Chinook helicopter from 18 (B) Squadron practising desert landing during Exercise Vortex Warrior. 18 Sqn are based at Royal Air Force Odiham, Hampshire.

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Introduction

The RAF Families Federation (RAF FF) is funded by the RAF to gather evidence of issues and concerns affecting all RAF personnel and their families. Following the renewal of our contract in June 14, we were specifically tasked to engage with the RAF Reserve community. As part of that process, we ran an online survey and conducted ‘live’ workshops to gather evidence of the RAF Reserves’ experience.

Survey Responses

We received 302 responses to the survey, representing approx. 12% of the entire Reserve cadre. Of the 302 respondents, 68% were Part-Time Volunteer Reserve (PTVR), 28% were Full-Time Reserve Service (FTRS) and 4% a mixture of Sponsored Reserves (SR), Additional Duties Commitment (ADC) and Volunteer ex-Regular Reserve (VeRR). These respondents represent 11% of the PTVR cadre, 13% of FTRS and 2% of the ADC/SR/VeRR cadres. Of the total respondents, 91% were aged over 30, 84% were male, 16% female: 75% were non-commissioned and 25% commissioned, and 63% were married or in a partnership. Where appropriate, we have broken out the responses to some questions between PTVR and FTRS given the significant differences in ToS and philosophy between the two groups. We have also made comparison where appropriate with the Reserves Continuous Attitude Survey (ResCAS), published in Jun 15, and the most recent AFCAS results.

Key issues and Responses

We focussed on the following areas:

- Reasons for joining the RAF Reserves
- Employer Understanding/Interaction
- Training available
- Pay & allowances
- Career Management & Interaction with the regular RAF
- Satisfaction levels as a reservist
- Mobilisation as a reservist
- Morale and likelihood of continuing in the Reserves

We gave respondents the opportunity to add comments to many of the questions; these totalled more than 40 pages. The comments we have included in our report are, as far as possible, a balanced reflection of the responses – good and not so good – against each question.

A summary of the responses to some of these key themes is:

- Do you believe the contribution made by the Reservists to the RAF is valued?
  - 57% Yes
  - 23% No
  - 20% Don’t know

Executive Summary
• What is your overall level of satisfaction with service in the Reserves?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>FTRS</th>
<th>PTVR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied or very satisfied</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly low or very low</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

• What is your morale like?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>FTRS</th>
<th>PTVR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fairly high or very high</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly low or very low</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Do you intend to renew your Service?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>FTRS</th>
<th>PTVR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know yet</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Why did you join?

The opportunity to work in a challenging and interesting job and the opportunity to use the experience gained as a regular were the most cited reasons for joining the Reserves, regardless of whether the respondent was FTRS or PTVR. One other common theme throughout was the desire to serve the country and “give something back.”

• If you are currently in civilian employment, or in training, how supportive of your Service is your employer?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supportive or very supportive</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Supportive</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Training

- How satisfied are you with the quality of the training you receive as a Reservist?
  71% satisfied or very satisfied.
  12% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
  11% fairly dissatisfied or very dissatisfied
  6% not applicable

- How satisfied are you with the relevance of the training?
  72% satisfied or very satisfied
  13% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
  10% fairly dissatisfied or very dissatisfied
  5% not applicable

- How satisfied are you with the availability of the training?
  45% satisfied with availability
  23% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
  25% fairly dissatisfied or very dissatisfied
  7% not applicable

A common theme amongst the comments was a perception that, having been selected for training, Reservists are then removed in favour of regular personnel. This has been raised during AMPBT visits - see page 17.

Pay & Allowances

- How satisfied are you with your basic pay?

  While 53% are satisfied with their basic pay, 41% are not. It’s noteworthy that many commented that, in effect “I don’t do this for the money”. Some 49% are happy with the Annual Bounty.

- However, 24% were dissatisfied with the administration of their pay and we received more comment about this than any of the other questions. We were struck by the number of comments from those who said they had not been paid for sometimes months at a time. The lack of personal access to JPA featured consistently as an issue as well.

- There also appeared to be more dissatisfaction with what can be claimed and how much can be claimed across all types of Reservist. Many comments indicated that awareness of allowances could be better.

Integration with Regular Service Personnel

We heard some fairly trenchant views about integration and so we asked: How satisfied are you with the level of integration between Reserves and Regulars?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>PTVR</th>
<th>FTRS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied/very satisfied</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied/Very Dissatisfied</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participant Data

The breakdown of respondents was as follows:

- Type of Reservist: 68% PTVR; 28% FTRS; 4% ADC, SR, VeRR etc
- Age: 9% under 30; 91% over 30
- Gender: 16% female; 84% male
- OR or Officer: 25% commissioned; 75% non-commissioned
- Personal circumstances: 16% single; 21% in a relationship; 63% married/civil partnership

The Questions and Responses

Having first discussed the potential question set with Reserve personnel, HQ Air Occ Psych staff and DACOS Reserves staff, we focussed our questions on the following areas:

- Employer Understanding/Interaction
- Reasons for joining the RAF Reserves
- Training available
- Pay & allowances
- Career Management & Interaction with the regular RAF
- Satisfaction levels as a reservist
- Mobilisation as a reservist
- Morale and likelihood of continuity in the reserves

Do you believe that the contribution made by the Reservists to the RAF is valued?

- Yes 57%
- No 23%
- I don’t know 20%
- Not applicable 0%
For comparison, the Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS) 2015 asked Regular RAF personnel about their perception of the Reserve forces:

In your experience, how would you rate the contribution to the RAF of... Armed Forces Reserves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RAF - Officers</th>
<th>RAF - OR’s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valuable</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very valuable</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This question is filtered to include only respondents who had indicated they had worked with Armed Forces Reserves in the past two years.

In your experience, how would you rate the professionalism of... Armed Forces Reserves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RAF - Officers</th>
<th>RAF - OR’s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very Professional</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This question is filtered to include only respondents who had indicated they had worked with Armed Forces Reserves in the past two years.
Reasons for joining the RAF Reserves

What factor Most influenced your decision to join the Reserves?

For the PTVR cadre only, the result varies only slightly:

PTVR only - What factor Most influenced your decision to join the Reserves?
These are some of the comments received.

*Ability to continue Full Time Service*

Having served in the military for over 10yrs previously I was missing the life and camaraderie and banter from being in the military. It now forms a major part of my time out of work and look forward to each training weekend I attend as it is always varied. I feel that my previous experience has helped in bringing other members of the Squadron together.

I have an ambition to join the Regular service and so thought this was a good stepping stone and chance to gain valuable experience.

I joined in order to undertake some form of ‘national service’ - to make a contribution in a small way.

I applied for the appointment I currently hold because it would give me the opportunity to re-balance my work/life commitments more towards my personal needs rather than that of the service. This new appointment gave me the chance to continue to serve in the RAF in an interesting and very challenging post.

In addition to the reason given- there is a sincere desire to serve my Country.

The opportunity to work in a challenging and interesting job AND the opportunity to work as part of a team.

Initially I joined to get an insight into service life with a view to become full time. For various reasons this did not happen but I continue to enjoy being PTVR.

To make a contribution to operations and to play a part in improving the security of our interests worldwide.

I joined to put something back into the system. I always wanted to be a regular but never joined. I love my job in the reserves and feel I have achieved a colossal amount in my time.

The initial factor was family connection however I have given much over the years and received much benefit as an individual and as part of our Force. We have always been ready to serve when required.

When I qualified as a graduate nurse I joined the reserves to get 2 years post graduate experience before joining the regulars as a commissioned officer but enjoyed the reserves so much I stayed.

New friendships, challenge, fitness, and doing something different to my day job. Also to gain new skills.

Mid-life crisis! Last chance to do something for my country

We were struck by the number of comments received that emphasised that joining the Reserves was seen as “an opportunity to serve my country” or “it being a civic duty.”
The Tri-Service Reserves Continuous Attitude Survey 2015 (ResCAS) chart [R047] states. How strongly do you agree or disagree ‘My main civilian employer supports my Reserve service’

The results were:

- Strongly agree or agree: ResCAS 71% RAF FF 60%
- Neither agree or disagree: 19% 22%
- Strongly disagree or disagree: 11% 4%

(Responses to ResCAS question and the RAF FF question indicating that they are FTRS have been excluded from this result)
Some of the comments received in relation to the question:

Sadly, I still do not feel that being a Reservist is looked on as an attribute for most employers, especially at application stage. I’ve had several jobs over the years and I have had to be very careful during my applications as to how I present my military status. At nearly every interview I’ve been asked whether I’ll be ‘called up’ which, rightly or wrongly, I always play down. When discussing PTVR service post regular service with RAF personnel, many who are interested won’t pursue it until they have secured a civilian job. They feel being a reservist will jeopardise their chances of employment...... I feel reservists would benefit from some training in how to handle applying for jobs and dealing with interviews in regard to discussing their status.

I believe employers that are supportive will be supportive; however, no amount of contact will change those that are not. Therefore I believe that strong sanctions by Government are necessary to force recalcitrant employers, if needs be, to be supportive but only as a last resort.

We need to educate and engage with middle management; too much employer engagement is aimed at the Execs.

We added a question asking for thoughts about what methods the RAF could actively pursue to boost support provided by employers etc. A combination of improved communications between the Service and employers, more face to face visits and briefings about the role of the Reservist were the most common responses. Some of the additional comments received were:

I wish employers in the UK where more supportive and took the time to understand the commitment an individual is making. I also feel employers should be more supportive financially instead of making employees use their holiday entitlement for the two week training course or make them take it as unpaid. This can be quite a headache trying to make sure you have enough funds to cover the funds lost and two weeks out of some people’s holiday is quite a lot when they have children to look after in school holidays.

As a RAF Reservist I have received training and experience that has in my opinion better equipped me as an individual to further the aims of my Civilian Employers and enhance the quality of my Civilian product.

Simple ways are enhanced qualifications- for example at RAF Halton on BTRC we received a thorough and excellent First Aid training- however it does not count as a civilian award which can be used in the workplace- this is a lost opportunity. Likewise, Food Handling Courses. As one rises through the RAF rank structure or the promotions ladder in civilian life we see other more complex military courses that are significantly educating our RAF Reserve personnel. However I am not sure the civilian employers are aware of these. Even something as simple as a statement of training and qualifications received, updated annually and given to personnel could then, if they chose, be passed on to their employer and added to their training files - thereby making them more valuable to their employer and not just perceived as someone that plays ‘war games’ at weekends.
At one of the unit workshops, we received a comment regarding the ‘under resourcing’ of the Support for Britain’s Reservists and Employers (SaBRE). We therefore added a question as to whether personnel believed SaBRE was achieving its aim. The response is interesting in as much nearly half have no idea but some of the comments are more enlightening:

The aim of the Support for Britain’s Reservists and Employers (SaBRE) is to enlist employers’ support for their personnel’s membership of the Reserve Forces. Do you think they are achieving their aim?

- Yes: 23%
- No: 29%
- I don’t know: 48%
More resource needs to be spent on SaBRE so that it can achieve its aims.

I believe that the majority of SaBRE (and RFCA) activity is focused and geared towards an ‘Army’ audience; the other 2 SS receive support as a by-product of this activity.

SaBRE are achieving their aim in the majority of cases but there is still a big problem with small to medium size businesses and the NHS at middle line manager level

I’ve told my employer of the SaBRE web site and service, but don’t think they have engaged with it. As busy people running an NHS A&E I think a more face to face briefing on what they get from my service would get the message across better.

Relationship between the employer and the unit is the principle reason why people leave or cannot be retained by the Sqn. Most employers have never heard of SaBRE. Sqn members dare not mention their membership at interview for fear of not being selected. Changes in the law need to be made to cement the employees’ rights.

I part own the company I work for. I’m not sure how SaBRE can encourage employers to be PROUD of the fact that they have employees who have chosen to serve, but it would be a good aim. The benefits of training, attitude, etc are also good but at root I feel that those who have a full time job and chose to be reservists as well are doing something extraordinary, something that can be celebrated and employers should be encouraged to do so. Rather than all communications focussing on how the risks to them are being mitigated.

SaBRE is still not well-known enough in the general workplace

My former employer refused to allow me to take time off for compulsory phase2 ACT until SaBRE got involved.

SaBRE is extremely biased towards Army Reserves; in eight years of Service I have never encountered any support from SaBRE

In light of some of these comments, together with evidence captured elsewhere, we are tasking our Regional AF Covenant Co-ordinators to investigate how the Corporate Covenant can help both local employers, SaBRE and Reservists. We are also working with MoD DRM to identify other opportunities to raise awareness amongst all concerned.
Training

We asked about satisfaction with:

- The quality of training and
- The relevance of training available

How satisfied are you with the quality of training you/your spouse/partner has/have received in the Reserves?

- Very satisfied: 42%
- Fairly satisfied: 29%
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied: 12%
- Fairly dissatisfied: 10%
- Very dissatisfied: 1%
- Not applicable: 6%

For comparison, 74% of respondents to the ResCAS were satisfied with the quality of their training in their current role, whilst 16% were neutral and only 10% reported that they were dissatisfied.

How satisfied are you with the relevance of your training you have received in the Reserves?

- Very satisfied: 45%
- Fairly satisfied: 27%
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied: 13%
- Fairly dissatisfied: 8%
- Very dissatisfied: 2%
- Not applicable: 5%

The replies received from the PTVR respondents were similar to both questions of quality and relevance of training.
Some of the comments received:

Overall the training has been good especially within the Squadron, certainly a lot more informative than what I got in the army..... I feel that there should be more opportunities for Reservists to attend training as that would only benefit the unit as a whole.

I am one of only a few who are earmarked to deploy from this station very soon but still operational commitments appear to be coming second best to currency of non-deploying regulars. Case in point being I had to travel to another station on the same day as my station were running the course required to deploy, primarily because currency was more important for the regulars.

With FR2020 all the rage at the moment there is no shortage of training opportunities, which can only be good for personal development and for the RAF as a whole

There is little or no consideration for specialist training of reserve forces in my trade. The amount of MTD’s has been reduced which means even less opportunity to gain qualifications that would support mobilisation.

The RAF Regiment has not embraced its reserve as other areas of the RAF has done. It can be fairly poor at supporting courses; importantly it does not understand its reserve and tries to run it as a regular unit eg. courses Monday to Friday as opposed to at weekends.

We asked further questions on availability of training courses and leadership training.

How satisfied are you with the availability of RAF Reserve training courses available to you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfied Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly satisfied</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly dissatisfied</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These are some of the comments received:

Regulars still get priority over external courses

The current RAF training system needs to be reviewed and adjusted to reflect the increased proportion of Reservists under Force 2020. One of the biggest frustrations is that most courses have been developed and are run for regulars, and so only run Monday to Friday, which is when Reservists are working in their civilian day job. Very few courses are designed to run over weekends to accommodate Reservists, which means we have to take annual leave from our day jobs in order to undertake RAF courses on some occasions - or if our work diaries are too busy to be able to take time off during the working week, we end up not getting the training at all!

I need to undertake Regular courses and there are difficulties in obtaining course places for Reserves e.g. First Aid Instructor - Regulars take priority. This does not reflect the Whole Force Concept.

In most cases we do not have any issues when loading reservists onto courses

Being dissatisfied with the availability of courses also includes dissatisfaction with communication about what courses are available.
We note that Air Member for Personnel Briefing Team (AMPBT) was asked about training availability on a number of occasions in 2014:

**Question to the AMPBT:** The drawdown of regulars and an increase of Reserve and Aux staff will increase the Trg burden, especially where currencies are required. To achieve the Full Manning aspiration what recognition is being given to the additional manning training margins and increasing mandatory training requirements plus the pull of personnel for ‘other commitments’?

**The response from the Team:** The ongoing Strategic Manpower Review is examining changes to the Manning and Training Margins to address exactly the issues this question raises. The review intends to make recommendations to the Air Force Board Standing Committee this year (2014).

**Question to the AMPBT:** How can we align the Air Force Board’s aspirations with tri-Service training establishment’s demands; which appear to be limited financially in the number of courses/places they can provide and thus priority appears to be with the Regular Force?

The response from the Team: There are known capacity issues with some tri-Service training establishments; notably the driver training school. These impact on both Regular and Reserve training. The issue is recognised and mitigations are being sought by 22 Trg Gp staffs.

**Question to the AMPBT:** In addition to looking at financial incentives for retention, what training opportunities are realistically open to Reservists? Would the SLT, through DACOS Reserves look to improve accreditation of Military training for Reservists (NVQ etc)?

**The response from the Team:** In short yes. There are tri-Service initiatives in place that have already improved the proposition to employers, especially small and medium sized enterprises, and the accreditation of military training is a key line of development as we take things forward.

**Question to the AMPBT:** “Is there a policy that sets the priority for the allocation of training places and specifically is there a differentiation made between regular and reservist personnel?”

**The response from the Team:** This is a bit ambiguous as it depends just what the questioner meant by ‘courses’. There are very few courses that are open equally to Regulars and Reserves but those that are (such as JMLC, IMLC) tend to be allocated first to Regulars and then to Reservists. The only thing we ask of the course loading organisations is that once a Reservist has been given a place that they are not bumped off – this is because, unlike a Regular, the Reservist will often have had to take time off their civilian work or arranged their private lives around undertaking training – the Regular on the other hand can easily be loaded on to another course”.

Given the apparent disparity between this response and some of the comments we received, HQ Air may wish to consider reiterating the guidance and publicising it again.
On leadership training, we asked:

For comparison, ResCAS reported that 46% were ‘Satisfied’, whilst 32% were ‘Neutral’ and 21% were ‘Dissatisfied’ with the amount of leadership training they had received.

These are some of the comments received:

Reserve officers have the opportunity to undertake a CST that is considered equivalent to their Regular peers, I am unaware of any plans/intent to develop a ‘Course’ such as the FCSP to prepare them for such Command as no significant training burden to prepare me for this job.

There has been a markable difference between the training as a Junior Rank and that of a Commissioning/ed officer. The commissioned training has appeared far more relevant and of a very high standard.

Professional Officer Training for part-time (PTVR) officers is non-existent for certain branches (Regiment, Logistics, Admin). To fill established Logs Officer posts on this squadron, I’m reliant on retired ex-Regulars. That’s not always satisfactory because not all ex-Regulars are suited to the exigencies of Reserve service.

The Reserves have invested more in training and development for me than my full time employer and much of it is transferable to my day job.
Pay & allowances

The subject of pay and/or allowances always produces a large number of comments, and the Reserves are no exception. Overall we received 91 comments on aspects of Pay and Allowances.

Are you satisfied with your basic Reservist pay?

For comparison, ResCAS found 52% of respondents were satisfied with their pay, whilst 29% were neutral and 20% were dissatisfied.

Breaking this out further, the results by type of Reservist are:

Are you satisfied with your basic Reservist pay?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PTVR</th>
<th>FTRS</th>
<th>ADC</th>
<th>SR</th>
<th>VeRR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>67%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
When training, it doesn’t make sense that you get paid £35 a day but working up to 24 hours a day, yet if you go in for 8 hours, you receive a full day’s pay. It’s less then minimum wage if you work a full day. I believe many people are put off joining for that very reason or likely to leave during Halton or Ex Omega because they don’t see any monetary benefit if they are self-employed or employers make them take it as holiday. The bounty simply makes up for the poor pay you receive for your training days the only grace is that it is tax free.

My employer pays me extra to be an SR. My allowance package is significantly higher than my RAF Regular colleagues doing the same job alongside me and I am paid overtime whilst deployed by my employer. My employer pays the SR a lot of money to retain us and thus meet their contractual obligations. This had led to most of us SR being motivated by financial reasons, which may not be best for the RAF.

The Basic Reservists Pay seems a bit low, however I fully understand and appreciate that my full-time professional salary is matched by the reserves when mobilised.

I am not bothered about pay as I do not do it for the money

Pay is difficult as I think most people don’t do it for the money, I certainly don’t. If it was the money then I probably wouldn’t be in the Reserves as the pay is not that good. I know nurses who can and do earn a lot more doing bank or agency shifts and would rather do that than join the Reserves.

We asked:

Are you satisfied with the amount of the annual bounty?

- Yes 49%
- No 20%
- Not applicable 27%
- I don’t know 4%
The responses from PTVR respondents only:

PTVR only - Are you satisfied with the amount of the annual bounty?

![Bar chart showing responses]

Yes: 67%
No: 26%
I don’t know: 5%
Not applicable: 2%

The Annual Bounty question, also opened up some interesting results, compared to the ResCAS survey.

The ResCAS survey reported that 72% of respondents were ‘Satisfied’ with the Annual Bounty, whilst 19% were ‘Neutral’ and 9% were ‘Dissatisfied’.

Some of the comments received:

The Bounty simply makes up for the poor pay you receive for your training days. The only grace is that it is tax free.

A lot of part time people will leave as they will be annoyed that new ex-regulars do not need to do ACT, or stay in 5 years to get full bounty. I also think a number of ex regulars will leave once they have got the maximum money available. One thing that is upsetting a lot of us who have been in years is the pension. For us who have been in for many years our time counts for nothing. I feel it should have been backdated to reflect the loyalty of those reserves who stay in.

I think the annual bounty for reservists who have served 5 year or more should have an extra £500 added each year until they leave the service. Ex regulars are being offered £10000 over 4 years, as well as all the other pay and allowances, reservists receive.
We decided to split the question of allowances up into two separate questions, in an attempt to establish satisfaction levels with the allowances they are entitled to claim and the amount personnel can claim.

**Are you satisfied with the allowances you are entitled to claim?**

- **Yes** 51%
- **No** 36%
- **I don’t know** 9%
- **Not applicable** 4%

For comparison, the ResCAS survey reported that 44% of respondents were ‘Satisfied’ with their expenses allowance, whilst 26% were ‘Neutral’ and 31% were ‘Dissatisfied’.

The principal comments from FTRS personnel regarding Allowances were that they are not able to claim for ‘Home to Duty’.

*Being in a FTRS role I am unable to claim a lot of the allowances a PTVR can, Home to Duty mileage being one example*

*FTRS should be allowed HTD payments as well as access to Medical/Dental*
This has also been raised with AMPBT:

“Is there a plan to align the Reserve Forces to the Regular Forces allowances?”

The response was:

“The current allowances and expenses regulations apply to both Regular and Reserve Armed Forces personnel. JSP 752 provides the over-arching policy document for allowances and expenses paid to Service personnel. Reimbursement Expenses (RE) provide refunds for actual expenditure incurred (within defined limits) and can be claimed by Reserve personnel when undertaking Service mandated activities, or meeting Service obligations. Contributory and compensatory allowances may also be claimed, where applicable, by Reserve personnel as a result of the exigencies of the Service.

The FR20 White Paper put forward a broad intention to deliver greater parity and comparability between Regular and Reserve Service, for equivalent levels of liability and commitment. The increasing proportion of Reserves in the future force structure (particularly in the Army) suggests that this imbalance needs redressing and in considering the allowances applicable to Reserve categories we are considering the objective justification that supports any difference in treatment between Regular and Reserve cadres, and between the different categories of Reserve. Consideration of the changes required to existing allowances policy will be determined, primarily, by the Service requirement.”

The satisfaction results from ResCAS, RAF FF Reserves survey and the individual RAuxAF results were very similar.

**Are you satisfied with the amount you can claim?**

- Yes: 49%
- No: 36%
- I don’t know: 12%
- Not applicable: 3%
The PTVR responses were:

PTVR Only - Are you satisfied with the amount you can claim?

- Yes: 52%
- No: 32%
- I don’t know: 15%
- Not applicable: 1%

We asked about the administration of individuals pay. The results indicated circa 76% were satisfied but we were struck by the number and nature of adverse comments received from the 24% who said they were not satisfied.

Are you satisfied with the administration of your pay?

- Yes: 76%
- No: 24%
These are some of the comments received:

I still haven’t been paid for training weekends over 6 months ago. I still haven’t received home to duty travel for over a year. I am not the only one there are many more like me. It’s very bad. You have to constantly chase no one takes responsibility

My pay has not been updated for over a year since I was promoted, and I am told I am unlikely to receive back pay. I don’t do this for the money, but surely this could be done better?

Ready access to JPA to claim expenses will always be a problem until an internet based solution become available.

It took 15 months for my pay to finally be correct and caught up (too long!). Although I didn’t join the Reserves for the money, being denied what I was entitled to, made me feel undervalued. Also, it does not inspire confidence in the overall administrative system.

I have experienced many problems with the administration of my pay such as delays; in some instances pay is many months late. The level of pay is very low compared to what I could earn in my civilian job. The time taken just to travel to my squadron leaves me out of pocket (despite the corresponding claim).

Administration of pay has always been processed very well. Other than home to duty (motor mileage allowance) it is unknown what other allowances we can claim for. I am awaiting phase two training and therefore utilisation of military skills can only be subject to basic training which has been utilised yes.

I have been in the reserves 7 months and still not been paid. I have put lots of e mails to the squadron but still nothing – it’s being “monitored.” Have been told if I don’t turn up for next trade training I will be put on holding flight until whenever next course is. I feel my only option is to not attend until I’m paid - I cannot work for free. I refuse to be back flighted for something that’s not in my control. Will hand kit back in and leave if I have to.

At unit level I have no issues with admin of pay but JPAC is next to useless in dealing with pay issues it is run by civil servant with no knowledge of JSP that govern pay and allowances and when they make a mistake it takes a long time to sort I have had two issues one which took 6 months to sort and was only resolved with a threat of County Court action for illegal deduction from salary and the other which is on-going since 2012

Not having access to a military computer means I have no access to JPA and have never used it. I am totally reliant on Sqn admin staff for my pay and admin. I trust they get it right!?

The ResCAS survey reported that 76% of respondents were ‘Satisfied’ with the admin support within their unit, whilst 15% were ‘Neutral’ and 9% were ‘Dissatisfied’. 
The ResCAS survey reported that 53% of respondents were ‘Satisfied’ with the career management within their units, whilst 34% were ‘Neutral’ and 13% were ‘Dissatisfied’.

We broke down these responses further:
The results from the Commissioned and Non-Commissioned cadre are:

How satisfied are you with your career management?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Commissioned</th>
<th>Non-commissioned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly satisfied</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither satisfied</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly dissatisfied</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We asked a general question about the opportunities for promotion, and were again able to provide statistics from a PTVR/FTRS perspective as well as a Commissioned/Non-Commissioned perspective.

How satisfied are you with your opportunities for promotion?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Commissioned</th>
<th>Fairly satisfied</th>
<th>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</th>
<th>Fairly dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very dissatisfied</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly satisfied</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither satisfied</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fairly dissatisfied</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results from the Commissioned and Non-Commissioned cadre were:

How satisfied are you with your opportunities for promotion?

And similarly from a PTVR/FTRS perspective

For comparison, the ResCAS survey reported that 39% of respondents were ‘Satisfied’ with their opportunities for promotion, whilst 32% were ‘Neutral’ and 29% were ‘Dissatisfied’. 
What do Reserve personnel think of how well the RAF exploits their skills?

**Do you think the RAF utilises your military skills fully?**

![Pie chart showing responses: 39% No, 47% Yes, 14% I don’t know.]

Some of the comments received regarding career management:

As a regular I would be able to apply for commissioning under the CWO scheme, this is not available to me as a FTRS.

My career in the Reserves has been managed actively by the Squadron staff, and even though I was a ‘late starter’ in age terms, I have been given the opportunity of training and promotion.

Promotion in the FTRS ‘arena’ is based on successful application for a vacant post - there are no SO1 posts in the region where I wish to live and work.

I joined the Reserves age 55 having completed a full Regular career - I am not seeking career opportunities but am glad that my experience and skills can be utilised in a positive way.

I feel honoured to have been able to commission. Phase two training is currently unidentified and therefore promotional opportunities are unknown, however commissioning from junior ranks means I have been satisfied.

There are differences between RAF and RAuxAF promotions (opportunities in that the latter requires job advertising and may mean a move away from current role.

Some Reserve personnel are happy to stay at the rank they joined at and have no ambitions to progress up the rank chain.

Reservist personnel should be boarded for promotion just like the Regulars and this would provide for a more transparent promotion system.
With the re-orbatting of the unit to which I belong and wider trade as far as I am aware from a reserve perspective the opportunities for promotion and career development have shrunk. The emphasis on using the reserves as a production line to fill gaps means that focus is placed on areas needing the most support, namely the lowest rank levels where numbers are greatest. Having been encouraged by my unit to peruse a commission the lack of support and assistance in order to produce a capable rounded officer within the time constraints available to the reservist was not adequate and again smacked of a poor cousin feel when I attended Cranwell. Coming from a background in teaching I was disappointed by this discovery. It might well be useful to look at the Academy programme run by the Civil Service and their mentoring schemes where potential leaders are identified and supported in a much more positive manner.

There is none in a SR unit.

As a WO I have no opportunity to progress as the CWO is not available to FTRS.

As FTRS, career management as such is in my own hands, which I accepted when I went FTRS.

Career advancement opportunities seem limited for SNCOs and Officers once they have been in ranks such as FS or Flt Lt. There is also no fast track commissioning route for WOs as in the Army/Army Reserves

Promotion prospects for the OR's appeared to be better than for the commissioned ranks. My expectation was that I would join the Sqn as a Fg Off and leave as a Flt Lt and it would also appear that some Sqn's have better promotion prospects for commissioned personnel.

JRs have a much clearer career path. The potential for officer promotion in the other two Reserve Services is far better.
Interaction/Integration with the Regular Royal Air Force

How satisfied are you with the degree of integration between Reservists and Regulars?

From a PTVR and FTRS perspective:

How satisfied are you with the degree of integration between Reservists and Regulars?
From a Commissioned/Non-Commissioned perspective:

How satisfied are you with the degree of integration between Reservists and Regulars?

- Very satisfied: 45% (Commissioned), 33% (Non-commissioned)
- Fairly satisfied: 33% (Commissioned), 27% (Non-commissioned)
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied: 20% (Commissioned), 20% (Non-commissioned)
- Fairly dissatisfied: 20% (Commissioned)
- Very dissatisfied: 8% (Commissioned), 9% (Non-commissioned)

AFCAS 2015 asked serving Regular personnel about the integration of Reserves:

In your experience, how well integrated into the RAF are... Armed Forces Reserves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2015</th>
<th>RAF - Officers</th>
<th>RAF - OR’s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Well</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very well</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This question is filtered to include only respondents who had indicated they had worked with Armed Forces Reserves in the past two years.
We asked how Reserve personnel felt they were treated by their Regular counterparts:

How satisfied are you with the treatment of Reservists by Regulars when working together?

From a Commissioned/Non-Commissioned perspective the replies were:

How satisfied are you with the treatment of Reservists by Regulars when working together?
The responses from the PTVR were:

### PTVR Only: How satisfied are you with the treatment of Reservists by Regulars when working together?

- **Very satisfied**: 37%
- **Fairly satisfied**: 27%
- **Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied**: 20%
- **Fairly dissatisfied**: 10%
- **Very dissatisfied**: 6%

These are some of the comments received regarding integration and treatment of the Reserves.

Still more work to be done here but it will take time.

I cannot comment on this as I have yet to work with Regular Squadrons

We are sometimes treated as second class citizens. A Lack of understanding and awareness of the value of Reserves at middle management level.

Whilst in general, my thoughts on the above are positive, I believe that we must continue to educate all (Regular and Reserve) on the benefits of the Reserves and how they can be mutually supportive.

Based on my observations and listening to experiences of the PTVR on the Sqn, I believe the PTVR struggle for recognition of their worth among Regulars. Education of Regulars is required perhaps most management trg courses attended by regulars should be reviewed and information relating to the Reservists included as appropriate. JLMC, ILMC and ALMC should include a Reserve Presentation.

I have always had a positive experience when working alongside my regular counterparts. They are often in awe of the fact you contributing your spare time to the Service.

We are usually fed back the thanks and gratitude from the station after our work performed over the weekends. A simple statement but adds a lot of value.

While the contribution of reservists may be recognised in some areas it is not universal and often it is the young members of the RAF with little or no experience of working with reservist that are often the most disparaging about the contribution reservists make

Acceptance of Reservists is patchy. The Logistics world is making all the right noises about Reserves integration, but we’re still a way from being in a position to offer suitably qualified and experienced Drivers, Suppliers and Chefs to augment/replace regulars on Ops or in a “backfill” capacity in the UK. When we do start mobilising Logistics Reservists, it’ll be interesting to see the reaction from the Regulars. My previous experience with the RAF Regt was almost entirely negative. The widespread view amongst the Corps is that there is no role for part-time Reservists in the RAF Regt!

Too many regulars don’t know enough about what a reservist can offer. Requests for assistance come through to reservists by rank; it should come through in competencies required. A 40 year old fit and well trained individual may hold the rank of SAC in the world of reserves, but have significantly more to offer than a young individual with limited life experience.

This question should be directed to Regulars!

After 30 years in the Reserves I am still not sure that the Regular RAF, know what they want us for and what they want us to do.

This is quite simple. There is a term banded around of one force approach. Well make it happen. Why is there still a distinct and harmful divide between the reserve forces and the regular forces?
The ResCAS survey reported that 36% of respondents ‘agreed’ with the statement that they feel valued by the Regulars, whilst 32% were ‘Neutral’ and 32% ‘Disagreed’.

Section 4 of the 2015 AFCAS report covers ‘Working with the Reserves’

Section 4 – Working with Others’.

Section 4 focuses on those who have had experience of working with the Reserves over the last two years, covering views on the professionalism, integration and contribution of Reserves personnel.

Professionalism of Reserves
In 2015, almost two thirds (63%) of personnel rate the Reserves as professional. RAF Officers are the most likely group to state that Reserves are professional (87%), whereas Army Other Ranks are the least likely (52%).

Integration of Reserves
Just over half of personnel state that Reserves are well integrated (52%), with Other Ranks more likely to agree than Officers (53%, 47%). The range of agreement varies across Officers in particular, with 70% of RM Officers thinking Reserves are well integrated, compared to just 34% of Army Officers.

Contribution of Reserves
62% of personnel rate the contribution of Reserves as valuable, with Officers more likely to agree than Other Ranks (67%, 61%). The most positive ratings are from RAF Officers, with 84% rating the contribution of reservists as valuable. RM Other Ranks, however, are the least likely to score Reserve contributions as valuable (54%).

For comparison, AFCAS 2015 asked RAF Regulars about the integration and professionalism of RAF Reserves:

Have you had working contact with any of the following in the last two years? Armed Forces Reserves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2015</th>
<th>RAF - Officers</th>
<th>RAF - OR’s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not ticked</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticked</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In your experience, how would you rate the contribution to the RAF of …. Armed Forces Reserves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2015</th>
<th>RAF - Officers</th>
<th>RAF - OR’s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valuable</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very valuable</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This question is filtered to include only respondents who had indicated they had worked with Armed Forces Reserves in the past two years.
In your experience, how well integrated into the RAF are... Armed Forces Reserves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2015</th>
<th>RAF - Officers</th>
<th>RAF - OR’s</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This question is filtered to include only respondents who had indicated they had worked with Armed Forces Reserves in the past two years.

In your experience, how would you rate the professionalism of... Armed Forces Reserves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2015</th>
<th>RAF - Officers</th>
<th>RAF - OR’s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very Professional</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This question is filtered to include only respondents who had indicated they had worked with Armed Forces Reserves in the past two years.

Continuing with the RAF FF survey, we asked:

Do you believe that Reservists should be visually recognisable whilst working alongside regulars?

No 85%  
Yes 15%
The question was put to the AMPBT during their RAF Honington visit on the 7 – 9 Dec 14

**Question to the AMPBT:** As part of the Whole Force Approach, why is there a need for PTVR personnel to wear distinguishing insignia?

**The response from the Team:** Whilst members of the RAuxAF subscribe to the WFA, they are fiercely proud of the fact that they are different. The vast majority of them are volunteers who simultaneously hold down a full time civilian job. Whole force is about delivering military output effectively from the separate elements that constitute the whole force.

Some years ago the RAuxAF, which in legal terms remains a separate Air Force, although not in practical terms, came to the conclusion that on working dress they would be indistinguishable when alongside their regular counterparts. However on ceremonial occasions they would retain the distinguishing badge that sets them apart. The RAuxAF has a long and distinguished history, only 6 years less than the regular RAF and there are currently no plans to disband it.

The comments we received were many and varied, a sample of which are:

> As to ‘visually recognising’ a Reservist, there may be some small advantage to doing so as it could show a Regular ‘employer’ that they have access to the skills of an airman/officer with (potentially) wider skills and experience than their rank suggests. However, I believe that such a move would only serve to highlight the Reserve (who is likely to be an Individual Augmentee) as different and lead to discrimination - I would argue strongly against any such move.

> One force concept - in the Territorial Army there is no visual recognition between a TA soldier and a regular soldier, however, RAF reservists have to wear a letter ‘A’ standing for Auxiliary on our No.1 uniform jacket. I have been the victim of social media name calling just because a letter ‘A’ is seen on the uniform. I feel that as soon as the ‘A’ is seen it is said that we are not as good as the regular force.

> Reservists don’t need special “Insignia” to be identified (although a greying and bald SAC is usually distinctive enough!) - I am a fan of the tradition of keeping “A” on No 1 and No 5 Uniforms for heritage reasons

> I am totally integrated with Regulars and the fact I am FTRS is invisible to Regulars, which is as it should be under the Whole Force Concept

> I feel most strongly that reservists should wear insignia to indicate FTRS. I would hope by doing so regulars may use FTRS personnel for their depth of experience and knowledge rather than dismissing them on the grounds of their current rank.

> It is always better when the Regulars are unaware that they are dealing with a Reservist.

> To highlight a reservist from his regular counterpart, would be like drawing attention to someone’s colour or weight and that is bullying.
Image caption: A Royal Air Force Typhoon performing an air display at RAF Coningsby. Source: RAF.
Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.
Satisfaction with life in the RAF Reserves

We posed questions about satisfaction with the Reserve experience:

What is the single aspect of your Reserve Air Force experience that gives you the MOST satisfaction?

From a commissioned/non-commissioned perspective

What is the single aspect of your Reserve Air Force experience that gives you the MOST satisfaction?
And some of the comments received:

Meeting with true Reserves - the PTVR cadre - and being enthused by their motivation and volunteer attitude

The opportunities to be mobilised and deploy on operations and work alongside the Regulars doing a meaningful job for Defence

The opportunity to do my day job as a nurse in a completely different way that improves my skills in both jobs.

Succeeding as a team

To serve my Country

Proactive support from higher RAuxAF formations

The opportunity to do jobs/roles that are not available outside the military environment

At the moment I do not get satisfaction from my role

Actually doing the job I have been trained to do for real.

The opportunities I have experienced from training to simply representing the RAF and RAF Reserve

We also asked:

What is the single aspect of your Reserve Air Force experience that gives you the LEAST satisfaction?
From a commissioned/non-commissioned perspective

**What is the single aspect of your Reserve Air Force experience that gives you the LEAST satisfaction?**

We clearly missed something given the number of “other” responses but the comments received indicated that many were dissatisfied because of administrative issues they were experiencing.

A selection of the comments:

*There is nothing I do not like*

*Lack of commitment shown to reserves during mobilisation*

*Difficulty with admin as no DII access*

*There is no area of dissatisfaction. However still in phase 2 training, future experience may change that view!*

*Lack of a coherent Reserve policy*

*None - am very satisfied in being part of the Reserves.*

*Trying to maintain the ever increasing mandatory training and administrative requirements along with normal reserve service, civilian work and life etc.*

*Inflexibility over periods of continuous training, they should be reduced to blocks of 5 days at most*

*The constant battle to prove ourselves to a regular, although this is improving*
FTRS Jobs not being rank ranged

The lack of opportunity to work in the UK day to day with the RAF and gain the perspective of my regular counterparts

Stop calling me a reservist; I do more OP deployments, more Exercises than some of the so called regulars.

Lack of understanding of all other commitments outside the Reserves.

Not enough opportunities to deploy.

The lack of requirement for me to work at the professional level I did as a regular.

The pension abatement

Over emphasis on fitness states and penalties when none of this is part of SJAR or bounty requirement, plus lack of support to maintain fitness unlike for regulars.

The bureaucracy involved regarding medical requirements

Being allowed access to the Medical / Dental services afforded to Regular RAF Personnel

Being mistaken for the Army Reserve!

JRs have a much clearer career path. The potential for officer promotion in the other two Reserve Services is better. Some Reserve personnel are happy to stay at the rank they joined at and have no ambitions to progress up the rank chain.

I am a WO the lack of a Commission Warrant Officer scheme for Reservists causes a block for the rest of the ranks.

The expectation from the regulars, that we can just take time off from the day job during the week to carry out RAF admin that cannot be carried out at weekends.

The fact that I have to abate a large part of my RAF Pension.

The fact that FTRS is/are treated differently to regulars with regards housing, medical, dental & travel.

I would like to see/experience more cross (reserve) squadron integration and even across Naval and Army reserve integration.

The fact that my civilian trade (paramedic) has no parity in the RAF’s eyes with nurses when the NHS treats the two trades at least equally. Also the RAF’s understanding of the skillset of the paramedic is woefully behind the times. They seem to treat paramedics as basic medics (no slur intended).

Administration: It is difficult to access anything from home and I live 3 hours away from my base so I find that admin builds up and there is not always time to do it on a squadron weekend.
Mobilisation

We attempted to identify the degree of mobilisation that has occurred amongst those who responded, and whether or not they felt that they were prepared properly and their skills/abilities were appropriately used. We also took the opportunity to enquire if their employers views of them had changed, post their deployment.

Have you been mobilised in the last 4 years?

- No: 53%
- Yes: 33%
- Not applicable: 14%

When mobilised, were your skills and/or abilities used adequately/appropriately?

- Yes: 28%
- No: 5%
- Only partially: 9%
- I don’t know: 1%
- Not applicable: 57%
For comparison, the ResCAS survey reported that 65% of respondents were ‘Satisfied’ with the support they received from the RAF when they were last mobilised, whilst 20% were ‘Neutral’ and 16% were ‘Dissatisfied’.
Some of the comments received regarding mobilisation were:

No employer, particularly those running small businesses, is going to be happy about losing a member of their workforce unless you can replace them like for like with no administrative or financial burden.

I was made redundant and my employer explained that my time off being mobilised was a factor in my redundancy.

I work for the MOD Civil Service, so as an organisation I get an excellent level of support. When you focus in down to desk-level, however, I find that my immediate line management are torn between having to “toe the line” in being supportive towards Reservists because that is the MOD policy, and their own personal perspective that my being absent for prolonged periods on mobilised service or 2 weeks special paid leave for ACT is a great inconvenience to the wider team and causes them staff shortage problems in the short term.

Mobilisation has in general been the biggest retention tool we had. Lads who had had good tours passed their views on and enthused the ones who were waiting. Once again, PDT experiences vary; an RAF serviceman deploying to Minhad would require 2 days training at an FP Flt...Our training infantry troops were subjected to an expensive four-month selection regime in order to carry out an unarmed security job in Minhad, completely overtraining and underutilising their skills. Believe me, their experiences do not need passing on to those waiting - I would have no Sqn left!! Cost-wise and morale-wise, this has been the greatest blow to retention we have ever experienced.

Mobilisation, though very challenging for the reasons expressed elsewhere in this survey, was overall a positive experience for me. Despite the lack of ownership, despite the low expectation and attitude from some regular training staff, despite the lack of communication. I made some very good friends, explored a role for which I had not really been trained and did so well, learnt many new skills and my personal confidence has risen. Most of all my time in the reserves seems worthwhile. The opportunity to contribute has been afforded me and I am grateful for that.

I lost my job after my last deployment.

More thought needs to go into mobilisation and demobilisation of reservists, particularly individuals rather than formed units. Specifically there needs to be sufficient face time prior to deployment with the unit or similar units.

I found my mobilisation a very positive experience. I was well prepared and I was given probably above and beyond the training that I required.... I couldn’t fault anything about the deployment process and I received good support on my return too.
Satisfaction and Morale within the RAF Reserves

We attempted to capture a sense of the levels of morale and whether or not personnel were committed to staying in and/or renewing their service in the Reserves.

What is your overall level of satisfaction of service in the Reserve Air Force?

From a rank perspective, the replies were:

What is your overall level of satisfaction of service in the Reserve Air Force?
What is your morale like in the RAF Reserves?

- Very high: 46%
- Fairly high: 22%
- Neutral: 19%
- Fairly low: 10%
- Very low: 3%

Commissioned versus Non-Commissioned results are:

- What is your morale like in the RAF Reserves?

- Very high: 24% (Commissioned) vs 21% (Non-commissioned)
- Fairly high: 49% (Commissioned) vs 45% (Non-commissioned)
- Neutral: 17% (Commissioned) vs 20% (Non-commissioned)
- Fairly low: 10% (Commissioned) vs 10% (Non-commissioned)
- Very low: 0% (Commissioned) vs 4% (Non-commissioned)
Retention

We asked if personnel wanted to stay on beyond their current engagement:

Do you intend to renew your Reserve Service commitments when next due?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>I have been prevented from doing so because I am due to retire</th>
<th>I have been prevented from doing so because of health reasons</th>
<th>I’m not sure</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>57%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is very little difference in the responses from PTVR and FTRS personnel:

Do you intend to renew your Reserve Service commitments when next due?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>I have been prevented from doing so because I am due to retire</th>
<th>I have been prevented from doing so because of health reasons</th>
<th>I’m not sure</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>58% PTVR</td>
<td>6% FTRS</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>2% PTVR</td>
<td>2% FTRS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 59% PTVR     | 8% FTRS | 2%                                                             | 29%                                                           | 2% PTVR     | 2% FTRS |
And between Commissioned and Non-commissioned personnel:

Do you intend to renew your Reserve Service commitments when next due?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Commissioned</th>
<th>Non-commissioned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been prevented from doing so because I am due to retire</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been prevented from doing so because of health reasons</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m not sure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

30% 31%
These are some of the comments regarding job satisfaction, moral and experience of being a Reservist. There are also some more general comments:

I think the recruitment process is not the best shall we say. It takes forever to get the medicals complete and having to travel all over to see a doctor and then see your own GP to gain any further information is so time consuming. It also is not fair that the GP then charges for the letter requested by CAPITA. I know the recruitment staff do an amazing job and can only work with the process they have been given but I do feel it all needs to be a bit more joined up.

The policy attest personnel prior to completion of Medical and RAFFT seems to be driven by need to boost stats and is counterproductive to efficient and effective use of resources.

I consider the reporting requirement in terms of SJARS should be reviewed it seems unreasonable that there is no requirement to report on AC and LAC given that it might take up to 3 years for a reservist to complete Phase 2 Trg.

I would always recommend being a Reservist and doing your bit.

Enjoyed initially but not being paid after 7 months makes me question do I want to remain.

Feel it’s unfair that we cannot be treated unless emergency in the medical /dental centre as the waiting list in Civilian Street is a nightmare. Particularly as I went for this job and lost my pension, therefore we should have some benefits. I feel it’s unfair that MPGS guard have access to all these facilities yet FTRS Home Commitment don’t.

Being a member of the reserve forces gives the individual a very positive sense of involvement, of contributing to the greater cause and helping others. More personally we are challenged to perform in environments outside of our normal lives. We can gain a sense of achievement and take the skills, attitude and sense of pride back to our families, employers and communities.

The RAF is astonishingly ignorant of the Reserve component and “corporate memory” is short, to say the least. Reservists have to re-prove their capabilities every time there’s a change of faces on station. There are undoubtedly people in the service who view Reservists as a threat (“job-stealers”) and there are some who simply won’t move with the times. Thankfully, they’re relatively few in number but, if they’re in a key appointment, they can still cause significant problems.

Once you’re demobilised, the regular unit you were on washes its hands of you. You go back to your own unit which just doesn’t have the support of a regular unit. Guys that have been in serious situations on ops are left to sort any health issues out (mental and physical) and the regular day staffs at the reserve squadron don’t give a hoot. I think we’re seen by the majority of the day staff as a hindrance to their working week.

Being a reserve makes it difficult to access facilities which are available such as clothing stores and the gym. Gym inductions and clothing must be done during weekdays and require holiday from our civilian work.
The Regular/Reservist relationship is divisive and creates a 2nd tier of RAF citizen. Reserves always struggle for kit, are last on the list for overnight accommodation. I could go on, but hopefully you get the picture.

Outward appearances suggest for some regular organisations the increase of reserve forces and subsequent integration and training system is all too much like hard work. If they ignore it for long enough it will go away. There is a basic lack of understanding of what the reserves offer and how they work. Training information is geared around regulars - reserves centric packages are needed.

I have been in 10 years and have been mobilised twice. You always feel the regulars don’t want you but once integrated we prove we can bring a lot of skills energy and enthusiasm.....and they are surprised by the commitment. Overall it's been a great experience and I have been to Iraq, Cyprus Germany, Sweden and Belgium, promoted once can’t really complain that much.

Training has been sporadic, and when delivered by Regulars has often been perceived as a “punishment” for the DS, who have to work on the weekend or in the evening. Lessons are poorly prepared and delivered by non-SMEs. DS solutions are often wrong, and the standard of support services (accommodation/catering) is noticeably and dramatically lower at the weekends than during the working week. Feedback to this effect from Reservists is often ignored as “reservists don’t understand training”; with the results that badly run courses continue for many years without review.

I feel very privileged and indeed humbled to have been given the opportunity to serve in The Royal Air Force.

Terms of service for FTRS could be in line with regulars and be 9 year contracts rather than 4

I love my job but I feel that losing my pension and also medical and dental is unfair for the amount or work and overtime I put into my job, so am actively looking to see if there is something else out there.

It would seem that while the reservist is attending training at their parent unit things plod along administratively. Upon mobilisation the reservist is transformed into some form of hot potato which no one seems to want to take proper and continued responsibility for. This includes the parent unit the reservist has come from, through the pre-deployment training establishment and on into theatre, where our administration was at best an afterthought. There is a need for the complete process to be looked at from the perspective of all those involved.

If we are to develop a capable and adaptable reserve force similar to that sported by countries such as Israel, then we need: The regular forces to embrace and understand the reserve forces and the role they can and do play; to encourage and forge closer relations with employers so that to employ someone who has volunteered to help their country is seen as something to be proud of and beneficial to the company; to ensure that the reservist is made to feel that their contribution and the upheaval they are putting their family and employer through is worthwhile.
The RAF needs to be very careful as it expands the Reserves. On the subject of training, it must start developing bespoke training courses tailored to the needs of Reservists, rather than just stripping out the Regular version and calling it a “Reserve Course”. The starting point should be a blank sheet of paper NOT the Regular course. Logistics seems to be flavour of the month at the moment. That’s great, but positioning 3 Logs Spt squadrons in the midlands means that we’re all trawling for the same people in the same area.

The 3 new General Service squadrons (NI, Lancashire and South Wales) are presenting a whole new challenge to the service. On the one hand they offer a quick fix to the recruiting issue. On the other, they’re a developing nightmare as far as command and control, training and corporate governance are concerned.

The ethos of the RAF Reserves is subtly different to that of the RAF. Reservists are loyal to their squadron first, the RAuxAF next and the RAF last..... It’s that bond that keeps the Reservist coming back month after month, year after year. The RAF needs to be careful that its efforts to integrate the Reserves into the “whole Force” don’t weaken squadron cohesion to the detriment of retention. We’re Reservists, neither better, nor worse than our Regular counterparts, but different AND proud to be different!

The allowances and availability of medical services together with a better pension abatement deal needs to be put in place to prevent the loss of some very experienced personnel. Get this right and recruitment will improve, ignore this advice and as the economy improves personnel will surely look for other employment. Don’t lose the people who are the backbone of the Services and helping to keep things afloat!

The loss of medical and dental treatment is accepted, as is the policy regarding accommodation. Obviously each individual Reservist will have a different perspective but, for me, the big issue is the daily travelling cost. If I could afford to move closer to my place of work, I would do so. Thank-you RAF FF for the opportunity to make known my reservations (pun intended)!

I think the Army really need the Reserves, I think the RAF are playing at it. One could be forgiven that the RAuxAF and RNR got a boost largely because of a major shift in Army strategy boosted their Reserve component. I am not sure that the RAF really know what to do with all of us, we’re just a pool of cheap labour.
How we did it

The survey ran for 6 months. It took time to gain traction with the Reserves community and to get people to complete the survey online. Visits to RAuxAF sqns also took time to arrange: Many meet monthly at weekends only and have a very tight training schedule to meet and finding even half an hour to allow us to present was frequently difficult. Regrettably, many planned briefings were cancelled at the last moment and had to be rearranged, often months later.

The survey became active on the 24th October 2014, and was live on the RAF FF website until the 30th April 2015.

We received replies from Reserve personnel at the following Units:

Benson
Brize Norton
Coningsby
Cranwell
Fylingdales
Halton
High Wycombe
Honington
HQ Air
Leeming
Lossiemouth
Marham
Northolt
Odiham
Scampton
Shawbury
Shrivenham
Valley
Waddington
Wittering
We also received responses from the following RAuxAF Sqns:

- No 501 (County of Gloucester) Squadron RAF (RAF Brize Norton)
- No 502 (Ulster) Squadron (Aldergrove)
- No 504 (County of Nottingham) Squadron
- No 600 (County of London) Squadron
- No 602 (County of Glasgow) Squadron
- No 603 (County of Edinburgh) Squadron
- No 606 (Chiltern) Squadron
- No 609 (West Riding) Squadron
- No 611 (West Lancashire) Squadron (RAF Woodvale)
- No 612 (County of Aberdeen) Squadron
- No 614 (County of Glamorgan) Squadron
- No 622 Air Transport and Air-to-Air Refuelling Squadron
- No 1359 Flight RAF (Hercules Reservist Aircrew)
- No 2503 (City of Lincoln) Squadron (RAF Waddington)
- No 2620 (County of Norfolk) Squadron RAF Regiment
- No 2622 (Highland) Squadron RAF Regiment
- No 2623 (East Anglia) Squadron
- No 2624 (County of Oxford) Squadron RAF Regiment RAF Brize Norton
- No 4624 (County of Oxford) Movements Squadron RAF Brize Norton
- No 4626 (County of Wiltshire) Squadron
- No 7006 (VR) Intelligence Support Squadron
- No 7010 (VR) Photographic Interpretations Squadron
- No 7630 (VR) Intelligence Squadron RAF (RAF Waddington)
- No 7644 (VR) Media Ops Squadron RAF (RAF Halton)