill it. Compared to the legacy "T" model, the more efficient and reliable "J" model incurs a cost saving of approximately \$1,000 per flight hour. The essential mission these aircraft provide make recapitalization of the C-130T to the KC-130J the Navy Reserve's number one equipment priority.

Adversary

The aviation adversary mission ensures readiness for the Navy's carrier-based tactical aircraft and develops Navy pilots' air-to-air combat skill. The Navy Reserve's Tactical Support Wing (TSW) maintains 29 F-5N/F and 2 F-5N+/F+ aircraft that replicate low-to-mid level threats. The Navy Reserve is modernizing the F-5N/F avionics suite to improve safety of flight and resolve obsolescence limitations. Further upgrades will improve the range of the aircraft and generate more accurate threat replication. The current fleet of F-5s will reach the end of their service life by the early 2030s; however, eleven upgraded F-5s purchased in FY20 will come into service over the next three years to ensure adversary capability does not lapse prior to fielding a replacement aircraft.

In April the Navy Reserve received twelve F-16C aircraft that provide dissimilar aircraft training and high-end adversary support to the fleet. These aircraft have sufficient airframe hours remaining to sustain adversary missions through 2035. Ongoing efforts to upgrade F-5 and F-16

aircraft, together with investments in Live-Virtual-Constructive technology, will increase the fidelity of modern threat replication and keep Reserve adversary training relevant to the fleet until follow-on platforms become available.

Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance (P-8A)

The P-8A aircraft is the nation's only full-spectrum, broad-area Anti-Submarine Warfare platform. Additionally, it provides armed Anti-Surface Warfare and networked Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance capability. The Navy Reserve's Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aviation (MPRA) squadrons mirror the active component units and integrate seamlessly into the Global Force Management (GFM) deployment cycle. The Navy Reserve is in the process of transitioning from the P-3C to the P-8A. VP-62 received their first two P-8A in February and March of 2023 with their third aircraft scheduled for delivery in July. VP-69 began the transition process to the P-8A in April 2023, with the first aircraft scheduled for delivery in August 2023. Transitioning to the P-8A sustains the joint forces military advantage over our pacing threat by providing worldwide, continuous deployed presence to deter adversaries and provide robust support of maritime operations. Hangers to support the new aircraft in the two squadrons are late to need and are the number one and two military construction priorities for the Navy Reserve. The recapitalization of Reserve MPRA ensures equipment parity with active units to deliver operational resiliency and strategic depth to the Joint Force. I am grateful for your support.

Train the Force: Readiness

The singular focus of the Navy Reserve's transformation is to generate and deliver warfighting readiness. As such, each Reserve Sailor's peacetime training and active duty service must translate directly to readiness in their programmed warfighting billet. We are ensuring that

training resources, and the policies that support them, provide Reserve Sailors the “reps and sets” they need to excel, on day one, in their wartime roles in a maritime fight.

For the first time, the Navy Reserve issued explicit Force Generation Guidance, released in December of last year, establishing a force-wide process to define and validate training requirements and to assess force-wide status. Most importantly, the guidance ensures that every Sailor is familiar with their unique training plan, tailored to their mobilization billet. Automated systems document individual training requirements and allow Commanding Officers of Reserve Readiness Units to evaluate and report the status of each Sailor’s training, specific to their unique mobilization billet. Accurate, relevant information gives Sailors and their leadership actionable tools to manage their warfighting readiness effectively and optimizes training investments to enable “plug-and-play” integration with active-duty forces.

Billet-Based Activation – activating individual Sailors and Reserve Units of Action to their programmed maritime assignments – represents an important inflection for the Navy Reserve in our transformation from a legacy force providing Individual Augmentees mobilized for land-based conflict against non-state, violent extremism. In the future, when necessary, we will activate units of action rather than individuals to meet reserve-appropriate requirements. Individual Sailors will train and activate into roles that align to their wartime billet and their specific experience and qualifications. This effort is in-line with the Secretary of the Navy’s updated policy for sourcing active and reserve Sailors to fill current requirements. The Secretary’s policy directs the DoN to apply the Total Force to source ongoing global requirements, and to continue developing permanent manpower solutions in lieu of individual augmentees. Billet-Based Activation provides reserve Sailors practical experience, while

preserving strategic depth for the new reality of multi-domain warfare in competition, crisis and conflict with peer and near-peer adversaries.

Mobilize the Force: Capacity

A Reserve Force designed and trained to fight and win must be ready and capable of mobilizing rapidly, and at scale, to provide the strategic depth necessary to sustain multi-domain combat operations. We will deliver on the imperative to mass mobilize the entire Reserve Force within 30 days when called upon.

Adaptive Mobilization

Our legacy approach to mobilization, in which individual Reserve Sailors were processed through a single, centralized facility to receive specialized training over the course of several months, did not meet the demand of a complex, dynamic security environment. To enable the readiness and deliver the Reserve Force to the fight immediately, we developed Adaptive Mobilization (AM) processes tailored to each billet, and distributed mobilization pathways to bring mobilization-ready Sailors into their active duty warfighting role efficiently and at scale. Using the AM model, six regional Readiness and Mobilization Commands (REDCOMs) and their subordinated Navy Reserve Centers (NRCs) support distribution of current and future activations by mobilizing the entire Selected Reserve population – roughly 50,000 Sailors– within 30 days of the demand signal. This model capitalizes on Training and Administration of the Reserve (TAR) staffs, located at the REDCOMS, NRCs and within Fleet units, and leverages the nationally distributed infrastructure unique to Reserve Forces to execute the AM model across globally distributed regions. The Navy Reserve has intentionally and frequently exercised these processes through force-wide mobilization exercises that stress-test our capabilities and drive future improvements.

Navy Reserve Center Optimization

The 115 Navy Reserve Centers spanning the United States, Puerto Rico and Guam make up a critical support network for Reserve Sailors across the world. In Fiscal Year 2020, the Navy Reserve began a crucial effort to optimize this network by strategically closing small, off-installation NRCs in order to realign TAR staff personnel to fill vacancies at under-staffed NRCs and REDCOMs. The Navy Reserve benefits by optimizing essential manpower to train and administer Reserve Sailors and to implement Adaptive Mobilization. NRCs outside of military installations incur force protection and security risks that “on-installation” NRCs do not. Evaluating these “off-installation sites” for closure reduces risk to the Force and curtails the expense and mobilization impact of Armed Watch Stander programs. The effort, which aligns with SECNAV’s 10-year infrastructure reset direction to divest the Navy’s facility footprint by 10%, reduces the Navy Reserve facility footprint by 10.3%.

Administration and Management of the Individual Ready Reserve

The Navy Reserve is comprised of 54,607 Selective Reserve (SELRES) Sailors, 9,966 TAR Sailors and 39,214 Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) members, totaling over 103,787 Sailors. The IRR is a critical component of the Navy Reserve, enabling additional surge capacity for the Navy Reserve Force at a significantly reduced cost. IRR Sailors also maintain many of the primary benefits associated with military service, such as access to the military exchange, commissary and Morale Welfare and Recreation facilities, Space-Available travel, Psychological Health Outreach Program (PHOP) and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) services. In order to leverage the potential of this population as a relevant source of strategic capacity, we have defined critical skills for the IRR, shifting the focus from the land-based fight against violent extremists and Individual Augmentee roles to those focused on the maritime

domain. We are deliberately exercising the IRR muster process via the application of a new technology solution to refine and improve the experience. Engaging with our IRR Sailors through proactive musters has also proved an effective means of recruiting experienced personnel by tapping into a desire to affiliate with the Selective Reserve

Develop the Force: Sailors

Navy Reserve Sailors and civilians provide the asymmetric advantage that allows the Navy Reserve Force to provide world-class warfighting readiness to the Fleet; as such, they remain my primary focus in the transformation of Reserve design, train, mobilize, and develop initiatives. These efforts support the professional, military, and personal growth of our Sailors, with special emphasis also on minimizing administrative distractions, enhancing talent management, and improving quality of life. The Navy Reserve has promoted particular efforts to improve mental health, resiliency and suicide awareness. We are focused on fortifying a culture of dignity and respect that exemplify our Navy's core values of honor, courage and commitment.

Recruiting and Retention

We are competing for talent within a discriminating labor force under rapidly evolving economic conditions. The labor market in the United States is the tightest in recent memory, with more job openings than people to fill them. However, the turmoil and uncertainty of the last few years have shown that many Americans are more likely than ever to pursue work for organizations that provide purpose to their lives and align with their deeper values. We believe the Navy Reserve is the employer of choice for those seeking challenge, purpose, and personal growth within a cohesive community of diverse and motivated individuals. To reach our goals, we are at General Quarters to spread this message to talented Americans who are eager to serve.

Reserve component recruiting and retention includes parallel efforts to access new Sailors as well as those with prior service. The Prior Service Mission is unique and critical to manning the Reserve force: in order to ensure we can fill critical gaps, the Navy Reserve must maintain a deep reservoir of talent, which requires active duty Sailors to affiliate with the Navy Reserve prior to leaving active Navy service. With this in mind, the Navy established the Navy Recruiting Reserve Command (NRRC), charged with retaining Sailors transitioning from active duty for continued service in the Reserve Component. The new NRRC can focus on the prior-service Reserve mission in today's competitive job market. To improve this process, NRRC has established Prior Service Detachments in the five continental fleet concentration areas and at two locations outside the continental United States. These detachments are staffed with reserve benefits advisors whose sole purpose is to act as an extension of the Career Transition Office and to educate Sailors on the transition process and the benefits and opportunities available in the Navy Reserve.

We are also aggressively activating accession and retention levers by promoting Active Component to Selected Reserve (AC2SELRES) opportunities during Transition Assistance Program classes and required career development sessions. Additionally, we are expanding bonus opportunities, including implementation of a TAR selected re-enlistment bonus for selected rates, extending High Year Tenure exception to policy to allow more flexibility in the process for service members, executing a High Year Tenure Plus program that automatically approves continuation of SELRES Sailors through 30 September 2024, extending Tuition Assistance Programs to SELRES Sailors and implementing SELRES exit surveys to identify additional issues or potential policy changes that could support the recruiting and retention mission. The Navy has also updated the Military Service Obligation construct by creating

mandatory SELRES service for eligible Sailors identified as fitting a specific need within the Reserve Force.

The Navy Reserve is projected to miss New Accession Training goals by 973 Sailors and to finish approximately 3,000 Sailors short of the FY23 10,330 recruiting goal. To address end strength shortfalls, the Navy and Navy Reserve are collaboratively embracing innovative digital advertising methods to identify candidates for high-demand fields such as Special Warfare, aircrew, Information Technology, and healthcare specialties. Digital advertising is especially critical since the Navy Reserve derives 40.2% of all new contracts from marketing and advertising leads.

Navy Personnel and Pay Modernization

Legacy pay and personnel systems continue to challenge and frustrate our reserve sailors and their families. The Navy is undertaking an Enterprise personnel and pay transformation to modernize and streamline the processes that govern activation and deactivation of Reserve Sailors, their career management, their pay, and the service and support they receive and deserve throughout their career. The Navy is modernizing the MyNavy HR Enterprise, to include Manpower, Personnel, Training and Education systems, to improve performance, achieve Active Component/Reserve Component permeability, increase productivity, achieve auditability and generate cost efficiencies in all aspects of personnel readiness for all Navy sailors and their families. The centerpiece of this transformation is the Navy Personnel and Pay (NP2) system, which will enable a single, integrated personnel and pay system that allows Reserve Sailors to seamlessly transition on and off active duty, without a disruption in pay. This capability will accelerate Adaptive Mobilization and provide the efficiency required to mobilize rapidly and at scale. While modernization efforts have been delayed, the Navy Reserve is pressing forward

with initiatives integrating antiquated systems that decrease timelines and mitigate shortfalls in operating capacity to support sailors and their families.

Culture of Excellence

As we transform the Reserve Force for strategic competition, Sailors form the foundation of our readiness and remain our most important customers. As such, we remain focused on strengthening an inclusive and diverse culture that is intolerant of sexual harassment and assault, and that provides comprehensive support to Sailors, civilians and their families. We are optimizing the warfighting readiness of the Reserve Force by empowering Sailors, promoting organizational trust and transparency, and ensuring inclusion and connectedness among every member of the Reserve Force.

The Navy Reserve is an exponentially more effective warfighting-ready force when it capitalizes on the diverse backgrounds, experiences, perspectives and talents of those who serve. With this as our guiding principle, the Navy Reserve is committed to fielding a force as diverse as the country and harnessing the asymmetric advantage of our Sailors to accelerate our warfighting advantage. In aggregate, the diversity of the Reserve Force has increased across all categories over the previous five-year period. We must continue to foster inclusion and equity in order to harness the diverse and unique capabilities of our Sailors.

Suicide Prevention

The well-being of Reserve Sailors, civilians and their families is an imperative for a healthy, whole force. We continue efforts to decrease barriers to mental health treatments, including the negative beliefs about help-seeking, and ensure appropriate services are available to all service members and their families. The Psychological Health Outreach Program (PHOP),

a Reserve program, provides counselors, coordinators and resources 24/7/365. In FY22, PHOP completed a total of 506 Reserve Center on-site visits and 29 virtual visits, a 25% increase from FY21. Additionally, they received 3,377 Navy Reserve referrals. Electronic behavioral health screenings are available to every Sailor and family member for immediate access to PHOP services, while Resiliency Check-ins provide screening and referrals as necessary. Reserve Sailors, civilians and their families are critical to our warfighting readiness and remain our most important asset and, as such, the importance of their health, wellness and safety underscores all of our efforts.

Conclusion

We are transforming the Navy Reserve and delivering ready units of action and augmentation manpower to support Navy warfighting throughout the spectrum of conflict. To remain ahead of our pacing threats in the coming decades, we must continue to transform our force with urgency, to face the challenges of today while preparing for the war of tomorrow. My unambiguous focus remains warfighting readiness. Strategic and tactical guidance supports this singular goal, with the enduring foundation of professional, empowered, proficient Sailors at the core. We have made great strides in modernizing how we man, train, equip and mobilize the force. But we still have much to do. Our Navy is stronger as a result of the Navy Reserve's contribution to the fight. As it has for well over a century, America's Navy Reserve remains "Ready Now."

On behalf of the men and women of the United States Navy Reserve, thank you for your steadfast support of Navy Reserve Sailors, civilians, families, and employers. Today, we face a new era with new challenges. With your continued support, we will lead the transformation of our Navy Reserve to address the current and future global environment with speed and agility.