

## Bush Has Abandoned National Guard and Reserve

### GUARDSMEN AND RESERVISTS OVEREXTENDED

**Reservists Make Up Growing Percentage of Active-Duty Troops.** In the first year of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Reservists and National Guardsmen made up about 25 percent of troops in Iraq. Currently, Reserve and National Guard members make up an estimated 35 percent of the troops in Iraq. [[Dallas Morning News](#), 7/31/05; [San Francisco Chronicle](#), 5/9/04; [AP](#), 5/12/04; [AP](#), 5/17/04]

- **Commander Said Increasing Reliance On National Guard And Reserve Cannot Be Sustained Much Longer.** Acknowledging a harsh reality, retired chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Hugh Shelton, said that the military is becoming heavily reliant on reservists and national guardsmen to maintain commitment abroad. He said "I don't think we can sustain that much longer." [[Lincoln Journal Star](#), 4/24/05]

**General Said Army Reserve Becoming 'Broken Force.'** In December 2004, the head of the Army Reserve sent a sharply worded memo to other military leaders expressing "deepening concern" about the continued readiness of his troops and warning that his branch of 200,000 soldiers "is rapidly degenerating into a 'broken' force." Lt. Gen. James Helmly lashed out at what he said were outdated and "dysfunctional" policies on mobilizing and managing the force. Helmly complained that his repeated requests to adjust the policies to current realities have been rebuffed by Pentagon authorities. [[Washington Post](#), 6/6/05]

**Former Bush Campaign Official Declines to Support Bush Due to His Treatment of Veterans, Reservists, And National Guard.** "When the Bush campaign asked James McKinnon to co-chair its veterans steering committee in New Hampshire - a job he held in 2000 - the 56-year-old Vietnam veteran respectfully, but firmly, said no. 'I basically told them I was disappointed in his support of veterans,' said McKinnon, who served two tours in Vietnam with the Coast Guard. 'He's killing the active-duty military. ... Look at the Reserves call-ups for Iraq, the hardships. The National Guard - the state militia - is being used improperly. I took the president at his word on Iraq, and now you can't find a single report to back up or substantiate weapons of mass destruction.'" [[Knight Ridder](#), 3/14/04]

### MEMBERS OF NATIONAL GUARD TOOK PAY CUTS TO FIGHT IN IRAQ, THEN HAD TROUBLE GETTING PAID AT ALL

**Activated National Guard And Reserve Soldiers Took Paycuts.** Surveys in 2004 showed that 40 percent of reservists and National Guard soldiers make less money while mobilized than they earned in their civilian jobs. Surveys of all Guard and reserve personnel found that among mobilized troops whose pay was cut, the average reduction was \$3,000, although some took pay cuts in the tens of thousands. [[Washington Post](#), 11/11/04]

**GAO Report Cites Massive and Widespread Pay Problems for Activated National Guard Soldiers.** A January 2004 GAO report studied six different Army Guard units and found Army Guard soldiers were being denied timely and accurate payroll payments. The report found that, "Overall, 450 of the 481 (94 percent) Army Guard soldiers from our six case study units had at least one pay problem associated with their mobilization. In addition, our limited review of the pay experiences of the soldiers in the Colorado Army Guard's 220th Military Police Company, who are currently deployed to Iraq, indicated that some of the same types of pay problems that we found in our six case study units continued to occur." [GAO Report, "Army National Guard Personnel Mobilized to Active Duty Experienced Significant Pay Problems," 1/28/04]

**Citizen-Soldiers Face Difficulty Holding Jobs.** Reservists and National Guardsmen are encountering serious obstacles in their civilian career paths because of extended deployments. While "there are laws designed to protect the civilian jobs of deployed Guard and Reserve troops... some still come home unemployed if their companies skirt the law or cut jobs for other reasons..." [[Associated Press](#), 6/3/05]

**National Guard Families Complained About Flagging Support And Services.** Tricia Fleming, 35, wife of Texas Army National Guard Spec. Lloyd Fleming, complained about flagging support and services for Reservists' families and overlong tours of duty for soldiers such as her husband - he left home in January, arrived in Iraq in March and wouldn't return till next July, she said. [[Cox News Service, 9/3/04](#)]

## **NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE SHORTED EQUIPMENT**

**The GAO Found Army Reserve Facing Increasing Equipment Shortages.** In July 2005, the GAO found that "Army Reserve units are not generally allotted all of the equipment they need to deploy." Since September 11th, commanders have required deploying units to have 90 percent of their required equipment, yet in February 2005 the Army Reserve reported it had about 76 percent of the equipment it requires, an estimate that includes older equipment. [GAO, "*An Integrated Plan is Needed to Address Army Reserve Personnel and Equipment Shortages.*" Rpt # GAO-05-660, 7/12/05]

- **Nearly Half of Army Reserve Equipment Needs to be Repaired.** The Army Reserve estimates that "currently as much as 44 percent of its equipment needs servicing." [GAO, "*An Integrated Plan is Needed to Address Army Reserve Personnel and Equipment Shortages.*" Rpt # GAO-05-660, 7/12/05]

**National Guard Units In US Recently Forced To Give Up Equipment.** Already suffering from manpower shortages, the National Guard's overstretched forces are being confronted with another problem: not enough equipment to supply Guard troops at home. "To fully equip troops in Iraq, the Pentagon has stripped local Guard units of about 24,000 pieces of equipment. That has left Guard units at home, already seriously short of gear." [[Detroit Free Press, 6/13/05](#)]

- **Soldiers Forced Were Buying Their Own Equipment As Late As 2004.** "Some Army maintenance chiefs, in desperation, are using their own credit cards to make purchases. One soldier, who asked not to be identified, listed boots, goggles and protein bars as particularly coveted items." [MSNBC.com, 4/15/04]

## **REPUBLICANS LIMIT HEALTH CARE FOR RESERVISTS**

**Hunter Declared a Few Months of Health Coverage Good Enough for Reservists.** Congressman Douglas Hunter, Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, removed a provision from the Defense Department budget that would extend TRICARE health coverage to all reservists and their families. In an attempt to justify his actions, Hunter stated that, in fact, Reservists and their families have TRICARE coverage from 90 days before mobilization until at least 120 days after they return, so extended coverage was not needed. [[Biloxi Sun Herald, 5/28/05](#)]

- **Republicans Cited Mistrust as Reason to Deny Healthcare to Reservists.** In a further attempt to rationalize the removal the provision from the Defense Department authorization bill, Chairman Hunter declared that civilian employers will "game the system" and take advantage of the reservists' benefits. [[Biloxi Sun Herald, 5/28/05](#)]

## **DEMOCRATS STAND WITH OUR TROOPS**

**Democrats Want the Bush Administration to Be Straight With Our Troops.** Democrats want the Defense Department to report on the lessons learned in connection with deployment, extension of duty, and troop rotations. We want the Defense Department to keep its commitment to limit the length of service for our citizen soldiers.

**Democrats Want Soldiers to Be Protected. Democrats believe that troops should have the proper equipment and safe transportation to do their jobs properly.** While they put their lives on the line, they should have access to all the protection they need.

**Democrats Want Pay Security for Military Families.** Democrats want to minimize the financial hardship faced by those called to active duty.

**Democrats Want Health Care for All Reservists and their Families.** Many reservists and junior enlisted personnel have no health care coverage while demobilized. Democrats want to make sure that those who serve our country are not left behind once they leave the battlefield.