



House of Commons
Committee of Public Accounts

Reserve Forces

**Thirty-sixth Report of Session
2006–07**

*Report, together with formal minutes, oral and
written evidence*

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The Committee of Public Accounts

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Angela Browning MP (*Conservative, Tiverton & Honiton*)
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Publication

The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including press notices) are on the Internet at <http://www.parliament.uk/pac>. A list of Reports of the Committee in the present Session is at the back of this volume.

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Summary

The Reserve Forces have become an integral part of the United Kingdom's defence capability. Reserve Forces comprise approximately 36,000 Volunteer Reserves, the largest element being the Territorial Army, and some 52,000 Regular Reserves (former Regular service personnel who retain a liability to be called up). The Department has used Reserves at unprecedented levels in the last ten years with the Reserve Forces making an increasingly important contribution to Defence as the Regular Forces have become more stretched. It has also successfully changed the culture of the Volunteer Reserve Forces to one where Reservists now expect and want to serve on operations. Over 12,000 Reservists, most of them from the Volunteer Reserves, have served in Iraq since operations commenced in early 2003.

All of the Volunteer Reserve Forces are below strength and numbers have been falling, although there have been signs that numbers may be stabilising. Compared with Regular Armed Forces personnel, Reservists generally have a more limited breadth of experience and may also be less physically fit. The performance of Reservists on operations is enhanced when they are trained, mobilised and integrated properly with the unit with which they will serve. However, many Reservists do not have the opportunity to train alongside their Regular counterparts before they are mobilised. The Department has had difficulty in providing training for Reservists due to problems in scheduling, resource constraints and the lower priority they are given. The Department has made improvements to the support it gives to Reservists and their families, especially when they are mobilised, and to those suffering mental health problems. But further provisions need to be made, particularly for those Reservists who have been physically injured. Overall, whilst the Department is heavily reliant on its Reserve Forces to conduct operations, they are not being treated with sufficient priority with respect to their training and support. Significant parts of the Reserve Forces are being restructured and undergoing other changes but the Department is making decisions on these changes in the absence of reliable management information about the cost and capability of Reserve Forces.

On the basis of a Report from the Comptroller and Auditor General,¹ we took evidence from the Department on four main issues: deploying Reserves; providing support and healthcare to Reserves; maintaining capable Reserve Forces and planning for the future use of Reserves.

1 C&AG's Report, *Ministry of Defence: Reserve Forces*, HC (2005–06) 964

Conclusions and Recommendations

- 1. All of the Volunteer Reserve Forces face significant shortfalls in manpower from some 16% in the Territorial Army to some 36% in the Royal Auxiliary Air Force.** Recruitment and retention could be improved by increasing the numbers of former Regular Armed Forces' personnel recruited into the Volunteer Reserves (for example through targeted mailshots) and by improving the quality of training and support available for Reservists.
- 2. People have been joining the Territorial Army despite failing basic fitness tests.** The Department is piloting a new system to rectify this situation but does not expect the trial to finish until November 2007. The Department should find an interim measure for enforcing the minimum standard of entry for physical fitness. In addition, it should look more creatively at options to help potential recruits meet the standards required, for example, by introducing a fixed-term probation period prior to full membership allowing applicants time to reach the necessary levels of fitness and negotiating reduced-rate gym membership.
- 3. The Department does not know if, on operations, Reservists are more likely than Regulars to experience fitness problems which require evacuation back to the United Kingdom.** Some commanders in the field in Iraq noted that a number of deployed Reservists were not as fit as they needed to be. The Department should collate and examine statistics on numbers of Reservists evacuated from theatre, and analyse the views of commanders in the field as expressed in post-operational reports. It should use this information to assess whether Reservist levels of fitness are meeting the demands of active service.
- 4. On routine training and on pre-deployment training, Reservists are not being given the opportunity to train alongside Regulars, nor with the equipment they will use on operations.** The Department should use the capacity in the training system more efficiently, making training facilities and equipment available for use by Reserves when not being used by Regulars and by training Regulars and Reserves together. The Department should also build joint pre-deployment training with the Regulars into the mobilisation of all Reservists.
- 5. The Royal Naval Reservists rarely go to sea, as the Reserve is increasingly confined to force protection duties.** A limited and unrepresentative range of duties does little to prepare Reservists for integrating with the regular naval forces if needed, or to promote high morale and the retention of high calibre recruits. The Department should widen the range of tasks available to naval Reservists so as to be more representative of the Royal Navy's work, including training and operational experience at sea.
- 6. A number of Reservists have valuable civilian skills which are not systematically utilised at present.** The Department should complete its database of any civilian skills which Reservists would be willing to use on operations and use it to secure maximum value from the resources which the Reserves provide.

7. **Reservist personnel have not been receiving prioritised medical treatment for either physical injury sustained on operations or for mental health problems which develop post-mobilisation.** Delays in treatment result in additional costs for the Department since injured Reservists continue to be paid their military salary, and may adversely impact on the morale of Reservists and the support given by their employers. In November 2006, the Department introduced the new Reserves Mental Health Programme to treat mental health problems affecting Reservists post-mobilisation. In addition, the Department should speed up the diagnosis and treatment of physical injuries sustained on operations. It should coordinate resources with the National Health Service so that cases can be referred directly to the appropriate specialists.
8. **The welfare support most used by Reservists and their families is provided by their Reserve unit, but not all units have dedicated welfare resources.** The Department is providing resources for some additional officers and should target Reservists deployed on their own or in small numbers, families who live a long way from the unit and, in the case of the Regular Reserve, those who no longer have a clear link to any unit. The Department should encourage units to build relationships with families over time, not just once Reservists have been called up, and assist families to form their own support networks.
9. **The Department has made some major decisions about the future of the Reserve Forces, yet does not know what they cost.** The Department should prepare management accounts which should show the full and marginal costs of the Reserves to inform decisions on deployment and on developments such as the new remuneration package.
10. **The Department monitors and collects information on areas of diversity such as race and gender, but not on the socio-economic or educational background of its Reserve personnel whether on recruitment or promotion.** Without such information the Department cannot be sure that its Reserve Forces are “drawn from the breadth of society that it defends”. The Department should collect information on the socio-economic and educational background of recruits and of those who are promoted, and use it to help draw on the best available talent from across the population.

1 Deploying Reserves

1. The number of Armed Forces personnel deployed on operations in Iraq and the Gulf region (Operation TELIC) has been significant. During the initial warfighting phase, Reservists contributed some 12% of total United Kingdom forces. Approximately 50% of medics in field hospitals on Operation TELIC have been provided by the Territorial Army.² As **Figure 1** shows, Reservists continue to be deployed on all of the major operations in which the United Kingdom Armed Forces are involved.

2. The Department acknowledges that it is better if Reservists can train with the Regular units with which they will be deployed but not all Reservists get this opportunity.³ The Department stated that there are a number of practical difficulties in arranging integrated training. For instance, the date that Regular Units in theatre are rotated may not match the date when Reservists are called up.⁴ Reservists will often deploy as individuals or in small numbers and not as part of a formed Regular or Reserve unit. So as well as reducing the Reservist's opportunity to prepare for deployment, the lack of integration training can result in those Regulars commanding Reservists on operations not understanding that Reservists provide a narrower range of skills than Regulars.⁵

Figure 1: Numbers of Reservists deployed on operations by Service and Theatre as at 30 April 2006

	Operation TELIC	Afghanistan	Sierra Leone	Balkans	Total
Army	452	104	2	64	622
Royal Air Force	24	9	0	2	35
Royal Navy	0	3	0	0	3
Royal Marines	1	0	0	0	1
Total	477	116	2	66	661

Source: Ministry of Defence.

Note: Figures include both Volunteer and Regular Reserves but exclude Reservists undergoing pre-deployment training, post-operational leave, medical cases and Reservists serving in the United Kingdom.

3. As to whether Reservists are mentally and physically fit before they are deployed, the Department confirmed that during the mobilisation process Reservists have to pass a series of stringent tests, including physical fitness tests, in order to go on operations. Nevertheless, the Department has acknowledged that recruits have been allowed to join the Reserves even when they had failed to pass minimum physical fitness tests.⁶ Some

2 C&AG's Report, para 1.6

3 C&AG's Report, para 15

4 Q 9

5 Q 42

6 Q 62

commanders in the field have concluded that pre-deployment assessments were not rigorous enough because a number of Reservists on operations were not as prepared as they needed to be and some had been evacuated to the United Kingdom.⁷ The Department believes that pre-deployment testing is more effective than it was, and that the standards at which Reserves go out to theatre, laid down by each Service, are appropriate for the tasks that they are being expected to do.⁸

4. The Department does not know if Reservists are more likely than Regulars to experience fitness problems on operations which require evacuation back to the United Kingdom.⁹ With the reports from commanders in the field, these evacuation statistics would provide an essential piece of management information in assessing fitness standards. The Department has provided statistics on the numbers of deaths and injuries on operations through military action and non-military accidents amongst Reserves compared with Regulars and these are shown in **Figure 2**. The Department believes that it would be difficult to adjust the data to take account of factors such as different levels of experience, length of deployment and types of deployment undertaken.¹⁰ Most of the casualties have been Regular personnel, however, and the evidence suggests that Reservists are no more likely to be killed or injured on operations.

Figure 2: Deaths and Injuries on Operations

Deaths

Theatre	Category	Number of Deaths			Reservists as a percentage of all deaths
		Regulars	Reservists	All	
Afghanistan (1 January 2001 to 6 February 2007)	Died on operations	45	1	46	2
	of which: combat related	24	1	25	4
	accident related	18	-	18	-
	other	3	-	3	-
Iraq (18 January 2003 to 6 February 2007)	Died on operations	125	5	130	4
	of which: combat related	98	2	100	2
	accident related	21	1	22	5
	other	6	2	8	25

Injuries

Theatre	Category	Number of Injured			Reservists as a percentage of all injuries
		Regulars	Reservists	All	
Iraq and Afghanistan (1 January 2006 to 31 December 2006)	Injured on operations	264	14	278	5
	of which: Military Action	171	6	177	3
	Accident	93	8	101	8

Source: Ministry of Defence

Notes:

- Deaths on operations not related to combat have been split into deaths due to accidents and other. Deaths due to accidents include those deaths not assigned a cause pending the outcome of an investigation and therefore may change category.
- Statistics on injuries prior to 1 January 2006 do not distinguish between Regular and Reserve Forces.

7 C&AG's Report, para 2.3

8 Qq 63–65

9 Q 56

10 Qq 51–55

5. A number of Reservists have skills brought from their civilian lives that have been particularly useful on operations, but the Department has no systematic knowledge of these skills.¹¹ The Department explained that Reservists are called out for their military skills, but if there is a need in theatre the commander can ask for volunteers to use their civilian skills. For example, a merchant banker volunteered his services to put financial structures in place in southern Iraq and in Kosovo some Reservists ran the power station. Information about Reservists' civilian skills usually only comes to light in theatre although the Department is beginning to develop a database to make it easier to track Reservists with relevant skills.¹² Such skills are typically used for reconstruction post-conflict where the other Government departments or non-governmental organisations that otherwise would do such work are not able to do so because of security considerations.¹³

11 C&AG's Report, para 5

12 C&AG's Report, para 2.6

13 Qq 78, 80

2 Providing support and healthcare to Reserves

6. In the survey of Reservists conducted by the National Audit Office, of the 16% who said that they intend to leave within the next year, 41% agreed that inadequate support played a part in their decision to leave.¹⁴ The Department accepted that more needed to be done to support Reservists and their families, but said that there had been significant improvements in recent times, such as a new remuneration package for Reservists and employers.¹⁵ Some families are not aware of the likelihood of the Reservist being called out. The possibility of being deployed was made very clear at the time of recruitment, but the Department did not see it as its job to manage the relationships between a Reservist and their family or employer.¹⁶

7. The results of the National Audit Office survey show that the most used form of support is the Reservist's unit, but not all units have dedicated full time staff for this role, although the Army is starting to provide additional resources. However, problems remain for the families who live a long way from the unit especially those of Regular Reserves.¹⁷ The amount of support has increased in recent years but communication still remains a problem with limited awareness of what is available.¹⁸ There are examples of good practice at the local level, such as helping families of deploying Reservists to form their own informal support networks.¹⁹ The Department also confirmed that welfare support is available on a tri-Service basis. For example families of Reservists at the Territorial Army centre in Portsmouth would be able to make use of the extensive facilities provided for the Royal Navy.²⁰

8. Reservists who have been injured on operations remain "mobilised" and continue to receive their military salaries and allowances whilst they are treated at military medical centres. The Department has introduced a fast-track system to treat Regulars who are required to be deployed on operations, but it is not available to Reservists who may need to return quickly to their civilian jobs. The Department has, however, undertaken to provide improved access to diagnosis and treatment for Reservists and is considering whether to increase the capacity of existing services.²¹ The Department pointed to the success of returning Reservists to their civilian lives. Of 127 Reservists undergoing treatment at the time of the hearing, 66 were expected still to be undergoing treatment after three months and around 20 remaining in the military system after six months. Those injured Reservists

14 C&AG's Report, para 4.17

15 Qq 12–13

16 Qq 23–24

17 C&AG's Report, para 4.17

18 Q 17

19 C&AG's Report, para 4.17; Q 17

20 Q 22

21 C&AG's Report, para 4.28

who choose to leave military service because they prefer to live at home will get their treatment from the National Health Service.²²

9. For mental health problems the situation has been less clear. The results of research conducted by King's College, sponsored by the Department, were published in *The Lancet* on 16 May 2006. This showed that a higher proportion of Reservists displayed mental health problems as a result of service in the 2003 Iraq war than the Regulars who served or those Reservists who did not deploy.²³ Problems arising from traumatic experiences may not emerge straight after the conflict, yet prior to the hearing the Department did not offer diagnosis and treatment of Reservists' mental health problems after demobilisation. Such care has been left to the National Health Service, which has limited expertise in dealing with problems from armed conflicts.²⁴

10. On 16 May 2006, the Secretary of State for Defence announced that mental health assessments were to be offered to Reservists who have been demobilised since January 2003. The Department has since announced, on 21 November 2006, the start of the Reserves Mental Health Programme. Reservists will be able to receive treatment from the military medical authorities, except where their condition is found to be complicated or intractable when Reservists will be referred back to their General Practitioner.²⁵ Demobilised Reservists can access this system by calling a freephone number, and the Army website also provides details of the programme.

22 Qq 49, 50

23 Ev 21

24 C&AG's Report, para 4.29

25 Q 19

3 Maintaining capable Reserve Forces

11. Each of the Volunteer Reserve services faces significant shortfalls in numbers.²⁶ Whilst some employers are concerned about releasing valuable staff for deployment, most have remained supportive.²⁷ The Department does not believe that rates of pay are an issue in the recruitment and retention of Reservists. Under new remuneration arrangements, Reservists receive Regular military rates of pay when they are serving, or more if this is necessary to match their civilian salaries.

12. Recruitment and retention are complex issues affected by a range of social and other factors. In a culture where Reservists are now more willing to serve on operations, longer serving, older members who joined for other reasons have left. Recruiting in units such as infantry battalions and Royal Artillery regiments is going well, but the Department is struggling to recruit Reservists in specialist areas such as the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and the Royal Signals. In 2005–06, more Volunteer Reserves were recruited than resigned and the Department believes that it has halted the decline in manning.²⁸ As **Figure 3** shows, there have been encouraging signs of improvement in the Territorial Army and Royal Marines Reserves since December 2005. However, the trend for the Royal Naval Reserve and Royal Auxiliary Air Force is still downwards.

Figure 3: Numbers of personnel in the Volunteer Reserves as a proportion of the numbers required

Volunteer Reserve Force	Number of Volunteer Reservists in service		Numbers in service as a percentage of the requirement for Volunteer Reservists	
	December 2005	April 2006	December 2005	April 2006
Royal Naval Reserve	2,460	2,386	72%	82%
Royal Marines Reserve	750	785	76%	77%
Territorial Army	31,260	32,150	81%	84%
Royal Auxiliary Air Force	1,390	1,350	66%	64%

Source: National Audit Office analysis of Ministry of Defence data.

Note: Between December 2005 and April 2006 the requirement for Territorial Army and Royal Auxiliary Air Force personnel has remained the same at 38,430 and 2,120 respectively. Over the same period the Requirement for Royal Navy Reserve personnel has decreased from 3,400 to 2,910 and the requirement for Royal Marines personnel has increased from 990 to 1,020.

13. Recruits have been allowed to join the Territorial Army when they have failed to meet necessary medical standards or have failed to pass basic minimum physical fitness tests. The Department has known about this problem since 2004 and intends to rectify it. The trial of the new system will not be complete until November 2007, however, and the

26 C&AG's Report, para 7

27 Qq 1–2

28 Qq 1–2, 30

Department thinks it will not be easy to put a process in place which is properly resourced, with the right people to run it and in the right places.²⁹

14. Reservists are given low priority in training compared with the Regulars.³⁰ When Volunteer Reserves are due to train at facilities also used by Regular personnel their training is subject to cancellation, sometimes at short notice. There is likely to be a negative impact on retention as many Reservists look forward to training and can often go to some lengths to attend, taking holidays or unpaid leave from work. In the survey of Reservists conducted by the National Audit Office, nearly half of all respondents stated that one or more training courses had been cancelled in the last 12 months.³¹ The Department is looking at this issue in the light of the Comptroller and Auditor General's Report although it emphasised that the issues are complex.³² The Department said some Regular personnel have to be ready to deploy at much shorter notice than Reserves, so such Regulars would rightly have priority in training.³³

15. Reservists are not always able to train with the necessary range of equipment that they will be required to use on operations.³⁴ In particular, the Royal Naval Reserve's limited access to ships and rarely going to sea is likely to impact negatively on morale, on recruitment and on the ability of Reservists to gain the experience and commitment necessary to work as part of naval teams on operations.³⁵ The Department has had difficulty in identifying tasks that Reservists can do on board what are now highly specialised ships, given their limited training.³⁶

16. Reservists on operations have complained about shortages of clothing and ammunition. Such logistical problems have been well documented and the Department has acknowledged them in evidence to this Committee on previous occasions.³⁷ The Department said it had learnt lessons from the earlier stages of Operation TELIC and had implemented changes to address these problems.³⁸

29 C&AG's Report, para 2.32

30 Qq 11, 43

31 C&AG's Report, para 2.10

32 Q 11

33 Q 43

34 C&AG's Report, para 2.11

35 Qq 5, 77

36 Q 5

37 Qq 33–40

38 Committee of Public Accounts, Thirty-ninth Report of Session 2003–04, *Ministry of Defence: Operation TELIC—United Kingdom military operations in Iraq*, HC 273

4 Planning for the future use of Reserves

17. The Department is changing the structure of the Reserve Forces. The Territorial Army is being restructured to fulfil its primary role to augment the Regular Army for large-scale operations, and, secondly, to support smaller scale enduring operations whilst the Regular Forces are stretched. Responsibility for the Royal Naval Reserve and Royal Marines Reserve has been unified under a single Commander of Maritime Reserves and the Royal Navy is working to agree a detailed requirement for its Reservists. The Royal Air Force has adopted a ‘Total Force Concept’ where Regulars and Reserves are becoming more closely integrated.³⁹ These changes have been planned and are now being implemented with little understanding of their cost or that of the Reserve Forces as a whole. The Department acknowledged that it ought to know more about the cost but that the picture is complicated. The Department is planning to apply an existing costing mechanism to build a better picture of the cost of the Reserve Forces and it intends to consult the National Audit Office about the results.⁴⁰

18. Currently, the Royal Navy is not as heavily committed to operations as the other Services and consequently few Royal Naval Reservists are deployed. Despite shortfalls in Regular Naval manpower and overstretch on operations and standing tasks, almost no use is being made of Reservists in these roles either.⁴¹ As Figure 1 shows, only three Royal Naval Reservists are currently on deployment. The Department said that it is making worthwhile use of its Reserves but their roles were now mainly in guarding ships and personnel. The Royal Navy was currently looking at where it needed to use Reservists.⁴²

19. Under the Reserve Forces Act 1996, a Reservist can generally only be deployed for a maximum of 12 months in any three year period. Taking into account the needs of Reservists, their families and employers the Department has further undertaken, where possible, to limit the deployment of Reservists to a maximum of 12 months in every five years. Thus, of some 9,000 Reservists deployed on operations in 2003, most will not be available again until 2008. Use of the Territorial Army has been so intense that a significant proportion of its trained strength (around one third) cannot be called out for a number of years without compromising the Department’s undertaking on frequency of deployment. In the event of a demanding large-scale operation it is likely that Reservists would be called out according to the ‘one year in three’ criteria.⁴³ The Department is running some risk at current levels of deployment of the Territorial Army and may in future have less capability to deploy to a large operation. The intention under new structures is that the Regular Army should take more of the burden in future on enduring operations.⁴⁴

20. In order to improve recruitment by making better use of resources, the Regular Navy, Army and Royal Air Force have taken over responsibility for recruiting Volunteer

39 C&AG’s Report, part three

40 Q 10

41 C&AG’s Report, para 3.20

42 Q 4

43 C&AG’s Report, paras 3.6 and 3.11

44 Q 44

Reserves. The Department undertakes analyses of demographic and societal trends. Forecast reductions in the number of working age people and the changes in the health and physical fitness of the population mean that recruitment may become more difficult.⁴⁵ The Department is looking more towards the Regular Reserves, ex-Regular personnel, many of whom might be interested in becoming Volunteer Reserves.⁴⁶

21. The Department also monitors information on areas of diversity such as race and gender. However, the Department does not collate statistics on the educational background of its Reservist officers to demonstrate, from a wider socio-economic perspective, whether or not the top ranks of the Reserve Forces are representative of all sections of society as this information is not held centrally.⁴⁷

22. We asked the Department for data on the numbers of Reservist Officers who were commissioned from the ranks, with an indication of how far they progressed.⁴⁸ The information provided by the Department is summarised at **Figure 4**. It shows that a significant proportion of Reservist officers are being commissioned from the ranks. The Maritime Reserve has the highest proportion of officers commissioned from the ranks, and the proportion in the Territorial Army personnel has been rising.

Figure 4: Reservist officers commissioned from the ranks

Volunteer Reserve Force	Time Period	Officers Commissioned from the ranks	Total Officer Inflow	Proportion Commissioned from the ranks	Current Senior Management Composition
Maritime Reserves	1 April 2000 to 31 March 2006	54 53	68 Royal Naval Reserves 66 Royal Marine Reserves	80% ¹	One Commodore One Colonel (Royal Marine Reserve) Five Captains Of the above, five were commissioned from the ranks. Of the 13 Royal Naval Reserve Units, 11 are commanded by officers commissioned from the ranks. ²
Territorial Army ³	1 October 2003 to 31 March 2004 2004-05 2005-06 1 April 2006 to 30 November 2006	100 180 210 110	270 440 380 Not provided	37% 41% 55% Not provided	Not provided.
Royal Auxiliary Air Force	2003-04 2004-05 2005-06	3 8 4	19 29 14	16% 28% 29%	2 Group Captains 17 Wing Commanders Of the above, three were commissioned from the ranks.

Source: Committee of Public Accounts analysis of Ministry of Defence data.

Notes:

1. The remaining 20 per cent are direct entrants, all of whom are former regular officers, Merchant Navy officers or medical personnel.

2. Royal Marine Reserve units are all commanded by current Regular officers.

3. Officer inflow data for the Territorial Army was provided to C&AG for his report, figure 12, and for the updated figure presented in the Department's supplementary memorandum.

45 C&AG's Report, para 4.6–4.7

46 Q 102

47 Q 71

48 Q 101

Formal Minutes

Monday 18 June 2007

Members present:

Mr Edward Leigh, in the Chair

Annette Brooke
Mr Philip Dunne
Ian Lucas

Mr Don Touhig
Iain Wright

Draft Report

Draft Report (Reserve Forces), proposed by the Chairman, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 22 read and agreed to.

Conclusions and recommendations read and agreed to.

Summary read and agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Thirty-sixth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chairman make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[Adjourned until Wednesday 20 June at 3.30 pm.]

Witnesses

Wednesday 28 June 2006

Mr Bill Jeffrey, CB, Permanent Under Secretary of State for Defence, Ev 1
Major General the Duke of Westminster, KG, OBE, TD, DL, Assistant
Chief of the Defence Staff (Reserves and Cadets), and **Brigadier Neil A C**
Baverstock, OBE, Director of Reserve Forces and Cadets, Ministry of
Defence

List of written evidence

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Third Report	Collections Management in the National Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland	HC 109 (Cm 7035)
Fourth Report	Gas distribution networks: Ofgem's role in their sale, restructuring and future regulation	HC 110 (Cm 7019)
Fifth Report	Postcomm and the quality of mail services	HC 111 (Cm 7018)
Sixth Report	Gaining and retaining a job: the Department for Work and Pensions support for disabled people	HC 112 (Cm 7019)
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Ninth Report	The Paddington Health Campus Scheme	HC 244 (Cm 7076)
Tenth Report	Fines Collection	HC 245 (Cm 7020)
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Twelfth Report	Excess Votes 2005–06	HC 346
Thirteenth Report	Smarter Food Procurement in the Public Sector	HC 357 (Cm 7077)
Fourteenth Report	Ministry of Defence: Delivering digital tactical communications through the Bowman CIP Programme	HC 358 (Cm 7077)
Fifteenth Report	The termination of the PFI contract for the National Physical Laboratory	HC 359 (Cm 7077)
Sixteenth Report	The Provision of Out-of-Hours Care in England	HC 360 (Cm 7077)
Seventeenth Report	Financial Management of the NHS	HC 361 (Cm 7077)
Eighteenth Report	DFID: Working with Non-Governmental and other Civil Society Organisations to promote development	HC 64 (Cm 7077)
Nineteenth Report	A Foot on the Ladder: Low Cost Home Ownership Assistance	HC 134 (Cm 7077)
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Oral evidence

Taken before the Committee of Public Accounts

on Wednesday 28 June 2006

Members present:

Mr Edward Leigh, in the Chair

Mr Richard Bacon
Mr Ian Davidson
Helen Goodman
Sarah McCarthy-Fry

Mr Austin Mitchell
Dr John Pugh
Mr Alan Williams

Sir John Bourn, KCB, Comptroller and Auditor General, and **Mr Tim Burr**, Deputy Comptroller and Auditor General, National Audit Office, gave evidence.

Mr Marius Gallaher, Alternate Treasury Officer of Accounts, HM Treasury, gave evidence.

REPORT BY THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL

Ministry of Defence: Reserve Forces (HC 964)

Witnesses: **Mr Bill Jeffrey**, CB, Permanent Under Secretary of State for Defence, **Major General the Duke of Westminster**, KG, OBE, TD, DL, Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Reserves and Cadets), and **Brigadier Neil A C Baverstock**, OBE, Director of Reserve Forces and Cadets, Ministry of Defence, gave evidence.

Q1 Chairman: Good afternoon. Welcome to the Committee of Public Accounts where today we are considering the Comptroller and Auditor General's Report on the United Kingdom Reserve Forces. We are joined once again by Bill Jeffrey, who is the Permanent Under Secretary in the Ministry of Defence, Major General the Duke of Westminster, the Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff for Reserves and Cadets, and Brigadier Neil Baverstock, the Director of Reserve Forces and Cadets. First of all, on behalf of all of us, I would like to express our thanks to the TA for the work they do, often on a largely voluntary basis. It has involved taking part in operations in recent times so we are very grateful for what they do in giving up their free time. Mr Jeffrey, what impact on recruitment has Iraq had?

Mr Jeffrey: We do not believe that Iraq itself has had a significant impact on recruitment. It is a complicated picture obviously. I would echo very strongly the tribute that you made to the Reserves generally. As a relative newcomer to the MoD, my main impression is that we have been going through a period of enormous change in what people understand the Reserves to be for and they themselves have adapted greatly over that period. That has probably impacted on the recruitment climate. We went through a period when we were losing more people from the Reserves than we were gaining. The figures we sent to the Committee a week or so ago between the publication of the Report and this session show that, in the last financial year, we recruited more than we lost. We think we have turned the corner. Exactly what affects it is a whole mix of social and other factors but we do not sense that Iraq itself is crucial. Indeed, many of those who are joining are joining because they relish the prospects of operational involvement.

Q2 Chairman: General Westminster, what is your feeling on this? Are we losing potential recruits because people—particularly high quality employers—are worried about members of their staff being sent on lengthy operations? That was not the case in the past. They are themselves discouraging people from joining the TA. Is this your impression? Has the increased participation in operations had any effect on recruitment from your perspective?

Major General the Duke of Westminster: There are undoubtedly some areas where employers are perhaps reluctant to allow their employees to go on operations. However, I do not think it is having an effect *per se* on the recruiting. I have done 35 years in the Territorial Army and recruiting has always been strong but in view of the culture change that we have been through over the last three years it was inevitable that we were going to lose people who joined for one reason but did not want to go on operations. In other words, they joined the old Reserve component and when things changed they decided it was not for them. The recruits we are getting now are willing and able to go on operations at some stage within their career. Employer support is holding up remarkably well across the piece. If you had asked me three years ago, when we embarked on TELIC 1, whether employer support had held up this well at this stage I would have been very hesitant in giving a positive answer. In general it is holding up well and in general it is not having an effect on recruiting.

Q3 Chairman: I should have declared an interest because I am a veteran member of the Honourable Artillery Company and I rose to the dizzy heights of

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trooper. How do you manage the change from the TA that I knew, which was largely a TA of summer camps in Germany and a weekend in Aldershot, to something which is far more serious now and potentially much more dangerous?

Major General the Duke of Westminster: I too am a trooper in the Honourable Artillery Company, Recce branch. We manage this change by a change of culture. There is a very strong and very deep culture of mobilisation within the reserve forces. We do tell our new recruits that operations will be not inevitable but almost an inevitability at some stage within their career so they know exactly what they are joining. We are changing very fast. In the last three years, that cultural change has been almost volcanic, in my experience, having been part of the old and now part of the new.

Q4 Chairman: I take an interest in the Royal Navy Reserve. It is obvious when I talk to officers in the Royal Navy Reserve that they feel they are under-utilised. Would that be a fair criticism, Mr Jeffrey, that you are not using them for standing tasks on ships in the way that you should be?

Mr Jeffrey: It is certainly the case that we are not using them to the same degree as we are using Reservists in the Army. The very nature of operations overseas is such that it would be surprising if we were. Broadly speaking, we are making worthwhile use of them.

Brigadier Baverstock: The Royal Navy is looking very hard at its Royal Naval Reserves at the moment. It has just implemented a number of changes at the very top of the structure in the way they manage their Reserves and at the top level they have just appointed a Reservist as a one star commander of the Maritime Reserve, whose job it is to ensure that the naval Reserves, including the Royal Marine Reserves, are properly structured for the tasks that the Navy has identified for them to do. The Navy is at the moment looking very hard at exactly where they need to use their Reservists. They have a strong structure and link to what we call their functional employers who are working out exactly what they are going to ask of them.

Q5 Chairman: You have vacancies in these ships. If you are a Royal Navy officer, as I understand it, in your annual time you are supposed to do with the Navy, it is very likely that you will be put on a training course. You will not be sent on a frigate as a watch keeper. That is right, is it not? That is not going to be very good for morale or recruitment, is it?

Brigadier Baverstock: One of the problems is identifying tasks within the limited training they have available that they can do in what are highly specialised roles on ships these days. What the Navy is doing is looking to match the availability of skilled people to the task they are trying to do.

Major General the Duke of Westminster: During TELIC 1 which I was involved with—I have been involved in every TELIC since TELIC 1—some 35% of the Royal Naval Reserve was mobilised where

there was a large maritime component being used. That was of course justifiable. As that large maritime component dwindled, the land battle took over.

Q6 Chairman: Can I interrupt you? I was told that they were widely deployed in the first two phases but not since in Iraq. That is the Royal Navy now?

Major General the Duke of Westminster: Absolutely because very largely the maritime component is not so greatly being used. However, 15% of the Royal Naval Reserve are today contributing to operations.

Q7 Chairman: What is to stop you allowing and encouraging all Reservists who are mobilised to train with regulars before they go on active service?

Major General the Duke of Westminster: If I understand you rightly, did you say is there something that stops us training?

Q8 Chairman: Yes.

Major General the Duke of Westminster: No.

Q9 Chairman: There is a reference in the Report at paragraph 15 on page three if you want to refresh your memory.

Brigadier Baverstock: We recognise—it is well recognised and was recognised even before the NAO Report—that where we can train Reservists with the regular units to which they are going that is by far and away the best thing to be able to do. That is what we try to do. There are however a number of practical difficulties that prevent us doing this in every single case. There are times when the change over of units does not match the call-up cycle of Reservists, not because we do not plan it but because the way we organise and the roles we ask Reservists to do in theatre might change during the mobilisation process itself. What we call the ability to task organise would be removed if we were to insist that every Reservist trained with the unit that he is going to deploy with.

Q10 Chairman: We are a value for money Committee and if you look at paragraph six, page two, you will see, “The Department has little understanding of the costs of Reserve Forces, which can be difficult to separate from the cost of other parts of the Armed Forces.” How can you make robust decisions about the use of Reserve Forces if you do not have this basic information, Mr Jeffrey?

Mr Jeffrey: We would acknowledge, as the Report does, that this is an area where we know less than we ought to. It is also quite a complicated area, as the Report acknowledges. Other countries with Reserve Forces face the same conundrum. We are trying to build up a better picture both of the costs of the Reserves and their benefits. The real problem is that, although some of the costs in the Reserves can be quite easily obtained—and the NAO did quite an interesting and useful exercise on that in the course of their study—essentially they are pay costs and it is a more difficult task to claw out of the rest of the MoD business the other costs associated with the Reserves. It is something we think we ought to do because in any business you have to understand the

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costs of what you are getting to get value for money. We have looked at various ways in which we could improve the position. We can either carry on doing *ad hoc* exercises of the kind the NAO did or we could develop some kind of special, computerised costing tool of the kind that we use for the medical side of the military. That would take time and be expensive. We are therefore using the existing Cost of Defence exercise and instructions on that will be going out very shortly. That should give us a much better picture of where the costs lie by the autumn and we will then talk again to the NAO, who have been very helpful on this.

Q11 Chairman: General, would you retain more Reservists if you cancelled fewer of their courses? This is apparently a complaint which was made to the NAO staff doing the study, that Reservists were complaining that they are busy people with families, with jobs and so many of the courses that they look forward to taking are cancelled because the regular forces consider them to be a low priority, they the Reservists.

Major General the Duke of Westminster: I do not accept that. Course loading is always an inherent problem within the Territorial Army and indeed the Reserve component because, having loaded a course, personal, family matters do tend to come up with some Reservists and they tend to drop away. I do not accept that courses are being shifted or indeed cancelled in favour of the regular component. However, it is certainly something which the chain of command are looking at again in the light of the NAO Report. These course loadings are a very complex issue, especially when one is dealing with individuals with families and jobs.

Q12 Chairman: If you look at paragraph 4.17 on page 38, you will see, "From our survey, of those intending to leave within the next year, 41% agreed that inadequate support played a part in their decision to leave." That is pretty damning, is it not?

Mr Jeffrey: It is 41% of that small percentage who said that they were planning to leave in the next 12 months.

Q13 Chairman: You certainly should be doing more to support Reservists and their families, surely?

Mr Jeffrey: We accept that but it is also an area where there have been quite significant improvements in recent times, as the Report brings out. There is a new support package for Reservists themselves and employers which, as I read the Report, the NAO acknowledged was a significant improvement on what had gone before.

Q14 Helen Goodman: It is clear that the quality of training, management and support to members of the TA as individuals and their families and employers is crucial for recruitment and retention. A few weeks ago I went to the TA centre in my constituency, Bishop Auckland, which is part of the Durham Light Infantry. In recent years they have sent 90 people to Kosovo and Iraq. The thing that really struck me was that the majority of them had

gone as individuals or just two people. I would like to know why they are being deployed singly in that way because I would have thought that did make it more difficult for people personally.

Major General the Duke of Westminster: The deployment package certainly in the Balkans has largely been individual reinforcements. However, there has been a Territorial Army signal squadron based in the Falklands for quite a period of time. That has been a composite signal squadron. In Iraq, whereas we do individual reinforcements, we also have company groups who look after the security in Basra, Shaiba and in Afghanistan. We do what is known in the trade as a bit of both. However, we recognise that Reservists would much prefer to be mobilised with their own people, with their own friends, than they would individual reinforcement. We are gradually moving towards that process but it is a slow, gradual move. A lot of it depends on the ability to get a Reservist up to the required level of training so that they can deploy but the really successful deployments have been the company groupings that have gone to Iraq and Afghanistan. We will continue to do a bit of both. When a regular regiment or battalion deploys, if they are short of people, they do need others to come and reinforce them. That is part of our role, to backfill the regular component.

Q15 Helen Goodman: When I was speaking to the people I met it did not seem to have occurred to them that this was likely to be part of the problem. You have a structure for that and you are addressing that?

Mr Jeffrey: It is an example of a wider issue. At the beginning of TELIC in particular a great deal was done very quickly. The mode of operating was changing. Expectations were changing and many of the shortcomings that have been described arose then. In my estimation, there has been a gradual process since then of making things more formal and routine, including where possible deploying people in units rather than as individuals, but we are not there yet.

Brigadier Baverstock: It is also clear what we mean by sending out full units. We are not necessarily taking a unit which is sitting in peace time in an infantry battalion or another unit and picking up the whole of that unit and putting it into an operational theatre. What happens is that the unit itself is formed up from a variety of other units which might provide 10, 15 or 20 people to a company which is then trained as a composite TA or Reserve unit and then sent out so that the unit part of it is created in the UK before it goes.

Q16 Helen Goodman: That relates, does it not, to the earlier questions about whether or not the people in the TA and the Regulars are training together? We have also heard that that does not happen as often as you would like.

Brigadier Baverstock: If it is appropriate and that unit was being attached to a battalion—and there are units attached to battalions—as part of its build

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up package, we would hope and plan if we can, to pick that unit up and train it with the regular unit with which that unit is going.

Q17 Helen Goodman: I can see that by doing it like that you can maximise the fighting effectiveness, but if you are sending people out in very small groups from the TA how are you able to provide support to their families? If you are Regulars and you are all living, for example, near me in Catterick Garrison, you are all together whereas these families are all isolated. What support are you offering to them?

Major General the Duke of Westminster: Many of the individual reinforcements come from a unit that is already centred around a TA centre. It is very much the job of the TA centre to organise that support. Even if only three or four people went out in a battalion just to do an individual reinforcement, it is the battalion's role to provide support to the families back home.

Mr Jeffrey: The amount of welfare support has been increased in recent years. There may be an issue about awareness of the support that is available but at local level there are often people performing essentially welfare functions, encouraging networks of families in mutual support and that sort of thing.

Brigadier Baverstock: In the past to cater for that we have mobilised officers in the units to keep them in the UK to provide that specific support. The Army is also establishing dedicated officers in a number of units to do welfare, recruiting and a number of other things in a dedicated way so that we can make sure that the level of support is there.

Q18 Helen Goodman: Can I ask you about paragraphs 4.29 and 4.30 on page 41? They are about the health support to people after they are discharged. This was another thing I discussed with the TA base which I visited. They said to me that once people left the Army they had no mechanisms for having contact with the individual soldiers or their families at all. There were no resources and there were no systems. Is that true?

Mr Jeffrey: The general policy is that when those who have been deployed return from operations overseas they are in the same position vis a vis any necessary medical attention as regular soldiers. They are kept on salary and other terms and conditions until they are recovered. Exactly what that means in practice depends on what the injury is, if it is an injury. They are largely dealt with at military medical centres attached to NHS hospitals.

Q19 Helen Goodman: One of the things that comes out of this Report which is very interesting is that if people have mental health problems as a result of having had traumatic experiences they may not be obvious straight away. They may not emerge for some time. If you have lost contact with people how can you support them?

Mr Jeffrey: There has been one significant development since this Report was published which is that our Under Secretary of State made a statement on 16 May the purpose of which was to beef up our offer of mental health assessments to

anybody who has been on operations overseas and has been demobilised since January 2003 on the basis that, if they seek a mental health assessment and it suggests a condition—post traumatic stress disorder, that sort of thing—that would be best dealt with by military medical authorities, it will be. If it is something more complicated or more deep seated in character, they will be referred to a GP and the National Health Service in the normal way. We hope that the announcement that was made a week or so ago will bridge that gap, although obviously it requires the demobilised Reservist to get in touch with us.

Q20 Sarah McCarthy-Fry: We seem to have all followed the same route and visited local TA centres in our constituencies. 103B Battalion is in my constituency which is one of the centres that was covered by the study. I want to go to paragraph 4.27: "The Department has reminded Regular commanders that mobilised Territorial Army personnel have the same entitlement to medical and dental care as Regulars, after a number of cases where full access has been denied to them." I wanted to be clear whether that was actually after they had been mobilised because an issue I picked up was that in the pre-mobilisation medical, where it was found that they needed dental treatment, the soldiers in my unit were being told they had to pay for that treatment themselves but that was prior to them being deployed. Can you confirm whether that is the case?

Brigadier Baverstock: There is no provision for primary health care for Reservists. That is where we would expect the National Health Service to take up the cudgels. Specifically in dental care we have looked at this to see whether or not it is something that would be appropriate in advance of mobilisation. When you look at the dental failure rates, they were just over 2% or thereabouts from TELIC 1 and they have fallen steadily ever since. We do not see that as a specific problem. Now, where somebody has a dental issue, we either get it corrected during the mobilisation process or we accept that they might be dentally sub-standard but get them fixed in theatre. In a way, they get deployed to get their teeth fixed. Under those circumstances the sheer investment we would have to go to simply does not make it worth it.

Q21 Sarah McCarthy-Fry: It does not make it worthwhile to pay for them to have their teeth treated? They were saying to me that if they did not pay to get their teeth sorted out before they went they were not allowed to go.

Brigadier Baverstock: That is no longer the case.

Q22 Sarah McCarthy-Fry: I was on the Armed Forces Bill and we went to Iraq to talk to troops out there. I met marine Reservists at Umm Qasr who were having the most fantastic time of their lives. One was a quality controller in a biscuit factory. One was a lifeguard and one worked in an accounts office. When I said to them, "How do your families feel about you being here?" it was a totally different

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story. I am concerned, as Helen Goodman was, about the level of support to Reservists' families and whether they get access to the same level of support that the Regulars get. Obviously, Portsmouth is a naval town. We have one very small TA centre but we have a huge backup of welfare support for the Navy. Is there a tri-service element so that the TA would be able to use the facilities that the Navy has there?

Brigadier Baverstock: Yes. We aspire and plan to provide the same level of support to Reservists' families whilst Reservists are deployed as a regular would get. There are challenges. For families not living in a unit close to the base it takes more effort to try and reach out and provide that service. Communicating with those families provides an additional challenge. It is as much a communication issue as it is anything else.

Q23 Sarah McCarthy-Fry: What about predeployment? I cannot remember which paragraph it is in the Report but it is worded very carefully. Although in theory everybody can be compulsorily called up, in practice you would go for people who had volunteered, but those volunteers may not necessarily have told either their family or their employer that they have volunteered so they can say, "I have to go." Would it not be better if we did more work predeployment with families so that they were not so horrified at the thought that their Reservist might be going?

Major General the Duke of Westminster: This is a very important issue because I have taken the view, as well as the Ministry, that it is not our role to become involved in the relationship between employee and employer and any serviceman or servicewoman and their family. It is a delicate dynamic that drives this type of intelligent mobilisation, but I do not believe it is our role to become involved in those personal relationships. I think it is right and proper that we must trust our people to manage those relationships in the best way that they possibly can to the best effect for themselves, not necessarily for us. That is the very delicate dynamic that we are at the moment playing out. I know that on many occasions those stories have emerged. I feel that we are taking the right approach in the way that we are going. Our job is to help the employer when the individual leaves and help the families as well. Managing that dynamic is not our job.

Q24 Sarah McCarthy-Fry: Could you argue a case though that that may have been true when the Regular forces were the ones that tended to be deployed and the Reserves did not? When you join the Regular services, you know you are more likely to be deployed. When people join the Reservists, should it not be made more public that the Reservists are just as likely to?

Major General the Duke of Westminster: It is made very clear at the recruiting process. This applies to all three services. If the recruits are not prepared to do an operational tour within the first four to five years of their service, they are not required. That is as far

as we go in telling the Reservists that they are there to use. Apart from anything else, we have produced a policy document called *The Defence Intent* for the use of the Reserves. That quite clearly states that the Reserve component of whatever colour and whatever service will be used on enduring operations for the foreseeable future. From our perspective, we have made it as clear as is possible but what we do not want to do is come in between that delicate dynamic of the family, the employer and the individual.

Mr Jeffrey: It may also be one of these transitional issues that I referred to earlier between the different models of what the Reserves are there for. There are undoubtedly some cases that command sympathy with families that have been utterly shocked that their family member was going to Iraq. These days, with the concept we are now operating on, the likelihood of surprises of that sort is probably less than it was.

Q25 Sarah McCarthy-Fry: If I can refer back to fitness, another big concern among my TA centre was the compulsory tests and they are very concerned about the physical fitness point because they have noticed that particularly young people are not as physically fit as they used to be. It is going to take time to get them physically fit, presumably because they are not doing as much exercise in school as they used to do. They are very concerned that they are going to lose people because, if they do not pass this compulsory fitness test, that is it. What level of flexibility are we going to have? Obviously, if they are going to be deployed, they need to get to that level of fitness but is there going to be some flexibility?

Mr Jeffrey: There are two levels at which this operates. There is the point at which the person is first recruited to the Reserves, when standards are set and those who do the recruitment are ready to reject people if they do not feel they come up to them. Then there is the point at which they are deployed, when there is a full medical examination, including a psychological assessment. One of the things we have been keen to do—and it is picked up in the Report—is to ensure that that process works properly and we are not letting people be deployed who are not physically up to it.

Major General the Duke of Westminster: Like all these new schemes, they are continuously under review. The problem of fitness does lay a great emphasis and a degree of responsibility upon the Reservists to look after their own fitness. As an individual—I am not speaking on behalf of the department, or indeed the chain of command—I have had my ear bent on exactly the same subject. We are flexible. These new schemes are always kept under constant review. There are plenty of people like myself and others to remind the chain of command and indeed others that this is too time consuming and it is impractical. Then we can down-test and readjust. It is not set in tablets of stone. What we must ensure for our own responsibilities in terms of duty of care is that if we send young

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servicemen on operations they are well trained and fit to cope with those operations. That is the balance we have to strike.

Q26 Mr Mitchell: How far is there a problem with recruitment? In other words, if you have difficulty in getting recruits to come forward and take on the job in the Territorials, how far is it a problem of inadequate money? You have run inspiring commercials inciting people to join. If you could run for the Labour Party you would be flooded out at this exciting time. Commercials do not really fill the bill. How far is the recruitment problem a problem of how much they are being paid?

Mr Jeffrey: I am not volunteering to be an Accounting Officer for the Labour Party. I do not think we sense that pay is itself an issue. It is more the mix of other issues we have been discussing this afternoon.

Q27 Mr Mitchell: Money is the answer to most things. If you are sticky on recruitment, surely the answer must be to pay them more?

Mr Jeffrey: I think it is more to do with whether people really want this sort of experience, what their families think, that sort of thing.

Q28 Chairman: Major General, would you have joined if you were paid more?

Major General the Duke of Westminster: It went through my mind, whether I should look for a quick pay rise. If you ask 10 Reservists why they joined, you will get 10 different reasons and not one of them will probably be the truth. Pay is an issue, yes, to a degree.

Q29 Mr Mitchell: You agree they are not paid enough?

Major General the Duke of Westminster: No, I do not, because they get Regular Army rates of pay when they are serving. It is a complete level playing field. I do not accept that, no.

Q30 Mr Mitchell: If you still have recruitment problems, you cannot raise standards, can you, standards of training, what you demand of them? It is a vicious circle.

Major General the Duke of Westminster: When one refers to recruitment problems, we are recruiting pretty well at the moment. Ours is a historical retention problem. The recruiting of the Teeth Arms specifically is really going quite encouragingly well. Our challenge in recruiting tends to be in the more technical arms like the REME, the Signallers and the more specialist arms. The recruiting in the infantry battalions, the Yeomanry regiments, the gunner regiments, is really going encouragingly well. It is the specialist areas where we are struggling, exactly the same as our Regular counterparts.

Mr Jeffrey: The pattern is that, after several years in which we lost more people leaving the Territorial Army than we gained—I think that was because of the change in the terms—last year in the figures we shared with the Committee a few weeks ago it was clear that we gained some ground. The strength of

the TA in April 2006 was 32,150 compared to 31,410 in April 2005. That is not a big increase but it suggests we have turned the corner. Doing things like taking Reserve recruitment alongside Regular recruitment, using the muscle of the Regular recruitment campaign—

Q31 Mr Mitchell: I sense from talking to people in the TA that they are effectively treated in terms of equipment and training as the poor relations of the system. Defence has been subject to numerous cuts in recent years. The numbers of Regulars have been cut back. Here you have a service where cuts are affecting the situation. How far are the TA and the Reservists generally treated as poor relations in this situation?

Mr Jeffrey: I think it is clear from the Report that it is certainly not the intention that they should be.

Q32 Mr Mitchell: I am sure it is not the intention but how far is it a fact?

Mr Jeffrey: I do not believe it is a fact. In most significant respects, the levels particularly of equipment are intended to match those that the Regulars get. If there is a recruitment problem, it is not to do with cuts. It is more to do with the fact that we have to work hard to get the people. In the last year or so we do seem to be having a measure of success on that.

Q33 Mr Mitchell: I have had some points put to me by a Reservist of the 250 Field Ambulance TA in Grimsby who was deployed into Iraq. They were issued only with DPM, disruptive pattern material, which attracted flies. His wife had to buy the desert kit and send it out to him. When TV crews arrived in the area, those who only had DPM dress were ordered to stay in their tents while those who had desert kit were ordered to walk round the camp in circles to give the television crews the impression that they were all properly equipped. The troops deployed in Iraq in DPM dress were all issued with desert dress when they went back home so they could be filmed getting off the plane. That bespeaks either of disorganisation or deprivation of necessary supplies in that situation.

Mr Jeffrey: If that was the case, clearly it was not satisfactory. I cannot speak to that specific example.

Brigadier Baverstock: I know I am here to answer questions but which TELIC did he go on?

Q34 Mr Mitchell: I do not know.

Brigadier Baverstock: When did he go?

Q35 Mr Mitchell: Early on, I presume.

Brigadier Baverstock: If you were to go and see the mobilisation process that goes on now in all three services for Reservists, it is extremely swept up. They get issued all the personal equipment they require during the mobilisation process.

Q36 Mr Mitchell: His argument was lack of medical supplies. He was given only two vehicles and a very limited supply of morphine and the other drugs you need in a war zone. They were ordered to reverse the

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triage and save those that were easily saved rather than those who needed more supplies. He also argues that while the standard issue of rounds for infantry troops is 180 per man he and the others got three rounds each and they were in dangerous situations daily. That is a scandal. Is that a problem of bad supply organisation for the initial effort in Iraq, which affects all Regulars and Reservists together, or is that a problem peculiar to Reservists?

Brigadier Baverstock: On the matter of the scaling of morphine, that is a medical issue that I am simply not qualified to talk about.

Q37 Mr Mitchell: This is a question of adequate supplies, is it not?

Brigadier Baverstock: I do not know about the scaling of ammunition that they were given. I do not know the specific circumstances. Nor would I expect that he would be treated in any way differently to that of a Regular.

Q38 Mr Mitchell: If the Regular only has three rounds in a situation where 180 is a standard requirement, it bespeaks a mess to me.

Brigadier Baverstock: He was in a field hospital. Do you know what job he was doing?

Q39 Mr Mitchell: Field Ambulance, it says, but this applies to other troops as well. He is a Reservist. Reserve soldiers of all ranks, he says, are supposed to receive build up training. They had no training. This applies to the large majority of Reserve troops in Iraq. They have no training before they are sent out.

Mr Jeffrey: That is an exaggeration of the position. Equally, it is the case that in the early stages of TELIC there were shortcomings which have since been reversed. I was with the Brigadier at Chilwell a month or so ago and certainly on the basic kitting out of those who were being deployed from the Reserves everything that I could see was of a very high standard and being done very well. It is true also that in the early days of Iraq there were some quite well documented logistic problems which applied to everyone. If the Reservist you are hearing from or speaking to is drawing attention to that sort of thing, it may well be a case from those much earlier days. I believe things are better now.

Q40 Mr Mitchell: He said they had to chase up their own medals rather than getting them supplied and the quality of the medals was very poor. They fell apart in a very short period. That is monstrous, is it not?

Major General the Duke of Westminster: Could I comment on the first list of allegations? I have visited every single TELIC including TELIC 1 when 202 Hospital were out there and I think 205 were out during TELIC 2 when over 20% of the contribution to TELIC 2 was Territorial Army. There is no doubt that, having started from a standing start, we were very pushed in order to provide the required training. However, having seen 202 in the field in the Shaiba logistic base when it was just a flat piece of desert, there was no suggestion from that hospital at

any time that they were short of any medical provisions whatsoever. I can categorically say that. They had been on the move for up to two and a half months dealing with casualties on the way through.

Q41 Mr Mitchell: The outcome of this, as you might expect, is that on return he quit. What was the rate of quitting or resignation on Reservists and other people who were drafted out to Iraq?

Major General the Duke of Westminster: If we refer to our answer that we gave some time before to the Chairman, there is no detectable trend that TELIC has been a reason for a large outflow of Reservists of any service. Over the last 10 years we have been losing Reservists. The last three years have not seen any detectable change in that process. We have looked into this very strongly and we also take, as it were, exit polls from soldiers leaving on the reasons why. There is no detectable TELIC factor amongst those "exit polls".

Q42 Mr Bacon: I would like to ask you about training. In paragraph 2.9 on page 14 it refers to the fact that due to pressure of time Reservists are often trained across a narrower range of skills. It gives the example of Territorial Army members of the Royal Signals who are trained to operate a smaller number of communications systems than their Regular counterparts. It goes on to say, "Although these differences are known to those who manage the Reserve Forces, they have not always been explained to the Regulars commanding Reservists on operations." It makes it sound as if Regular officers find Territorials in their midst, expect them to be able to do something and they cannot. That would be deeply frustrating for both sides, would it not? Surely that is a basic management problem, is it not?

Major General the Duke of Westminster: And has been largely redressed. What we now do is encourage those regular battalions and regiments who are receiving Reservists to come to Chilwell to start meeting and understanding their Reserves. Where possible on predeployment training we now get the Reservists to train with their regular counterparts so that the commanding officer can take a view on the level of training that they have and also on the level of training that they need before they go to an operational theatre.

Q43 Mr Bacon: In the next paragraph, 2.10, it says that the training of Volunteer Reserves is given a lower priority than the training of regulars and that training is subject to cancellation, sometimes at very short notice. Something like half of the respondents in the survey which the National Audit Office did stated that training courses in the last 12 months had been cancelled. "There continue to be delays in providing new recruits with their initial training." Is this not probably more the reason? I should say I also served in the Territorial Army. I joined the Territorial Army in order to help end the Cold War. I would like to place on the record that within five years of my joining it was over. It certainly was not about money. Is it not things like that? They join and they find that they are not trained properly, there is

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no training at all or it is cancelled. It would have far more to do with the level of morale and whether they want to stay or not than things like money.

Major General the Duke of Westminster: First of all, with the operational tempo as it is, one has to look at things like readiness cycles. Clearly, the Regular component is on much shorter notice and therefore they need—and it is quite right that they should have—priority in terms of training and the training available. The readiness cycle is such that that is so. For the last 35 years I seem to remember the frustrations of not being able on occasions to get onto training areas, not having access to training facilities when one wanted it, but I believe now that the training is very much better. I do not say that we have it 100% right but we are getting there. This is looking back to TELIC 1 where we gave Reservists four days' notice to move. We have deployed Reservists in four days during TELIC 1 for some very good reasons so we have gone from that standing start. I think it is fair to say that the work is still in progress but it is fully recognised and there are improvements in leaps and bounds.

Q44 Mr Bacon: I would like to come on to readiness and utilisation. At paragraph 3.11 it says, "The use of the Territorial Army on operations in the last few years has been so intense that, currently, a significant proportion of its trained strength (33% or over 8,000 personnel) cannot be called out for a number of years without compromising the Department's commitment to deploy individuals for one year in every five." It goes on to say, "In the event of a demanding large-scale operation it is likely that Reservists would be called out according to the 'one year in three' criteria enshrined in the Reserve Forces Act (1996)." I am not familiar with that Act but that is saying that the one year in five criterion can be overwritten.

Mr Jeffrey: The requirement in the legislation is one year out of three. We have stated as a matter of policy that we will try to make it no more than one out of five. We are carrying some risk at levels of deployment of the Territorials at the moment and in future we may have less capability to deploy to a large operation. That is something that will just have to be managed but the new structures in the Regular Army are intended to enable the regulars to take more of the burden in future anyway.

Q45 Mr Bacon: What is the purpose of a one year in five rather than a one year in three criterion? Do you think you would have more difficulty in retaining it if it were one year in three?

Mr Jeffrey: It is a view by the Ministry that it would be better to avoid as frequent deployments as one year in three but the statutory obligation is to make sure it is not any more than one in three.

Brigadier Baverstock: It is entirely to do with sustainability. We recognise that we will not be able to sustain our Reserve Forces if we call people out every one year in three. It is a system that the Americans are also looking at very hard. Therefore, we have made this voluntary commitment not to compulsorily mobilise people more than necessary. I

will quote from the document we published, *Future use of the UK's Reserve Forces*: "In most situations a maximum cumulative total of one year out of three applies. It is recognised that regular mobilisation of the VRF up to this maximum is unsustainable. The feedback from Reservists and employers is that a limit of up to 12 months' service in aggregate over 5 years is more reasonable unless the individual volunteers for more frequent tours. Where possible, this is the level which we intend to apply unless no viable alternative exists."

Q46 Mr Bacon: Paragraph 4.11 talks about the Department's view that it is important to have a proportion of the TA mobilised wherever possible to keep the Territorial Army "simmering". It goes on to say, "... the Department has yet to identify fully what simmering means...". Can you say what "simmering" means?

Brigadier Baverstock: We are considering at the moment what "simmering" means. This is as a result, we believe, of the success we have had in changing the culture of mobilisation in the Reserve Forces. When we started out, even three years ago we did not anticipate that there would be the appetite for mobilisation within the Reserve Forces that currently exists and therefore the document I have just quoted from, even when it was published 18 months ago, had not fully recognised what that was. We had intended to use the Reserves as a last resort and found that there is now a massive appetite for people going forward, so we need to make sure that we feed that appetite by continuing to give Reservists the opportunity to go on operations, and the level at which that is simmering we have not come to a conclusion on.

Q47 Mr Bacon: May I ask about money? The Report says that in April 2005 the Department introduced a new remuneration package for Reservists who were deployed in operations, and it says that under the new scheme if a Reservist is mobilised and their civilian pay is higher than service pay they can claim the difference, including certain benefits, up to a maximum of £548 per day, equivalent to £200,000 per annum, or a maximum of £822 per day, equivalent to around £300,000 per annum, if serving as a medical consultant. Presumably you have got some people who are in professional occupations that are earning high salaries and you do not want to disincentivise them, but there must come a point where it would be cheaper simply to hire some full-time doctors than to be paying consultants the equivalent of £300,000 a year while they are away.

Brigadier Baverstock: In terms of the overall number and the cost through life, as it were, of a Reservist, even when we are paying them those sorts of rates, that is still not excessive.

Q48 Mr Bacon: You mean simply because they are doing it for short periods of time?

Brigadier Baverstock: We still have to pay more to maintain a doctor permanently on the payroll than pay them their civil rates. When we looked at this in SI 859, when we were drawing that up, the medical

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profession was the only profession where we thought there might be a significant effect. We set the limit at £200,000 rather than the higher figure because it was to remove the disincentives for our Reserve medics not to go on operations. It was an issue of removing disincentives. In fact, we have found that there has not been a step change in the overall cost of remuneration over and above military rates of pay since we introduced this. There has been a slight increase but not a massive cost change.

Q49 Mr Bacon: In paragraph 4.28 it says, “When mobilised Reservists are injured in theatre, and after they have been stabilised, they are evacuated to the United Kingdom where any further urgent care is provided. . . . their medical care continues to be provided by the Department through military medical centres attached to NHS hospitals. However, a number have experienced problems in obtaining necessary and timely healthcare and support. To address problems in providing injured personnel with timely access to diagnosis and treatment, the Department has introduced a process to fast-track those Regulars who were required to be deployed to operations . . . This was not available to Reservists . . .”. Apparently you are now changing that, but what I am curious about is that if somebody goes abroad wearing the Queen’s uniform and gets injured what part of basic care would not make you want to make sure that they were looked after? Why would it not be available? Why would it not always have been available?

Brigadier Baverstock: The care within the military system is provided when a Reservist is in service. When they are outside the military system—

Q50 Mr Bacon: But they got injured in the military system, did they not?

Brigadier Baverstock: Can I finish? Outside the arrangement is that the National Health Service deals with them. What we do is, when a Reservist is injured on operations and they come back and they require medical treatment, we simply do not demobilise them. We keep putting them through and that gives them access in the mobilised service to the military health system. We have a number of Reservists in that position at the moment, I think it is about 127 who are undergoing treatment post-operations, and we have a high success rate in getting them back into civilian life thereafter, about 66 people within three months and then it drops right down to about 20-odd three months later on the current figures. That is the system we use now. Keeping somebody in the military health system is not always the best way to go because that ties them to military facilities which are not as widely spread as the National Health Service and some Reservists prefer to go and live in their community at home and get their treatment in the NHS.

Q51 Mr Davidson: I wonder if I can start by saying that on Sunday I had a big event for veterans and the air cadets came along and participated in that and we were very grateful for that and they did very well. Could I ask about casualty figures for the Territorial

Forces in general? Do you have those for deaths in service, for injuries from military events and for accidents, and how do they compare with those for the Regular Forces?

Mr Jeffrey: We do have these figures. I do not have them to hand. Unless either of my colleagues does we can perhaps send them direct to you.¹

Q52 Mr Davidson: What do they tell us?

Mr Jeffrey: That there have been some casualties.

Q53 Mr Davidson: I did recognise that there would be some of everything but what does it tell us in comparison?

Mr Jeffrey: I do not think they reveal any significant difference as between Regulars and Reserves.

Major General the Duke of Westminster: Of the Reservists we have had four killed in Iraq and one in Afghanistan, and quite clearly, *pro rata* to our Regular colleagues, that would be a lower percentage. I do not think it is proper to read anything into that except to say—

Q54 Mr Davidson: You might not think it is proper but I think we will make that judgment. Maybe you should just tell us what the figures are. If we do a comparison, taking into account the fact that they have different roles, and I know in here, for example, that quite a number of the Regular Forces were used on security duties or guard duties to relieve front-line troops, which I understand, when you allow for that is there any difference in the statistics for accidents or injuries or fatalities?

Mr Jeffrey: I do not believe we can go into that level of fine detail. As the General says, proportionately the injury and fatality rates seem to be lower. That may well reflect the particular mix of things that they are asked to do—

Q55 Mr Davidson: That is what I want to know, you see, comparing like with like. Can I ask then, Chairman, if these figures could be provided and run past the National Audit Office to make sure that we are able to compare like with like? What I want to see is whether or not non-military accidents as well as injuries through military action are higher or lower.

Mr Jeffrey: We will certainly do our best to provide them.

Q56 Mr Davidson: That would be helpful. In terms of evacuated numbers, paragraph 2.3, as I read this, basically is saying that for understandable reasons a number of Reservists had to be brought back, but I am somewhat concerned to see in the final sentence that you do not know what the figures are as compared to Regulars. I would have thought that was an essential piece of management information. Why do you not know this?

Brigadier Baverstock: We have simply not broken out the figures between Regulars and Reservists in terms of casualties in the way that you are asking. Previously we have been concerned with the figures

¹ Ev 20–21

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over the Force as a whole and not breaking them down between the two. We have not previously seen that as being necessary.

Q57 Mr Davidson: I am having difficulty hearing you.

Brigadier Baverstock: We have simply not broken the figures out between Regulars and Reservists.

Q58 Mr Davidson: Okay; maybe I am picking this up wrong. I would thought that the reference here to “evacuate” covers the point about being physically and mentally prepared and some people will be neither and therefore have to be sent back. I would have thought that was surely an essential piece of information for you to be able to take into account the usefulness of Reserve Forces.

Brigadier Baverstock: No, because there is a whole stack of other factors which we look at in terms of preparation to deal with the task and also we try to match what we believe the Reservists are capable of doing to what they are doing. You are assuming in these figures that somehow the Reservists are worse than the Regulars overall. A lot of the evidence here is that people seem to think they were. We do not have figures to suggest whether that is true or not.

Q59 Mr Davidson: I am assuming that it is worse on the basis of what the sentence actually here says, which you have agreed, so I think it is not unreasonable to make that assumption. In particular, if you look at paragraph 2.32 where, if I remember correctly, it says, “. . . recruits have been allowed to join the organisation even when they have failed to meet necessary medical standards or to pass minimum physical fitness tests”. It is reasonable to read across from that that some people who are possibly sent on operations might not be up to standard and have to be sent back and therefore the evacuation figures would be higher. Would you accept that that is not an unreasonable set of assumptions?

Brigadier Baverstock: We believe that the standards at which Reserves go out to theatre are appropriate for the task they are being expected to do in theatre. When you talk about entry standards for new recruits, then what we are doing there—and this came up in an earlier question—is that the Army is now putting in place a policy to make sure that the physical fitness standards are the same—

Q60 Mr Davidson: That is right, but it is not in place yet so it is possible for people to join the Territorial Forces without passing the physical standards and, as far as I can see from this Report, there is not a hurdle in the middle of the process which would debar them from being sent on service. Is that correct?

Brigadier Baverstock: There is. During the mobilisation process part of the training that they get during mobilisation is to pass a series of tests which they need to pass in order to go out on operations, including physical fitness.

Q61 Mr Davidson: Am I right in thinking then that they can come in, as it were, without testing but before they were deployed they would have to come up to the same standard as Regular Forces?

Mr Jeffrey: They would be tested on coming in. Whether these tests have always been successful in the past is a moot point, but certainly before deployment—

Q62 Mr Davidson: Sorry—what do you mean, it is a moot point? You mean they failed?

Mr Jeffrey: In some cases they may well have done, yes. The significant point is that before deployment there will be pretty thorough-going tests as part of the process of—

Q63 Mr Davidson: And do they have to pass those? As you said, it is a moot point whether or not they pass the tests at the beginning, which I take it means that they can fail them, but do I take it that the fact that they then have Regulars tests halfway through means that they have to pass those before they get sent on deployment?

Mr Jeffrey: If they are selected for deployment they will generally speaking come into the main deployment centre at Chilwell. There they undergo physical tests. There is some evidence from the post-operational reports that are quoted in the NAO Report of some commanders in the field feeling that some of those who were deployed were not as fit as they might be, but we believe that area of pre-deployment tests is more effective than it was and it is certainly intended to prevent any who are not fit for duty being deployed into theatre.

Q64 Mr Davidson: That is hedged around with so many caveats that I am not entirely sure what you are saying to me.

Brigadier Baverstock: I think it is important to distinguish between passing training tests and achieving standards during normal annual activities and passing tests prior to going to theatre operations. In the former case not all Reservists pass the tests. The reason that Reservists get bounty is through passing those tests and not all Reservists every year get bounty, which means not all Reservists are meeting the laid-down standards because bounty is a reward for doing that. However, prior to going on operations each Service has laid down the standards that it expects these Reservists to achieve and they need to pass those at the standard laid down.

Q65 Mr Davidson: Sorry—time is limited. I just want to be assured that they have to pass a stringent set of tests before they are sent on operations.

Mr Jeffrey: They do.

Q66 Mr Davidson: Okay. Many of my colleagues have already covered points that I wanted to raise. In the reasons for leaving 38% indicated that there was a lack of opportunity for promotion. Major General, this obviously was not a problem for your good self and you are obviously a role model for any duke that wishes to join the TA but presumably you

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would accept that you are not necessarily typical. Can I ask how many of the people who are in the senior ranks of the TA come from modest backgrounds? How many are, for example, not public schoolboys?

Major General the Duke of Westminster: No idea.

Q67 Mr Davidson: Does that apply to everybody? None of you has any idea?

Major General the Duke of Westminster: How many would come from non-public school?

Q68 Mr Davidson: Yes.

Major General the Duke of Westminster: No.

Q69 Mr Davidson: Is that information not kept?

Major General the Duke of Westminster: It would be kept on their entry—I guess on their commissioning—

Brigadier Baverstock: It could be, I dare say, culled from people's personal records, but it is not something which we specifically look for as a piece of—

Q70 Mr Davidson: That is right, there is no monitoring as to whether or not you have equal opportunities at all in terms of access to the highest positions, whether those opportunities are available to everyone?

Major General the Duke of Westminster: There is opportunity. I am one who started as a trooper, really not thinking I was going to go any further than probably squadron leader, and it has taken me 35 years to get to where I am. Any suggestion that it was achieved otherwise I would not be desperately happy about. Everybody goes through exactly the same promotion exams. Everybody goes through the same testing—

Q71 Mr Davidson: Yes, I am sure they do. That is not the question I am asking though. I am seeking reassurance that in the top ranks of the TA there is a fair representation of all sections of society and if you do not have that information to hand I wonder if you could maybe write to the back desk. What I am looking for is an assurance that those in the top ranks are not only drawn from a very narrow band of society, and what I would like to see is perhaps, whether or not there is a—

Mr Jeffrey: We have a general issue in the Department, which you will recognise, Mr Davidson, about monitoring for diversity. We do keep pretty good records on the progress of women, ethnic minorities, *et cetera*. So far as I am aware, we do not pay any particular regard to, if I may put it this way, social origins but we can certainly see if there is any information which would help to clarify that.

Mr Davidson: I would find that very helpful just in order to demonstrate whether or not you are an overt organisation.

Q72 Mr Williams: I was fascinated to see that the Royal Naval's Reserve has been without any ships since 1994. Mr Jeffrey, did not anyone point this out to the Department?

Mr Jeffrey: The Royal Naval Reserve itself being without ships?

Major General the Duke of Westminster: The Royal Naval Reserve lost their minesweeping fleet in 1994.

Q73 Mr Williams: Is it not a bit of a disadvantage in training not having any ships?

Major General the Duke of Westminster: I think it is fair to say they miss them.

Q74 Mr Williams: What do you do? Take them down to Dover and put them on ferries for cheap trips across to get their sea legs?

Major General the Duke of Westminster: No. They obviously do sea time, and that is not always easy to get.

Q75 Mr Williams: No, I understand that.

Major General the Duke of Westminster: However, it was one of the defence reviews that removed the minesweeping fleet from the Royal Navy Reservists.

Q76 Mr Williams: Of all the Services the naval unit is so essentially a close-knit team, is it not?

Major General the Duke of Westminster: Yes.

Q77 Mr Williams: Without access to service in a naval ship, how can they get the experience and the commitment necessary to work as the tight team that you need in battle conditions?

Mr Jeffrey: They do have some access to the regular naval vessels and they do some joint training with the regular Royal Navy. As the General says, though, clearly it would be easier to do that if they had dedicated vessels of the kind we had in the past, but there is a cost issue here.

Q78 Mr Williams: I was puzzled at a piece of information we have here. One part of it makes sense and the other part I would be fascinated to have an explanation of, and perhaps the General might be able to explain it. A special usefulness has been found in Iraq for engineers, which you would understand, and bankers. Why bankers? What great military commitment do they have?

Major General the Duke of Westminster: Quite clearly the financial structures in southern Iraq are not quite what they are in the Square Mile in this country. In fact, we did use a merchant banker who had been called out, who had volunteered his services, and I suppose the best way to describe it was that he became chancellor of the exchequer to southern Iraq, handling the oil money and, as a Reservist, putting the financial structures in place to ensure that that money was properly looked after.

Q79 Mr Williams: But that is one banker. What were the other bankers doing?

Major General the Duke of Westminster: That is the only case that I know of.

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Q80 Mr Williams: Oh, we have got it in the plural here. Do not worry. I was just fascinated. It just seemed so obscure.

Major General the Duke of Westminster: Leading on from that, we call our Reservists forward for their military skills, but if there is a need in theatre and the operational imperative is that we need a banker, a lineman, or indeed any other specialist trade, the commanders in theatre can say to their Reservists, “Is anybody a lineman? Is anybody a banker? Is anybody this or that?”, and then we can use their civilian skills. That is the way it is played out.

Brigadier Baverstock: What we are referring to is reconstruction post-conflict where the agencies that otherwise be coming to do that are not all there in the early stages, and therefore the military has to play a role by putting some of these people in place. In Kosovo, for example, we had people running power stations, we even had an officer running a hotel.

Q81 Mr Williams: I can see your engineers coming in there.

Brigadier Baverstock: Exactly. That is where Reservists’ civilian skills very often really do come into their own. They provide an extra dimension and value to us if we can trawl and find these people and use them for their civilian skills.

Q82 Mr Williams: It was a fascinating tangential point. Coming on to what Ian was asking about, that you knew that people were failing fitness tests in 2004 but were still being accepted into the Reserves, it then goes on to tell us that you are trying new ways to apply entry standards, but these will not be completed till 2007. Why, having found out that people just needed better monitoring before they went in, does it take till 2007—and this is really for the military side; I do not care who answers it—to do it properly?

Brigadier Baverstock: Which section were you referring to?

Q83 Mr Williams: Paragraph 2.32 on page 20. I have got a synopsis of it here which is part of our questions. You knew that people were joining the Territorial Army despite failing basic fitness tests in 2004, but your trial of new ways to apply entry standards will not be completed until November 2007.

Brigadier Baverstock: The phrase is “entry standards”. The way that Reservists are recruited into the Army and then go through a series of tests and so on is very different from the way the Regulars are who go to the single centres do it. Therefore, getting a process in place which is properly resourced with the right people to go on and run it is quite a complicated thing. You have to decide on the process you are going to use, you have to assess how far Reservists will travel to go to a specific centre. You have to put initial staff in place to do that, you have to find the money to pay for it and do it and you have to set the standards themselves. It is not an easy process to go through.

Q84 Mr Williams: Can I just interrupt? I accept that but how far is it just a resource factor? Three years does not make sense otherwise.

Brigadier Baverstock: It is not just resources because there are a number of models in addition that you may have to try, and a number of ways of doing it. You do not know, for example, if we were to ask a Reservist to, say, travel from a mobilisation centre in Scotland to a recruitment centre where these tests are being done in, say, Yorkshire, whether he would actually do that, so we need to trial the systems to see whether or not they will work.

Q85 Mr Williams: But in the meantime, commanders are having to deal with people who are less than fit for purpose, to use a phrase that is popular at the moment. We understand that commanders in the field have expressed concern that pre-deployment assessments of mental and physical fitness are too easy to pass. The consequence of that, from your own experience, which I am sure you will confirm, is that when you have had to call out Reservists in some instances you have had to call out five Reservists in order to be able to fly one to Iraq. You had to call out five to find one who was fit to go and take part in the military operation.

Brigadier Baverstock: The five to one figure refers to regular Reservists, in other words, former regular servicemen who have left and can be called back to the colours.

Q86 Mr Williams: Would it be more or less than the others?

Brigadier Baverstock: For the volunteer Reserves the mobilisation risk is significantly less. TELIC 1 is about 2.5%.

Major General the Duke of Westminster: It was 1 to 1.2 or 1 to 1.4.

Brigadier Baverstock: It has fallen down to that.

Q87 Mr Williams: So these are people who have finished their regular service. They then have their period on reserve and expect to go into retirement?

Brigadier Baverstock: Yes.

Q88 Mr Williams: Okay; that explains that factor. You are reducing the manning requirement for Territorial Army medics. I see from the Report that you have a real problem with medics. The Army has a 40% shortfall, the Air Force has a 33% shortfall and the Navy has a 35% shortfall. How successful are you at trying to remedy it or are you not going to remedy it but simply lower your request for numbers?

Brigadier Baverstock: We are not lowering the request for numbers or the requirement for numbers because of a shortage of medics to try and make the figures look better. That is done against a manpower planning process run by the Ministry of Defence and the single Services to see how many medics they generally require and a balance is struck between the Regulars they require and the Reservists they need to go on to make up the capability. It is certainly not done as a way of cooking the books.

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Q89 Mr Williams: I was interested in the observation that it is anticipated that there will be greater difficulty in recruiting in the future than there has been in the past and that this may be demographically explicable. Can you give us a background to that from the Department's point of view and what you hope to do about it?

Mr Jeffrey: It comes back to the discussion we were having earlier about the recruitment climate generally. We feel that there are some signs that this is a difficult climate, partly because of demographics, as you say, and partly because of what people want to do with their spare time these days. On the other side there is also evidence that we are getting a bit more success than we were and are attracting people who are attracted by the idea of operational deployment. It is a changing picture and certainly we feel it is worth investing more effort in recruitment through the main Army, Navy and Air Force recruitment schemes using the Armed Forces recruitment centres for Reservist recruitment as well as Regular recruitment.

Q90 Mr Williams: This applies to Regular recruitment as well as to Reserve recruitment, obviously, does it not?

Mr Jeffrey: Yes.

Q91 Mr Williams: Is it not somewhat alarming, because you are short of people at the moment, with the increasing commitments we have undertaken overseas?

Mr Jeffrey: The position in terms of complement differs as between the Reservists and the Regulars. We are some way short of complement. The Territorial Army, as I recall, has about 84% of its authorised complement, and that is an increase on a year ago, so we are, as I said, heading in the right direction. The regular Army is much closer. It is something like 98% or 99% of the manning level that we are working to but in each case we do have to take account of the social climate in which we are operating.

Q92 Chairman: One last question from me to wrap up this thing about the Royal Navy and the question you were asked about the minesweepers. I have taken an interest myself in it for some time. My Royal Navy career was barely more glorious than my Army one. I rose to the dizzy heights of Royal Navy university-based acting midshipman, but I have talked over the years to RNR officers and they have always sold me the party line that they did not want to keep their minesweepers. They would much rather be serving on operational shifts and it was a bit of a Dad's Army afloat when they used minesweepers, but you seem to be saying something different here, General and Mr Jeffrey. You seemed to be implying to us quite an important point, that there is a cost element here, and the RNR in their hearts would rather have their own minesweepers, especially currently, going back to my first question to you, because they are not getting much operational time afloat anyway in Royal Navy ships.

Mr Jeffrey: What I was saying, and I cannot speak for the General, was that they do get some experience of training on Royal Navy ships, and inevitably, because they are deployed to the extent they are, that is less than it might be, and I can see that that is not an optimal situation. I do not know, because I am not familiar with the history myself, what the history of the minesweepers is and whether they were suitable for that sort of training.

Q93 Chairman: Do you want to comment on this, Major General, because you must have had many conversations over the years with RNR officers about their minesweepers?

Major General the Duke of Westminster: It is rather like a cavalryman losing his tank; it is very much the same sort of thing. The role of the RNR has changed very considerably over the last three years. They are now in support of the fleet and they now fulfil primarily a niche capability and this role is both out at sea and on shore. By that I mean that their role is now very much in the force protection area which it is deemed the Royal Navy needs. They do have their branch structures and logistic branch, of course, which is a very highly successful branch, but their role has changed. Their role has changed largely because of lessons learned from TELIC 1 wherein, when they came to a large scale mobilisation, ie, the Royal Navy, they found that their Reserves were not configured appropriately to a large expeditionary operation, as TELIC 1 was, so in the intervening time they have been down-testing and re-adjusting and they have changed their role, so the concept of sea time and time-at-sea specialist weapons officers et cetera is now not so imperative as it was.

Q94 Chairman: And they are happy with that, I take it?

Major General the Duke of Westminster: They are happy with that?

Q95 Chairman: Yes.

Major General the Duke of Westminster: The Commodore behind me, Chairman, is nodding his head vigorously—yes.

Q96 Mr Davidson: When I was back home in the Borders recently I saw the Royal Scots (as was) seven-a-side team, which is doing exceedingly well but it was composed entirely of Fijians because they had recruitment difficulties. Has the TA recruited similarly?

Mr Jeffrey: I do not believe so. It is essentially a domestic organisation we are looking at.

Major General the Duke of Westminster: We recruit purely British citizens. We do not recruit from the Commonwealth *per se*. We have just agreed that now we will invite Gurkhas who wish to live in this country and take their British citizenship, if they so wish, to join, but as regards Fijians and others, unless they are British citizens and British residents they do not join.

Q97 Mr Davidson: Is that a different rule for the Regulars as compared to the Territorials?

 Mr Bill Jeffrey, Major General the Duke of Westminster and Brigadier Neil A C Baverstock

Brigadier Baverstock: I think the General is referring to recruiting people from the Commonwealth countries. The eligibility rules are the same for Regulars, and we have just been looking at this ourselves. The only difference is that Commonwealth citizens are allowed to join the Volunteer Reserves but they have to be resident in this country.

Q98 Mr Davidson: Yes. I can see that coming for the weekend training would be somewhat difficult if they were travelling from Fiji.

Brigadier Baverstock: Exactly, but they are able to do that.

Q99 Mr Davidson: So if Fijians were here they would be able to join?

Brigadier Baverstock: Fijian, South African or whoever.

Mr Jeffrey: What we do not do, as we do with the Regulars, is to go to Fiji in order to recruit them.

Q100 Mr Davidson: Because obviously you are recruiting for a different purpose. The second point is on the question of people's progress throughout the ranks and you mentioned that you have risen from trooper to Major General. What I am not clear about is how common that is—and obviously, you are the only Major General and therefore there is only one who can have your part—and whether or not people do have the opportunity to rise from the ranks, stay in, I think you said 35 years or so, and rise to the heights, or whether or not the average length of time in the service is very much less than that and therefore people who do not rise. Do you have figures for that?

Mr Jeffrey: I do not have figures to hand. The average length of time is undoubtedly less than that, but within the population there are a number of people, of whom the General is a distinguished example, who stay in the Reserves for a long time and do progress through the ranks.

Brigadier Baverstock: A large proportion of people are commissioned from the ranks into the Voluntary Reserves. In the Naval Reserves centre, for example, in London, HMS President, the majority of people who are officers would have come out of the—

Q101 Mr Davidson: I wonder if you could just give us the NAO figures for the numbers in each of the Services that are commissioned from the ranks with an indication of how many of them rise and how high in order that we can try and clarify that.²

Mr Jeffrey: As we have been discussing earlier, there may be a limitation in the data but we will certainly do our best.

Mr Mitchell: You agreed with Alan Williams that demographic changes will affect recruitment. There is also going to be a shrinking body of Regulars from which Reservists will be recruited. You are already running, on this chart you supplied us with in the memorandum,³ at about 85% of Reserves as a proportion of the numbers required, although the shipless Royal Naval Reserve figures seem to have shot up since being deprived of ships. Given those three facts, and given the fact that with reduced defence capacity, which has happened already, there are going to be more gaps to fill, and a Government (and is not just ours) which has increased output of wars or that we are getting involved in more wars, how are you going to treat the Reserves in this situation? It is going to be more important to fill the gaps. Surely it needs to be built up and invested in and cosseted far more than has been the case over the last decade.

Q102 Chairman: Why not use that as a general wrap-up question and you have the last shout, Mr Jeffrey.

Mr Jeffrey: I think that is precisely why we are taking very seriously the challenge of recruiting up to complement. As this session has brought out very clearly, the Reserves are making a more and more important contribution and the Regular Forces are pretty stretched, so it is important. We are not only driving ahead with recruitment campaigns of the kind we described earlier; we are also—and this is a point that comes out of the Report—looking more towards the Regular Reserves. There is this great body of people who still have a commitment to us. Not all of them are suitable these days but there may be many of them who would be interested in becoming Volunteer Reservists and marketing the Reserves among the population of ex-Regulars is therefore something we are paying quite a bit of attention to.

Chairman: Gentlemen, thank you very much for what has been a very interesting hearing. I repeat what I said at the beginning. With 12,000 of your men, Reserve Forces, having served in Iraq, our thanks go out to them for what they have done on behalf of our country but there are still some concerns about equipment and about training and we would be very concerned if manning levels were to fall any lower. Thank you very much, gentlemen.

³ Ev 15–20

² Ev 22–23

Memorandum submitted by the Ministry of Defence

The National Audit Office Report on the Reserve Forces published on 31 March 2006 presented some statistical information on the manning and other key aspects of those Forces, as well as describing their operational employment. Some of the picture thus presented can now be updated, particularly where annual information only extended up to 2004–05 at the time of the report’s publication. There has also been an important policy announcement on enhanced provision for Reservists’ mental healthcare since the report was published. I therefore felt it would be helpful to offer a written memorandum, prior to the forthcoming Public Accounts Committee hearing on 28 June, providing an update on the current position with respect to these matters.

The Memorandum reproduces a number of graphs and figures that correspond to those included within the National Audit Office’s Report. These have been updated using data from the same sources and compiled upon the same basis as before unless the text indicates otherwise.

I hope that this updated information will be of use to the Committee in advance of the session later this month.

THE USE OF RESERVES ON OPERATIONS

The Report states at paragraph 1.1 that, “The Ministry of Defence has moved from maintaining little-used Reserves Forces for a war of national survival to keeping Reserve Forces that have played a significant role in supporting most operations over the past 10 years”. This continues to be the case at present, and while the majority of mobilised Reservists are still deployed on Operation TELIC, an increasing number of those called out are now being sent to Afghanistan. For example, of 630 Army Reservists accepted into service between 1 January and 31 May this year 420 were mobilised for Operation TELIC, 124 for service in Afghanistan, and 86 for service in the Balkans.

These figures illustrate that members of the Reserve Forces continue to be used in all major theatres of operation. Since the Report’s publication the Minister for the Armed Forces, the Rt Hon Adam Ingram, MP has issued a new call-out order under section 56 of the Reserve Forces Act 1996 so that Reservists may continue to be called out into permanent service to support military operations in the Balkans. The order took effect on the 1st of April and was reported to Parliament in a Written Ministerial Statement thereafter.

The figures below present the number of Reservists mobilised by service and theatre of operation as at 30 April 2006:¹

	<i>Op TELIC</i>	<i>Afghanistan</i>	<i>Sierra Leone</i>	<i>Balkans</i>
Royal Navy	—	3	—	—
Royal Marines	1	—	—	—
Army	452	104	2	64
Royal Air Force	24	9	—	2
Total	477	116	2	66

MANNING OF THE RESERVE FORCES

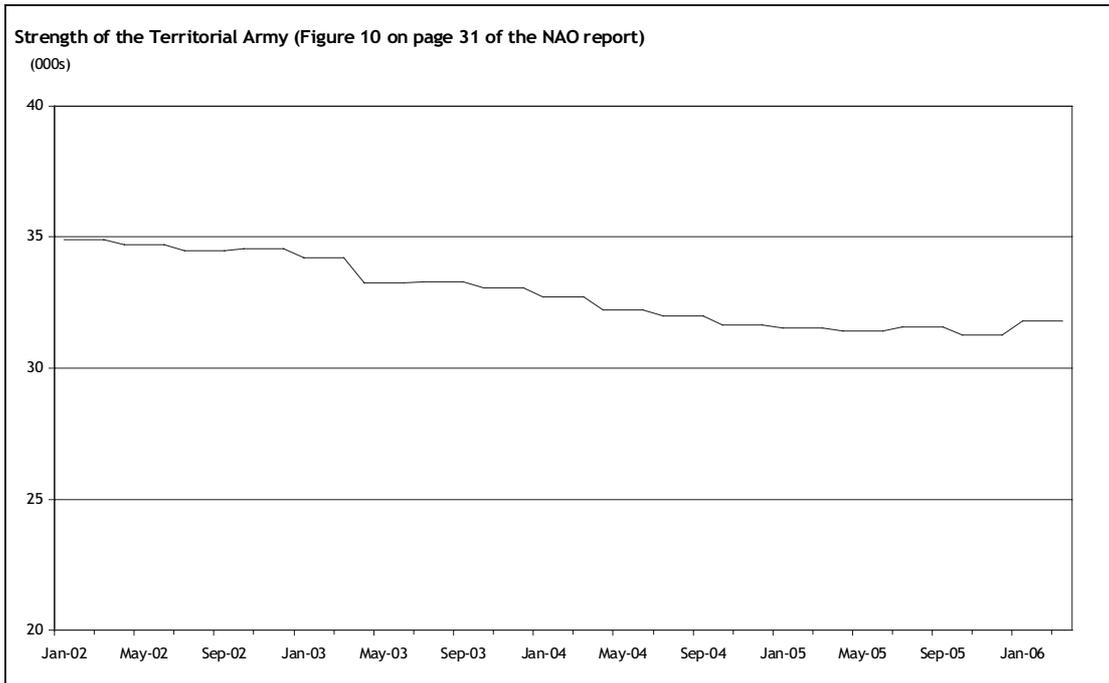
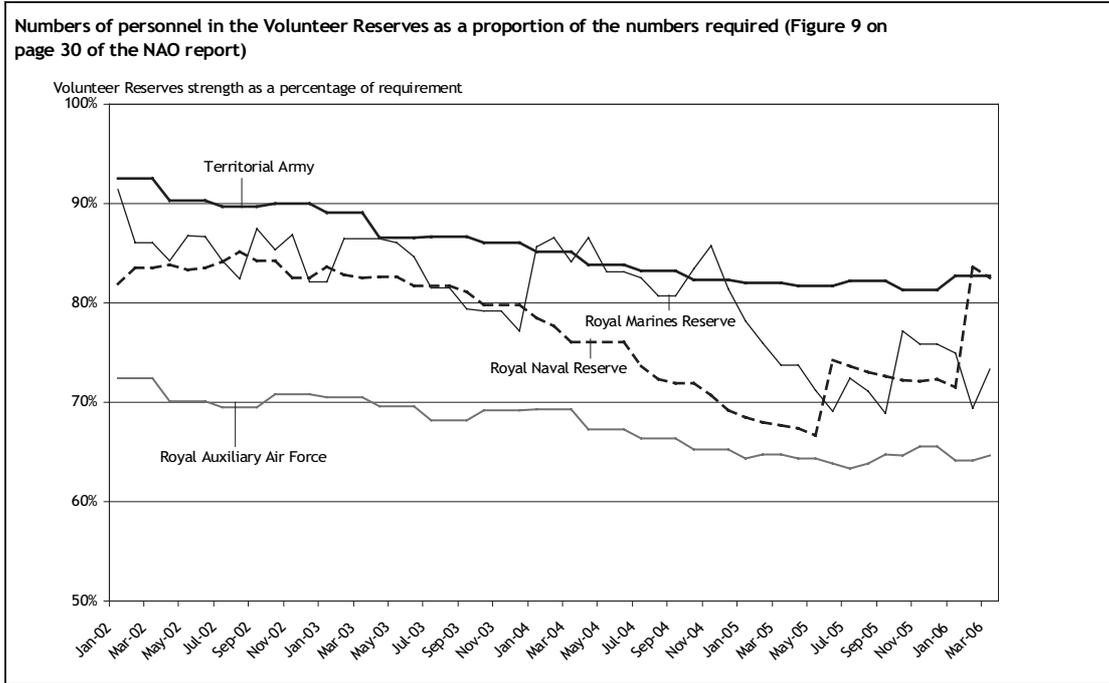
The Report contains a number of pieces of information pertaining to the manning of the Reserve Forces. Figure 1 states the requirement and strength of each of the Volunteer Reserve Forces as at December 2005 given in the National Audit Office Report. A comparison of this information against the latest position at April 2006 is contained in the following table:

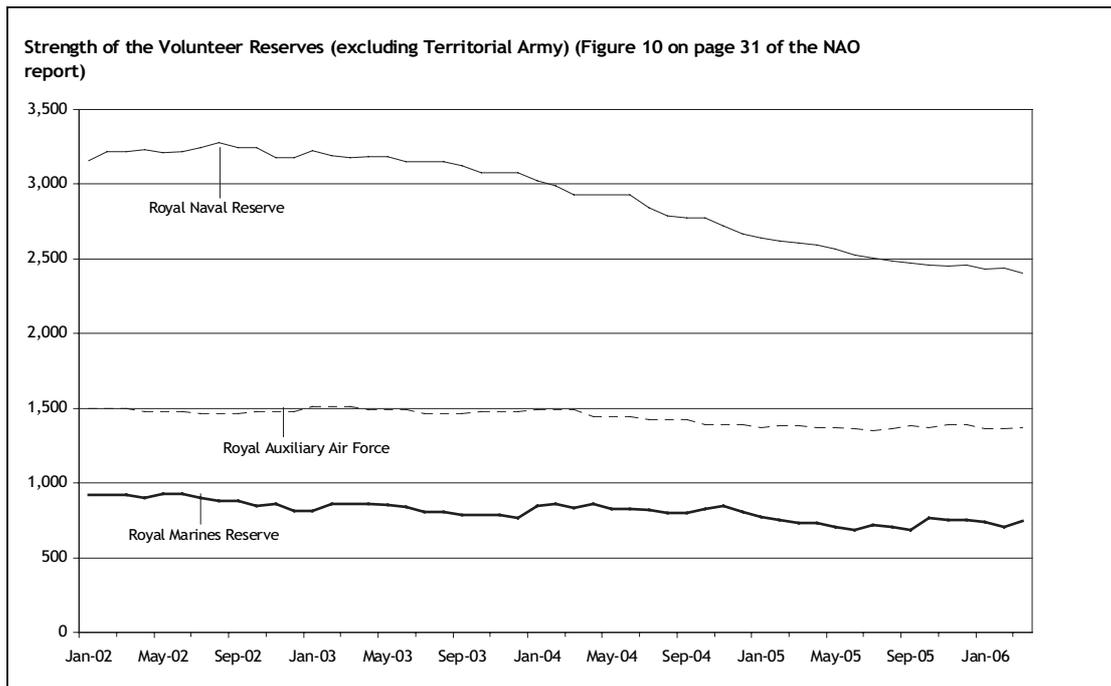
<i>Volunteer Reserve Force</i> ²	<i>Requirement</i>		<i>Strength</i>	
	<i>December 2005</i>	<i>April 2006</i>	<i>December 2005</i>	<i>April 2006</i>
Royal Naval Reserve	3,400	2,910	2,460	2,386
Royal Marines Reserve	990	1,020	750	785
Territorial Army	38,430	38,430	31,260	32,150
Royal Auxiliary Air Force	2,120	2,120	1,390	1,350

¹ Figures include both volunteer and regular reserves serving in the Joint Operational Area and therefore exclude those on pre-deployment training and post operational tour leave, medical cases and staff appointments in the UK, and Sponsored Reserves.

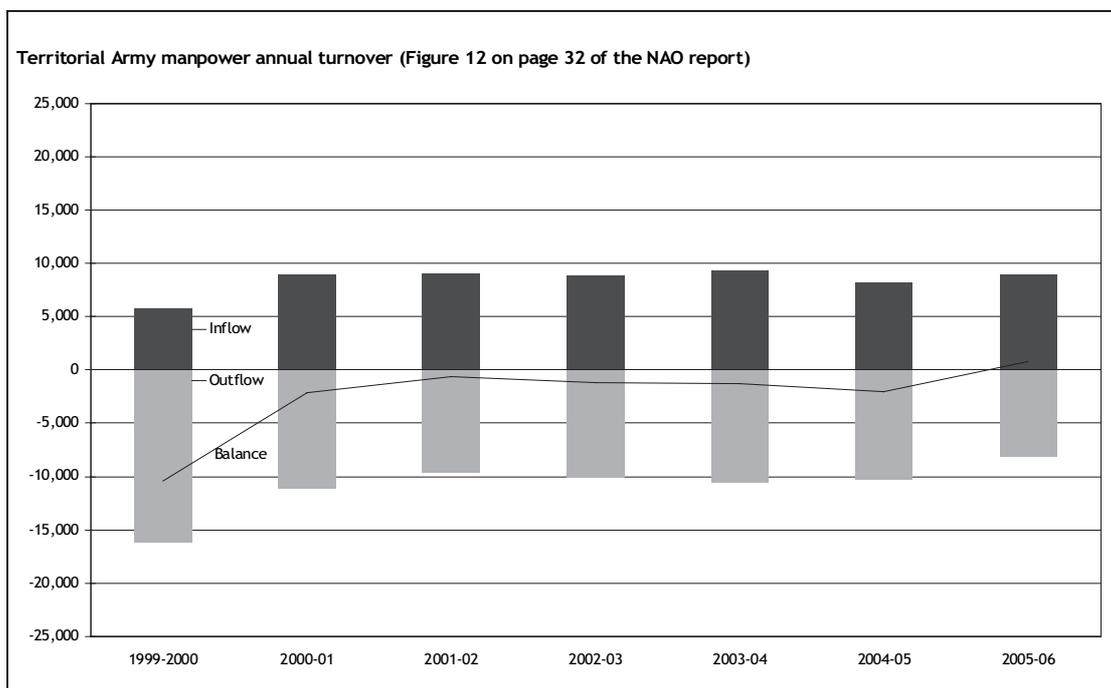
² In common with the National Audit Office report, all manning figures quoted in the Memorandum, except where stated, exclude university cadet forces, Full-Time Reserve Service personnel (except for the Royal Naval Reserve and the Royal Marines Reserve), and, in the Territorial Army, Non-Regular Permanent Staff.

Figures 9 and 10 in the report have been updated accordingly, and are reproduced below:

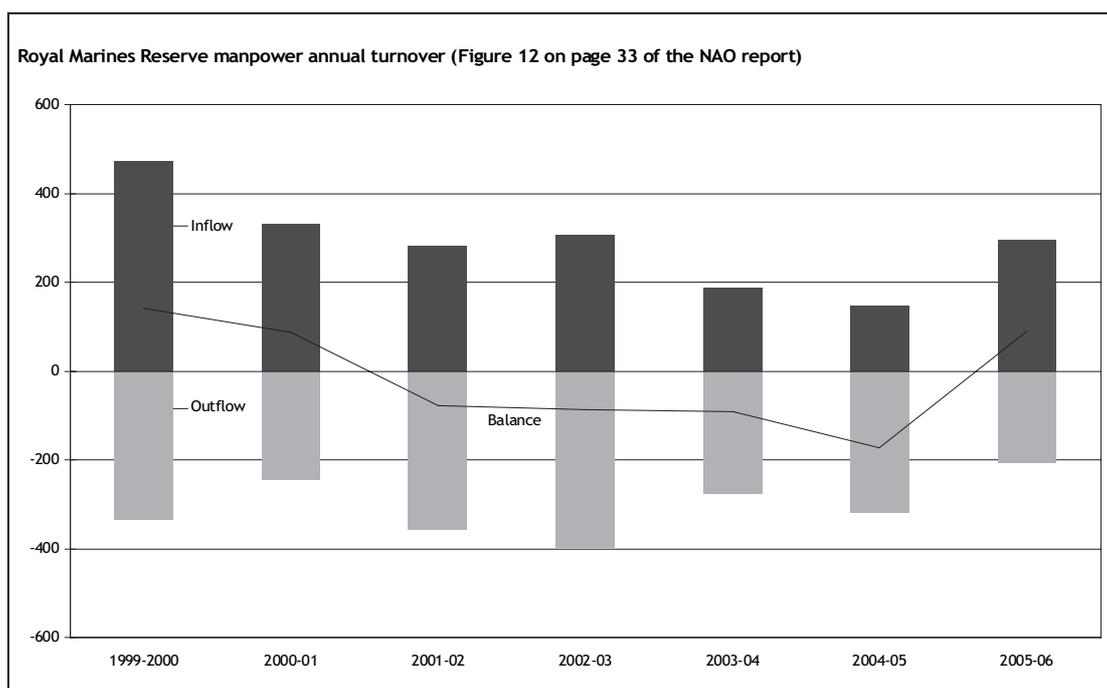
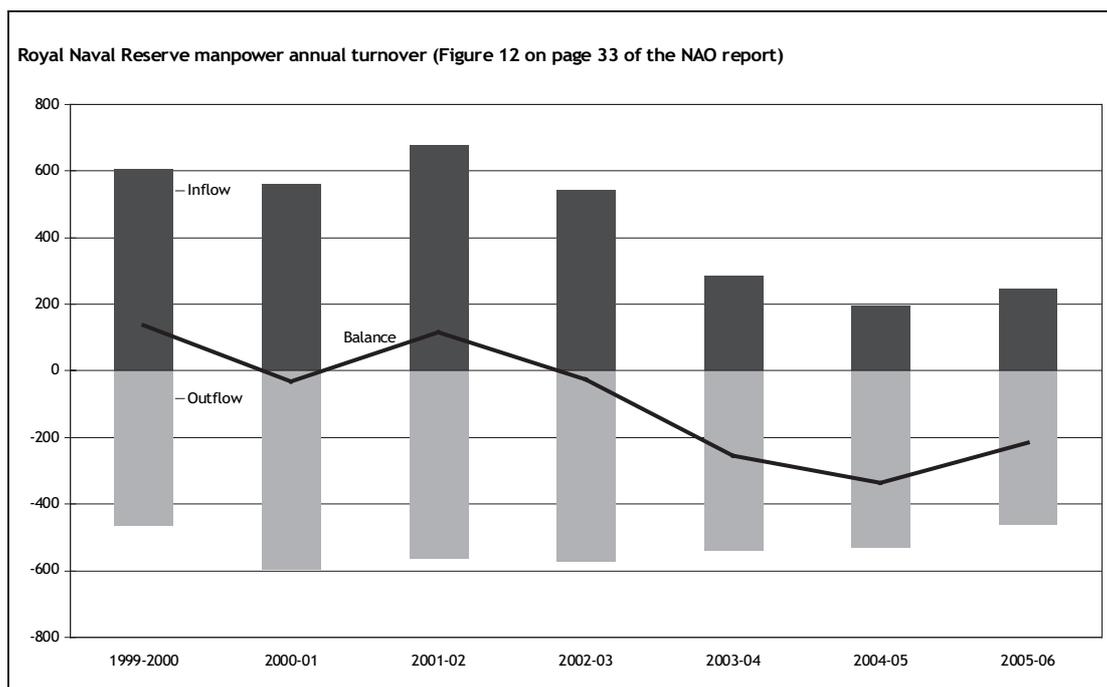




In addition to manning levels in the Volunteer Reserves, the report also presents information on levels of annual turnover at figure 12. This figure, updated with data for 2005–06, is reproduced below.³

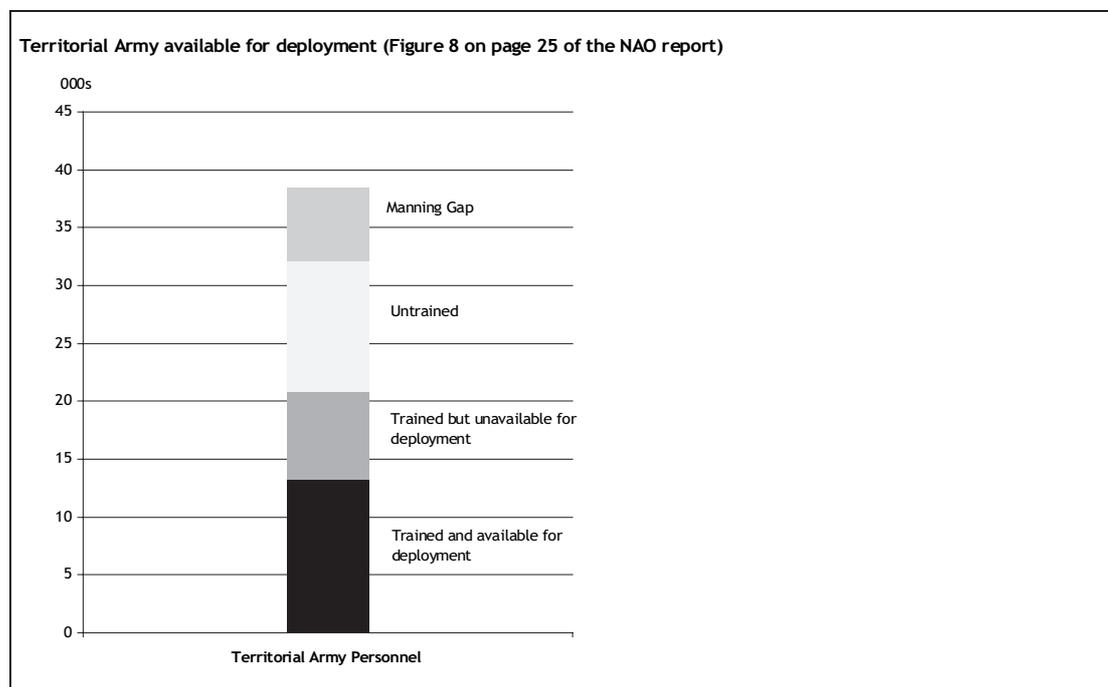


³ In common with the National Audit Office Report, data for the Territorial Army include University Officer Training Corps personnel.



We have not updated turnover statistics for the Royal Auxiliary Air Force in Figure 12 as the data (given on a calendar year basis) in the Report was up to date to the end of 2005. We are currently looking to analyse the data by financial year but this data has not yet been fully validated.

Figure 8 of the Report illustrates the proportion of the Territorial Army that is available for deployment, which is partly a function of manning levels, as well as the level of turnover in personnel and the efficiency of the training system, and the level of operational usage already experienced by trained personnel. An updated figure 8 reflecting numbers as at the end of 2005–06 is reproduced below:



The revised figure reflects the increase in TA manpower outlined in the table above, as well as an increase in the overall number of those trained of 580, and of those trained and available for deployment of 1,162 compared against the position presented in the report.

RESERVISTS' MENTAL HEALTHCARE

The Report states at paragraph 4.29 that, “The Department is currently deciding whether, for a period of time after demobilisation, it should offer Reservists the opportunity to have potential mental health problems assessed and, where necessary, treated by specialist defence medical personnel. The Department is awaiting the final results of research by King’s College, London on tracking the health of cohorts of Armed Forces personnel who have returned from Operation TELIC”.

The King’s College research, which was sponsored by the Department, was published in *The Lancet* on 16 May 2006. Findings showed that higher percentages of Reservists displayed symptoms of common mental health problems and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a result of service in the 2003 Iraq War than either the Regulars who served during the early phase of the Operation (Operation TELIC 1) or those Reservists who did not deploy.

In tandem with the publication of this research the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence, Mr Tom Watson MP, announced the Department’s intention to introduce an enhanced post operational mental healthcare programme for recently-demobilised Reservists through a Written Ministerial Statement on 16th May. Details of the scheme are as follows:

- MOD would offer a mental health assessment, conducted by appropriately qualified members of the Defence Medical Services (DMS), to any member of the Reserve forces who had been demobilised since January 2003 following deployment on any operation overseas and who had a concern about their mental health as a result.
- If individuals were assessed as having a mental health problem that was categorised primarily as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or a related traumatic adjustment disorder, that was directly related to their operational deployment and of a nature that could be treated within the resources of the DMS, they would be offered out-patient treatment by the DMS.
- If the assessment identified cases that fell outside the parameters set out above, such as complex multi-disorder diagnoses or acute cases requiring in-patient care, the DMS would refer them—with its assessment results—on to the appropriate NHS providers in order to assist their access to NHS treatment, as well as encouraging contact with the relevant welfare organisations to ensure follow-up.

It was further stated that another announcement would be made in a few months time to confirm the details of the service that would be provided, including the location(s) at which the assessments would take place, and the date on which the service would commence. A Project Officer has been appointed to take forward the implementation process and to conclude these details. Once the project plans and timetable are sufficiently far advanced for us to determine with confidence a date when the scheme will be able to commence, a further announcement will be made as promised.

Supplementary memorandum submitted by the Ministry of Defence

Question 51 (Mr Ian Davidson): *Could I ask about casualty figures for the Territorial Forces in general? Do you have those for deaths in service, for injuries from military events and for accidents, and how do they compare with those for the Regular Forces.*

DEATHS AND INJURIES RESULTING FROM SERVICE IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

Deaths

<i>Theatre</i>		<i>All</i>	<i>Regular</i>	<i>Reservist</i>
Afghanistan	<i>Died on operations</i>	46	45	1
	of which combat related	25	24	1
	(1 Jan 2001 to 6 Feb 2007)			
	of which accident related	18	18	—
	of which other	3	3	—
Iraq	<i>Died on operations</i>	130	125	5
	of which combat related	100	98	2
	(18 Jan 2003 to 6 Feb 2007)			
	of which accident related	22	21	1
	of which other	8	6	2

Background notes:

a. Deaths in Afghanistan are for the period 1 January 2001 to 6 February 2007. Deaths in Iraq are for the period 18 January 2003 to 6 February 2007.

b. The information on deaths by “theatre of operation” presented here are for all serving personnel in the Armed Forces including full time reservists and Territorial Army.

c. To record information on cause and circumstances of death, Defence Analytical Services Agency (DASA) uses the World Health Organisation’s International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Health-related Problems 10th revision (ICD-10). In addition, DASA also record the casualty reporting categories used by the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Cell (JCCC), used for reporting to the Chain of Command and for notifying the next of kin.

d. Combat related deaths have been defined as those with a JCCC reporting casualty category of “killed in action” or “died of wounds” whilst on deployment. The term killed in action is used when a person has died before receiving medical attention whilst died of wounds refers to all other violent deaths.

e. Deaths on operations not related to combat have been broken down into accidental deaths and other. Deaths due to accidents include those deaths not assigned a cause of death pending the outcome of an investigation. These figures may change as inquests are conducted. “Other” deaths include deaths due to illness and deaths due to violent and unnatural causes.

Injuries

Notification of and information held on injuries prior to 1 January 2006 does not distinguish between Regular and Reserve Forces. However, the total number of Regular and Reservist injuries on Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan since 1 January 2006 is shown in the table below:

(DATA ON INJURIES FROM 01/01/06 TO 31/12/06)

<i>Type</i>	<i>Category</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>Military Action</i>	<i>Accident</i>	
Regular	171	93	264
Reservist	6	8	14
Total	177	101	278

Background notes:

a. The Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC) Cause Categories “Friendly Action/Fire” and “Enemy Action/Fire” were used to extract the Military Action data.

The JCCC Cause Categories “Operational Accident”, “Non-Operational Accident”, “Road Traffic Accident” and “Violent and Unnatural Causes” were used to extract the Accident data.

Any casualties with the Cause Category “Natural Causes” are not included in the data.

The medical listings for casualties that are reflected in these numbers are as follows:

Very Seriously Injured/Wounded—The injury is of such severity that life or reason is imminently endangered.

Seriously Injured/Wounded—The injury is of such severity that there is cause for immediate concern but there is no imminent danger to life or reason.

Incapacitating Injury—Injury requires hospitalisation, whose condition does not warrant classification as Very Seriously Injured or Seriously Injured, but whose injury makes the person physically or mentally unable to communicate with friends or relatives.

Minor Injury—Does not warrant hospitalisation. Only for use in the event of high profile multiple casualty incidents when details of all personnel involved are required.

Unlisted Condition—An individual whose injury requires hospitalisation but whose condition does not warrant classification as Very Seriously Injured, Seriously Injured or Incapacitating Injury.

A doctor will decide on how an injury should be listed.

Question 101 (Mr Ian Davidson): *I wonder if you could just give us the figures for the numbers in each of the Services that are commissioned from the ranks with an indication of how many of them rise and how high in order that we can try and clarify that.*

PROMOTIONS

Royal Naval and Royal Marine Reserves (Maritime Reserves)

The majority of Royal Naval Reserves (RNR) and Royal Marine Reserves (RMR) officers are promoted from the ranks and attend the same Admiralty Interview Board as their regular counterparts. However, some 20% are direct entrants, all of whom are former regular officers, Merchant Navy Officers or Medical Personnel. A limited Officer Direct Entry scheme has now been introduced for mature candidates with civilian qualifications of interest to the service. These candidates must also pass the Admiralty Interview Board.

In the period between 1 April 2000 and 31 March 2006, of 68 RNR and 66 RMR personnel, who were appointed as officers, 80% had been promoted from the ranks.

Of the Maritime Reserves’ Senior Management comprising one Commodore, one Colonel RMR and five Captains, five have been promoted from the ranks, one is a former Regular Officer and one is a direct entrant doctor.

Of the 13 RNR units, 11 are commanded by officers promoted from the ranks and two by former Regular Officers.

The RMR units are structured differently and are all commanded by current Regular Officers.

Royal Auxiliary Air Force (RAuxAF)

The RAuxAF has two Group Captains and 17 Wing Commanders, three of whom were commissioned from the ranks.

In 2003–04, 32 RAuxAF applicants attended the Officers and Air Crew Selection Centre (OASC) at Cranwell. Of those, 19 were commissioned, including 3 promoted from the ranks.

In 2004–05, 42 applicants attended the OASC. Of those, 29 were commissioned, including eight promoted from the ranks.

In 2005–06, 31 applicants attended the OASC. Of those, 14 were commissioned, including four promoted from the ranks.

Territorial Army (TA)

The numbers of Territorial Army personnel commissioned from the ranks are not currently recorded centrally. The figures in the table below show the number of Officers joining from the ranks, split by age group, since October 2003. It is assumed that those joining over the age of 30 would have been commissioned directly after a period of service in the ranks.

INTAKE OF TA OFFICERS "FROM THE RANKS" SPLIT BY AGE GROUP
FOR THE PERIOD 1 OCTOBER 2003 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2006

<i>Financial Year</i>	<i>30 and Under</i>	<i>31 to 35</i>	<i>36 and Over</i>	<i>Total</i>
1 October 2003 to 31 March 2004	30	20	60	100
1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005	70	20	100	180
1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006	80	20	110	210
1 April 2006 to 30 November 2006	30	10	60	110

Background notes:

- a. Reliable inflow figures prior to October 2003 are not available.
 - b. The information is compiled from data contained on the Officer's Record of Service and relates to those Officers who joined the Territorial Army Officer strength during the period above "From The Ranks".
 - c. Figures exclude Non Regular Permanent Staff (NRPS) and Full Time Reserve Service personnel (FTRS).
 - d. The figures are rounded to the nearest 10. Figures ending in 5 have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias. Due to the rounding methods used, the totals may not always equal the sum of the parts.
-