

From the IRR or Retirement to Active Duty

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Military personnel are classified as either “Active Duty” (regular or reserve) or “Inactive Duty” (Individual Ready Reserve or retired). The U.S. Army recently called up 5,674 members of the Individual Ready Reserve, with some nonactive-duty military service obligation remaining, for mostly combat support roles. The U.S. Military currently has over 200,000 (111,000 Army soldiers and 64,000 Navy sailors) members serving in the Individual Ready Reserve. This article focuses upon the ability of the U.S. Military to mobilize a member classified as on “Inactive Duty”.

Inactive Duty

A member of the “Individual Ready Reserve” (IRR) is defined as a pretrained individual, with prior service on active duty or the selected reserve, and some period of a military obligation remaining on their contract. Members of the IRR do not perform regularly scheduled training, and voluntarily serve in the nonpay program to earn retirement points and military benefits. The IRR consists of personnel who either drill in the Voluntary Training Unit (VTU) or do not drill at all.

A “Retired” service member is defined as all officers and enlisted personnel who receive retired pay on the basis of active duty and/or reserve service to our country. A “Retired Reservist” includes all Reserve officers and enlisted personnel who receive retired pay, are otherwise eligible for retired pay but have not reached age 60, or have not elected discharge and are not voluntary members of the Ready or Standby Reserve. Retired Reserve Officers and Retired Enlisted Reservists with 20 or more years satisfactory service are liable for recall only after all Ready Reserve and Standby Reserve resources have been exhausted.

Retired enlisted members with more than 20 years but less than 30 years of active duty service have dual status as a retired regular active duty member and a member of the Retired Reserve. After completion of 30 years of total service the member assumes Retired Regular status.

Mobilization Authority

Title 10 U.S.C. 12301(a): In time of war or national emergency declared by Congress, the entire membership of all reserve components or any lesser number can be called to active duty for the duration of the war or national emergency plus 6 months.

Title 10 U.S.C. 12301(b): At any time service secretary can order any reservist to active duty for up to 15 days each year. The DOD's Office of General Counsel has interpreted this authority to include use for operational missions or annual active duty for training. The legal opinion noted that this authority could not be used if a member had already completed 15 days of annual training for the calendar year.

Title 10 U.S.C. 12301(c): Members of units organized and trained to serve, as units who are ordered to active duty will be so ordered with their units. Such units should remain intact, as practicable, although elements may be detached from the main body as operational requirements dictate.

Title 10 U.S.C. 12301(d): Provides for the call-up of reservists who volunteer for active duty. The number of volunteer reservists and their length of time on active duty depend upon the availability of funds and the end-strength authorizations for the active force.

Title 10 U.S.C. 12302: In time of national emergency declared by the President, up to one million members of the Ready Reserve can be called to active duty for not more than 24 consecutive months.

Title 10 U.S.C. 12304: When the President determines that it is necessary to augment the active forces for any operational mission, up to 200,000 members of the Selected Reserve can be called to active duty for not more than 270 days. This is known as Presidential Selected Reserve Call-Up (PSRC) authority. This authority cannot be used to access reservists for domestic emergencies.

Title 10 U.S.C. 688: A service secretary may involuntarily call up retired service members who have completed at least 20 years active duty (Regular or Reserve) at any time. The criteria are that there are insufficient qualified Reservists in an active status. This includes all personnel who are otherwise eligible for retired pay but are not yet age 60, have not elected discharge, and are not voluntary members of the Ready or Standby Reserve.

Types of Mobilization:

Reservists may be involuntarily ordered to active duty under the following contingencies:

Selective Mobilization. Expansion of the active Armed Forces by Congress or the President to mobilize reserve component units, Individual Ready Reservists, and the resources needed for their support to meet the requirements of a domestic emergency that is not the result of an enemy attack.

Presidential Selected Reserve Call-Up (PSRC). A Presidential expansion of the active forces for any operational mission by recall of up to 200,000 Selected Reservists. This recall may be for periods of up to 270 days and does not require a declaration of emergency.

Partial Mobilization. Congressional (up to full mobilization) or Presidential (not more than 1,000,000) expansion of the active Armed Forces to meet the requirements of a war or other national emergency involving an external threat to the national security.

Full Mobilization. Congressional and Presidential expansion of the active Armed Forces by mobilization of all reserve component units, individual Reservists (including all Ready

and Standby Reservists), Fleet Reservists, retired military personnel, and the resources needed for their support to meet the requirements of a war or other national emergency involving an external threat to the national security.

Total Mobilization. Congressional and Presidential expansion of the active Armed Forces to organize and/or generate additional units or personnel, beyond the existing force structure, and the resources needed for their support to meet the total requirements of a war or other national emergency involving an external threat to the national security.

Activation and Mobilization

Upon mobilization a selected reservist will report, within 24 hours of notification unless a different reporting time is specified, to their Reserve Center for processing. Members of the IRR, serving in a VTU, must report to their Reserve Center for activation processing within 5 to 15 days of notification unless a different reporting time is specified in the recall notification. After the date of an alert or notice of reserve mobilization, applications from members who are voluntarily serving under a Ready Reserve Agreement for transfer or discharge from the Ready Reserve will not be approved unless required by law or for reasons of extreme personal or community hardship.

Military retirees will be categorized under the following criteria: (i) age; (ii) length of time after retirement; and (iii) whether or not an individual has a disability. Category I retirees are those within their first five years of retirement, under age 60, and not disabled. Category II consists of those who have been retired more than five years, under age 60, and not disabled. Category III includes all others, including those who are disabled. All Category I and II retirees are considered for preassignment to mobilization positions and as mobilization assets. Category III retirees with selected skills are classified as mobilization assets on a case-by-case basis. Category I, II and then III retirees may be mobilized as needed. Mobilized retirees will be used primarily to staff contiguous United States (CONUS) installations, permitting reassignment of a substantial number of active duty personnel to fleet and operational billets.

Conclusion

Being a member of the IRR or Retired Reserve will not preclude you from being considered a mobilization asset when needed to defend our country. During the Gulf War, more than 20,000 IRR soldiers were mobilized and deployed. Also, after Sept. 11, 2001, the Army called up more than 2,500 IRR soldiers (a minority were involuntary call-ups). Prior military training and experience is an asset that may be needed when the role of the military is over burdened by worldwide conflicts.