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Benefits for reservists when volunteering vs. being mobilized: same or different?

Washington — Since Operation Desert Storm, the Air Force has increasingly relied on Reserve and Guard forces to meet combatant commander requirements. Demand for forces dramatically increased after the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

The Air Force initially met this demand primarily through partial mobilization of forces. Although Reserve and Guard forces are still being mobilized — particularly in stressed career fields like security forces, civil engineering and operations — the Air Force Reserve has subsequently strived to meet these requirements through volunteerism.

To accommodate this greater reliance on Reserve and Guard forces, Congress and the Department of Defense have revised law and policy, improving benefits in some cases and outlining accessibility to Reservists in others. The range and conditions of benefits — when they apply, when they don't — can be confusing: Does a Reservist get a particular benefit when he or she meets a contingency requirement by volunteering as opposed to being mobilized?

For the most part, the answer to this question is yes. However, there are some cases where the benefits for volunteers as opposed to people who are mobilized differ.

As Reservists are only mobilized in support of contingencies, this article examines the applicability of benefits for volunteers only in the context of contingencies. Moreover,

since mobilizations in almost all cases last longer than 30 days, this article does not address the applicability of benefits for volunteers in situations involving 30 days or less.

This article focuses on 30 benefits or categories of benefits available to Reservists and Guardsmen that include pay, allowances and leave, retirement, health care, legal protections, education, insurance, survivor benefits, privileges, and small business support.

Of the 30 benefits or categories of benefits reviewed, 25 are the same for both volunteers and people who are mobilized. Five are different, depending on whether a Reservist is placed on active-duty status by way of volunteerism or mobilization for greater than 30 days.

These five are legal assistance, income replacement, the 1095 rule, post-deployment/mobilization respite absence and follow-on mobilization. Following is a brief explanation of these five differences:

Legal assistance

Although legal assistance is available to Reservists and their dependents whenever on active-duty orders, a mobilized Reservist is eligible for continued legal assistance after demobilization. This entitlement is available when mobilized for more than 30 days and provides legal assistance to Reservists and dependents after release from active duty, for not less than twice the length of active duty, subject to the availability



Photo by Master Sgt. Keith Reed

Maj. (Dr.) Gene Delaune an IMA assigned to the 89th Medical Group at Andrews AFB, Md. gets a rare chance to visit a home and have tea with an Iraqi family recently.

of legal resources. See 10 U.S.C. § 1044, as amended P. Law 110-181, section 541; 122 Stat. 114.

Income replacement

In order to qualify for income replacement of up to \$3,000 per month, a Reservist must be involuntarily mobilized (not on voluntary orders) for any full month following the date on which the member (a) completes 547 continuous days of active duty under involuntary mobilization order; (b) completes 730 cumulative days of active duty under an involuntary mobilization order in the previous 1,826 days; or (c) is involuntarily mobilized for a period of 180 days or more within 180 days of release from a period of 180 days or more of active duty.

This income replacement is only the difference between the member's average civilian income and the total military compensation, when the member's civilian pay was more. This entitlement is not applicable to federal employees and is

set to expire at the end of the 2008 calendar year. See 37 U.S.C. § 910, as amended, P. Law 110-181, section 604; 122 Stat. 145.

The 1095 rule

Reservists may serve on active duty orders for 1,095 days (three years) of the previous 1,460 days (four years). If Reservists serve in excess of this limitation, then they must be counted against active-duty or active Guard and Reserve end-strength limits, unless these Reservists serve on active duty under certain excluded categories.

Days spent on mobilization orders are excluded, as are days on annual tour, days spent as an AGR, duty performed before first entering the Selected Reserve and certain training tours. While the secretary of the Air Force may waive certain Reservists to count against active-duty or AGR end strength according to established criteria, waiver is not guaranteed.

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Moriarty named HQ RMG Group Superintendent

By Chief Master Sgt. Dina Moriarty
RMG Group Superintendent

Hello fellow Reservist! I am very excited to have the opportunity to work with more than 6,000 enlisted Individual Reservists and 170 enlisted full-time support members. I'd like to share a little about myself, background, vision and expectations as I begin this new position.

I joined the regular Air Force April 1981 and have been in the Personnel career field since. I served for four years and then transitioned to the traditional reserves for four years. I spent a year as a participating individual ready reservist and then a Individual Mobilization Augmentee for five years.

In 1996, I was selected as a Base Individual Mobilization Augmentee Administrator at Eglin AFB, Fla.

In September 2001, I transferred to Air Force Special Operations Headquarters and my first day on

the job we mobilized all of our assets. In July 2006 I moved to the newly formed HQ Readiness Management Group at Robins AFB, Ga. and was the superintendent of the Joint and Defense Agency detachment. During the process of standing up the Readiness Management Group, the need to have administrative control of personnel transactions became apparent. AFRC determined that the RMG needed to own the IMA personnel processes. In July 2007, I assisted with standing up the new Director of Personnel directorate. I'm especially proud that we have hired 26 full-time support personnelists to provide, quality personnel services and support. In July, I was selected as the RMG Commander's Group Superintendent.

I have worked in all aspects of the Reserve program. My goals are to address issues on personnel, military pay and travel pay in addition, to giving you better access to the experts that can answer those questions. I know

what you are facing with trying to please three masters, your civilian employment, your Reserve career and most importantly, your family. I want to help facilitate better processes to make your life easier by automating processes that benefits you.

I plan to visit the bases during your unit training assemblies, conferences and other opportunities. I want to hear your needs and concerns but also provide you the most current information.

If you have specific IMA question, I will ask you to please let those experts in the field be your first contact. Contact your unit reserve coordinator, then the Base Individual Mobilization Augmentee Administrator. If the BIMAA cannot answer your next question, the next step would be the detachment superintendent, then the program manager.

I want to personally thank you for your dedication and the sacrifices you make, taking time from your civilian jobs and your families to serve our country. You are



Chief Master Sgt. Dina Moriarty

the reason why we are here.

I am proud to serve with such an awesome group of professionals and will never forget who my "customers" are. You!

If you are not getting the support you feel you deserve and want to discuss it with me, I am here for you. My commercial phone number is (478) 327-2286 and DSN is 497-2286.

News Briefs, Education Information

Volunteer for the Human Resources Development Council

The Command Human Resources Development Council will hold its biannual meeting at the Atlanta Airport Marriott, Atlanta, Ga., on Oct 27-30. This conference is detachment funded. The RMG has authorized one IMA per MAJCOM to attend. Please contact your program manager if you are a volunteer.

AF Announces New Community Web Site

On Oct. 1, the Air Force introduced a new Web site for Airmen and their families that provides a 24/7 resource for information on topics like relocation, military child education and finances. The new Air Force Community Web site will be located at www.afcommunity.af.mil. For more information, contact the local Airman and Family Readiness Center or visit the new site.

New Upgrade to Home Use Middleware to Use CACs from Home

Air Force Military Personnel Flights began issuing the next generation CACs to Air Force team members recently to meet HSPD-12 requirements.



These next generation CACs require an upgrade of home use middleware from ActivCard Gold 3.0 to ActivClient 6.1. Home users without the next generation CAC should upgrade now to prevent a loss of service when they receive their next generation CAC. The software supporting the next generation CAC is compatible with the old CAC that most users have. Users with a next generation CAC experiencing a loss of service from home should contact their local Help Desk for downloading instructions.

Get 1 Now

On Oct. 1, AFRC Recruiting Service launched a new bold rewards program called "Get 1 Now" for reservists who recruit people into the Air Force Reserve. From iPods to flat-panel televisions, the prizes make a statement about how important "Get 1 Now" is in assisting Recruiting Service in meeting the goal of 8900 new members. Submit referrals any time at Get1Now.us. Awards are totaled between Oct. 1 and Sept. 30. For more information or a password call **1-877-786-2372**.

Tricare "stay alert" e-mails

Officials with the Tricare Management Activity are now providing benefits news electronically. From beneficiary newsletters and changes in coverage, to pharmacy updates and news releases, all Tricare beneficiaries now have an easy way to stay informed by email. Subscrib-

ing is fast and secure by clicking on the "little red envelope" on the Tricare Web site. For more information visit <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=12311439>.

Landlord default protection

A new change to the Joint Federal Travel Regulations authorized the military to pay to move servicemembers and their families whose landlords default on property the military members are renting. The change is retroactive to July 30. It does not apply to military members who own their own homes and default on their loans. Servicemembers should contact their housing or administrative officers if they believe the new JTFR change may help them.

For more information, visit <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123110335>.

IR Quick Reference Guide called "IR IMA/PIRR Basics now available

HQ RMG has recently published a quick reference guide providing details on both IMA and PIRR categories. For information and to access the quick reference guide visit <https://www.my.af.mil/ASPs/DocMan/DOCMain.asp?Filter=RC-OT-00-03&FolderID=RC-OT-00-03-7&Tab=0>.

New Government Travel Cards

All new government travel should be received by Oct. 1. Begin using the new Citibank card Nov. 30.

Tricare Reserve family benefit now permanent

Falls Church, Va. —

Eligible families of activated Reserve members will continue to save up to \$300 in annual deductibles now that a Tricare “demonstration program” is a permanent benefit.

Eligible family members of Reserve personnel activated for more than 30 days under federal orders in support of a contingency operation are made eligible for Tricare Standard and Tricare Extra, which have annual deductibles. While they may be eligible to enroll in Tricare Prime or Tricare Prime Remote for Active Duty Family Members, which have no deductibles, may choose to stay with Tricare Standard of Extra.

Introduced as one of the first Tricare healthcare enhancements after Sept. 11, 2001, to assist the increasing number of Reserve service members activated to support the war on terrorism, the benefit waiving annual

deductibles has been a demonstration project for more than seven years.

“The demonstration has worked well and the benefit is not changing,” Army Maj. Gen. Elder Granger, the deputy director of the Tricare Management Activity. “We simply want to make sure our Reserve families know this is a permanent benefit



now that final federal regulation has been published.”

Reserve families often meet annual deductibles under their commercial plans before they get activated. Waiving the Tricare Standard and Extra deductibles means eligible families will not have to pay additional deductibles under Tricare. The annual deductible for Standard and Extra is \$300 for families.

“Reserve members and their families make huge sacrifices to protect our freedom. We don’t want to see them sacrifice even more by paying deductibles twice in one year,” General Granger said.

The published regulation also contains provisions that make it easier for Reserve members to continue to see their family physicians by potentially increasing the amount that can be paid to out-of-network healthcare providers.

Since eligibility for Tricare benefits is determined by the services to ensure family members are eligible for the Tricare Reserve Family Benefit. Activated Reserve members should visit their local military ID card issuing facility and update their information in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System.

Hamil goes Pro



Courtesy photo

Master Sgt. Corrina Hamil, IMA assigned to USSTRATCOM at Offutt AFB, Neb., accepts the first place award at the Natural KC Gold’s Classic Bodybuilding, Figure, and Xtreme Fit Championships open women’s body building competition in Kansas City, Kan. Sept. 13. Hamil’s win qualifies her to compete in the professional ranks in 2009. Her next competition is the Super USA on Nov. 8.

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These criteria, in order of priority, are members deployed to the area of responsibility; members directly supporting Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom or Noble Eagle; members supporting approved contingencies; members on operational support orders; and members backfilling for active-duty members who are forward deployed in support of OEF, OIF or ONE. In the past year, more than 2,200 Reservists applied for waiver, while more than 1,600 were approved. See 10 U.S.C. § 115, *as amended*, P. Law 110-181, sections 403(h), 416(b), 417; 122 Stat. 87, 91, 92.

PDMRA

Secretary of defense policy establishes the post-deployment/mobilization respite absence (PDMRA) benefit. Department of Defense and AFRC guidance

further delineate the policy. Essentially, PDMRA provides for paid days off after extended time spent deployed (minimum of one cumulative year within the last 72 months).

When mobilized, all time is credited toward PDMRA, whether deployed inside or outside the continental United States. By contrast, for volunteers, the benefit applies only when serving in certain designated locations and only if the member is subsequently mobilized within the next 72 months. See Secretary of Defense Memorandum, 19 Jan 2007; OSD/PR Policy Letter, 15 Mar 2007, *as amended* 18 Apr 2007 and 24 May 2007; and HQ AFRC/A1 Policy Letter, 21 Feb 2008.

Follow-on mobilization

Another difference between volunteering and being mobilized that could affect most Reservists is a secondary or follow-on mobi-

lization. Current policy strives to minimize the disruption to a member’s commitments outside the military.

Accordingly, the secretary of defense has established a desired ratio of time Reservists spent mobilized to time not mobilized.

This ratio is currently 1 to 5, which means that a Reservist who spends a period of time being mobilized should expect five times that period at home station, not being mobilized.

A member who volunteers does not establish a new dwell period at home station by virtue of volunteering for a contingency. He or she can still be mobilized upon his or her return from voluntary duty, per the established ratio, based on his or her last mobilization.

It is also important to point out that this dwell rate is a planning objective and, as such, can be changed by the secretary of de-

fense when the needs of the military require. See Secretary of Defense Memorandum, 19 Jan 2007; OSD/PR Policy Letter, 15 Mar 2007, *as amended* 18 Apr 2007 and 24 May 2007; and HQ AFRC/A1 Policy Letter, 21 Feb 2008.

Interested in volunteering?

If you are interested for a deployment, your first stop is your Detachment Program Manager. He will provide guidance throughout the volunteer process. Specific AEF vacancies can be found by contacting your active-duty unit deployment manager or your respective AFRC Functional Manager.

For information on the process, visit the RMG AEF Volunteer Process COP at <https://wwwd.my.af.mil/afknprod/ASPs/docman/DOCMain.asp?Tab=0FolderID=OO-OP-RC-711&Filter=OO-OP-RC-71>.