Ex-regulars in the British Army Reserve: just here for the money.

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Part II: Identity and Motivation

5

Ex-regulars in the British Army Reserve

"Just Here for the Money?"

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Abstract

The UK part-time Army Reserve has seen a large influx of personnel who previously served full-time in the regular army (ex-regulars). This is contrary to the previous tradition where most army reservists had no previous full-time armed forces experience. The influx of ex-regulars is a deliberate policy move and has been supported by large financial incentives to join. This has led to speculation that the ex-regulars may be more motivated by pecuniary and occupational reasons for joining rather than institutional reasons and that consequently they may be less likely to stay and less satisfied with their service. Analysis of an anonymized data set from the annual workforce survey of army reservists was undertaken to examine this issue. Overall, very little difference in satisfaction between ex-regulars and those part-time reservists with no previous full-time service was found and no difference in intentions to stay. Minor differences only were reported in knowledge, family support and working with regulars. Long-term intention to stay was predicted across all the respondents by a "Duty satisfaction" factor that reflected how reservists felt valued by the organization. The negotiated experience of part-time reserve service, juggling family, civilian work and reserve service time, likely means the drivers for satisfaction from part-time reserve service are similar for those with and without full-time military experience.

Introduction

The UK Armed Forces, like many of their allies, are going through a period of structural change in reaction to increased demands on Defence activity, rapid changes in defense technology requiring ever larger equipment procurement budgets alongside severe pressures on Defence spending. This has led to policy shifts explicitly in favor of diversifying the military labor force to reduce full-time personnel costs but also in reaction to the difficulty of retaining full-time military personnel (Geluk, Schleuter, Thomas & Erkens, 2020). Like many Armed Forces, the UK is attempting to move toward a model of force integration, the "Whole Force" or "Total Force" (Gearson, Berry, Devanny & Musgrave, 2020). This is generally conceived as a successfully integrated and affordable mix of full- and part-time military and civilian personnel at varying degrees of readiness balanced against the force requirements (Goldenberg, Febraro & Dean, 2015; Gazit, Lomsky-Feder & Ben-Ari, 2021). Part-time reservists in these "Whole Force" militaries no longer only mobilize in times of large-scale conflict but are increasingly relied upon to supplement smaller scale operations, routine exercises and full-time workforce gaps (Armstrong, 2020; Ministry of Defence, 2013, Pint et al., 2017). Thus, while the overall size of many part-time reserve components has shrunk since 1990, in line with the reduced size of their full-time components, the necessity to have more effective and fully staffed reserve forces has increased (Dalzell et al., 2019).

The British Army Reserve

The British Army Reserve is a regionally based organization with about 350 local training centers (drill halls) spread across the UK, consisting of up to 30,000 part-time reservists, split among 70 major units. The units' roles span all combat, combat support and combat service support military roles (see Ministry of Defence, 2017, p. 40 for a definition) but with a predominance of combat support and combat service support. Both ex-regular (full time) officers and soldiers, as well as individuals with no prior military experience, can join the British Army Reserve between the ages of 18 and 50. However, the predominant joiner for the Army Reserve has traditionally been those with no prior military experience. Educational, medical and fitness standards are uniform across both Regular and Reserve new entrants. The vast majority of part-time army reservists work in a civilian based full time job, or study full time, while also being a part time Army Reservist. Those Reservists whose civilian role is also their military role are a small minority (Ministry of Defence, 2020a).

Training is provided for the part-time reservists in their units for training once a week in the evening and up to two weekends a month, with an annual continuous training period of up to two weeks a year. Recruit and specialist training is also carried out on a part-time basis but is centralized in schools. Ex-regulars who are already trained do not have attended this training. Once trained, individuals are asked to voluntarily attend a minimum of 27 days a year. While many individuals attend a lot more (Cunningham-Burley et al., 2018) the median is about 40 paid days per year for attenders (personal communication) and this is almost identical to the median paid days attendance per year for the US National Guard (Kilmas, Lippiatt, McDonald & Sollinger, 2017). However, in the UK there is no legal force to mandate Reservists to attend any specific events and there is a tail of non-attenders who attend for less than 27 days per year. Army Reservists can be compulsorily mobilized for full-time service and they accept this obligation and many were compulsorily mobilized for the invasion of Iraq in 2003 (Connelly, 2018). However, with few exceptions since the end of 2003, the Army policy has been to ask individuals to "volunteer" for compulsory mobilization through "intelligent selection" (Connelly, 2018).

Improving the Trained Strength of the Army Reserve − Future Reserves 2020

Between 2008 and 2011, the British Army was looking to reform and modernize the UK Armed Forces for the post Iraq and Afghanistan conflict era. The British Army since 1990, like many other Western armies, has moved gradually toward adopting "post-Fordist" principles to deliver greater efficiency in their operational outputs, assist them in moving toward more "Whole Force" structures and also reduce overall costs (King, 2006). Key to this approach has been the implementation of the four tenets of post-Fordism: (1) the replacement of mass labor with a highly skilled core (full-time personnel that are more professional and a higher proportion of elite special forces) with a less-skilled periphery (contractors and part-time reserve forces); (2) the outsourcing of non-core functions to reduce overheads (contractors, defense civilian employees and part time reserve forces with specialist civilian skills); (3) the centralization of headquarters and the flattening of hierarchies; and (4) the development of a network approach to supply, knowledge and organizational structure (e.g., the dispersal and coordination of forces centered on independent brigades). However, the British Army was under urgent pressure to radically reduce their overall long-term costs in 2008 (Dandeker, 2015; Dorman, 2011) and so the full time leadership of the British Army initially made the choice to keep as much investment as possible in the full-time forces and cut back severely on the reserve forces (Bury & Catignani, 2019).

Historically, the reserve forces lobby in the UK retains some political clout and the proposed reserve forces cutbacks led to the UK Prime Minister losing trust in the full-time leadership of the army

regarding the reserves and the appointment of an independent commission to examine the UK reserve forces instead. The independent commission report highlighted that the UK Armed Forces Reserves were in decline and had been used primarily to provide individuals to plug gaps in full time workforce for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan rather than for more ambitious or strategic purposes (Ministry of Defence, 2011). At the same time, decisions were imposed by ministers on the army to move toward a more integrated "Whole Force" model and cut personnel costs. In 2011, after much political wrangling, the size of the full-time regular army was reduced substantially, being classed as unaffordable, under the auspices of the 2010 Strategic Defence and Strategy Review. In parallel, the government's response to the independent commission review was a £1.4 billion "FR20" program to increase the reserves efficiency and improve their workforce recruitment and retention (Ministry of Defence, 2013).

The "Army 2020" program to redesign the British Army now aimed to improve the integration of full-time regular and part-time reserve structures to deliver this "Whole Force" approach and was drawn up in parallel with FR20 (Ministry of Defence, 2013). The political imposition of the workforce cuts to the full-time force alongside the investment in part-time reserve forces was highly controversial at the time but was followed through. While the FR20 External Scrutiny concluded that FR20 had been a qualified success (Council of Reserve Forces & Cadets Association, 2020) others have been more critical and noted the difficulties of large-scale institutional change for the British Army in particular, whose reservists make up more than 90% of UK Armed Forces reserves (Bury, 2019). Criticisms have also been made of the British regular army leadership who, it is argued, recovered from being very much outmanoevred by a reservist supporting political lobby and successfully toned down the increased role that part-time army reserves were given from the review (Bury & Catignani, 2019). Other research has highlighted the difficulty that the British regular army has in accepting and valuing the part-time army reserve (Connelly, 2013, 2020) and so a key aspect of the Government policy paper "Reserves in the Future Force 2020: valuable and valued" (Ministry of Defence, 2013) was an attempt to increase the regard of reserves that was held by the regular army. Evidence from annual workforce surveys demonstrated that Regular Army regard for the Army Reserve actually plummeted after 2013 in the light of regular force job losses (Connelly, 2016) but more recently has climbed back up levels not seen since the part-time reserves were fully involved in the campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan (Ministry of Defence, 2021). Despite this, there has been much concern about the ability of the reformed "Army Reserve," as it was renamed, to improve their workforce recruitment and their effectiveness (Bury & Catignani, 2019; Edmunds, Dawes, Higate, Jenkings, Woodward, 2016).

The full-time regular concerns about the ability of their part-time colleagues to undertake their increased expectations can be partly explained by their collective and individual identity as full-time military professionals (Connelly, 2020) but also by the increased expectation that the British Army Reserve will be asked to do more (Ministry of Defence, 2013). However, as others have argued this increased expectation may not sit well with the actualities of balancing part-time reserve with full-time civilian work and family life (Cunningham-Burley et al., 2018; Edmunds et al., 2016). There was great interest also in the ability of the Army Reserve to recruit successfully the trained soldiers required (Bury, 2019). The intense political scrutiny of the program and the intra-Army regular reserve rivalry about the increase in reserves investment has led to many competing claims being made about the success or failure of recruitment to the Army Reserve between 2013 and 2020 (Bury, 2019, Bury and Catignani, 2019; Edmunds et al., 2016). Recruiting was very slow and ambitious new targets were not met. The recruiting environment was hamstrung by institutional self-harm throughout (Council of Reserve Forces & Cadets Association, 2020). The Army Reserve had actually been cut in terms of the number of part-time positions in 2013 compared to 2011 and so part-time personnel in redundant posts left making the targets to reach every greater (Connelly, 2016). There were problems with a new outsourced recruiting system that had not been designed for reserves and so took time to adapt (Francois, 2017), and the rebranding of the Army Reserve at a

time when the Army was seen to be downsizing may have confused public perception of recruiting (Bury, 2019; Connelly, 2018; Parry et al., 2016). While overall Army Reserve numbers are now just shy of the original 2020 targets it is still the case that the army in 2020 received more than 32,200 applications to join the Army Reserve but took on only 3,500 in the same year (Ministry of Defence, 2021).

Ex-Regular Personnel

Yet the one area of recruitment for the Army Reserve that has gone well from 2013 onwards was the effort to encourage more regular soldiers to join the part-time Army Reserve on leaving their full-time service. The FR20 program included considerable incentives to encourage more of these ex-regulars to join the Army Reserve. Policy changes allowed ex-regular personnel to join the part-time reserves more easily than before and provided exemptions so they could avoid compulsory mobilization and attend less time training for a time period after joining. There were also considerable financial awards available of up to £10,000 per person if they undertook the minimum part-time training commitment over the first three years of their service. This was a direct policy initiative to retain the investment in training and experience of a skilled full-time workforce and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the part-time reserve forces (Ministry of Defence, 2013).

This was a major change for the Army Reserve who had traditionally relied on new entrants with no prior military experience to fill the part-time ranks. For those leaving the full-time Regular Army, it was also a major change as there was little cross-over in numbers between those leaving Regular Army and joining the Army Reserve prior to 2013 (Connelly, 2013). There were only 2,360 ex-regulars registered in whole tri-service 30,600 part time reserves population in 2013 (Ministry of Defence, 2014). However, post 2013, the numbers of ex-regulars joining the Army Reserve increased very rapidly. The number of ex-regular officers joining the Army Reserve jumped from 150 in 2013 (28% of intake) to 250 in 2015 (40% of intake) to 350 by 2020 (45% of intake). Similar trends were observed in “other ranks” ex-regular intake to the Army Reserve so that the total inflow per annum was close to 40% from ex-regular service personnel by 2020 (Ministry of Defence, 2021).

It is not unreasonable to speculate that this profusion of ex-regulars may attract those with a more pecuniary orientation to service in the Army Reserve given the significant financial incentives to join. It has been speculated that those who join the armed forces for such reasons are more inclined to display an “occupational” type of commitment to military service meaning they were less likely than those with a more “occupational” orientation to put up with the adversities of military life and are less emotionally committed to the armed forces (Moskos, 2005). Research on this Institutional/Occupational (I/O) distinction in the reserves has broadly replicated the more extensive research in this area with full-time Armed Forces personnel. For example, US part-time reservists who indicated that they were motivated by material incentives were less likely to be retained and had less organizational commitment to the reserves overall and may have a negative impact on unit readiness and effectiveness (Griffith, 2008). Recent work in the British Army Reserve also seemed to replicate this finding. It was reported those reservists who joined for pecuniary reasons were at risk of leaving if they felt their financial rewards were not being sustained. Those who had joined for more institutional and intrinsic reasons were more satisfied and more likely to stay in the reserve (Bury, 2017). The research also indicated that army reservists with no ex-regular service did suspect ex-regulars of being solely attracted by the financial benefits and not committed to reserve service in the same way (Bury, 2017). However, it was notable that UK army reservists did not easily fit the I/O distinction with more than three quarters fitting an institutional distinction and the occupational pecuniary factor created was solely centered on pay including pay problems and lack of pay which may point to some dissatisfaction with administration rather than motivation for pay (Bury, 2017).

It is not known how many ex-regulars were sampled in either the US or UK studies cited above and numbers may be small, especially in the US sample. Ex-regulars have already served and by virtue of electing to continue service in the Army Reserve when they could be free entirely of army service may suggest a more occupational orientation anyway than the financial occupational explanation. Indeed, it has been reported that UK army reservists, when interviewed in detail, did not display a mutually exclusive I/O distinction and discuss institutional motives alongside the importance of topping up of civilian wages with part-time Army Reserve wages (Bury, 2019; Cunningham-Burley et al., 2018). While the absolute numbers of ex-regulars who join the Army reserve have increased, the proportion of ex-regulars who claim to be willing to join the reserves has not changed substantially. Representative attitude surveys report that the proportion of regulars indicating they are willing to join the part-time reserve forces after regular service has remained between 25%-30% since 2010 (Ministry of Defence, 2021b). Furthermore, the numbers actually joining from regular to part time reserve still represent less than 30% of the total outflow from the regular Army (Ministry of Defence, 2021a). Thus, while it may be the case that the increased number of ex-regulars joining the Army Reserve may be tempted solely for financial reasons it may be that those who had already professed an interest now find it easier, and are simply more incentivized, to join the Army Reserves. An understanding of any dissatisfaction with the pecuniary rewards of Army reserve service will be important to understand in the ex-regular Army Reserve population.

Accordingly, it may be useful to consider the retention intentions of ex-regulars who join the Army Reserve as perhaps more in line with recent thinking about reservist military contracts, compacts and covenants as being in constant motion and negotiation (Gazit et al., 2021). The Armed Forces "compact" with the ex-regular reservist may be different from other reservists with their reduced formal commitment combined with their financial incentives but it can also be seen as an attempt to reward the deeper experience the ex-regular brings to the Army Reserve and respect the requirement for the ex-regular to settle into civilian life. Ex-regulars are individuals moving into the civilian world and will need to adopt the negotiation strategies of informal "multiple contracts", balancing their relationships with the Armed Forces versus their civilian work and family commitments that all part-time reservists have to manage (Cunningham-Burley et al., 2018). Given their previous military service ex-regular reservists may be more aware of the often marginalized status of reservists within the Armed Forces (Connelly, 2020) and any disparities between the equipment, leadership and career opportunities available to them as a reservist versus their previous status as a regular (Ministry of Defence, 2013). This may be represented by a lower satisfaction rate in any survey of ex-regulars versus more traditional army reservists from the UK with no prior full-time army experience. Satisfaction with employment is generally associated with the intention to stay in employment and this is the case also in the Armed Forces. The policy decision to incentivize recruiting more ex-regulars into the Army Reserve was aimed at improving the effectiveness of the Army Reserve by retaining experienced soldiers in the reserves. Given the success of this policy in attracting ex-regulars, it is important to understand the satisfaction levels and retention intentions of ex-regulars in the Army Reserve in comparison to other part-time reservists without such full-time experience. The policy change will be less impactful if ex-regulars intend to stay for a shorter time than other reservists without full-time experience.

The UK Reserves Continuous Attitude Survey (ResCAS)

The data examined in this chapter were collected as part of the UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) Reserves Continuous Attitude Survey administered in 2015, known as the "ResCAS" (Ministry of Defence, 2015). ResCAS is part of an annual series of tri-service attitude surveys delivered to personnel in the UK Armed Forces (Royal Navy, including the Royal Marines, British Army and Royal Air Force). The survey is administered between January and March each year and the results of each survey are publicly available online via the UK MOD in early summer. For the 2015 tri-service ResCAS, the total tri-service sample consisted of 16,979 volunteer reservists. 5,215

responses were used in the ResCAS 2015 analysis, giving an overall response rate of 31%. The response rate among Officers was 43% while the response rate among soldiers was 26% (Ministry of Defence, 2015). The mean scores for all survey items broken down by service are publicly available online (https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tri-service-reserves-continuous-attitude-survey-2015). The survey replicates a number of items that are presented to the full-time regular services on an annual basis in the Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS). The results of AFCAS 2015 show that the Army Reserve was, in general, more satisfied with their experience of the Army than their full-time counterparts. For example, 47% of regular army respondents were satisfied with life in the service in general compared to 77% in the Army Reserve. Only 77% of regular army respondents were proud to be in the service compared to 92% in the Army Reserve and only 47% of regular army respondents would recommend joining the service to others compared to 86% in the Army Reserve (Ministry of Defence, 2015).

Permitted use of an Army Reserve only, fully anonymized, dataset from ResCAS 2015 was agreed with the British Army Personnel Capability Branch as part of the Future Reserves Research Programme undertaken by the authors and jointly funded by the British Army, UK MOD and UK Economic and Social Research Council. The 2015 dataset comprised responses from army reservists broken down into nine sections from the survey: "life in the army reserve," "pay, allowances and admin support," "kit and equipment," "mobilization," "training and career management," "perception of army reserves," "civilian employment," "working with regular paired units" and "changes to the army reserve." Each section consisted of several questions. Additionally, respondents were asked to provide information on their demographics and previous military background. There was an overall satisfaction item that asked for a rating of "How satisfied are you with life in the Army Reserve in general?" on a five-point Likert scale.

The MOD publishes the mean scores for each item in this survey and produces a summary public report reporting satisfaction levels (Ministry of Defence, 2015). However, there is no detailed analysis of relationships between items and answers. Therefore, we sought to gain a more detailed understanding of army reservists' satisfaction with their service. Specifically, in the light of the large growth in ex-regulars into the army reserve, we aimed to understand what reservists without prior military service and reservists with prior military experience (ex-regulars) felt most and least satisfied with, how this related to their intention to continue serving, and whether satisfaction varied between these two groupings of reservists, with a particular additional interest in female reservists.

Participant Demographics

For the Army Reserve ResCAS, a random sample of 12,428 members of the Army Reserve were posted a paper questionnaire to their unit address using details recorded on the MOD Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) system. Respondents were able to return their completed questionnaires using an enclosed pre-paid envelope. The database contains responses from 3,748 Army Reservists giving a response rate of 28%. The Army Reserve response rate was broadly similar to the overall response rate achieved across all services with 42% response rate from Officers and 22% from soldiers. Of the 3,748 participants, 2,911 (84%) were males and 567 (16%) females. Ages ranged from 18 to 66 years ($M = 41.78$, SD = 10.7). Males ($Mdn = 44$ years) tended to be older than females ($Mdn = 41$ years; $N = 3,478$, $W = 9,21,410$, $p < .001$). In sum, 1,843 (53%) participants had soldier ranks, and 1,635 (47%) had officer ranks. The sample thus overrepresents officers in the data. This is typical of survey designs where those who have been in service longer and are of higher rank tend to be more likely to complete surveys (Ministry of Defence, 2020b). However, data analysis showed no significant difference in respondents based on an officer/soldier split and so this is not considered further. Of 1,843 soldiers, 268 (15%) were female. The proportion of women amongst the 1,635 officers was slightly higher at 299 (18%). This association was also found to be significant ($\chi^2 = 8.6375$, df = 1, $p = .003$). This split quite closely represents the actual reported populations of females in the AR with

17% of female officer entrants and 12% female soldier entrants in 2017 (Ministry of Defence, 2020c).

Of all participants, 1,173 (34%) were ex-regular and 2,305 (66%) non-ex-regulars. Of all 567 female reservists, 102 (18%) were ex-regular and 465 (82%) were not. Out of all 2,911 male reservists, 1,071 (37%) were ex-regular and 1,840 (63%) were not. Figures on intake to the Army Reserve show it has been reported to be growing in recent years (Ministry of Defence, 2021) and the figures for intake are in line with the reported proportions above. Thus, proportionally more men than women were ex-regulars. A Pearson's chi-squared test showed this association to be significant ($\chi^2 = 74.219$, df = 1, $p < .001$). Ex-regulars (*Mdn* = 47 years) also tended to be older than non-ex-regulars (*Mdn* = 41 years; $N = 3{,}478$, $W = 17{,}79{,}700$, $p < .001$).

Principal Component Analysis Data Preparation

Principal component analysis (PCA) was used to reduce the dimensionality of the dataset to a manageable number of satisfaction factors. Using these satisfaction factors and the demographic data, including data on previous regular service, it was possible to investigate to what extent these factors would explain general satisfaction (GS) with life in the reserve and whether there were any sub-group differences. Data preparation and analyses were performed in R Version 3.4.3. The initial focus for the analysis was on being an ex-regular (or not) as a grouping factor, 38 participants who had not answered whether or not they were ex-regulars were excluded from the analysis. Three participants had answered that they had not been mobilized as a reservist, but then given a date for their last mobilization. These were also excluded from the analysis.

A minority of questions targeted specific sub-groups but the approach was to explore responses from those questions which were applicable to all survey participants, excluding questions targeted at a subset of participants. Twenty questions were excluded because they were not directed at all respondents. For two questions ("What is your rank?" and "When did you join the Army Reserve?"), the database provided offered several variables to use. Two variables were selected that showed positive intercorrelations between rank, age and when reservist joined, as it seemed likely that older reservists had been in the army longer and had reached higher ranks than younger counterparts.

In most cases, any missing values were imputed but for some questions a direct solution was more helpful. For example, the 42 missing values in the "intention to stay" variable were re-coded to be included as "not sure" responses, which resulted in a total of 1,096 "not sure" responses. This seemed appropriate as it was felt that no response was not qualitatively different from a "not sure" response. All other missing values remained with the intention to have those imputed in the next step. With a view to prepare for PCA, some variables were scored in reverse. Lower scores indicated less satisfaction/smaller amounts/disagreement with criticism while higher scores indicated more satisfaction/bigger amounts/agreement with criticism.

Imputation

PCA requires a full dataset without missing values. For this reason, missing values were imputed with predictive mean matching (Little, 1988, Little, & Rubin, 1989; Rubin, 1986), a form of multiple imputation, using the R package mice (van Buuren & Groothuis-Oudshoorn, 2011). The imputation was run for 3,478 participants on 104 question variables (please contact authors for the list of 104 variables selected). In total, 9,222 missing values were imputed (2.55% of the dataset).

Data Reduction and PCA

The aim was to reduce the number of variables to a smaller set. The 40 question variables that were intended to probe satisfaction with specific aspects of life in the Army Reserve and were aimed at all survey respondents were selected and submitted to a PCA with varimax rotation using the R package psych (Revelle, 2014). All of the questions were measured on a five-point Likert scale with two exceptions. The question "Rate your workload" was measured on a 3-point Likert scale (1 = very high or low – 3 = neither high nor low). The question "amount of time you dedicate to the Army Reserve" was a binary measure (1 = too much or too little, 2 = about right). For the purpose of the PCA, the five-point Likert-scale responses were considered as continuous (Field, 2009).

Thirteen factors were identified and labelled, namely: employment package, career opportunities and management, kit and equipment, training amount and quality, Employer support, access to JPA intranet for HR support, supportive family, pay and expenses, compatibility with private life, appreciation by Regulars and wider society, time and workload commitment required, civilian career usefulness and mobilization support. The factor loadings are available from the authors. While all factors seemed to be very homogenous in terms of content, it is noteworthy that the first-factor "employment package" was the only one which had loadings from questions with quite varied content: rating of participants' morale in the Army Reserve, satisfaction with the financial incentives, satisfaction with the support of the permanent staff, satisfaction with pre-deployment training they undertook, and satisfaction with the weekly and weekend training, as well as the annual deployment event and the opportunity to attend overseas training. As this factor combined several aspects that seemed to represent what the organization was delivering to the individual, it was called "employment package." Questions that did not load on any factor were: "satisfaction with administrative support in the unit" and "satisfaction with opportunities to take part in Adventurous Training" and were not re-considered as separate variables in the following analyses.

Ex-regular Satisfaction Comparisons

A series of t-tests were undertaken to compare ex-regulars and those without Ex-regular service to establish any key differences in these satisfaction factors (Table 5.1). There were few statistically significant differences but Ex-regulars reported they were significantly more satisfied with employer support and that their service was more compatible with their private life but had a less supportive family compared to those with no ex-regular service and were less satisfied with the support available last time they were mobilized. However, the effect sizes for these significant differences were small and there were no significant differences found in items relating to satisfaction with employment package, career opportunities and management, kit and equipment, training amount and quality, JPA intranet access, pay and expenses, appreciation by Regulars and wider society and time and workload commitment required. While there was a trend toward ex-regulars being more satisfied with the Employment Package factor it did not reach significance and the effect size was very small.

<Insert Table 5.1 here>

The relationships between some categorical items and the fact whether reservists were ex-regular or not was also examined. No differences were found in the intention to stay in the Army Reserve across both groups ($x^2(5) = 1.95$, $p < .001$). No differences were found in the proportion having been mobilized as Reservist ($x^2(1) = 0.06$, $p < .857$) or the last year they were mobilized ($x^2(3)=1.94$, $p < .585$). Ex-regulars had joined the Army Reserve on average significantly more recently than those respondents without ex-regular service ($x^2(6) = 219.3$, $p < .001$). Ex-regulars were significantly more likely to claim they were well informed about a range of future changes including changes in remuneration ($x^2(2) = 10.35$, $p < .001$), new opportunities for the Army Reserve ($x^2(2) = 19.38$, $p < .001$), changes in terms and conditions of service ($x^2(2) = 6.17$, $p < .001$) and the future role of the Army Reserve ($x^2(2) = 17.87$, $p < .001$). Ex-regulars were significantly also more likely to state they

knew which Regular unit their Army Reserve unit was paired with ($x^2(2) = 15.94$, $p < .001$) and to have participated in the activity with that paired Regular unit ($x^2(2) = 10.66$, $p < .001$).

General Satisfaction (GS)

To determine GS a new variable was created. Initially, this was formed by summing the answer scores from a series of seven questions found in the section "Life in the Army Reserve" that asked about overall levels of satisfaction that were quite general in nature. They were measured on a five-point Likert scale with 1 as "very dissatisfied" and 5 as "very satisfied." The middle score 3 stood for "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied." The first two questions asked participants about their satisfaction with "life in Reserve in general" and with "their current role in Army Reserve." Using the same five-point Likert scale, the other five questions measured how strongly participants agreed or disagreed with the following statements: "I feel proud to be in the Army Reserve," "I enjoy serving in the Army Reserve," "I feel valued by the Army Reserve," "I feel motivated to do the best job I can for the Army Reserve" and "I would recommend joining the Army Reserve to others." The answer scores were summed to combine as a new continuous variable named "general satisfaction" (GS). As the data with imputed values were used, a GS score for every participant was created, even if they had originally not answered one of the survey items. A t-test established that while there was a statistical difference ($p = .46$) between Ex-regulars (Mean = 28.31, SD = 3.67) and those without Ex-regular Service (Mean = 28.57, SD = 3.67) the effect size was very small.

A regression of the 13 specific satisfaction factors on the GS score was undertaken to see if there were the same or different predictors for the two groups. The models were slowly built up predictor by predictor, starting first with the 13 factor scores and then continuing with other variables. The final model for each group was the one that explained most variance, and could not be improved by adding or subtracting any predictors. For comparison, however, all predictors which are significant in both or either one of the group models are reproduced in Table 5.2.

<Insert Table 5.2 here.>

Overall, the GS score for both groups seems to be predicted by an almost identical set of specific satisfaction predictors. All of the 13 specific satisfaction factors were significant predictors for both groups, apart from satisfaction with JPA intranet access, which was only predictive for non-ex-regulars, presumably because ex-regulars were likely more familiar with the system and how to access it. The same reason may apply when considering that being informed on the future role of the Army Reserve and well informed on the new opportunities for the Army Reserve emerged only as a significant predictor for the non-ex-regulars, but not the ex-regulars. Employment package and career opportunities and management stood out as the strongest predictors for both groups. Training, supportive family, pay and Regular appreciation seemed the next more predictive. Civilian career usefulness and intent to stay beyond seven years were also reasonable predictors.

Gender was not a significant predictor, but was kept in the model because the adjusted R^2 was slightly higher when it was retained. Rank marginally missed significance at a .05 level. The reference group for intention to stay was the "not sure" group, which was large in both groups. For both the ex-regulars and the no ex-regulars service groups, the level "intent to stay for less than 1 year" showed a negative co-efficient, pointing to the fact that satisfaction at this group was lower than in the reference group. All other levels of this variable showed positive coefficients, demonstrating that compared to the not-sure reference level, satisfaction scores were significantly higher than in the reference group.

Splitting GS Score Further

However, upon closer inspection of Spearman's correlation coefficients between the above components (see Table 5.3), it seemed that the GS variable was in fact made up of two different clusters. The first cluster included "satisfaction with life in the Reserve in general," "I feel proud," "I feel motivated" and "I would recommend." These statements seemed to express a satisfaction with the purpose of serving in the Army Reserve. The summed scores were subsumed under a new variable called "duty satisfaction" (duty) with a possible minimum score of 4 and a possible maximum score of 20 points. The other correlation cluster included the questions "satisfaction with role in Army Reserve," "I enjoy serving" and "I feel valued by the Army Reserve" and seemed to tap into a personal satisfaction by the individual from service in the Army Reserve. We therefore summed scores from these three questions to create a new variable called "individual satisfaction" (IND). The minimum score possible was 3 and the maximum 15.

<Insert Table 5.3 here>

Importantly, overall satisfaction was high (see Table 5.4). The means of the scores on all IND questions were above the middle value 3 (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied). The lowest agreement was expressed in "I feel valued" with a mean of 3.56. However, this score still expresses a tendency toward satisfaction rather than dissatisfaction. "I feel valued" falls under IND. So, on average respondents seemed to be quite satisfied and this was reported in the original summary report by the Ministry of Defence (2015).

<Insert Table 5.4 here.>

It was found that whether or not respondents were ex-regulars did not make a difference to the expressed duty satisfaction ($W = 1{,}336{,}500$, $p = .58$) nor to IND satisfaction ($W = 1{,}302{,}900$, $p = .077$). There was also no difference between male and female respondents in terms of duty satisfaction ($W = 827{,}710$, $p = .91$) nor IND satisfaction ($W = 854{,}810$, $p = .173$). No relationship was found between age and duty satisfaction ($r_s = -.025$, $S = 71{,}907{,}00{,}000$, $p = .133$). A very weak relationship was detected between age and IND satisfaction ($r_s = .099$, $S = 6{,}317{,}400{,}000$, $p < .001$), but having scrutinized the scatterplot and considering the very large sample size, this was considered likely spurious. Finally, neither duty ($W = 15{,}28{,}700$, $p = .451$) not IND satisfaction ($W = 14{,}62{,}500$, $p = .132$) differed between the soldier ranks and officer ranks groups.

However, when examining the Spearman correlation coefficients (see Table 5.5), it became apparent that different satisfaction factors seem to correlate with IND than do so with the duty satisfaction factor. Duty satisfaction correlates positively and significantly with kit, training, career, support of the family, pay and appreciation of regulars and society. Satisfaction with JPA is positively correlated with duty, albeit very weakly. IND satisfaction, on the other hand, is very strongly positively correlated with the factor "package," and more moderately correlated with information and compatibility with private life. This suggests that the GS duty and IND relate to different aspects of satisfaction with Army Reserve service. Mann-Whitney tests on duty satisfaction and IND satisfaction between ex-regular and non-ex-regular found no difference between the two groups for either: duty ($W = 13{,}36{,}540$, $p = .5804$) or IND ($W = 1{,}302{,}900$, $p = .077$, $N = 3{,}478$). There were no differences between ex-regulars and those without regular service in the patterns of correlations between the different satisfaction factors and the duty and IND GS factors.

<Insert Table 5.5 here.>

All the respondents were divided into three groups by their intention to stay in response. Those who were as yet undecided (1,096), those with the intention to stay up to two years (475), and those who intended to stay for three years or more (1,907). Looking only at those participants who had indicated how long they wanted to stay, we found that intention to stay was positively correlated to

duty satisfaction ($N = 2{,}382$, $r_s = .243$, $p < .001$). However, intention to stay was not correlated to IND ($N = 2{,}382$, $r_s = .003$, $p = .876$). A Kruskal-Wallis test indicated that the three groups differed in terms of duty satisfaction ($H = 266.74$, df = 2, $p < .001$) with a Dunn test showing that the Three-Year-Plus group was significantly higher than the other two groups in duty satisfaction. Two-group Mann–Whitney tests were run for all three comparisons and the effect size r computed. These confirmed the findings of the Dunn test and showed no difference in duty satisfaction between the Undecided and the Up-to-Two -Years group ($Z = 0.0414$, $p = .967$, $r = .001$). However, the Three-Year-Plus group scored significantly higher on duty satisfaction than the Up-to-two-Years group, with an associated small effect size ($Z = –10.439$, $p < .001$, $r = –.214$). The Three-Year-Plus group was also significantly higher on duty satisfaction compared to the Undecided group ($Z = –14.9398$, $p < .001$, $r = –.273$) and the effect size was almost of medium size. Nevertheless, the predictors for duty satisfaction themselves did not differ between the three groups when running a regression for all three groups. All three groups' duty satisfaction was predicted by kit, training, career, family support, pay and appreciation by Regulars and society. Access to JPA was a predictor for the Undecided and the Three-Year-Plus groups only.

Discussion

The Army Reserve has had a large influx of ex-regulars with previous full-time service into the ranks and this reflects the success of a policy drive since 2013 to incentivize ex-regulars joining through the introduction of significant financial incentives. Previous research has demonstrated that reservists who join for pecuniary and occupational reasons tended to be less satisfied, less committed and retained for less time in reserve service than those who joined for more institutional reasons (Griffith, 2008, Bury, 2017). Ex-regular individuals in the Army Reserve may have also been thought to be at risk of being less satisfied with the Army Reserve since it has tended to be marginalized in the British Army (Connelly, 2020; Dandeker et al., 2010) and where the quality of kit and equipment, the quality and frequency of training, career opportunities, pay and other factors may have been previously perceived as inferior (Ministry of Defence, 2013). However, while there was a hint of a trend toward less GS, in reality, no substantive differences in GS were found in the ResCAS data examined here. The predictors of GS were almost identical across ex-regulars and those without ex-regular service. There were also no differences apparent after the split of GS into Duty satisfaction and IND factors

Previous studies have suggested that ex-regulars in the Army Reserve attracted to join by financial incentives may be more motivated by pecuniary rewards and they may be more occupational oriented in their service. As a consequence, they may be less satisfied and their longer term intention to stay in the reserves may be negatively impacted compared to those who joined for more institutional reasons (Griffith, 2008, Bury, 2017, 2019). This analysis of survey data found that there was no association with being an ex-regular and the intention to stay in the Army Reserve and those reservists who had served wholly part-time in the Army Reserve. The general lack of differences in satisfaction would seem to confirm that there are great similarities in the attitude to reservist service in ex-regulars and those without that experience in those surveyed. While there has been a clear increase in the numbers of ex-regulars joining and the financial incentives have been clearly important in boosting numbers those who join do not seem to be motivated by very different factors than others in the Army Reserve. This is an important finding given the numbers of ex-regulars now in the Army Reserve compared to previous years and the concerns raised by reservists without full-time service that ex-regulars would be less committed to the army reserve (Bury, 2017).

It will be useful to continue to track that this lack of difference in satisfaction or retention intention does not change in the years ahead as the number of ex-regulars has steadily continued to increase since 2015. The ex-regular respondents had less service in the army reserve compared to other respondents and so there is the potential for change in retention intentions and when the financial

incentives for their service taper away after 5 years. The large-scale financial incentives for joining have also now been reduced for the ex-regulars joining the Army Reserve and this may change the landscape. The recent UK Reserve Forces Review 2030 (Ministry of Defence, 2021) continues to indicate the importance of recruiting ex-regulars into the part-time Army Reserve for the foreseeable future. The new review looks to re-invigoration of a Strategic Reserve as well as the current part-time Army Reserve. The Strategic Reserve would consist of a managed list of individuals who left the Regular Army before their contracted commitment and who retain a liability for recall in a crisis. This Strategic Reserve list previously existed for most of the 20th Century until the end of the Cold War as a quick way of augmenting personnel gaps in the full-time regular force on transition to war mobilization (Connelly, 2018, 2021). The Army Reserve have been fulfilling the individual augmented role since 2003 and it will be interesting to see how ex-regulars react to having a choice of moving to part-time service in the Army Reserve or being a member of the Strategic Reserve (who may have some options to serve on occasion part time).

The survey did reveal some minor differences between ex-regulars and those without full-time experience. For example, ex-regulars were more satisfied with their information about future changes to the reserves. This may not be unexpected in terms of individuals who have worked full time in the Army and may still have many friends serving full time and so will be well tuned to sources of knowledge in a way those who have not been fully immersed in the institution from having served part time will differ. The ex-regulars reported their families were less supportive of their reserve service. Again, this may not be surprising as the top reported influence on leaving the full-time service is due to the impact of service on the family (Ministry of Defence, 2021). The ex-regular family may have expected a clean break with the Armed Forces on leaving full-time service. Being away on a weekend training with the Army Reserve may not fit the family ideal of spending more time with the ex-regular. It should also not be assumed that ex-regular families know much about part-time reserve service and this may also account for a slightly less supportive attitude. A recent study confirmed that most UK ex-regular family members sampled were unaware of the welfare, benefits and other support services available to them when their family member moved from regular to reserve service (Connelly, Fear, Morrison, Hennelly, Smith, 2017).

The ex-regulars report being more satisfied with the time and workload commitment required for the Army Reserve. It is difficult to know the reason for this higher satisfaction. With more full-time institutional experience, they could be more efficient at dealing with the time and workload commitment compared to other reservists and so feel more satisfied. It could be that they do put in less time and so have a lower workload than other reservists. The average part-time reservist spends 40 days on average a year on reserve service but it may be the case that many of the ex-regulars are more relaxed over their training levels and attendance rates may be closer to the minimum 27 days due to their previous full-time experience. It would be interesting to compare the actual attendance at training between ex-regulars and other reservists over a training year. Ex-regulars also may find it difficult to devote spare time due to having to concurrently settle into civilian life. However, a less likely, but possible scenario could see ex-regulars being satisfied with more attendance and not less. Most Army Reserve units in the UK have opportunities for their part-time soldiers to attend many more than 40 days a year and having ex-regulars undertake these additional duties could be an advantage. It may be the case that for some ex-regulars who join the part-time reserves that they are happy to "over commit" to the Army Reserve to the virtual exclusion of a civilian role in the same way they demonstrated total commitment to their full-time service and that this remains an important part of their military identity (Connelly, 2013, 2020). This over commitment behavior has been reported in previous work on army reservists in the UK (Tindal et al., 2021). Other incentives for high attendance could be those ex-regulars who are now drawing a military pension and using reserve service as a top up wage option. There are also reportedly pension advantages for some ex-regulars who stay till the age of 60 in the reserves.

The lack of large-scale differences found in the ResCAS data does not preclude that more focused questions on the institutional and occupational motivations for service in the Army Reserve would not uncover some interesting differences (Griffith, 2008, Bury, 2017). The authors of this paper did not construct the items analyzed and so they may be less sensitive to uncovering such distinctions in the two groups. However, the relative absence of GS and retention differences does point to two groups that share more than they differ. The constant negotiated nature of reserve service (Gazit et al., 2021) means anyone balancing family life and civilian job and army reserve service is likely to experience part-time reserve service under similar circumstances. The drivers for continuing service and satisfaction are therefore very similar as all part-time reservists are now transmigrants with a duality between the civilian and military worlds.

The drivers for intention to stay for all army reserves for the longer term are worth further exploration. These seem to cluster around what we termed "Duty satisfaction." Analysis of the items indicates that this is about how proud and motivated the individual perceives themselves as a part-time reservist and their satisfaction with life in the Army Reserve and willingness to recommend others join the service. More analysis is required to understand how "Duty satisfaction" differs from "IND" where the individual's role, own enjoyment and feeling valued by the Army Reserve are important. The predictors of duty satisfaction identified those areas that contributed to making them feel proud and motivated such as the kit and equipment that they are entrusted with, the training amount and quality they can access, career opportunities available, a supportive family, the pay they receive and how appreciated they feel by regulars and wider society. These are perhaps areas to consider for improving retention across the part-time Army Reserve and were indeed the focus for investment for much of the FR20 program (Ministry of Defence, 2013). It remains to be seen if the UK Reserve Forces Review 2030 continues to invest in these areas (Ministry of Defence, 2021).

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<Table captions>

Table 5.1 Mean and standard deviations of satisfaction factors for ex-regulars and no ex-regular service

	No ex-regular service			*Ex-regular*			
Satisfaction factors	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*p*
Employment package	2,306	−0.02	1.00	1,175	0.04	0.99	.063
Career opportunities and management	2,306	0.00	1.00	1,175	0.00	1.00	.222
Kit & equipment	2,306	−0.01	1.01	1,175	0.03	0.98	.897
Training: amount and quality	2,306	0.00	1.00	1,175	0.00	1.00	.964
Employer support	2,306	−0.03	1.02	1,175	0.06	0.95	**.016**
Access to JPA intranet for HR support	2,306	0.02	1.00	1,175	−0.04	1.00	.093
Supportive family	2,306	0.03	0.99	1,175	−0.05	1.01	**.026**
Pay & expenses	2,306	0.03	0.98	1,175	−0.05	1.04	.129
Compatibility with private life	2,306	−0.02	0.99	1,175	0.04	1.01	**.029**
Appreciation by Regulars and wider society	2,306	0.02	1.00	1,175	−0.04	1.01	.085
The time and workload commitment required	2,306	0.00	1.00	1,175	0.00	1.00	.992
Civilian career usefulness	2,306	−0.01	1.00	1,175	0.02	10.1	.522
Mobilization support	2,306	0.04	0.99	1,175	−0.08	1.10	**.001**

Note: Significance values of individual *t*-tests between the two groups are given in the furthest right column. Significant differences are in bold text.

Table 5.2 Regression R^2 of satisfaction factors and other items on general satisfaction score (GS) by no ex-regular service and ex-regular groups

	No ex-regular service		*Ex-regular*	
Satisfaction factors	R^2	*p*	R^2	*p*
Employment package	0.43	***	0.38	***
Career opportunities and management	0.24	***	0.29	***
Kit & equipment	0.11	***	0.09	***
Training: amount and quality	0.22	***	0.18	***
Employer support	0.05	**	0.08	***
Access to JPA intranet for HR support	0.07	***	0.01	
Supportive family	0.18	***	0.19	***
Pay & expenses	0.17	***	0.21	***
Compatibility with private life	0.12	***	0.10	***
Appreciation by regulars and wider society	0.16	***	0.17	***
The time and workload commitment required	−0.09	***	−0.09	***
Civilian career usefulness	0.13	***	0.13	***
Mobilization support	0.06	**	0.10	***
Rank	0.01		0.02	
Gender	−0.02		−0.03	
Age	0.00		0.06	**
Intent to stay (<1 yr)	−0.07	**	−0.05	*
Intent to stay (1–2 yr)	0.01		0.02	

Intent to stay (3–4 yr)	0.06	**	0.03	
Intent to stay (5–6 yr)	0.06	***	0.04	
Intent to stay (7+ yr)	0.14	***	0.14	***
Future role (informed)	0.07	**	0.03	
New opportunities (well informed)	0.07	**	0.03	*
R^2 adjusted	0.50		0.40	

Note: ***$p < .001$, **$p < .01$ and *$p < .05$.

Table 5.3 Spearman correlation table of the two general satisfaction factors "duty satisfaction" and "individual satisfaction" and their constituent component items

		1.	2.	3.	4.
General Satisfactions					
	1. Duty satisfaction				
	2. individual satisfaction				
Components of general satisfactions					
	3. Satisfaction with life in the Army Reserve in general	.77**	.00	–	
	4. I feel proud to be in the Army Reserve	.71**	.01	.40**	–
	5. I feel motivated to do the best job I can in the Army Reserve	.82**	.00	.51**	.48**
	6. I would recommend joining the Army Reserve	.83**	.00	.53**	.52**
	7. Satisfaction with my current role in the Army Reserve	.01	.80**	.01	.03
	8. I enjoy serving in the Army Reserve	–.02	.74**	–.02	.00
	9. I feel valued by the Army Reserve	.00	.88**	.00	.00

Note: **$p < .01$.

Table 5.4 Descriptive for the general satisfaction variables "duty satisfaction" and "individual satisfaction" and their component items (n = 3,478)

Variables	*Items*	*M*	*SD*	*Mdn*	*Min*	*Max*
Duty satisfaction		16.67	2.74	17	4	20
	Satisfaction with life in the Army Reserve in general	3.87	0.86	4	1	5
	I feel proud to be in the Army Reserve	4.46	0.72	5	1	5
	I feel motivated to do the best job I can in the Army Reserve	4.08	0.92	4	1	5
	I would recommend joining the Army Reserve	4.26	0.87	4	1	5
Individual satisfaction		11.79	2.31	12	3	15
	Satisfaction with my current role in the Army Reserve	3.83	0.98	4	1	5
	I enjoy serving in the Army Reserve	4.41	0.71	5	1	5
	I feel valued by the Army Reserve	3.56	1.10	4	1	5

Table 5.5 Spearman correlations of specific satisfaction factors with general satisfaction variables "duty satisfaction" and "individual satisfaction"

Satisfaction factor	*Duty satisfaction (DUTY)*	*Individual satisfaction (IND)*
Kit & equipment	0.14***	–
Training: amount and quality	0.25***	–
Career opportunities and management	0.35***	0.01
Access to JPA intranet for HR support	0.09***	0.03
Supportive family	0.28***	0.01
Pay & expenses	0.22***	0.02*
Appreciation by Regulars and wider society	0.22***	0.04*
Employment package	−0.02	0.63***
Employer support	0.01	0.18***
Compatibility with private life	–	0.19***
The time and workload commitment required	–	−.02*
Civilian career usefulness	–	–
Mobilization support	–	–