

Title:

Understanding Military Reserve Forces

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503

Summary:

Although many people tend to get the two confused, there is a rather significant difference between a military reserve and a military reserve force - a military reserve is a group of personnel who are employed by the military, but who are not committed to engage in battle by their commanding officer. This way, they are able to move quickly to address unexpected situations or unforeseen circumstances.

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Keywords:

Article Body:

Although many people tend to get the two confused, there is a rather significant difference between a military reserve and a military reserve force - a military reserve is a group of personnel who are employed by the military, but who are not committed to engage in battle by their commanding officer. This way, they are able to move quickly to address unexpected situations or unforeseen circumstances.

In order to do this effectively during battle, the military reserve is literally held back in a defensive position, just in case the enemy forces break through the front line. If the enemy makes a mistake or exposes a vulnerable area in their strategy, the military reserve can then be immediately committed to the battle. In some cases, the reserve may provide relief for the troops who are already engaged in fighting - like a second shift line.

A military reserve force is quite different, as it can be either composed of part-time military personnel or civilians, all of whom are available to be called upon to fight if there is need for defense against invasion or in order to mobilize against war. Unlike the military reserve, the military reserve force is not counted as part of a country's permanent body of armed forces.

Why would a country bother with a military reserve force, in that case?

Maintaining a reserve force allows a nation to reduce the amount of expenditures that might accumulate during times of peace, while ensuring that there is still a prepared force in case of war. In addition, there are some countries whose reserve force members are volunteers, committed only to a part-time obligation, but who would not be paid compensation should the country go to war. Nations such as Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States maintain voluntary reserve forces.

Since military reserve forces are not actively engaged in battle on a regular basis, other countries legislate that mandatory service in their military can be counted as time spent as a member of the military reserve force. Israel and the Republic of China have a compulsory number of years that each individual must spend as a member of the military reserve force, in addition to completing one's national service.

There is a secondary type of military reserve force that functions slightly differently than the regular reserve forces, and this is known as the Home Guard. The Home Guard - such as the United States National Guard - is a military reserve force that is technically a militia, and can only be called upon to activate in the event of an invasion. The difference is that a Home Guard is composed strictly of civilians who have volunteered for the service, without part-time military personnel involved.

How does that differ from what is regularly referred to as a militia? On occasion, a militia can be referred to as a group of citizen soldiers who are disassociated with their government, or it can also be the term of reference for a country's police force.