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from the president's desk

Full-Time Support



When I accepted the office of President, one of my initiatives was to develop an issue focused on the Full-Time Support (FTS) community. For those who have been retired for a few years, these are the professionals we used to call TARs (Training and Administration of the Reserve.)

The FTS community consists of about 2,000 officers and 9,000 enlisted members. Although technically members of the Navy Reserve, they serve full time year round just as an Active Component (AC) Sailor. Traditionally, the two FTS flag officers served as Commander, Navy Reserve Forces Command (CNRFC) and Deputy Chief of the Navy Reserve (Deputy CNR). Today, selected reserve (SELRES) officers have backfilled those positions, and these admirals hold significant warfighting responsibilities. Rear Admiral Carol Pottenger is the Commander, Navy Expeditionary Combat Command, and Rear Admiral Lothrop "Buzz" Little is Deputy Commander, Task Force One Three Four (Iraqi Detainee Operations.)

Many SELRES do not understand the importance of the FTS community to the Navy Reserve. It is my expectation that after reading this issue you will see them as I do, key leaders in executing our Overseas Contingency Operations and leading advocates for all Navy Reservists.

FTS Sailors follow a career path similar to their AC counterparts. Sea-shore rotations, progressively increasing responsibility, and proven expertise in SELRES matters are the hallmark of a successful career. SELRES expertise is developed in assignments at Navy Operational Support Centers (NOSCs), duty as an Operational Support Officer (OSO) or assistant at 241 different commands, and serving on the staff of Reserve Component Commands (RCCs) and CNRFC. FTS officers command aircraft squadrons, ships, destroyer squadrons, and at the flag level, major Echelon II commands. FTS enlisted earn designations all the way up to Force Master Chief.

The TAR (now FTS) community was established in 1952 as part of the Armed Forces Reserve Act. A 1976 study recommended that the TAR Program be eliminated, but a 1977 DOD report found the TAR Program to be effective and recommended its retention. Last year, the Commission on the Guard and Reserve made 95 recommendations to Congress, and the Secretary of Defense concurred with 81. Recommendation 29, to reassign FTS missions back to the AC community, was one of them. This proposal is currently being debated but a decision has not yet been rendered.

The exceptionally high level of retention among FTS officers has prompted the Secretary of the Navy to convene annual Selective Early Retirement from Active Duty (SERAD) boards. Without retention, commanders and captains are involuntarily retired after 22 years and 26 years respectively. This "force shaping" tool is one that has not been used in the SELRES community since 1993, and represents another career hurdle not faced by AC counterparts.

One of the most valuable roles FTS play with respect to the SELRES community is acting as an "inside sales rep" for many commands. Familiar with the resources and the means to employ them, FTS are assigned all the way up to combatant command staffs to ensure that requirements for reserve support are identified, understood, and fulfilled.

The FTS community is a key part of our One Navy team. They represent a vital and valuable resource that serves as the primary linkage between the AC and the Reserve Component (RC). ausn's mission is a perfect fit for the FTS. Our reputation and presence on Capitol Hill is respected and influential. ausn represents the perfect vehicle by which Congress, SECDEF, and supporters of the Commission on the Guard and Reserve can be educated about the value that this cadre of career professionals bring to the fight. If you are an FTS member of our Association, you have a permanent home here. If you know of an FTS who is not a member, why not invite that Sailor to join ausn today? Their career and the future of their entire career path may depend on it.

G. Mark Hardy