

Chapter 10 – Reserve Affiliation

When you leave active duty service you have the opportunity to earn cash bonuses and retain many of your military benefits by joining the Selected Reserve or National Guard. The following section will explain your opportunities and possible obligations in the Reserve.

A. Obligation to Service Continues for Eight Years

When you entered the service, you incurred a military service obligation of eight years. If you are separating prior to fulfilling eight years of service, then some of that obligation probably remains even though you are returning to civilian life. You *must* satisfy that obligation by becoming a member of the Ready Reserve in one of the following categories:

- **Selected Reserve:** You may voluntarily affiliate with the Selected Reserve, either with a National Guard or Reserve unit, or a Reserve individual program.
- **Inactive National Guard:** If you served in the Army, you may become a member of the Army National Guard and request transfer to the Inactive National Guard if unable to participate in regular unit training.
- **Individual Ready Reserve (IRR):** If you do *not* affiliate with one of the above programs, your service will automatically or involuntarily assign you to the Individual Ready Reserve.

B. Opportunity for Continued Military Service Beyond Eight Years

If you *have* served eight years or more of active duty, you may no longer have a military service obligation and do not have to affiliate with the National Guard or Reserves. You may however, elect to continue your military service by affiliating with a Reserve component in one of these categories.

Before you depart, explore your Reserve options in the geographic area in which you plan to live after separation.

Selected Reserve

You may volunteer to sign an agreement to serve for between one and eight years in a National Guard or Reserve unit, or a Reserve individual program. Upon becoming a member, you may be recalled to active duty in time of war or national emergency. You may also be ordered to active duty involuntarily for up to 270 days, for any single contingency operation, without a declaration of a national emergency.

Members participate and train as required by the Reserve category to which they belong. For National Guard and Reserve unit programs, this usually means a minimum of one weekend a month and two weeks of annual training per year. For Reserve individual programs, the training requirement may be somewhat less.

Inactive National Guard

Currently, only the Army maintains an Inactive National Guard. This consists of National Guard personnel in an inactive status; they are attached to a specific National Guard unit but do not participate in training. As a member of the Inactive National Guard, you would be recalled to active duty with your unit. To remain a member, you must muster once a year with your assigned unit.

Individual Ready Reserve

The Individual Ready Reserve consists mainly of individuals who have had training and who have served previously in the active component. Other IRR members come from the Selected Reserve and have some of their military service obligation remaining. As an IRR member, you may be involuntarily recalled upon declaration of a national emergency. Otherwise, participation requirements may include an annual day of muster duty to satisfy statutory screening requirements. IRR members may participate in voluntary temporary tours of active duty and military professional development education programs.

C. Benefits of Joining a Selected Reserve Unit

You have gained many valuable and unique job skills through formal and on-the-job training while in the service. You should consider using these skills in the National Guard or Reserves. The benefits of joining the Selected Reserve include the following:

- Extra pay
- Opportunity for promotion
- Full-time employment opportunity
- Military retirement opportunity
- TRICARE Reserve Select
- Exchange and commissary privileges
- Morale, welfare, and recreation programs
- Education assistance
- Officer and Non-Commissioned Officer clubs
- Travel (on a space-available basis)
- Servicemen's Group Life Insurance
- Reserve Component Survivors Benefits Plan
- Legal assistance
- Family Centers
- Opportunities for contacts in the civilian community
- Continuation of military ties
- Reserve Component Dental Plan

Priority Placement

Priority placement in a Selected Reserve unit is authorized for "Eligible Involuntary" separatees who apply within one year after their separation. Your installation's retention or personnel office can assist you. If you have already separated, contact the Reserve or National Guard recruiter listed in your local telephone directory.

D. Standby Reserve

If you have not completed your eight-year military service obligation, you will be transferred to a Reserve component in either the Ready Reserve (Selected Reserve, Individual Ready Reserve, or Inactive National Guard), discussed above, or possibly in the Standby Reserve, under certain conditions.

You may be placed in the Standby Reserve if you still have time remaining to complete your military service obligation and are either:

- a) filling a "key" position in a civilian occupation, or
- b) have a temporary hardship or disability.

Members of the Standby Reserve have no participation or training requirements, but, in the event of a national emergency, may be involuntarily recalled to active duty. As the term “standby” implies, these reservists will only be mobilized once it has been determined that there are insufficient numbers of qualified members in the Ready Reserve to do the job. There are no other participation or training requirements.

Contact the Reserve Component Transition Office at your installation to see if you qualify for assignment to the Standby Reserve. If you cannot locate this office, contact your installation’s personnel office for assistance.

E. Where to Sign Up for the Reserves

If you are interested in joining the National Guard or Reserves, keep in mind that there are a limited number of positions available. The sooner you review your options, the better your chances of finding a good position by the time you separate.

While you are in the military: Contact your installation’s Reserve Component Transition Office. The staff will provide you with information about your obligations and benefit. In most cases, they will put you in touch with an active duty recruiter. You can access information about opportunities in the Reserve and National Guard online at the websites listed below.

Once you are out: Contact the nearest Reserve or National Guard unit listed in your local telephone directory. Any recruiting office will be happy to refer you to the appropriate recruiter.

Other resources: Many overseas and stateside installations have National Guard and Reserve recruiters located on their facilities.

Reserve Websites:

- U.S. Air National Guard:** <http://www.goang.com>
- U.S. Air Force Reserves:** <http://www.afreserve.com>
- U.S. Army National Guard:** <http://www.1800goguard.com>
- U.S. Army Reserves:** <http://www.army.mil/usar>
<http://www.goarmyreserve.com>
- U.S Coast Guard Reserves:** <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/reserve/reshmpg.html>
- U.S. Marine Corps:** <http://www.marforres.usmc.mil>
<http://www.mfr.usmc.mil>
- U.S. Navy Reserve:** <http://www.navyreserve.com>