



Russian Operational Reserve Developments

OE Watch Commentary: The Russian Ministry of Defense has been tinkering with wide-scale reforms of the military reserve system for several years. The current reserve system was inherited from the Soviet Union and designed for supporting a doctrine that required maintaining a large strategic reserve of troops that could be mobilized in the event of large-scale warfare. It was composed of conscripts and officers who had completed their mandatory service obligation and had been discharged from active service, with rare and infrequent call-ups to test mobilization capabilities. A consequence of the Soviet Union's mass mobilization doctrine was the necessity to maintain units and equipment for these mobilized reservists. These units were/are manned by small full-time cadres that would keep the equipment serviceable and maintain enough institutional knowledge to bring the mobilized reserve up to some level of combat readiness before deployment. Many of these "skeleton units" were disbanded after the 2009 "New Look" reforms, as there was a belief that resources were being wasted on maintaining a mass mobilization capability to the detriment of bringing active units up to full levels of operational readiness. There has been some debate about whether Russia needs to maintain a large strategic reserve or should switch to more of an operational reserve. Opinions vary between two major camps, the reformers saying that an operational reserve would do far more to enhance security because it would be smaller, better trained, more able to quickly become combat ready in a national emergency, and more likely to be called in an emergency, while older retired senior officers that believe that the capability to mass mobilize should be maintained at all costs. Debate on this issue appears to be settled, as Russia is increasing both capabilities.

The large strategic reserve will be developed by maintaining the universal conscription system and increasing the size and scope of Volunteer Society for Cooperation with the Army, Aviation, and Navy (DOSAAF) programs that provides military training and militarily useful skills to Russian youth. The accompanying excerpted articles explain how Russia is implementing the operational side of its reserve development. As explained in the accompanying article from the 17 April 2018 edition of *Izvestiya*, Russia has now enacted legislation to govern reserve promotions. Reservists that are regularly engaged in military training will be eligible for promotion up to the rank of Colonel (O6/NATO OF-5), providing appropriate time-in-grade and military education requirements have been met. The article from *Guarding the Arctic* explains a new operational reserve system (мобилизационных людских ресурсов, or mobilization human resources) that is being implemented in the North Sea Fleet, which controls most military forces in the Northern Joint Strategic Command. Russian reservists reportedly serve up to three days a month and conduct one 30 day training period per year, requirements that are very similar to the U.S. National Guard and Reserve. Reservists receive 12 percent of their rank and positional pay (with incentive pay for being in the north) most of the time, but receive full allowances during their 30 day training period. If this new system proves effective, it could well be implemented throughout the rest of the Russian military. The article from the 3 April 2018 edition of *Izvestiya* explains how the Russian Navy will use an operational reserve. The Russian Navy envisages forming a reserve crew for approximately 4-5 ships of a given class. This development is intended to relieve the burden upon active duty crews which have been far more active in recent years, and in some cases, are spending significant time at sea. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

Source: Aleksandr Kruglov, "Военнослужащий запаса сможет дослужиться до полковника: Минобороны создало специальные аттестационные комиссии для присвоения званий «запасникам» (A Reserve Serviceman Will Be Able to Serve Until Colonel: The Ministry of Defense Has Created Special Evaluation Boards to Promote Reservists)," *Izvestiya*, 17 April 2018. <https://iz.ru/731102/aleksandr-kruglov/voennosluzhashchii-zapasa-smozhet-dosluzhitsia-do-polkovnika>

A reserve serviceman will be able of serving until the rank of colonel.' For the first time in the history of the native Ministry of Defense, special evaluation boards have been created under the military commissariats. It is they who will decide whether a candidate is worthy of receiving a promotion. In the process, the board will take into account the candidate's military education, state of health, ethical qualities and professional aptitude. In the experts' opinion, the new approach will stimulate reserve servicemen to increase their qualifications. A Military Department spokesman told Izvestiya that the Defense Minister's Order "On The Procedures for the Conduct of the Evaluation for the Award of Military Ranks to Citizens, Who Are in the Russian Federation Armed Forces Reserve" is already in force. The new document consolidated and streamlined the requirements for reserve officers, who are seeking to obtain a promotion.

The evaluation boards will appear under the republic, kray, and oblast military commissariats. Their sessions will be conducted once per quarter. Four employees of the corresponding commissariat and one government official will be part of each board. They will divide all reserve officers into two categories – those assigned to a military unit and those who are on the general list at the military commissariat. They will automatically place the former on a list of candidates for promotion. In the event of the declaration of a mobilization, these officers must appear at a definite military unit, where a position has already been reserved for them...

It will be easiest of all to become a senior lieutenant. It is adequate to receive the evaluation board's favorable endorsement and to undergo a medical examination in order to do this. The promotion procedure is significantly complicated from captain and higher. The candidate will have to complete training assemblies and retraining. He will have to pass tests based upon their results...The minimum intervals of time between promotion to the next military rank are specified in the legislation. So, a senior lieutenant will be able to become a captain in four years. A major will have to wait five years for promotion to lieutenant colonel. A reserve officer will be able to service for no more than to colonel.

In the process, they will now award a below-the-zone promotion to a reserve serviceman. Thus the department intends to provide them an incentive to increase their qualifications. The defense minister will make a personal decision on each officer here...Officers, who are not on active military service, will be included in the reserve. The state's mobilization capabilities are increased by the "reservists" in the event of a large-scale war.

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Continued: Russian Operational Reserve Developments

“The innovation is connected with the growing complexity of the tasks facing the Navy. The Russian Fleet is returning to the World’s Oceans.”

Source: Olesya Frantsishevich, “Гражданские Военные [Civilian Servicemen],” *Guarding the Arctic*, 30 March 2018.

...The Northern Fleet has been taking part, for the third year running, in an experiment conducted in the Russian Armed Forces in line with the Russian President’s decree to test a new system for training and building mobilization human resources (MHR) [мобилизационных людских ресурсов (МЛР)].

...The essence of the experiment is that the Ministry of Defense concludes, through the Northern Fleet command, a contract with reservists on their inclusion in a mobilization human resource. “This system of manning reserve subunits is being used in our country for the first time,” Captain First Class Vladimir Kondratov, head of the organizational-mobilization department of the Northern Fleet headquarters, explains. “Military commissariats select reservists using the same system as when they recruit contract servicemen: Candidates undergo compulsory medical examinations, pass fitness tests, and appear before a certification commission.”...

Those included in the mobilization human reserve are entitled to a monthly monetary allowance, consisting of 12 percent of the salary for the military position in which they are registered as reservists in their military unit, 12 percent of the salary for the military rank, additional pay for serving in extreme-north conditions, and a monthly pro rata premium for continuous service in the reserve...Once a year, reservists are mobilized for 30-day training camps, for operational, mobilization, and combat training activities. For the duration of that training, reservists receive 100 percent of a serviceman’s pay and allowances. According to Vladimir Kondratov, it is during this period that the greatest effect is achieved. They also attend monthly training sessions lasting up to three days depending on the level of their skills.

Captain First Class Vladimir Kondratov notes that the heads of the organizations and enterprises whose employees are enrolled in the MHR provide great support to the experiment. They understand the importance of their subordinates’ military and mobilization training and the need for them to attend reserve training camps... In Murmanskaya Oblast, reserve training camps are organized in one of the military units stationed in the town of Polyarnyy. The participants in the experiment from all over the region arrive here on the appointed day and are confined to barracks. They receive pay and allowances in line with their position and rank, as well as food, uniforms, and medical assistance. The camps include the full program of combat training, including such disciplines as communications, radiation, chemical, and biological protection, special tactical training, fire, and physical training...

Source: Nikolay Surkov, Aleksey Ramm, and Yevgeniy Dmitriyev, “Российский флот пополнится резервами: Сменные экипажи обеспечат боевым надводным кораблям непрерывное присутствие в дальней морской зоне (The Russian Fleet Will Be Supplemented by Reserves: Rotating Crews Will Ensure Continuous Presence of Combat Surface Ships in Distant Seas),” *Izvestiya*, 3 April 2018. <https://iz.ru/725828/nikolai-surkov-aleksei-ramm-evgenii-dmitriyev/rossiiskii-flot-popolnitsia-rezervami>

*The Russian Fleet will get rotating crews. They will, if necessary, be sent to ships serving in a distant sea and ocean zone. This will make it possible to ensure the Russian Navy’s constant presence in key areas of the World Ocean. In the opinion of experts, the innovation will increase the efficiency of the surface fleet’s utilization. The Navy High Command told *Izvestiya* that the military department will start forming additional reserve crews for the surface fleet this year. The innovation will affect first- and second-rank ships. The former include the largest combat units (with a displacement in excess of 5,000 tons) – aircraft carriers, general-purpose amphibious warfare ships, cruisers, and destroyers. The second rank are frigates, corvettes, and large amphibious warfare ships, which are in great demand now...It is planned that one reserve crew will be created for four or five ships of every project in each fleet. Reservists, among other things, will be used for this purpose in the future.*

The innovation is connected with the growing complexity of the tasks facing the Navy. The Russian Fleet is returning to the World’s Oceans. Seamen are having to serve off the coasts of Syria and Somalia and perform long voyages for the purpose of showing the flag. At the same time, in connection with the objective shortage of surface ships of the main classes, the task is being set of ensuring the practically continuous operation of the available hardware. However, no machine, not even the most sophisticated one, can function without people. Involving reservists will make it possible to let seamen rest. At the same time ships will be able to remain in the Mediterranean or the Indian Ocean and to continue fulfilling tasks. In addition, it will be possible to involve additional combat crews if corresponding specialists in the regular crews fall ill or suffer traumas.

It is proposed that for most of the year reservists will undergo intensive training ashore, using the latest simulators. Training sessions are also being planned for some reserve combat crews as understudies on board ships, taking turns with the regular crews. Upon completion of onshore instruction, the reserve crew will board one of the ships of the corresponding project and, after completing the reception and handover procedures, will begin tackling training and combat tasks...