

TAKING A FIX

Vice Admiral Robin Braun

Chief of Navy Reserve

It's an honor to serve as the 13th Chief of Navy Reserve. Since assuming command four months ago, I've been on an aggressive schedule; meeting with key stakeholders, Flag Officers, Full Time Support (FTS) and Selected Reserve leadership teams, and our Sailors. I've solicited their thoughts and insight as we take fix on the state of the Navy Reserve and roll out our Strategic Plan for 2013. We were put on a solid path to success by my predecessor, VADM Dirk Debbink, and the Force has never been more ready, relevant, or aligned to the active component than we are today. But the strategic landscape continues to change and in order to meet those challenges we'll make some rudder corrections to stay the course. In January 2013 we'll promulgate the Navy Reserve Strategic Plan, a plan that aligns with the Chief of Naval Operations' Sailing Directions and centers on our most important asset - our Navy Reserve Sailors.

Today the Navy Reserve is composed of 64,000 Sailors across 28 officer designators and 69 enlisted ratings. At 11 % of the Navy Total Force and 4.3% of the manpower appropriation, the Navy Reserve is an affordable source for operational capabilities and surge support that complements and/or augments the Active Component. Served by 122 Navy Operational Support Centers across all 50 states and territories, our Sailors provide a trained, ready force that adds to Navy's strategic depth during times of peace, but which can be quickly accessed for operational capabilities when the need arises. We provide on-demand capabilities and capacity at a part-time cost and are trained and ready to support the Fleet when needed. Our Selected Reserve Sailors are only paid when training or serving on active duty and do not incur full-time costs for housing, food, medical or other services. Clearly, the Navy Reserve is a cost-effective way to maintain capabilities that can be surged when the Navy and Nation need additional support.

In my travels, I continue to be impressed by what our personnel are accomplishing both at home and around the world. There's no doubt that the strength of the Navy Reserve rests with our Sailors who prove everyday that they're flexible, responsive and innovative. They're a force multiplier for the Active Component, bringing Navy training and experience, as well as valuable skills, credentials and experience from their civilian careers.

Responsive

Recently, the Navy Reserve proved its ability to rapidly respond during Hurricane Sandy. Even before the storm made landfall, our Reserve units assigned to U. S. Fleet Forces Command began looking at how to best support an increased watch posture within the Maritime Operations Center (MOC). Navy Reservists were already in the Hampton Roads area to take part in Exercise VIGILANT SHIELD 13. Upon request, RC personnel surged to the MOC as watch standers, planners, Crisis Action Team members, and support personnel.

Additionally, a total of 26 Navy Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officers (NEPLOs) were deployed throughout the northeastern states. As the storm impacted the area, the NEPLOs coordinated federal support to FEMA, state and local agencies that requested military assets and capabilities.

RC aircrew from HM-14 supported MH-53 aircraft onboard the USS WASP off the coast of New Jersey, ferrying first responders, vital equipment and supplies to areas inaccessible by vehicles. Our Navy C-9 aircraft were called to move 110 Seabees and 6600 lbs of cargo from Port Hueneme to Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst on short notice. Another C-9 crew transported a Mobile Operations Control Center from San Diego to NAS Jacksonville in support of U.S. Fleet Forces Command efforts to survey coastal damage. From humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts like Hurricane Sandy or the earthquakes in Japan and Haiti, to operations in the Horn of Africa and Afghanistan, Navy Reserve Sailors are constantly adapting to emerging missions and changing operational requirements.

Flexible

In the past month, Reserve Sailors manned the Navy Reserve Maritime Intelligence Operations Center to support Exercise Vigilant Shield. In Bahrain, SPAWAR reservists provided Cyber Security training to Sailors from USS DEXTROUS (MCM 13), USS CHINOOK (PC 9), and a local Joint Mobile Ashore Support Terminal (JMAST). In the Eastern Pacific, Navy Reserve Frigate USS CURTS (FFG 38) is underway conducting Transnational Organized Crime operations. In Afghanistan, helicopters from HSC-84 and HM-15 and transport aircraft from VR-56 and VR-62 are flying missions in support of coalition forces.

On any given week, thousands of Navy Reserve Sailors are providing operational support to the Fleet. Currently, more than 3,800 dedicated Reserve Sailors are mobilized around the world, often in harm's way. Since 9/11, almost 70,000 Reserve Sailors have been mobilized in support of overseas contingency operations. Throughout our history, Reserve Sailors have answered every call, often at a moment's notice, to support our nation in time of need.

Innovative

The Navy Reserve is always looking forward, ready and willing to innovate and embrace new capabilities. We are developing plans to provide underway and in-port support for both Littoral Combat Ship seaframes and associated Mission Modules. We are also exploring requirements for increased Reserve support to missions such as Homeland Defense, shipyard maintenance, unmanned systems, cyber warfare, mine countermeasures, and ballistic missile defense.

In addition, we're identifying areas where we can offer our skill sets to provide strategic depth. Examples include operational planning, religious ministry support and intelligence analysis. Our vision for the Navy Reserve is to continue to provide essential warfighting capabilities to the Navy, Marine Corps, and Joint Force Team.

As operations in Afghanistan wind down and resources are realigned within the Department of Defense, the Navy Reserve will continue to work with leadership to determine what capabilities should reside in the Navy Reserve and where the Navy Reserve can best support Navy's Active Component. Establishing the correct Active Component/Reserve Component mix is essential to efficient utilization of the Navy Reserve.

Looking forward

In 2010, approximately 7,000 Reserve Sailors served as Individual Augmentees or were mobilized with units. Today this number is around 4,000. Although overall requirements are drawing down, Navy leadership has challenged the Reserve Component to take on more of the IA workload in order to get AC Sailors back to sea. In 2013, the number of mobilized Reserve Sailors should remain relatively constant and we will remain ready to perform these essential IA missions.

Looking forward, the Navy Reserve is working to recruit and retain the most qualified and talented individuals available. To help us in this area, we continue to develop and mature the Continuum of Service (CoS) effort. The CoS is a transformational approach to personnel management that provides opportunities for seamless transition across service status categories to meet mission requirements and encourage a lifetime of service. CoS makes service easier for Sailors by identifying and eliminating barriers impacting their desire and ability to serve.

For the Navy, CoS enhances readiness by building a Total Force team of trained and experienced professionals that will ensure that the Navy is prepared to win our nation's wars by making sure we have Sailors with the right skills in the right job at the right time. For Sailors, CoS provides flexible service options and improves life-work balance. It offers both full and part-time service opportunities, depending on the Navy's needs and our own personal desires. This supports the CNO's vision of a seamless Navy Total Force.

The Navy Reserve will continue to provide both operational capabilities and strategic depth as part of the Total Force. Accordingly, we will need Sailors who are able to provide operational capabilities on a rotational basis, while others will be relied upon for strategic depth, providing at least one weekend a month and two weeks of Active Duty per year, but ready to answer the call in case of a national emergency. This mode of operations is nothing new to us. The Navy Reserve is an agile, capable, and responsive force that can be tailored as necessary to meet mission requirements.

The Navy Reserve will continue to develop the skill sets, resources, and policies to ensure our entire Navy Reserve Force is trained and ready to meet all operational challenges. We will also continue to support our Sailors and their families as they navigate the various participation levels afforded to them by the Continuum of Service. For our deploying Sailors, we will continue to emphasize the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program that provides services to them and their families before, during and after deployment via Deployment Readiness Training, Command Individual Augmentee Coordinators, Returning Warrior Workshops and Post Deployment Health Readiness Assessments. We owe nothing less to our serving Sailors and their families.

Our Navy remains the world's preeminent maritime power, and the Reserve Component's ability to contribute across a wide spectrum of operations enhances the Navy Total Force. The Navy Reserve acts as a true force multiplier, and provides unique skill sets that contribute greatly to the Navy's ability to meet its responsibilities in an increasingly uncertain world. I am extremely proud of the men and women of the Navy Reserve and continue to be inspired by the dedication and commitment of our Sailors and their families.