

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-16-538](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

DOD has sought and Congress has directed the department to identify areas to reduce costs by assessing headquarters and overhead functions. The Army and Air Force each have two Reserve Components—a National Guard and a Reserve—with approximately 715,000 members combined, comprising about one-half (53 percent) and one-third (36 percent) of the Army's and Air Force's total authorized personnel, respectively.

Senate Report 114-49 included a provision for GAO to review DOD's Army and Air Force Reserve Components' headquarters. Among other things, this report (1) describes the trends in authorized full-time support positions at Army and Air Force Reserve Components' headquarters as well as in four selected states since fiscal year 2013 and (2) evaluates the extent to which DOD assessed personnel requirements for the Army and Air Force Reserve Components' headquarters since fiscal year 2013. GAO analyzed and interviewed DOD officials responsible for documentation, such as guidance and assessments, and conducted nongeneralizable case studies in four selected states that GAO reviewed in a November 2013 report.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making two recommendations, including that the Air Force revise its guidance to clarify the frequency with which all of its Reserve Component headquarters should assess personnel requirements. DOD generally agreed with the recommendations.

View [GAO-16-538](#). For more information, contact Andrew J. Von Ah at (213) 830-1011 or vonaha@gao.gov.

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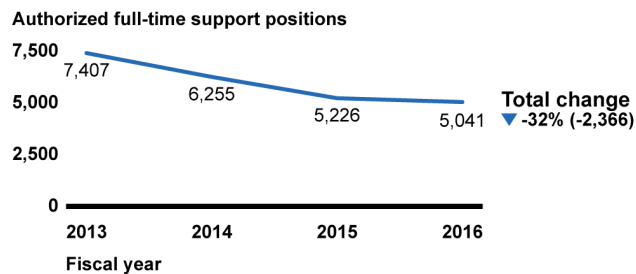
NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVES

Air Force Needs to Consistently Assess Personnel Requirements to Appropriately Size Its Headquarters Reserve Components

What GAO Found

From fiscal years 2013 through 2016, the total number of authorized full-time support positions at the Army's and Air Force's Reserve Components' headquarters—which oversee subordinate units, or provide administrative or overhead support—decreased from 7,407 to 5,041 positions overall (about 32 percent, see figure). Department of Defense (DOD) officials attribute this decrease to the Deputy Secretary of Defense's headquarters reduction efforts. Each state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam also have National Guard forces that can be activated for federal missions. Over the same period, authorized full-time support positions for the National Guard increased in the selected four states GAO reviewed: Delaware, Georgia, New Jersey, and Texas.

Trends in Army and Air Force Headquarters Reserve Components' Combined Authorized Full-Time Support Positions, since Fiscal Year 2013



Source: GAO analysis of Army and Air Force Reserve Components data. | GAO-16-538

The Army and Air Force Reserve Components have assessed some of their headquarters' personnel requirements, but not all relevant Air Force organizations have done so and in the time frames specified in guidance. The Army has assessed and validated 49 percent of the aggregate personnel requirements of its Reserve Components' headquarters, but officials told GAO that the Army is currently focusing on conducting non-headquarters assessments. Since November 2013, the Air Force has not assessed two of its Reserve Component headquarters: Headquarters, Air National Guard and the Office of the Director, Air National Guard. An Air Force official stated that two different Air Force guidance documents should be used in tandem, but Air National Guard officials were unaware of this. The same Air Force official stated that the Air Force would modify the existing guidance within the year to clarify that all Air Force Reserve Components' headquarters should conduct assessments of personnel requirements. Additionally, Air Force organizations were unclear about the frequency with which they should conduct assessments. While the guidance states that assessments should be done biannually, or twice a year, Air Force organizations that have conducted assessments have done so generally every 1 or 2 years. As the Air Force considers revising its guidance, it has an opportunity to clarify the frequency with which its organizations should conduct these assessments.