



Highlights of [GAO-05-660](#), a report to Congressional Committees

RESERVE FORCES

An Integrated Plan Is Needed to Address Army Reserve Personnel and Equipment Shortages

Why GAO Did This Study

The Department of Defense (DOD) cannot meet its global commitments without continued reserve participation. The Army Reserve provides critical combat support and combat service support units, such as medical and transportation units, to the Army. While Army Reserve members historically could expect to train one weekend a month and 2 weeks a year with activations for limited deployments, since September 11 some have been called upon to support ongoing military operations for a year or more.

GAO (1) identified the challenges the Army Reserve faces in continuing to support overseas operations and (2) assessed the extent to which the Army and Army Reserve have taken steps to improve the Army Reserve's readiness for future missions.

What GAO Recommends

GAO makes two recommendations to enhance planning and implementation of Army and Army Reserve initiatives related to readiness and predictability of deployments, including identifying funding to implement them. DOD agreed with the recommendations.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?-GAO-05-660.

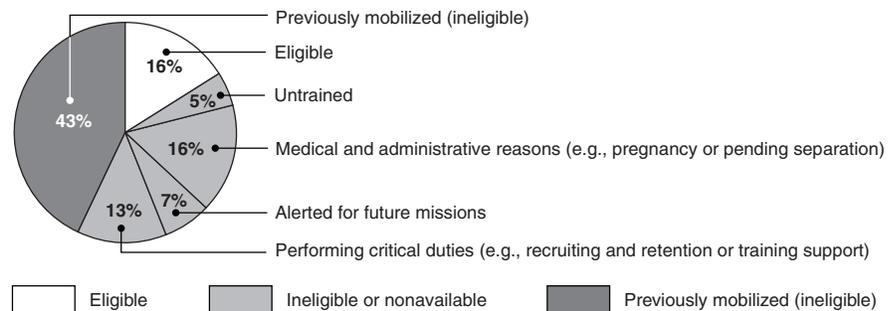
To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Janet A. St. Laurent, (202)512-4402, or stlaurentj@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

While the Army Reserve has provided ready forces to support military operations since September 11, 2001, GAO found that it is becoming increasingly difficult for the Army Reserve to continue to provide these forces due to personnel and equipment shortages. The three primary causes of these shortages are (1) the practice of not maintaining Army Reserve units with all of the personnel and equipment they need to deploy, (2) current DOD and Army personnel policies that limit the number of reservists and length of time reservists may be deployed, and (3) a shortage of full-time support staff to develop and maintain unit readiness. These challenges are compounded by emerging recruiting shortfalls.

The Army and Army Reserve have recently begun several initiatives to improve the Army Reserve's readiness and provide more deployment predictability for its soldiers; however, the Army lacks a comprehensive management strategy for integrating the initiatives to ensure that each initiative most efficiently contributes to the achievement of its overall readiness and predictability goals. One of the Army Reserve's major initiatives has been to develop a rotational force model. However, the model cannot be fully implemented until the Army determines the types and number of Army Reserve units it will need to carry out its plans to restructure into a more modular and flexible force. Because the Army has not defined what personnel, units, and equipment the Army Reserve will need under the new modular and rotational models, it cannot be assured that its initiatives are most efficiently working together to meet readiness goals and that funding is appropriately targeted to meet those goals. Until plans that integrate the initiatives are completed and approved and adequate resources are provided to implement them, the Secretary of Defense and the Congress will continue to lack assurance that DOD has an effective and efficient plan for resolving the Army Reserve's growing challenges.

Army Reserve Personnel Still Eligible for Overseas Deployment, Ineligible to Deploy Again under Personnel Policies, and Ineligible/Not Available to Deploy for Other Reasons as of March 28, 2005



Source: GAO analysis of Army Reserve data.

Note: Based on 196,219 soldiers in the Selected Reserve.