

# Reserve Forces - Identity and Integration in a Total Defence Workforce

Vincent Connelly

Oxford Brookes University, UK.

# Research projects & Data

Factors that influence integration between regulars and reserves (Connelly, 2013; Connelly, 2020)

What motivates, sustains or deters employers, Reservists and Reservists' families in support of reserve service (Morrison et al, 2013)

Awareness and attraction to Reserve Service (Parry et al, 2016)

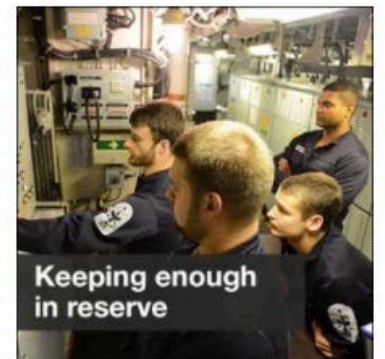
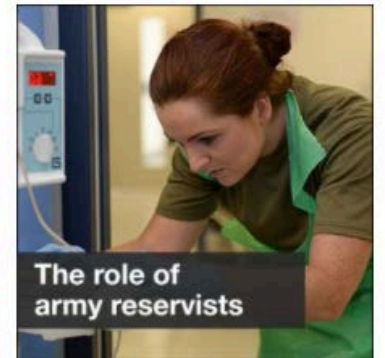
Integration of the Whole Force: Understanding barriers and enablers to maximise task and team performance (Parry et al 2017)

Support to the Families of Reservists: An Investigation of Needs, Provision and Gaps (Connelly et al, 2018)

ESRC/MoD Future Reserves Research Programme 2014-2018  
Armed Forces Continuous attitude Surveys (AFCAS & RESCAS)



Ministry  
of Defence



# The UK Volunteer Reservist Commitment

<b>Routine Commitment</b>	<b>Exceptional Circumstance</b>	35,000+ mobilisations since 2003
1 evening a week 1-2 weekend a month 2 weeks a year – training Minimum 27 days a year	<b>Mobilisation</b> (up to 12 months including pre-training and post tour leave) Usually “voluntary”	

Routine commitment will usually be taken outside of civilian work time (weekends and leave).

Basic and Trade Training is generally completed part time at weekends and on 2 week courses of instruction

Trained Reservists then train collectively in their unit locations on a routine commitment basis with a 2 week “Annual Camp” every year

# The challenge of the Whole (Total) Force

Reservists bring a boost to personnel numbers (capacity) but also their skills acquired from the civilian labour force (capability)

Leading to a need to accept more diversity and difference in the military labour force (regular, reserve, civil servant, contractor) and the delivery of integration as key to success

However, integration can be a challenge to the workplace culture of the full time “Regular” Army...

“A slow road to integration..”

**1876** – “in order to strengthen the connection between the Line and the Militia battalions”

**1908**- “the new Army scheme would bring the Regular and the Volunteer Forces closer together”

**1998** – “make them more relevant and useable and integrate them more closely into regular forces.”

**2013**- “If we are to achieve a truly integrated Whole Force...”

# The shrinking British Regular Army

## “The Post-Fordist Military” King (2006)

The replacement of mass labour with a highly skilled core and less-skilled periphery

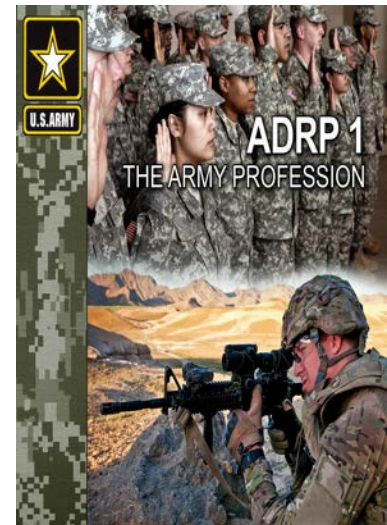
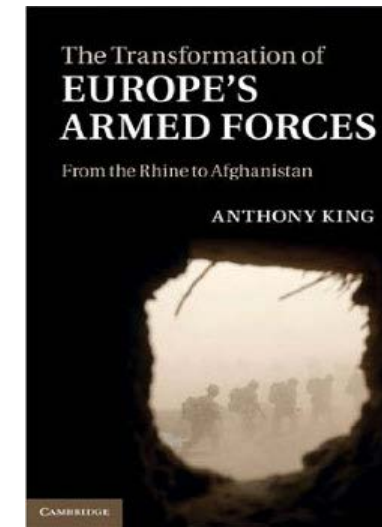
Shrinking military concentration & proportional growth of “elites”. “Special-force-ification” Multi-skilled expectations

Discourse of “professionalisation” of Western Armed Forces (Evetts, 2003)

Leading towards a workplace culture that is...

more homogenous, tightly defined, strongly held, based on a set of dominant “professional” values

Based on “full time” beliefs within a collective working environment



# Explaining full time and part time tensions

## Walker (1990)

“Through their own professional commitment to service and resultant disposition to accept their lives work as crucial to the nation’s security most Regular Soldiers believe...that the nation will always need regular professional standing forces to meet external threats

*and that part time soldiers are not capable of meeting national security needs at any level of manning, training or equipment.*

Importantly these beliefs are driven *more* by socialisation and identity *than* by systematic observation and reflection on the reserve forces.”

## Lawrence and Corwin (2003)

Organizations characterized by ritual density, uniformity of attention, structural homogeneity, emotional intensity and with highly frequent order giving more prone to marginalize part timers.

These organisations have a workplace culture that has strong and enduring workgroup boundaries, with pressures for conformity and where the level of stratification will be high.

Only individuals fully conforming to the full time rituals of the organisation will be fully accepted.

Trust in part time workers will, as a consequence, be very low...

Part time Reservists will be judged harshly against the Regular Army group norms of time, productivity, commitment, and conformity to the Army as a vocational profession.

# Time, commitment & professional identity

Social construction of time, productivity and commitment important to full time professional identity (Lawrence & Corwin, 2003. *Being There*).

Professional is more than “just” 9-5 and professionals are “*expected to be involved in their work at all times, such that ‘ever-availability’ acts as a symbolic expression of professional commitment*”

Commitment = long hours and ever availability; “*We serve our country more than once a week*”

Comments from Regulars about Reserves

*“I don’t like them because they are not 100% commitment ”*

*“perceive what they do as a hobby, not a profession ”*

## **Reservists**

Many Reservists define commitment differently in terms of sacrifice of time from family and civil employment. Evidence of Reservists “stealing” time from family and workplace and “white lies” to carve out time for Reserve training.

Some Reservists judge other Reservists time commitment negatively. Proud with strong (and complex) identity but not actively public facing (Woodward et al, 2018). Some Army Reservists see Reserve service as a stigma and not to be talked about with employers or wider society (Cunningham-Burley et al, 2018)

# Other barriers

## **Perceptions of Workplace Boundaries**

The Regular Army is a strongly bounded organisation. Reservists are often seen as civilians in uniform. “The British Army” = “The Regular Army”

## **Demands for Conformity**

Commitment is demonstrated by sacrifice of time and lack of choice. The Army comes first. Reservists “Cherry pick” best aspects of military work.

## **Perception and Acceptance of Stratification**

The higher the *part-time* rank the less respect for their expertise and legitimacy. “it’s almost devaluing our jobs and the training that we’ve done”

## **Assimilation not integration**

Considerable resistance to the idea of deploying Reserve collective formed units of any size with little faith in any form of Reserve collective training standard. Individuals or small groups only accepted and trusted.



# Consequences?

Lack of trust in Reservists leads Regulars to “break up” Reservist groups (Kirke, 2008, Connelly, 2020). Evidence from recent Ops confirms this approach (Connelly, 2018, 2020).

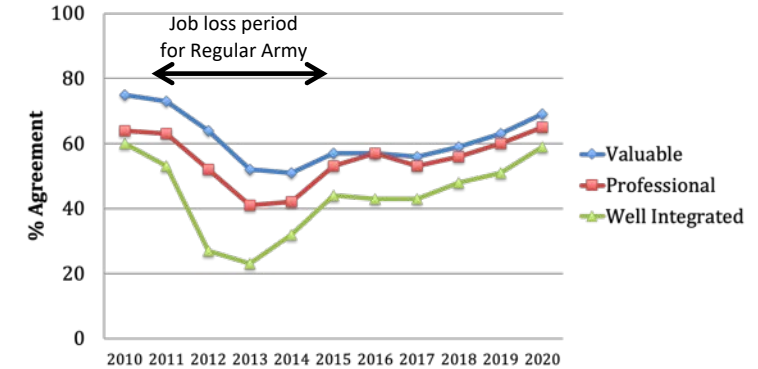
Poor treatment and exclusion of Army Reserve soldiers deployed to Iraq by some in the Regular Army had a direct impact on retention (Dandeker et al, 2010)

2008-2014 perceived marginalisation of the Army Reserve led to high level of intra-service (regulars vs reserves) rivalry (Bury & Catagnani, 2019)

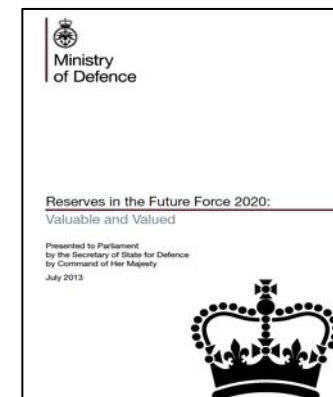
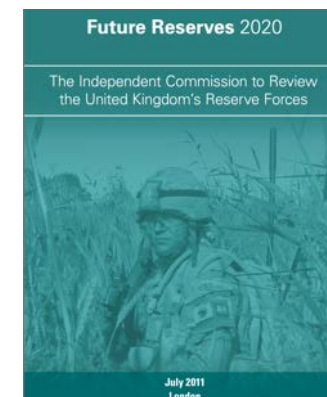
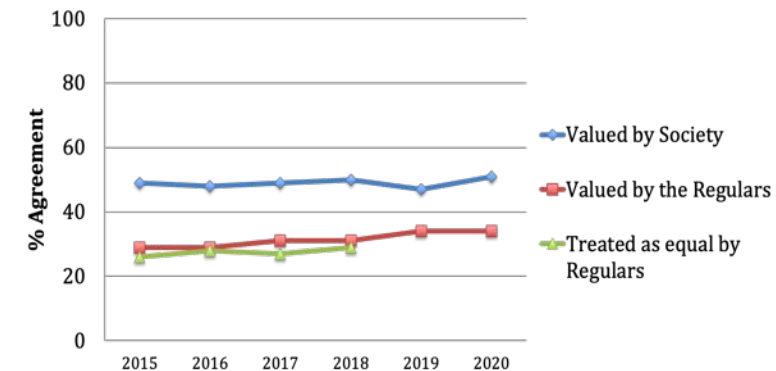
Move post 1992 away from Army Reserve providing formed units in a crisis to providing individuals who volunteer for service with the Regular Army in “wars of choice” (Connelly, 2018)

Institutional Myths, defining “threat” in terms of risk, centralised control, influencing debate, maintaining professional power (Currie et al, 2012)

AFCAS data on perceptions of Army Reserves by Regular Army Respondents.



RECAS data on Army Reserves perceptions



# Tackling integration

Part time Reserves challenge the current social construction of the full time military identity.

Understanding tensions are derived from socialization and identity. Defining and understanding differences in "commitment" and "time". Recognizing civilian equivalent experience.

Changing the discourse of "equivalence" to one of accepting "diversity and difference" of labour and organization. Devolved vs centralized.

The "Fight today" ethos of the Regular Army. Part time Reserves are often semi-trained and need some post mobilization training. Understanding readiness and planning for longer term.

Recognising training needs are different between Reserve and Regular units. More effective use of time for more focused training. Simulation/Emulation/more Regular support.

Clarity over focused Reservist unit roles and understanding of risk. Training outcome based, progressive and evaluated objectively. Building trust through shared training.

Organisational power dynamics. Proportional representation at senior ranks.

Improved education & experience on both sides through career

The Army Reserve is "surely one of the hardiest of British plants as it grows in financially stony soil, without even being watered by moral encouragement" (Basil Liddell-Hart, 1932)

## Our Army of part-timers...

DESPERATE defence chiefs have been forced to filter more than 4,000 part-time soldiers into regular Army units in a frantic bid to fill personnel gaps.

The situation is so dire that reservists now fill slots at deputy commander level at two divisions and several regional brigades.

A reservist has even been appointed to command Edinburgh Castle. Major General Alastair Bruce, a journalist, spends weekdays in Scotland supervising a staff of 30.

The Armed Forces are currently 8.5 per cent short of the personnel needed to carry out all duties effectively. But the situation is particularly acute in the Army, which has 78,880 soldiers – almost 4,000 short of its 82,500 target – of which 75,210 are trained. Sources say that the overall figure may be reduced down to 75,000 in a forthcoming defence review.

To try to fill the shortfall, 4,160 reservists have been drafted in to operate in full-time roles. Although fully integrated, they do not receive free medical care or dental assistance unless they sign up for operations.

In 2012, then-defence secretary Philip Hammond announced the transformation from Territorial Army to Army Reserve, admitting more integration would be needed to cut costs. But even under the

By **Marco Giannangeli**  
DEFENCE EDITOR

One Army policy, regular and reservists maintained separate budgets and targets. Now, as regular Army figures continue to drop, Army Reserve is to be completely incorporated, allowing Ministry of Defence bosses to offer a single personnel figure which applies to both elements.

In the latest quarterly statistics, the strength of the British Army is listed at 116,800 when regular and reservist figures are combined.

On paper, the Army Reserve is 30,000-strong, meeting targets set for 2020. In reality, however, some are not trained and around 12,000 failed to honour their contractual obligations to show up for weekend and annual exercises last year.

With the 4,000 already committed to regular forces, this potentially leaves a fully available reservist force of just 15,000.

Major General Jonathan Shaw, a former Parachute Regiment officer who wrote Britain In A Perilous World, criticised the integration. He said: "What we are seeing is smoke and mirrors. The MoD is pretending to have a reserve when the reality is that our reserve force is increasingly being used in the front line."

**'Reserves are increasingly being used on the front line'**

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