A HISTORY OF THE
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF
ARMY RESERVE
The Office of Army Reserve History reports to the commanding general of the U.S. Army Reserve Command (USARC) and has been in existence since 1992. The office provides advice and recommendations to the USARC commanding general and the leadership of the Army Reserve on Department of Defense and Army historical policy, operations, and developments, and exercises overall staff responsibility for military history programs within the Army Reserve community. The office is comprised of the director, Publications Section, Field Programs, the U.S. Army Reserve Historical Research Collection, and the National Museum of the Army Reserve. One of its functions is to write the official history of the Army Reserve. This history not only provides a comprehensive account of Army Reserve activities in peace and war, but also serves as an important tool in the on-going training of officers and noncommissioned officers in the profession of arms. The office prepares and publishes historical monographs and special historical studies on topics and events of historical significance to the Army Reserve and the Army.

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For copies contact:
The U.S. Army Reserve Command, AFRC-MH,
4710 Knox St, Fort Bragg, NC 28310-5010
or call 910-570-8194/8180.
# HISTORY

The Concept ........................................ page 2

Office of the Executive for Reserve Affairs ........................................ page 5

Office of the Executive for Reserve and ROTC Affairs ........................................ page 9

Office of the Chief Army Reserve ........................................ page 13

Appointment of First Statutory Chief of the Army Reserve ........................................ page 14

The Chief of the Army Reserve Becomes Commanding General of the U.S. Army Reserve Command ........................................ page 16

Appointment of Chief of the Army Reserve to Lieutenant General ........................................ page 17

Move to Fort Belvoir ........................................ page 18

# FLAGS

Distinguishing Flags ........................................ page 20

# NOTES

Notes ........................................ page 24
THE CONCEPT

The role of the Army Reserve chief evolved significantly since its origin, when the Army established the position of Chief of the Reserve Section as an additional duty under the G-2, War Department General Staff. In those early days, the chief functioned as a liaison for the officers and enlisted men of the Organized Reserve Corps with the War Department. This officer functioned as a manager of an expanding federal reserve force in existence since 1908. The National Defense Act of 1916 established the Officers’ Reserve Corps and the Enlisted Reserve Corps. By February 1917, approximately 500 Army Reserve officers received commissions, along with nearly 2,000 officers in the older, but still separate Medical Reserve Corps. By June 1917, the Medical Reserve Corps was merged with the Officers’ Reserve Corps. Following the rapid growth of reservists with America’s entry into World War I, and their important role demonstrated during the war, some planners in the War Department saw the need for greater attention to the Organized Reserve.

General John J. Pershing depicted as chief of staff, U.S. Army. (Oil painting on canvas by Richard Leopold Seyffert, 1975, Art Collection, U.S. Army Center of Military History.)

The need for providing guidance at the Army staff level, poor training opportunities, and an unrealistic view of mobilization of the Organized Reserve all contributed to serious problems for the Organized Reserve forces. Army Chief of Staff John J. Pershing (Chief of Staff, 1921-1923) provided the much needed focus for correcting those problems. He realized the benefit of having a staff officer available at the War Department to answer questions and evaluate recommendations made by Officers’ Reserve Corps members. Colonel John McAuley Palmer, a member of Pershing’s personal staff, took special interest in the Organized Reserve forces, although his role remained entirely advisory in nature. From 1921 to 1923, Colonel Palmer managed Organized Reserve Corps affairs. Colonel Willis Uline, Colonel Palmer’s friend and chief of staff of the 98th Organized Reserve Division, suggested in a letter of 27 September 1922 that the War
Department establish a Chief of Organized Reserve comparable to the previously established Chief of the Militia Bureau. Uline's letter to Colonel Palmer stated that the Organized Reserve needed a full-time spokesman at the War Department headquarters. He argued that a regular Army officer should fill this requirement, disposed to develop a strong reserve component reporting directly to him. Uline believed that such a reserve bureau acquired survival value. A succession of inept or weak chiefs would scarcely nullify its influence.¹

Colonel Uline’s suggestion found support within the War Department. On 1 March 1923, General Pershing responded to the proposal with a memorandum to the Army’s deputy chief of staff. He directed the proper section of the General Staff to study the question of establishing an agency in the War Department. Pershing noted that the agency should be one “whose express function will be to handle questions pertaining to the Reserves, that is, an agency to which Reserve officers seeking information or with recommendations to make, or any business relating to the Reserves, could go and receive a cordial welcome and thoughtful consideration.”²

On 12 June 1923, Memorandum 42, Military Intelligence Division, established a Reserve Section in the Military Intelligence Division of the War Department General Staff. The section disseminated information on Organized Reserve activities and served as the War Department’s point of contact with units and members of the Organized Reserve. Major Charles F. Thompson, then serving in the War Department’s Military Intelligence Division, assumed the additional duty of chief of the Reserve Section. After serving a few weeks in the position, Major Walter O. Boswell, a former aide-de-camp to General Pershing, succeeded him.
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE FOR
RESERVE AFFAIRS

Paragraph 24 of Special Order 53, War Department, dated 5 March 1927, moved the Reserve Section to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of War and designated it as the Office of the Executive for Reserve Affairs. This order appointed Colonel David L. Stone as the first executive for reserve affairs. A letter from the secretary of war to the executive for reserve affairs, dated 11 March 1927, defined the functions of the new office. Under the reorganization, the office provided reserve officers and their associations with a War Department contact and acted as liaison between them and the secretary of war. An executive order, not congressional legislation, established the new Office of the Executive for Reserve Affairs. The executive served at the will of the chief of staff of the Army.

The Reserve Officers Association, an organization founded in 1922 to act as an advocate for the young Organized Reserve Corps and to promote and develop military preparedness, passed a resolution at its 1927 national convention that urged Congress to pass legislation establishing a reserve division in the War Department. Senator David A. Reed of Pennsylvania introduced a bill the following year for the establishment of a reserve division “responsible for the study and coordination of all details pertaining to the Reserve, the ROTC, and the Citizens’ Military Training Camps.” The bill required a Regular Army major general as the chief of the Reserve Division, supported by a small staff of officers, three selected from the Officers’ Reserve Corps. In March and April 1928, the Senate Committee on Military Affairs conducted hearings for the bill. Several spokesmen for local
chapters of the Reserve Officers Association voiced opposition to the proposed legislation. They voiced a fear that adoption would create a bureau under which the reserve existed separately from the Army, comparing it to the way that the Militia Bureau had separated the National Guard from the Army. Bill opponents argued that a statutory office for reserve affairs may hamper the current relationship and urged that the reserve remain an integral part of the Army. The committee concurred with this view and the bill died in committee—nearly forty years passed before the Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve attained statutory status within the Army.

The Executive for Reserve Affairs established its new office in the State, War, and Navy Building, located next to the White House and headquarters to the State, War, and Navy Departments. The building originally contained five wings built on five acres of land in 1888. The Executive Branch still occupies this structure, now known as the Eisenhower Executive Office Building. By 1931, the executive for reserve affairs moved into an office in room 217 of the building and remained there until 1939.

State, War, and Navy Building (now known as the Eisenhower Executive Office Building), looking from the northwest. Located on 17th Street, Washington, DC, it housed the offices of the first officers who served as chief of the Reserve Section/Branch and executive for reserve affairs. The White House is barely visible in the background at the extreme right, January 1932. (National Archives)
On 4 November 1930, in a memorandum of the secretary of war to the chief of staff, the Office of the Executive for Reserve Affairs transferred to the Office of the Chief of Staff. An officer of the Regular Army, the executive held responsibility for “facilitating activities pertaining to the Officers’ Reserve Corps and the Organized Reserves of the United States.” While the executive had direct access to the chief of staff under this arrangement, he also served at the pleasure or whim of the chief. The Office of the Executive for Reserve Affairs undoubtedly achieved greater status with the promotion of Colonel Charles D. Herron to brigadier general in October 1934. The Army assigned General Herron as the first incumbent executive for reserve affairs to hold the general officer rank. Despite this, Brigadier General Edwin S. Hartshorn, who served as the executive from 1935 to 1938, observed in 1936 that “the Chief of Staff [of the Army] retains to himself the supervision and control of the Reserve Component of the Army of the United States. . . . All instructions issued by the Office of the Executive for Reserve Affairs are given in the name of the Chief of Staff.” The National Defense Act did not provide for the position of executive. The executive’s office, kept at minimal staffing level, consisted of the executive and a secretary as late as September 1936.
As Europe stood on the brink of war in the summer of 1939, the executive’s office, along with many other War Department officials, moved into the temporary Munitions Building located on the north side of the Mall at 20th Street and Constitution Avenue, Northwest. The move for the executive and various War Department offices occurred sometime between April and August 1939. The executive first occupied room 2020 of the “tempo” or temporary building.

On 21 August 1940, the executive acquired liaison functions with the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) by a letter from the secretary of war to the executive for reserve affairs. In a letter to the War Department in February 1934, Mr. Ralph C. Bishop, secretary of the Civilian Military Education Fund, first proposed the concept for these new duties for the executive for reserve affairs. Mr. Bishop pointed out the need for an “Executive for Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) Affairs” to serve as a point of contact in the War Department for college officials and to coordinate ROTC policies and administration. He suggested the executive for reserve affairs as the logical officer to facilitate such a role.

In the latter part of 1938, Army Deputy Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall, a Virginia Military Institute graduate and a strong advocate of the ROTC program, started exploring Mr. Bishop’s suggestion. General Marshall discussed the proposal with the Executive for Reserve Affairs Brigadier General Charles F. Thompson in January 1939. Following some consideration, General Thompson expressed concern that acquiring responsibility for both Army Reserve and ROTC affairs could require long absences from Washington and interfere with the role then assigned to corps area commanders throughout the United States. He recommended the gradual introduction of ROTC responsibilities by the executive for reserve affairs on an experimental basis. In August 1940, the executive received the liaison functions in accordance with this recommendation.7
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE FOR RESERVE AND ROTC AFFAIRS

With the new designation as executive for ROTC affairs, the executive received authority for the initiation of action on any matters pertaining to the ROTC by making “suitable recommendation to the appropriate Division of the General Staff.” On 20 June 1941, with the growing importance of the ROTC program on the eve of the United States’ entry into World War II, the War Department redesignated the Office of the Executive for Reserve Affairs as the Office of the Executive for Reserve and ROTC Affairs. With added responsibilities for the office came a further allocation of staff on 16 April 1941. The executive received two additional officers, a lieutenant colonel, and a captain.

Just three months after the United States entered World War II, Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall initiated a major reorganization of the War Department in response to new demands for planning and implementation of wartime policies. The reorganization created three new commands: the Army Air Forces, the Army Ground Forces, and the Services of Supply (later renamed the Army Service Forces). The Army Service Forces held the responsibility for supply (or technical) and administrative services, the nine geographically based corps area, and most Army installations throughout the United States.

Because of the Marshall reorganization, Circular 59, War Department, dated 2 March 1942, the Executive for Reserve and ROTC Affairs moved on 9 March 1942 under the Adjutant General’s Office, which came under the Administrative Services Division, part of the Army Service Forces Command. At the time of this shift, the Office of Executive for Reserve and ROTC Affairs remained relatively small in comparison to other offices within the War Department. The executive’s staff consisted of three military assistants and three civilians who performed clerical and stenographer duties. He continued to formulate
and coordinate War Department policies pertaining to reserve affairs and Organized Reserve units, as well as to procure reserve officers from ROTC, Civilian Military Training Camps, and civilian life. The ROTC responsibilities of the executive included an advisory role on policies that affected the selection of the kinds, types, and locations of colleges and universities for senior ROTC units. As the United States prepared to fight in World War II, the executive also considered policies that affected the training of reserve officers and units of the Organized Reserve and their mobilization responsibilities.

Until June 1942, the Executive for Reserve and ROTC Affairs remained under the Adjutant General’s Office, after which it realigned directly under the Chief of Administrative Services, which still reported to the Army Service Forces Command.10 As the military establishment rapidly expanded in the Washington, DC area, the federal government built a new building to accommodate the many offices of the War Department and Navy. This new building, situated on the west bank of the Potomac River, became the Pentagon. Sometime between November 1942 and 14 January 1943, the executive for reserve and ROTC affairs moved from the Munitions Building into his first Pentagon office, located in room 3C928.

Due to the mobilization for the war effort, by the latter part of 1942, the vast majority of Organized Reserve Corps officers now served the Army on active duty. In addition, the Office of the Executive for Reserve and ROTC Affairs continued to function as the point of contact for those thousands of reserve officers not mobilized because of age or physical disqualifications and those former reserve officers who now desired to renew their former connections to the Army. This large number of non-mobilized reserve officers created a flurry of activity for the executive. The Army also involved the office with studies on reserve and ROTC matters and plans for the reorganization of the reserve component and its integration with the Regular Army following the war.
The War Munitions Building, Washington, DC—second home of the Office of the Executive for Reserve Affairs and Executive for Reserve and ROTC Affairs, 1939 to 1942. (National Archives)

The War Munitions Building, Washington, DC, taken 20 July 1938. (U.S. Army Signal Corps photo in the National Archives)
On 12 November 1943, the Army abolished the Administration Services Division, Army Service Forces Command, and placed the Office of Executive for Reserve and ROTC Affairs under the leadership of the Director of Personnel, Army Service Forces. On 17 May 1945, transferred completely from the Army Service Forces, the Office of Executive for Reserve and ROTC Affairs once again reported to the chief of staff, and functioned as a War Department special staff activity. At this time, the office consisted of a Reserve Affairs Branch, an ROTC Affairs Branch, and an Information and Records Section. In response to the growth and recognized importance of the Army Air Forces, an Air Force officer joined the Office of the Executive for Reserve and ROTC Affairs in December 1945. The Air Force officer advised and assisted the executive in Army Air Force Reserve and ROTC Affairs, maintaining liaison with all agencies in Headquarters, Army Air Forces related to the Organized Reserve Corps and ROTC. Shortly after the war, the office grew to a staff of six officers and four civilians.
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ARMY RESERVE

On 7 December 1954, the Army re-designated the Office of the Executive for Reserve and ROTC Affairs as the Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve and ROTC Affairs. Change 14 to Special Regulation 10-5-1, dated 16 October 1956, made the chief responsible to the newly established Office of the Assistant Chief of Reserve Components. A major shift in the internal organization and responsibilities of the chief came on 13 February 1963 with General Order 7, Department of the Army, which re-designated the office as the Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve. With this change, responsibilities for ROTC affairs transferred from the Chief of the Army Reserve to a separate division under the Office of Chief of Reserve Components. The Office of Chief of Reserve Components was short-lived and abolished on 20 May 1974.

Following the 1963 transfer of ROTC responsibilities, the Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve consisted of four divisions and two offices: Organization and Training Division; Personnel Division; Logistics Division; Comptroller Division; Information Office; and Administrative Office. An executive officer, later designated as the deputy chief of the Army Reserve, managed the operation of the divisions and offices.16

In 1967, the issue of having a statutory chief of the Army Reserve came before Congress yet again. In September 1967, Secretary of the Army Stanley R. Resor stated before the Senate Committee on Armed Services that the Army could support a statutory chief of the reserves similar to that of the National Guard Bureau. Secretary Resor, however, opposed giving such an office for the Army Reserve much autonomy, arguing that such responsibilities belonged to the Army chief of staff or to his office. Despite some of the controversial issues surrounding the establishment of a statutory chief of the Army Reserve, legislation supporting its creation passed through Congress and became effective on 1 January 1968 as Public Law 90-168.
Nominated by the president on 23 April 1968, the 60th anniversary of the Army Reserve, and then confirmed by the Senate on 17 May 1968, the incumbent chief of the Army Reserve, Major General William J. Sutton, served as the first “statutory” chief of the Army Reserve. The new law called for the chief of the Army Reserve to function as an advisor on Army Reserve affairs to the Army chief of staff, and required that the chief be an Army Reserve officer with at least ten years commissioned service in the Army Reserve. The president appointed the chief to a four-year term, with the advice and consent of the Senate. The position called for an officer in the rank of major general, and eligible to succeed himself.17

The Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve acquired special staff status, as affirmed by Army Regulation 10-5, Department of the Army, 1 April 1975, following the abolishment of the Office of the Chief of Reserve Components in 1974. The Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve and the National Guard Bureau both now reported directly to the Army chief of staff.18

Although achieving greater recognition at the highest levels, the Army continued to relocate the Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve throughout the Pentagon. In May 1986, the Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve relocated to room 3E390 in the Pentagon, an area of the Pentagon later damaged on 11 September 2001 by the tragic crash of the hijacked American Airlines Flight #77.
The Pentagon, home of the Office of the Executive for Reserve and ROTC Affairs and Chief of the Army Reserve, since 1943. Viewed from the south, the photo depicts Washington, DC, in the background. Photo taken 23 July 1947 by Corporal Moore. (National Archives)
THE CHIEF OF THE ARMY RESERVE BECOMES COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE U.S. ARMY RESERVE COMMAND

In the late 1980s, concern within the Army increased about command and control issues in the Army Reserve. Army Reserve major commands had two chains of command—U.S. Army Forces Command, headquartered at Fort McPherson, Georgia, and the Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve. Thus, the chief of the Army Reserve still had little authority over major commands throughout the Army Reserve. The Army addressed these issues with the creation of the U.S. Army Reserve Command as a provisional command at Fort Gillem, Georgia, on 1 October 1990. The command fully activated a year later on 18 October 1991 as a major subordinate command of Forces Command.\(^\text{19}\) The chief of the Army Reserve, designated as the commanding general of the new command, commanded all Army Reserve forces assigned to Forces Command, while continuing to serve as the principal staff advisor on Army Reserve issues to the Army chief of staff. The chief also assumed the position of deputy commanding general for reserve forces, Forces Command. In addition, as commanding general of the U.S. Army Reserve Command, the chief of the Army Reserve became responsible for managing and executing all operational and maintenance funding (OMAR), as well as the personnel funding (RPA) allocated by the Department of the Army to the Army Reserve.\(^\text{20}\) Major General William F. Ward, Jr., incumbent chief of the Army Reserve, served as the first commanding general of the new U.S. Army Reserve Command. In late 1997, the Army located the U.S. Army Reserve Command headquarters in its own headquarters building at Fort McPherson, Georgia. In 2011, the command relocated under the 2005 Base Closure and Realignment Commission’s (BRAC) recommendations to Fort Bragg, North Carolina.
After years of increased reliance upon the Army Reserve and the Army National Guard, and based on numbers of troops and facilities under their control, the Army now seriously considered elevating the ranks of both chiefs of the reserve components. Selected legislators introduced legislation in Congress in late 2000, and the House and Senate passed the Fiscal Year 2001 Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act, which directed the military services to grant a third star to the heads of their reserve components. On 27 April 2001, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld announced that President George W. Bush nominated both Major General Thomas J. Plewes, chief of the Army Reserve, and Major General Roger C. Schultz, director of the Army National Guard, for appointment to lieutenant general. The Senate confirmed the nominations on 24 May, and the Army promoted both men in a ceremony at the Pentagon on 13 June 2001.21

Lieutenant General Thomas J. Plewes, following his promotion on 13 June 2001, stands with all of the living former chiefs of the Army Reserve. Left to Right: Brigadier General (Retired) Harry J. Mott III; Major General (Retired) Roger W. Sandler; Major General (Retired) William F. Ward, Jr.; Lieutenant General Plewes; Major General (Retired) J. Milnor Roberts; Major General (Retired) William R. Berkman; and Major General (Retired) Max Baratz. (Lieutenant Colonel Randy Pullen, Public Affairs and Liaison Directorate, Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve)
As a result of the 2005 BRAC, the Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve operations moved in 2011 from Arlington, Virginia, to its new facility at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. The headquarters was named Truman Hall in honor of President Harry S Truman, whose career in the Army Reserve spanned thirty-three years. Counting the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve, he had forty-one years in the military.22
The Chief, Army Reserve continues to have an office in the Pentagon, Washington, DC. (National Archives)
DISTINGUISHING FLAGS
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF THE ARMY RESERVE AND ROTC AFFAIRS
2 AUGUST 1960 – 17 NOVEMBER 1970

DESCRIPTION:
Within a wreath formed by two olive branches, a torch inflamed surmounted by the bust of a Minuteman in profile all or gold.

SYMBOLISM:
The torch, symbolic of the ROTC, and the Minuteman, represent the coordination of Army Reserve and ROTC Affairs under one office. The wreath represents accomplishment. The teal blue background represents branch unassigned.
Due to the reorganization of the Army Reserve in 1963, transferring the responsibility for ROTC affairs from the Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve to the Chief of Reserve Components, the Army Reserve sent a recommendation for a new flag to the Institute of Heraldry. On 9 December 1967, the Institute of Heraldry changed the drawing to delete the torch, and on 17 November 1970, approved a new distinguishing flag for the chief.

**DESCRIPTION:**

On a teal blue flag 3 feet hoist by 4 feet fly is the bust of a Minuteman in profile, within a wreath formed by two olive branches, all yellow. The fringe is yellow.
On 8 December 1982, the Office of the Chief of the Army Reserve requested a flag drawing to be modified. On 13 April 1983 the Chief of the Army Reserve selected a design, and on 9 August 1983 the Institute of Heraldry completed the flag drawing.

**DESCRIPTION:**
Within a wreath formed of two olive branches, the bust of a Minuteman in profile all proper.

The Minuteman represents the American Cincinnatus, the citizen soldier. The wreath signifies accomplishment. The teal blue background alludes to branch unassigned. The color blue also stands for loyalty and devotion to country while gold signifies honor and excellence.
NOTES


5. Memorandum, Brigadier General E. S. Hartshorn, Executive for Reserve Affairs, to Mr. Murray, Investigator for the Civil Service Commission, 8 September 1936, National Archives, Record Group 319, Entry 343, Box 100.


7. Hirshauer, 118-121.


15. Ibid., 11.


17. Curry and Crossland, Twice the Citizen, 181-182.


21. Lieutenant Colonel Randy Pullen, “History Made: Leaders of Army Reserve, National Guard don third star in historic first,” Army Reserve (Summer 2001), 6-7, 58; and “Director, National Guard and Chief, Army Reserve Confirmed for Promotion to 3-star rank,” U.S. Army News Release #01-146, 1 June 2001.
