

# Department of the Air Force

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Presentation

Before the House Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Defense

## ***Guard and Reserve Hearing***

Statement of

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Chief of Air Force Reserve

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## **Air Force Reserve Fiscal Year 2022 Posture Statement**

As an integral component of the Total Force, the Air Force Reserve provides experienced manpower and critical capabilities for our National Defense. Our Citizen Airmen are interchangeable, interoperable, and integrated across the Total Force. We execute the full spectrum of Department of the Air Force missions, while providing daily operations at a fraction of the cost of a standing force.

Total Force operations require Total Force readiness. The Air Force Reserve must be structured, trained, and equipped for the future fight. Operational success in tomorrow's battlespace requires an agile, modern force. We must be prepared to provide ready forces for joint operations, defend our homeland, counter violent extremist organizations and rogue nations, and deter aggression through nuclear and conventional readiness.

Because of the hard work and support of Congress, we were able to make steady gains in readiness during Fiscal Years (FY) 2018 and 2019 and preserve those gains in FY 2020. Funding from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was integral in our efforts to maintain readiness during the pandemic. With nearly \$19.5 million in additional funding, we were able to invest in needed software and information technology infrastructure, allowing us to preserve our force and provide virtual training. With this investment, we scaled from an average of less than 1,000 remote workers to supporting nearly 15,000 across the Total Force. Passing legislative relief to allow Reservists to complete a qualifying year for retirement if the COVID-19 pandemic prevented them from doing so, has the potential to be extremely beneficial by preventing career disruption.

With the assistance of Congress, we have preserved both individual and unit level readiness across the Air Force Reserve. Our nuclear deterrence forces are mission ready, and we increased our priority unit readiness. We modernized key weapon systems and lessened critical manpower shortfalls. Through internal reforms and process improvement initiatives, we increased our organizational effectiveness and enhanced our ability to provide excellent care for our Citizen Airmen and their families.

While we continue to preserve our force and readiness, we still face challenges. Due to limited resources, the Air Force Reserve will continue to balance requirements and prioritize critical system upgrades to our aircraft to enhance our ability to provide relevant warfighting capacity to the Total Force in order to enable joint all-domain operations. Additionally, we will begin to prioritize backlogged infrastructure and facilities requirements within our existing resources to optimize our training.

The Nation's adversaries have studied our vulnerabilities and employed technological advances to exploit them, thereby eroding our longstanding advantages, altering the nature of warfare, and expanding conflict into new domains. The changing battlespace has given rise to new operational missions and generated a need for advanced capabilities.

In his paper, *Accelerate Change or Lose*, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force presented a clear case for the changes needed to ensure we are able to meet the challenges of the security environment. *Accelerate Change or Lose* outlines a path toward ensuring the Total Force is

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ready when called to defend our Nation and its interests. Because we are involved in every core Air Force mission set, nearly every Active Component initiative impacts the Air Force Reserve. To remain relevant contributors to joint operations, we must maintain interoperability as a Total Force. We optimize our operational capability when we maintain parity with our Active Component counterparts. The concurrent fielding, recapitalization, and divestment of airframes, systems, and equipment is essential to the Air Force Reserve's ability to more effectively integrate within the Total Force. Associations between geographically co-located Active and Reserve component units greatly enhances this integration, providing multiple benefits to the Total Force at the best value for the American taxpayer.

Our readiness, operational capabilities, and success as an organization all depend on our Reserve Citizen Airmen. They are both the heart of our organization and its foundation. Our Reservists are incredibly talented. Their diversity and high level of experience multiplies our operational capabilities, and their dedication enables execution of our mission. It is therefore incumbent upon us to develop our Airmen as individuals, technical experts, and leaders, ensuring they have the resources and support they require. We are absolutely committed to providing excellent care to our Citizen Airmen and their families.

The Air Force Reserve is a cost effective force, and will continue its excellent stewardship of American taxpayers' dollars.

### **The Air Force Reserve in the Total Force**

The Air Force Reserve is a predominantly part time force which, when mobilized, provides full time support to the Joint Force. In addition to our daily contributions to global operations, we provide rapid surge capability and strategic depth for national defense. We participate in almost every Active Component mission, operating as part of an integrated Total Force across nearly all Air Force core functional areas and weapon systems.

On average, over 6,000 Reserve Citizen Airmen contribute to world-wide operations every day. Typically, approximately two thirds of those Airmen are volunteers. Our personnel support all combatant commands and are deployed to every geographic area of responsibility. Last year, approximately 5,500 Airmen mobilized or volunteered to support operations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Within 48 hours of a request for forces, we were able to generate airlift to ensure that 120 medics were in place in the New York City metropolitan area. In total, 274 medical personnel were deployed to the northeastern United States in support of the national COVID-19 response, representing the largest unplanned mobilization of Reserve forces since 9/11. Last year, our Reservists provided nearly two million days of support to the Active Component and the Joint Force.

In addition to supporting global military operations, the Air Force Reserve partners with and supports multiple federal and civil organizations and institutions. We routinely participate in humanitarian aid and disaster relief efforts. We also support global scientific research programs in addition to education and technology initiatives. This year, we added new winter weather reconnaissance capabilities to collect data on Atmospheric Rivers on the West Coast, supporting the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in forecasting floods. We also

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flew 164 missions to cover 20 of 30 named storms.

In 2020, the nearly 4,000 Reservists supported 91 service, joint, and multinational exercises, increasing Joint Force integration and strengthening relationships with allies and partner nations. The COVID-19 pandemic increased exercise participation manpower costs, as restriction of movement measures mandated significant personnel isolation before and after exercises. The pandemic also resulted in 53 planned exercises being cancelled. This resulted in nearly 4,000 Reservists missing an opportunity to receive readiness or proficiency training and approximately \$11 million in unobligated Reserve Personnel Appropriations.

Approximately 75 percent of Air Force Reserve members serve part time. In addition to their military training and experience, our part time force brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise from their civilian careers to their military service. This strengthens our capabilities, enables the integration of civil sector best practices, and facilitates beneficial partnerships with industry and other institutions. Many of our members have civilian careers similar to their military jobs, which enables Citizen Airmen to bring scope and depth to their military positions. This is particularly advantageous for emerging and evolving missions, such as cyber and space, into which we actively recruit personnel with civilian experience.

The Air Force Reserve provides the Total Force with a method to retain talent, by providing a continuity of service options for Active Component members who would otherwise separate. The Department of the Air Force understands the importance of retaining experience and talent, and seeks to leverage the value, which the Reserve Component brings to the Total Force. In addition to using Total Force partnerships to place newly trained members in units with highly experienced personnel, the Air Force is currently exploring flexible service options designed to allow members to easily transition between components of the Total Force. The Air Force Reserve fully supports these efforts, which will benefit our Airmen, our readiness, and our national defense.

Total Force Integration is exemplified by associations between geographically co-located Active Component and Reserve units. In this construct, equipment resources are officially assigned only to the lead unit, but are shared between the lead and associate unit. Associations further enhance our interoperability and give the Active Component access to the experience resident in the more seasoned Reserve force. This ensures parity in equipment and training, while providing cost savings and readiness benefits to both components.

Currently, there are 79 associations between the Reserve and the Active Component. Most of these are classic associations, in which the Active Component is the lead organization. Active associations, in which the Reserve is the lead unit, comprise a little more than twelve percent of current associations. The Reserve and the Active Component have associations in nearly every major mission set, and many training units, including every undergraduate pilot training wing, pilot instructor training, and major aircraft formal training units. We are also the lead component for the B-52 and C-5 Formal Training Units.

### **[Implementing the National Defense Strategy](#)**

After nearly two decades of counter-terrorism operations, great power competition has re-

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emerged as the highest priority for national security. The rise of peer and near-peer competitors on the world stage in an age of unprecedented global economic interdependence, combined with the proliferation of swiftly advancing technology, has created a unique and complex environment. *Accelerate Change or Lose* affirms that a rapid shift in military operational focus and capabilities is imperative to remain competitive in this security environment. The United States must be able to combat adversaries across the spectrum of conflict and operate simultaneously in all warfighting domains. The 2018 National Defense Strategy provides the framework to ensure we can compete, deter, and win in tomorrow's battlespace, and we are diligently working to meet that intent.

Our efforts align under those of the Department of the Air Force and support the Total Force's mandate to provide ready forces for national defense. In order to operate seamlessly in a combat environment, we must have the capability to connect with the Joint Force. The Total Force must be capable of conducting robust nuclear and conventional deterrence, homeland defense, and counter-extremism operations. Meeting this mandate in the future operational environment will require the Total Force to dominate space, generate combat power, and conduct logistics under attack. As the Airmen who execute the mission represent the most important element in this and every undertaking, the Department of the Air Force is simultaneously focused on developing and caring for our people and their families.

### **Air Force Reserve Strategic Priorities**

To restore readiness rapidly and prepare for the future fight, the Air Force Reserve established three priorities. The first, **prioritizing strategic depth and accelerating readiness**, focuses on the requirement to prepare for future operational requirements while maintaining present-day readiness. This includes sustaining our present level of support to the Joint Force. The second, **developing resilient leaders**, serves two purposes: to enhance the physical, mental, and emotional fitness of all Reserve Citizen Airmen and to develop mission-focused leaders who can operate independently. Our final priority, **reform the organization**, aims to increase efficiency and effectiveness through internal process improvements and innovation.

The Air Force Reserve strategic priorities were developed based on the challenges outlined in the National Defense Strategy and are aligned with Secretary of Defense, Secretary of the Air Force, and Chief of Staff of the Air Force directives. We made significant gains in 2020, preserving overall readiness, implementing new leadership development programs, and improving our internal operations. We are in the process of expanding and accelerating these efforts to further enhance our mission readiness and our ability to support Air Force Reserve Citizen Airmen and their families.

### **Air Force Reserve Future Force Framework**

Both the Future of Defense Task Force Report 2020 and *Accelerate Change or Lose* acknowledge that our technological advantages are rapidly eroding in a strategic environment that is defined by great power competition. Both of these documents call for change to meet the requirements of the National Defense Strategy. To align Air Force Reserve capabilities and force structure with the National Defense Strategy and to posture our force to execute tomorrow's missions, we developed the Air Force Reserve Future Force Framework. This will enable us to

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deliberately organize, train, and equip our force to best prepare for conflict in highly contested environments. This framework directs mission optimization through assessing capabilities to determine which mission sets are best suited for the Air Force Reserve to align and improve policy, planning and programming efforts. The framework also provides for tailored and prioritized training. This element synchronizes training efforts and capitalizes on technology to optimize unit training assemblies by enabling the completion of ancillary training requirements through virtual methods. Finally, the Air Force Reserve will continue to leverage civilian sector strengths by capitalizing on member expertise and knowledge, cultivating industry partnerships, and tailoring recruitment efforts to develop the force of the future.

### **Infrastructure and Facilities**

Maintaining and modernizing our infrastructure and facilities is critical to readiness, force protection, and ensuring a safe work environment for our Airmen. These efforts are funded through Military Construction (MILCON) appropriations, which provide for new facilities and major infrastructure projects, and with the Facility Sustainment, Repair, and Modernization (FSRM) funds included in our O&M appropriation. FSRM appropriations are used to repair and modernize existing facilities and to extend the service life of existing infrastructure. Through the FY 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act, Congress provided funds for the construction of a new F-35 simulator facility and squadron operations facility at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth, Texas.

### **Generating Combat Power Today and Tomorrow**

The Air Force Reserve provides daily operational support to the Joint Force, while maintaining a strategic force for sustained operations during major conflict. We provide surge capacity and rapid response capabilities, enabling the Joint Force to quickly adapt to operations tempo increases and unforeseen events, such as national disasters and contingencies. We also fill Active Component manning shortfalls and provide augmentation to meet short term manpower requirements.

Our ability to meet current taskings and to supply strategic manpower are predicated on our readiness. As an operational reserve, we must maintain our readiness to support present-day missions while we align our capabilities to meet the intent of the National Defense Strategy and prepare for future requirements. Last year, we focused on preserving the readiness gains of the previous two years, concentrating efforts specifically on mission essential personnel preparing to deploy and entering training pipelines.

The Air Force Reserve must be able to decisively employ both traditional and emerging capabilities. In order to enhance our ability to compete, deter, and win in any environment, we remain focused on key mission sets and are actively expanding our capabilities in the space and cyber realms. As warfighting domains become increasingly integrated, we must be prepared to conduct joint all-domain operations, which will allow us to create decisive, asymmetrical advantages in future conflicts.



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### **Nuclear Deterrence Operations**

Nuclear capability is a foundational element of our national defense, and the Air Force Reserve shares in the nuclear mission. Our Nuclear Deterrence Operations assets include nuclear strike, air refueling, and command, control, and communications capabilities. In FY 2020, we supported one Nuclear Operational Readiness Inspection to assess the readiness of our forces to conduct Nuclear Deterrence Operations. Our nuclear forces remain mission ready.

### **Air Superiority**

In order to defeat a peer or near-peer adversary, we must be able to generate combat power in contested environments. Maintaining parity with the Active Component is essential for assuring the ability to operate in contested environments. Program upgrade delays and limited delivery of replacement aircraft add risk to the ability to sustain air superiority strategic surge capacity in the future.

The Air Force Reserve has Classic Associations in several F-35 units. We execute F-35 combat operations in our association at Hill AFB, Utah. Additional associations execute F-35 formal training at Luke AFB, Arizona and Eglin AFB, Florida, and operational test and weapons instructor course missions at Nellis AFB, Nevada. The Air Force Reserve's first unit-equipped F-35 wing will execute combat operations and be part of an Active Association.

### **Aerial Refueling**

The Air Force Reserve air refueling fleet in FY 2021 consists of seven unit equipped wings and four associate wings. In December 2019, our Unit Equipped wing at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base (AFB), North Carolina, began its KC-46 airframe conversion. Four of the twelve aircraft were delivered in FY 2020 with the remaining eight scheduled for delivery early in FY 2021. Half of the crews have already completed conversion training, along with 85 percent of maintenance personnel. The Classic Associate unit at McConnell AFB, Kansas entered conversion in April 2020 with 50 percent of both operations and maintenance personnel completing conversion training in 2020.

At present, we have eight wings which operate the KC-135, two of which are currently undergoing conversion to the KC-46. Six of these wings are unit-equipped, and three are tasked with an alert mission. We are focused on the readiness of our KC-135 force, with the goals of improving mission capable rates, increasing aircrew and maintenance manpower, and providing better training for our aircrew and maintenance personnel. The first Air Force Reserve aircraft began datalink modification with "Real Time Information in the Cockpit" (RTIC) in early 2021. This modification increases the communications and information capabilities of the aircraft increasing its support capacity in a fast paced contested environment.

The Air Force Reserve has two wings who associate with the Active Component to fly and maintain the KC-10. The Air Force Reserve remains committed to this aircraft and mission as long as it remains a part of the air refueling force. As the inventory is reduced, the Air Force Reserve will work with the Department of the Air Force to convert those units and their manpower to the determined follow-on missions.

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### **Airlift**

The Air Force Reserve enables combat delivery through our strategic and tactical airlift fleets. In order to effectuate the C-5 formal training requirements, the Air Force Reserve requires a ground training device to increase training efficiency and precluded the requirement for a dedicated flyable aircraft for ground training. The C-5 fleet continues to invest in programs to address safety, obsolescence, regulatory compliance, and long term sustainability. The C-130H fleet Aircraft Modification Program Increment 2 (AMP 2) contract award resulted in a savings of \$540 million across FY 2020-2024. The C-17 fleet continues to provide operational and strategic depth to the Global Reach enterprise.

### **Dominating Space**

The establishment of the United States Space Force (USSF) in December 2019 underscored the importance of space to our national security. The Air Force Reserve is a major contributor to space operations. In the last year, our personnel executed up to 30 percent of daily space missions directly supporting United States Space Command taskings. We added 30 space manpower authorizations in FY 2021. In addition, the Air Force Reserve has already taken steps to provide focused support to the USSF for the near term. Our space units are aligned with and will be able to integrate effectively with USSF forces for the foreseeable future.

### **Cyber Defense**

Digital technology permeates nearly every aspect of modern life. This technology is both pervasive and inexpensive, making the cyber domain easily accessible. The increasing integration of cyber capabilities enhances our ability to generate combat power, yet exposes us to new threats. Therefore, the Air Force Reserve is building and expanding our foundational capabilities to conduct operations in the information environment, by evolving our cyber mission portfolio and repurposing our cyber force to better defend against future threats.

We provide support directly to Air Forces Cyber, Sixteenth Air Force, and United States Cyber Command. We are implementing the Cyber Squadron Initiative and are developing Mission Defense Teams with three of ten teams projected to reach Initial Operational Capability declaration during FY 2021. These teams will be located at Air Force Reserve host installations, as well as Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth, Texas where we are the lead Air Force unit.

We are in the process of transitioning our cyber personnel from information technology support to mission assurance and defensive cyber operations. Along with our Active Component counterparts, we are replacing our internal communications network with contractor delivered information services. The shift to Enterprise Information Technology as a service will allow us to leverage modern systems and practices from civilian industry for our internal networking needs, while enabling our personnel to focus on cyber operations and defense.

The Air Force Reserve is continuing to develop and implement new programs to expand accessibility and better utilize data. Our goal is to migrate from stove-piped service information technology systems to cloud based platforms. As part of this effort, we are transitioning to an operating-system agnostic framework. We are extending mobile-based capabilities and



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implementing alternative platforms to enable increased user accessibility. These efforts allow users to connect securely to Air Force networks through virtual desktop applications, enabling access from any device and any location. They also significantly reduce the equipment, software, and maintenance support requirements to maintain infrastructure. Our work in these areas prior to the pandemic allowed for our rapid scaling of telework initiatives. We are working with the Air Force Chief Data Office to create a mature Shared Data Environment, which will serve as a single source for information.

### **Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR)**

The Air Force Reserve ISR enterprise is uniquely designed to provide strategic depth and operational surge capacity in traditional and emerging mission sets. Tailoring mission profiles is necessary to ensure our ISR forces are readily available for mission execution. We will develop capabilities in areas that support the Joint Force while ensuring current mission sets are relevant to multi-domain operations and great power competition. Investments in the operational use of publicly available information, increased presence in battlespace characterization, and support to key capabilities--such as nuclear, space, and cyber operations--are necessary to ensure that we are postured to meet the needs of Joint Forces.

The Air Force Reserve continues to provide approximately 500 experienced pilots, sensor operators and intelligence Airmen to support Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) operations at five associations with our counterparts in Air Combat Command and Air Force Special Operations Command. We will maintain our contribution of both steady state and surge capacity to MQ-9 combat lines, as the Total Force RPA enterprise reorganizes to a leaner and more lethal force.

### **Command and Control (C2)**

The Air Force is preparing for the future fight by fielding new concepts and capabilities which enable Joint All-Domain Command and Control (JADC2), the Department of Defense's top modernization priority, which is critical to executing joint all-domain operations. JADC2 is a system that uses data, machine learning and state-of-the-art software to seamlessly link "sensors to shooters" and create a resilient, adaptable line of communications across all domains – air, land, sea, cyber and space to faster and more accurate enable decision making. The Air Force Reserve's current C2 program will continue to provide strategic depth for the Total Force as the Air Force pursues the development of JADC2.

As part of the Air Force's strategic initiative to strengthen joint leaders and teams, Fifteenth Air Force will now provide the Department of Defense with an air-centric capability to task during crisis operations and be offered as part of the dynamic force employment model to meet the National Defense Strategy for more integrated and multi-domain operations. Our FY 2021 budget allocated 60 Air Force Reserve positions to stand up a classic associate unit for the service-retained, Joint Task Force (JTF)-capable organization at Fifteenth Air Force, JTF Headquarters at Shaw AFB, South Carolina. This classic associate unit is projected to reach Initial Operational Capability during 2021.

### **Manning a Ready Force**

Adequate manpower is vital to readiness. For several years, our overall manpower has hovered

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slightly below end strength targets. During the pandemic, the Active Component experienced high retention rates, which impacts our ability to recruit prior service Airmen. While we do have part time manning shortfalls in some locations and in certain critical career fields, our total assigned part time personnel is near the total authorized. Although there have been improvements in the past year, our full time assigned manning remains below the authorized level.

Our full time personnel continue to preserve our readiness while maintaining a high operational tempo. However, our full time force is overtasked. We place too many requirements on too few Airmen. We owe it to them to reduce some of the burden.

Our full time force is a mix of Air Reserve Technicians (ART) and Active Guard Reserve (AGR). Between 2013 and 2018, our ART manning levels dropped from 80 to 74 percent, largely due to the highly competitive civilian job market. This decrease in positions filled was further exacerbated by the civil service hiring process, which prolonged vacancies and caused us to lose candidates.

Ensuring our full time personnel are fairly compensated for their work is essential to recruiting and retaining talented individuals. Therefore, we implemented several initiatives to fill our full time manpower positions. These efforts are producing results. At the start of FY 2019, our full time manning level was approximately 75 percent. By the end of the first quarter of FY 2021, the number of assigned ARTs increased to 82 percent of authorized.

The increase in our assigned full time manning levels is due, in part, to the conversion of a percentage of our ART billets to AGR authorizations. AGR manpower and retention rates are higher than that of the ART force, with a comparatively faster hiring process. Please also note, younger workforce members often have difficulty demonstrating the qualifications required to be listed on a hiring certification for ART positions. AGR positions, with an effective off ramp strategy, can provide a way to gain sufficient experience to be considered for ART positions at the end of a three year AGR tour. The ART to AGR conversion initiative is a multi-year effort, which began in FY 2018. In FY 2020, we executed 521 conversions, and we are rapidly progressing on our remaining 816 conversions planned for FY 2021.

Our ART manning and overall full time manpower also benefited from Direct Hiring Authority. This authority, which Congress granted, streamlines the civil service hiring process for certain critical career fields, drastically decreasing hiring timelines. Direct Hiring Authority provided particular benefit to our full time maintenance force. This authority allowed us to hire 1,166 ARTs and civilians, increasing full time maintenance manpower to 80 percent. Direct Hiring Authority enabled us to decrease our ART maintainer vacancies to their lowest level in nearly five years.

Extending this authority to pilots has produced similar results. In FY 2020, our full time pilot manpower was nearly 75 percent of authorized. Last year, Direct Hiring Authority was used for 55 percent of pilot hiring, helping us achieve a full time manning level of 97 percent of authorized. Overall, pilot manpower has remained steady over the last year, at above 85 percent. We are exploring new options to increase both full time and part time pilot manning, including updating pay grade determination criteria for ART aircrew members and offering additional civilian recruitment and retention incentives.

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We are grateful to Congress for authorizing Tricare Reserve Select (TRS) for military technicians and other Title 5 civilians who also serve in a Reserve Component. When enacted in 2030, this will serve as a significant retention tool, as it provides Reserve Component members a cost effective option for obtaining premium healthcare for themselves and their families.

In addition, the Air Force Reserve took steps to improve retention in both our full time and part time force. Reducing attrition preserves readiness and provides cost savings by decreasing training requirements. We are presently targeting retention through bonuses and special salary rates, which offer a marked return on investment. A single \$15,000 retention bonus results in a cost avoidance of roughly \$45,000 in training funds and prevents an approximately three year readiness gap, which occurs while a replacement is trained.

While we have experienced a two year positive trend in increasing retention, we are continuing to focus our retention efforts on Airmen with six to ten years total service, which is the group with the highest attrition rate. In addition to expanding existing programs, we are seeking new methods of increasing retention and engaging wing leaders in these efforts. We also reduced barriers to recruiting, including decreasing hiring timelines, eliminating mileage restrictions, and removing unnecessary interview requirements. In FY 2020, our attrition rates were 10.3 percent, below the goal of 10.9 percent. To date, our FY 2021 attrition rates are at 10 percent with a goal of staying below 10.5 percent.

Our full time to part time force mix is based on pre-Gulf War force structure and operational tempo. In order to effectively accomplish our mission, train our force, and maintain readiness, we must increase the percentage of full time manpower in relation to our end strength. Presently, full time uniformed military members constitute approximately 25 percent of Air Force Reserve authorizations. Based on current requirements, we need to continue our efforts to increase this type of full time support which is essential to maintaining readiness.

### **Modernizing and Improving the Air Force Reserve**

Tomorrow's operational environment will notably evolve when compared to how we conduct operations today. The return of great power competition, combined with the rapid advancement and widespread availability of digital technology, drives the need to transform our forces so they can generate combat power effectively to win, despite contested environments established by our potential adversaries. This requires fielding new warfighting concepts and capabilities and modernizing existing platforms to meet future threats.

We implemented multiple readiness initiatives, including bolstering training, removing unnecessary requirements, and instituting internal reforms to streamline our operations and enhance support to our Reserve Citizen Airmen. We are prepared to meet both current and future requirements, and we must carry our present momentum forward into the coming years to further optimize our force.

### **Maintaining Operational Parity with the Active Component**

In order to effectively support the Active Component and connect with the Joint Force, the Air Force Reserve must modernize simultaneously as the Air Force upgrades legacy platforms, adding capabilities required for the future fight. Our operational capabilities are tied to our

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ability to integrate into the Total Force, therefore we must maintain parity with the Active Component whenever possible.

Concurrently fielding new airframes, aircraft upgrades, and other equipment is critical to sustaining and improving this operational parity. The Air Force Reserve can only provide strategic depth and operational support to the Joint Force in mission areas where our personnel are trained on the required weapon systems, and we are most effective when we can operate interchangeably with our Active Component counterparts. Concurrent fielding enables our personnel to train on the same systems employed by the Active Component, facilitating interoperability within the Total Force. This maximizes the Air Force Reserve's ability to support operational missions and enhances our integration with the Active Component, assuring we are capable of providing the Total Force with the warfighting capability necessary to achieve decisive victory against future threats and in all domains.

In addition to concurrent fielding, the Reserve must recapitalize and divest weapon systems in conjunction with the Active Component. This prevents problems which arise when the Reserve Component continues to operate a legacy system that is no longer used by our active counterparts. In this situation, the Reserve becomes responsible for all aspects associated with that particular platform, such as standardization and evaluations and safety. Asynchronous divestment can also lead to significant sustainment cost growth with diminishing vendors for spare parts. Furthermore, once the Active Component divests a weapon system, the Reserve is unable to hire qualified Active Component aircrew separatees for that specific airframe, increasing training costs and reducing readiness.

### **Weapon System Modernization and Sustainment**

While acquiring new platforms such as the F-35, KC-46, B-21, and F-15EX will enhance our capabilities, both the Active Component and the Reserve will continue to rely on many of the proven platforms currently in our inventory. This necessitates aircraft modernization and system upgrades, which will provide the capabilities needed for the future fight and ensure survivability if operating in a contested environment.

Key modernizations are required to keep our legacy fleet relevant in the prioritized missions outlined in the NDS. Necessary A-10 enhancements include the installation of upgraded mission computers, Helmet-Mounted Targeting, Anti-Jam Global Positioning System equipment, and missile warning systems which will provide enhanced threat awareness and weapons delivery capabilities in contested environments. The A-10 is also undergoing critical flight safety upgrades like wing replacements, which will avert a predicted grounding of 35 aircraft in FY 2023. Our B-52 fleet requires upgrades to radar and defensive systems and the install of advanced data link equipment, and is in the process of integrating Advanced Extremely High Frequency communications capability. The fleet also requires engine replacements to sustain itself through 2050. Our F-16s require active electronically scanned array (AESA) radars to more effectively support homeland defense and other priority NDS missions.

After decades of operating in a permissive environment, we must be prepared to conduct logistics under attack. The C-5 and C-17 are both vulnerable to radar guided missile threats which would be mitigated by the installation of a layered defense and awareness suite. Currently,

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the Radar Warning System upgrades for both aircraft are unfunded. We are presently installing the Mobility Air Forces datalink system in our C-5 fleet and to equip our KC-135 aircraft with the Real-Time in Cockpit situational awareness system. Our KC-135 fleet is also scheduled to continue Large Aircraft Infrared Countermeasures modifications during programmed depot maintenance. The installation of additional threat awareness and self-defense systems will provide further protection for this aircraft.

In addition to modernization, many of our airframes require upgrades, repairs, and component replacements in order to maintain airworthiness and extend service life. These weapon system sustainment actions are critical to both our mission capability and aircraft availability rates. Maintaining a mission capable aircraft fleet is essential to meeting operational taskings and training our personnel. The lack of weapon system sustainment funding can ground aircraft, hampering our ability to support global operations and degrading our readiness, therefore, the Air Force Reserve will continue to prioritize these efforts within its appropriated funding levels.

Years of continuing resolutions, lack of flexible funding, and an aging fleet have increased weapon system sustainment requirements. Historically, due to competing higher priority requirements, the Air Force Reserve has had approximately 75 percent of our share of these requirements funded. We obligated over \$445 million for weapon system sustainment in FY 2020. Our FY 2021 appropriations are approximately \$743 million, of which we are on track to fully obligate, with 88.9 percent funded to requirements 27 percent already obligated.

Our current sustainment requirements include measures to extend the B-52's service life by an additional thirty years and to replace this platform's engines with new, more fuel-efficient ones. Our A-10 fleet requires wing replacements and our C-130H aircraft need avionics and propulsion upgrades, which we will prioritize when and as needed.

### **Internal Improvements**

Reforming our organization through internal improvements and increasing our operational efficiency continues to be one of our major focus areas. Our intent is to increase our overall readiness and enhance our ability to support our Reserve Citizen Airmen by streamlining our internal processes and eliminating requirements, policies, and programs which either detract from or do not contribute to our readiness or provide support to our personnel.

In FY 2020, we continued to fill full time healthcare provider vacancies by leveraging ART to AGR conversions. This enabled a 32 percent improvement in processing fitness for duty case completion. The significant process reforms from FY 2019 yielded a 14 percent increase in quality and reduced medical downtime for Reserve Citizen Airmen awaiting a return to duty determination. We were also able to capitalize on the Shared Data Environment to make Individual Medical Readiness reporting more visible to senior leadership. An increased use of Individual Medical Readiness services under the Reserve Health Readiness Program enabled completion of Separation History and Physical Exams to increase from 9 percent to 42 percent.

We are currently accelerating and expanding our internal reform efforts. We identified additional areas within our organization that require enhancement and are working to improve the most

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critical of these. One of several of these initiatives is the holistic reform of our manpower and personnel programs and processes. We are also identifying processes which create problems for our Airmen, such as pay and benefits issues.

As part of this enterprise-wide initiative, the Air Force Reserve's Force Generation Center is presently improving our mobilization and deployment processes through process and system upgrades. In FY 2020, the Force Generation Center ran a proof of concept test for a Deployment Orders Cell (DOC). The initial test supported 8 units and 595 Airmen. Centralizing this process cut the average orders processing time from 59 days down to 7 days for the Airmen in the test group. This will expedite orders approval, enabling Airmen to receive benefits earlier in the process and reducing gaps in support. These improvements will alleviate problems caused by our current lengthy process, helping our personnel, their family members, and their civilian employers better plan and prepare for deployments.

In addition to our own internal efforts, we participate in Department of the Air Force development and reform initiatives, including the Air Force War Fighting Integration Capability team. We also support and will benefit from the Department of the Air Force's ongoing predictive maintenance efforts and are working to acquire additive manufacturing capability. To date, five Air Force Reserve wings have purchased equipment required to manufacture items in house, which are currently being used for training and familiarization. Personnel at Pittsburgh Air Reserve Base, Pennsylvania and Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi have completed initial online training but due to the pandemic they have not been able to complete the necessary in person training to manufacture aircraft parts. These two initiatives will decrease aircraft repair time, ultimately improving mission capable and aircraft availability rates.

### **Exercise Planning**

Operating in contested airspace requires both modernized aircraft and trained aircrew. We must ensure all Reserve Citizen Airmen receive realistic training and are fully capable of employing the systems which will be required in the future operating environment. One of the ways in which we are ensuring our ability to operate in a future threat environment is the Deliberate Planning Exercises (DPEX) program. DPEX shifts from an ad hoc method of scheduling exercises to a centrally planned, readiness driven, comprehensive exercise program that deliberately schedules personnel for exercises to boost unit capability toward specific mission essential tasks.

### **Providing Excellent Care to Airmen and Families**

Our Airmen are our greatest asset. They are ultimately responsible for maintaining our readiness, aligning our organization to meet future requirements, and executing our operational missions. Their success depends on our support. The Air Force Reserve is absolutely committed to providing excellent care to both our Airmen and their families. This mandates a holistic approach, and we continually seek ways to better support our personnel and enable their personal and professional success. We currently have numerous personnel support initiatives, including reducing the administrative burden on our Airmen, improving education and training, growing our resiliency programs, and providing our Airmen and their families with access to needed resources. Our ultimate goals are to improve the quality of life for our personnel and to foster an



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environment where people want to stay and serve.

### **Diversity and Inclusion**

Diverse, resilient, and ready Citizen Airmen are the bedrock of the Air Force Reserve's readiness and lethality. The Air Force Reserve continues to fully operationalize Diversity and Inclusion to leverage its remarkably diverse citizenry for decisive, lethal advantage.

As an organization, we are committed to ensuring an environment in which every person is valued and is able to reach their fullest potential. To that end, we have realigned our organization to ensure that the Chief Diversity Officer is a director-level position on the major command staff. We have also ensured that at each wing the vice commander is the Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager and provided training on a quarterly basis for these duties.

The Air Force Reserve is in the process of conducting an internal racial disparity review as a compliment to the Department of the Air Force's ongoing racial disparity review. This review is focused on processes unique to the Air Force Reserve that may contribute to racial disparity in the areas of discipline and career development. The review is being conducted in three phases. The first phase identified processes with the potential for racial disparity. The second phase, which is underway, consists of conducting a thorough analysis of these processes for disparity and making policy recommendations. The final phase will be continuous review and sustainment.

### **Suicide Prevention**

Over the last two calendar years, the Air Force Reserve has experienced an increase in member suicides. Our rates are not going in the desired direction. Losing even one Airman to suicide is a horrible tragedy, with every life having its own deeply personal story.

In response to this heartbreaking trend, we expanded upon our existing support programs and are adding new leadership tools to assist with suicide prevention and intervention. Suicide is a complex interaction of factors; while there is no one "fix," we are committed to addressing suicide comprehensively. The Air Force Reserve Suicide Prevention Program is a comprehensive, evidence-based, multidisciplinary program that is dedicated to a leadership driven and safety oriented culture. Its focus areas are building connections, detecting risk, promoting protective environments and equipping Airmen and their families.

Although the Air Force has found no direct link between deployments and member suicide, all personnel receive mental health screenings before, during, and after deployment and as part of their annual health assessment. These screenings assess suicide risk along with other behavioral and mental health issues. We conduct Suicide Analysis Boards, modeled after safety investigation boards, to identify the causes and contributing factors behind member suicides.

Our intent is to create protective policies and programs which will reverse this trend and bring our suicide rate to the only acceptable number: zero.

### **Personal Resiliency**

The personal wellness of our Airmen and their families is incredibly important. The Air Force

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Reserve has multiple on base entities which provide support and resources to our personnel. We employ dedicated Sexual Assault Response Coordinators in all wings and Violence Prevention Integrators on all nine Air Force Reserve host installations and at Fort Worth Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base, where we are the lead Air Force wing. In FY 2019, we began building out embedded Religious Support Teams at our host installations with Religious Affairs Airmen. In FY 2021, we are completing this process by filling 10 Chaplain positions.

In addition, the Air Force Reserve promotes and provides mental health resources as part of the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program. This initiative supports Reservists and their family members through pre-and post-deployment events. This program has seen an overwhelming success, with over 97 percent of attendees finding the events beneficial. Over the past year, the program cancelled 14 planned in person events, due to the pandemic, shifting to a virtual delivery model. These virtual events primarily focused on pre-deployers. In 2020, the program supported 902 members and 1561 family members., For the remaining Reservists and their family members who were unable to attend in person events, these members will be eligible for in-person post-deployment events once resuming these events is safe.

### **Childcare Benefits**

The Air Force Reserve has worked to ensure that childcare is available on Unit Training Assembly weekends at no cost to parents through the Home Community Care (HCC) program. Airmen who do not have another adult for childcare due to being a single parent or a dual military couple are eligible for the program. The HCC program mitigates host locations without Child Development Centers and a lack of availability of Active Component facilities on weekends. Currently, the HCC is available or in progress at 41 Air Force Reserve locations, working to recruit providers by zip code.

### **Summary**

We will continue our diligent efforts to meet the intent of the National Defense Strategy, increase our interoperability within the Total Force, and further our integration within the Joint Force while ensuring that we remain a cost effective force that provides strategic depth to the Nation.

Our recent readiness gains would not have been possible without your support. The approval of our FY 2020 and 2021 budget requests enabled us to improve our readiness while maintaining robust support to global operations. Funding from the CARES Act allowed us to rapidly scale telework capabilities to protect our people. Recent legislative actions, such as Direct Hiring Authority, removed barriers to success and improved the quality of life for our Citizen Airmen. The future operational environment will require a capable, modern, and combat-ready force. With your continued support, we are confident the Air Force Reserve will remain prepared to fly, fight, and win, delivering airpower anytime, anywhere.