

NATO ACT Reserve Component to Become More 'Joint' - ACT

Written by Steve Zip, Commander US Navy (Reserve)
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Norfolk – In this era of ever more complex joint operations, US and NATO leaders are looking for new ways to further integrate their reservists into training and operational support since reserve forces have been and continue to be a significant part of the NATO force structure.

One recent initiative is bearing fruit as an element of the US Joint Staff South Reserve Unit is being organised to directly support NATO Allied Command Transformation. This new unit – to be named NATO ACT Joint Reserve Element – was stood up in January 2013. Both commands are located aboard Naval Support Activity Norfolk making for an efficient transition. The initial cadre will be comprised of two US Army Reservists, two US Coast Guard Reservists, two US Air Force Reservists, and one US Marine Corps Reservist. This program is being spearheaded by Vice Admiral Carol Pottenger, US Navy, NATO ACT Deputy Chief of Staff for Capability Development and a Reservist herself. "This is the logical first step on the road to eventually leverage the skills and experiences gained by our multinational Reservists during more than 10 years of combat operations. ACT looks forward to the unique opportunity this provides to expand Reserve participation by other Services to assist in areas where we currently lack depth," she said.

Some of the strategic NATO ACT mission areas these Joint Staff South reservists will be supporting include:

- Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD)
- Cyber-Defence
- Connected Forces Initiative
- Countering Improvised Explosive Devices

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- Partnership Conferences

While NATO ACT has several US Navy Reserve units currently supporting these missions, the creation of a truly "joint" US reserve unit marks a key step to employing more diverse reservists at a NATO strategic headquarters staff. The ultimate goal in the future will be to leverage this success by developing a *multinational*, joint reserve unit at NATO ACT that reflects this operational theater reality.