

## **SPANISH NATIONAL RESERVE FORCES STATUS** **(as to April 2006)**

*The following information completes the first ones, dated 2004 and 2005, existing in the NRFC database on National Reserve Forces, but focussing in the so called Voluntary Reserve. The temporary reserve concept is currently being discussed and it could disappear.*

*Taking into consideration that there will be new callings, twice a year normally in Spring and Autumn, for accessing to the condition of volunteer reservist, data now provided will be updated in few months.*

COUNTRY: **SPAIN**

GENERAL INFORMATION :

After drastic changes in the old model for the national military service in our country, the process, which started in 1998 to get a complete professionalism in our Armed Forces, is finished. It had the objective of getting more operational, more flexible, more reduced and better equipped Armed Forces while effectively accomplishing with constitutional defence missions and international contributions and compromises

To compensate possible shortage or lack of certain capabilities, the use of volunteer reservists is of paramount importance as a complement in this new scheme. Therefore, we have initiated the path to reach at the end of this year 5.000 volunteer reservists. Their recruitment is a specific part of the Plan for the Recruitment of Personnel for Armed Forces, that expects to annually increase, in 2000 people, the current amount of reservists.

However, is not our intention, not yet, to create a procedure to replace, substitute or relieve permanent professional forces with reservists anywhere.

Nevertheless, the Defence Strategic Review document foresees, in case of conflict or crisis, the contribution of those forces, although gradually and balanced, before the situation to face.

As it has been detailed bellow three categories of reservists are considered:

- **temporary**, people available during a certain period of time, between one and five years, depending on the rank they had got during their service. Having been temporary military professional and permanent career personnel, they become temporary reservists just from the moment they have finished their temporary service compromise or have dismissed from their military condition, respectively;

- **voluntary**, that is similar to the homonymous NATO category in the MC 441. They sign a contract with the Armed Forces for two or three years that could be periodically extended for the same period until it takes a total of fifteen years or when they get the age of fifty eight.
- **obligatory** for anybody comprised between nineteen and twenty-five years old which will be mobilised in accordance with a specific crisis situation and after the correspondent governmental decision.

The percentage of reservists before active duty personnel is approximately 3%. Women are now increasing their presence within the Spanish Armed Forces that represents around 18% of the total. However, for Reserve Forces women suppose a regular contribution of 25-30% .

The distribution of selected candidates, according to their professional titles, academic qualifications or university degrees, is demonstrating that the majority of the current candidates to obtain the condition of volunteer reservists are owner of the highest level of professional skills, following by those showing primary and secondary school diplomas.

#### BASIC ORGANISATION AND PRINCIPLE:

Volunteer Reservists once nominated sleep as “deactivated available” under the administrative authority of Defence Regional Delegates.

The Government, in a case by case basis, officially authorises reservists to serve by specifying the number and type of them to be activated and the total amount of time to remain in this situation. There are three different procedures to activate reservists which are coincident with the three categories of reservists cited above.

In principle, reservists in general are going to fill specific posts that are vacant within the permanent force structure, except for volunteer that will have in the near future their own, independent and particular organisation and structure. Therefore, volunteer reservists cannot be activated to complete any post within existing military units or to generate new ones.

The Royal Decree that approved the Regulations for access and regime of volunteer reservists, states the necessity of establishing memoranda of understanding (MOUs) and other agreements between the Ministry of Defence and the employer organisations, public administrations and social agents in order to co-ordinate their military education and training, programmes and periods, in harmony with labour activities. In this field we consider very useful the work that is being carried out by the NRFC at this moment and we will contribute to and learn from it.

The constitution and implementation of the General Bureau of Reservists has been the most important decision recently taken by the Minister of Defence in this issue. Its consolidation and usefulness are now our first challenges.

#### MAIN LEGISLATION:

In general the National Reserve concept, and in particular that of Voluntary Reserve, is based in the following three main legal documents:

- The article 30.1 of the Spanish Constitution (1978), expressing the general right and obligation for Spaniards to defend their country, is of paramount importance.
- The Law 17/1999, dated 18 May, on Personnel Regime for the Armed Forces regulates, among others, the reservist status. It is the legal support for the activation, duration and call-out regulations.
- The Royal Decree 1691/2003, dated 12 December, that approve the Regulations for accession and regime of volunteer reservists.

Apart from the Constitution, the Law 17/1999 is articulating our National Reserve Forces system by defining the cited types of reservists: temporary, obligatory and voluntary, in order to complete the existing capabilities of our Armed Forces.

While the temporary reserve are based upon former professional relations with the Armed Forces and the obligatory reserve was initially thought for extraordinary situations, it seemed opportune to develop the procedures to have volunteer reservists as a complement to reinforce capabilities when needed. They will represent, not only a supplementary contribution to our national defence, even in peacetime, but also the deepest and strongest link between Armed Forces and the civil society.

The third document, Regulations, is the more recent official publication that develops the who, how, when and where in relation with volunteer reservists. All Spaniard between 18 and 58 years old are free to apply for and to offer their skills and expertise in relation with the specific posts that are published in order to arrive at the end of each year with the desired, and decided by the Government, number of reservists.

They have to succeed the selection process and turn on candidate to be volunteer reservist. Then they will be trained in basic military issues and exercises during a relatively short period of time, no more than thirty days.

Finally, they will receive education and training related to specific aspects and responsibilities of their future and potential job. However, seven days per year are considered necessary to pass a re-cycling and updating period, if they have not been activated, yet.

## FUNCTION OF RESERVES:

- In principle individuals belonging to Reserve Forces have to serve in Units, Centres and Organisms of the Spanish MOD, in Spain.
- However, the Spanish Government will also authorise temporary and volunteer reservists to carry out certain missions and tasks abroad, in accordance with the compromises and requirements derived from the international agreements signed by Spain or to contribute to the implementation of peace and security around the world.
- Furthermore, obligatory reservists could also be mobilised to serve for general interest, other than military, goals and objectives but concurrent with the National Defence necessities, e.g. Civil protection, Citizen safety and security, Environmental cares and Social services.

When a volunteer reservist is activated, we do not use to say mobilised for this type of reservists, he becomes fully military professional during the time he is working for the Armed Forces and he will be individually occupying the position what he was assigned for in the selection process referred above. Until that moment they are civilian and will wear uniform only in solemnities and special military events, and they can be members of the existing Associations for reservists integrated in the Spanish Federation of Reserve Organisations (FORE) that also belong to CIOR.

## CATEGORISATION/READINESS:

As it has been said above we have three categories of reservists: temporary, voluntary and obligatory. The two first must be available to be incorporated into service during a certain time, once they are called, always more than one month. Consequently they must report on any change of address to the Defence Local Delegate.

From our statistic, after the series of callings over the last two years it is easy to see, that there is not appropriate proportion between the amount of reservists being Officers, NCOs and Soldiers. People willing to play as Officers/NCOs volunteer reservists are almost double than those requesting Troop positions. Therefore, with this "raw material" it is difficult to think about units of reservists, at least in this moment.

Last calling in Autumn last year has produced similar results. In total we have now almost 3,500 selected candidates, most of them already involved in courses for training and basic military education. Approximately 2,000 are already full members of the Voluntary Reserve.

However, we realise that sooner or later we need to decide upon any solution that should be balanced between available funds in one side and people needed in the other. In this consideration there are some magic

figures flying around reflecting a ceiling of 15,000 reservists taking into consideration natural relieves and leavings.

On the other side we have a pool of 26,000 of those temporary reservists which compulsory remain as reservists between one and five years after leaving the Service, depending on the contract they have had and the rank they have got. Then, they are automatically moved to the civilian world. They potentially form the future voluntary reservists most important “quarry”.

#### FUNDING:

- At the beginning of each year the Spanish Government publishes the maximum amount of places within the administration to be filled until December, what includes those of volunteer reservists. As a consequence the Annual National Defence Budget will include funds for training and activate volunteer and temporary reservists.
- The Spanish MOD will establish agreements with employers, social agents and other related bodies within the Public Administration in order to define, inter alia, the percentage of reservists which could be activated within the same enterprise and the more appropriate period of the year to activate them when organizing training and updating courses.

#### TRAINING:

When decided, an official resolution orders the starting point for a new selection process. This resolution really develops and completes all that is stated in general terms by the cited Royal Decree. It normally refers to general conditions to take part on the selection process, for instance, to be Spaniard; to have good behaviors; to be between eighteen and fifty five for soldiers and fifty eight for Officers and Non Commissioned Officers; to keep all civil rights; not to be objector. Also a list of official and valid documents to demonstrate personal qualifications and skills is included.

The table, or list of medical conditions and exclusions, that is the same for all applicants intending to come into Armed Forces anyhow, is also referred. And finally, directions for a special psychological support, in order to help the candidate during the election of any possible position, from the list of those posts proposed by the resolution, are also provided.

Volunteer reservists have to receive a basic military training, and also specific, if necessary, just from the moment they have been selected after requesting for that condition. Each service, Army, Navy, Air Forces and Medical, Legal and others, is responsible for military training, basic and specific, depending upon chosen posts. Between 15 and 30 days, continuously or discontinuously is the normal length of these courses.

Then they sign the contract that means a free temporary and voluntary compromise for three years that could be prolonged for other similar periods until a total of fifteen years. A project for a new Law is only contemplating limits on the age, eighteen and fifty years old for everybody. The contract should reflect how long the reservist wants to be activated during each period and also his willingness to participate in missions abroad.

They must also receive periodical, once a year, training and updating, in accordance with the requirements of the post they have been given. It will be no less than seven days, within the normal contract scope of three years, in order to improve their knowledge and professional skills. In the same way, to maintain and update their military knowledge temporary reservists will be provided with the appropriate means for their information and improvement of their current skills.

In general terms, volunteer reservists will not have any relations or contact with permanent or regular military people during training periods.

## CONCLUSIONS:

The process for recruiting Volunteer Reservists is already consolidated. A new calling is planned for April-May 2006 and our aim is to have 5,000 volunteer reservists at the end of this year. In order to be able to assess how much the final scenario will cost and to have a base to fix the number of reservists we could activate every year we use to work with an estimation of 15,000 voluntary reservists as primary objective to initiate a serious and final study.

The Spanish concept of National Reserve is, so far and with some singular exceptions, not to create and employ units but to use volunteer reservists in accordance with their individual capabilities to complement those of professional men and women. In this way of thinking we consider the possibility of starting the activation process in the near future with the use of medical support elements made up of professional personnel complemented with volunteer reservists. The complete CIMIC world is our natural objective when thinking in full activations.

Recently, the participation during two months of six medicine doctors and nurses, volunteer reservists, to help people suffering the consequences of the earthquake in Sumatra, has been the first occasion to intervene that our reservists have got, by being integrated in different medical teams within the military Unit organised by Spain to contribute with the whole humanitarian and support operation.

In this same lane for the first time we have initiated the Activation Plan for training in an annual basis. The intention is to have, alongside each year, the whole Volunteer Reserve Force activated during short period of 7-10 days for training and updating. This include CIOR Congresses and Meetings and AESOR International Exercises.