

# Retirement Pay, Training Opportunities Attract Men to Reserve Program; Navy Units Active Here

## Civilians Keep Skills Learned in Wartime

By Bill Force  
Mail Tribune Staff Writer

There is in Medford a tightly-knit group of several hundred former servicemen who have responded to government inducements to maintain and improve their war-developed skills and experience for the benefit of their own careers and for the defense of their nation.

All are members of the eight separate reserve units activated here by the army, navy and air force. They are civilians, free of military habits of thought, but rich in the skills or potential skills military commanders may eventually need.

Men with families and full-time jobs, they would be the last to pretend they have signed up with the reserves out of pure altruistic instincts. The fact that they can earn points for retirement, improve their ratings in the event they are recalled to active duty, and develop skills that can be utilized in civil life, while at the same time serving the interests of national defense, they regard as a happy circumstance. Few would deny they are principally concerned with the personal benefits offered by the program, and service recruiting propagandists for the reserves apparently take this attitude for granted.

**Two Plans**

There are two types of reserve plans offered by each arm of the service—organized reserve and volunteer reserve. By far the most satisfactory, in the way of service rendered to its members, is the organized reserve plan. However, it represents a considerable expense to the government and repeated cuts in Secretary Louis Johnson's defense department budget have hit the program hard. There are only three organized reserve units in Medford at the present time.

The members of these three groups draw pay, based on their ratings, for each of the weekly training sessions and also enjoy a period of active duty each year for which, of course, they draw regular base pay. Though this type of program makes greater demands on the reservists' time than the volunteer program, it is more attractive financially and the training offered is more concrete.

Members of volunteer units draw no pay for training sessions they attend and they are accepted for active duty only when available billets are not filled by organized reservists. But they do accumulate points toward retirement and many of them, particularly the Seabees, get valuable training with distinct carry-over benefits in civilian trades. Their program is pretty much restricted to training films and the lecture periods.

**Navy Units Active**

As it is throughout the nation, the navy reserve is the most active of the three branches of the service in Medford.

Now in process of activation here is the first navy electronics warfare organized reserve unit in the Pacific northwest. In honor of the achievement, the 13th naval district headquarters in Seattle last Monday sent Lt. T. P. Pierce to Medford to present the new unit with the battle colors flown during the war on the carrier USS Kearsarge.

The electronics company is now ready to undertake a comprehensive training program in which a reservist could start as a recruit and advance through the ranks to chief petty officer. Advancement is by examination, and the training now available through the Medford unit is sufficient to enable the serious reservist to pass all the promotion tests, provided he spends the minimum amount of time in each rating and takes the required number of training courses. There are also a certain number of Annapolis appointments made from the ranks of the organized reserves.

**Well Equipped**

In quarters at the federal office building here, the electronics company has two rooms crammed with elaborate electronic equipment that is at the disposal

of the members during their weekly training periods. The unit can train radio men, sonar men, radar men and electronic technicians. It owns radio testing equipment, oscilloscopes, audio oscillators, impedance bridges, electronic volt meters, as well as numerous portable radios and two destroyer-type transmitters that are used for actual transmission to receivers in Eugene and Seattle.

In addition to serving a training function, the navy's stock of equipment here could play a vital role in local disaster work or for civil defense, and there would be a nucleus of trained operators readily available.

The electronics unit has been in operation here since 1947, but on a volunteer basis. Its members now will be paid for the time they spend in training periods and for the time they spend on week-end cruises out of Crescent City.

The cruises, a new plan announced only this month, are expected to play an important part in the navy reserve program in this area and they, unlike the summer cruises, will be available to organized and volunteer reserves alike.

**Four Navy Units**

There are four navy reserve units in Medford—electronics warfare, commanded by Lt. Edward O. Leonard; the volunteer Seabee unit, commanded by Lt. (jg) John Jones; the volunteer composite unit, commanded by Lt. Cmdr. Rodney Keating, and navy air reserves now being organized under Lt. Cmdr. Lane Bardeen. Bardeen's group is expecting activation orders next month. They will get lecture instruction in the history of naval aviation, the latest in naval aircraft, and aircraft armament. The 13th district has also promised to furnish the group with a Link trainer, an elaborate mechanism used in instrument flying.

The volunteer composite unit is now, and has been for several weeks, undergoing an intensive course of study of the problems involved in taking the fleet out of "mothballs." Since the war, a goodly portion of the navy's floating stock has been smeared with protective grease and encased in shields of specially coated fabric. Reactivation of the ships will present a highly specialized problem that will call for prompt action if the call to arms is sounded. Reservists will at least have the book-learning required to accomplish the job.

**Seabee Unit**

The fourth group in the navy's expanding program for southern Oregon is the Seabee volunteer unit. Seabee, of course, derives from the initials, CB, which stand for "construction battalions." They consist of men already proficient in a wide range of crafts and skills, but the reserve plan gives them lecture, training film, and correspondence course training, leading to advancement in rating and wider acquaintance with the specialized fields.

Seabees hold job specialties as drivers, surveyors, electricians, mechanics, builders, steel workers and utilities men. The current training course for southern Oregon reservists deals with cold weather engineering. Members are afforded an opportunity to participate in summer active duty periods at either Port Huene, Cal., San Diego, or Seattle—provided the budget can stand the strain.

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**BATTLE COLORS PRESENTED**—Lt. Ted Pierce, left, and Lt. Edward O. Leonard are shown above with the battle colors formerly flown from the aircraft carrier USS Kearsarge. The flag was brought to Medford by Lieutenant Pierce, naval reserve procurement officer of 13th naval district headquarters in Seattle, for presentation to the new organized electronic warfare company now being activated here. The company is the first organized electronic warfare unit to be formed in the northwest. Lieutenant Leonard is commanding officer.

### Air Program Cut

The air force reserve here used to be one of the most active in the northwest. It boasted a small air fleet all its own, and the caliber of the first-hand training it offered its 140 flying members was second to none anywhere. It was a budget curtailment that literally clipped the wings from the splendid unit and left it with a room at the airport to give lectures and show training films.

Though impressively organized under the title of 9091st volunteer air reserve training group, with headquarters in Medford supervising a vast lower hierarchy covering western Oregon and northern California, air force reservists outside of the Portland area are denied the kind of a program that would make the unit widely popular. It offers the same kind of retirement benefits as the other volun-

teer units of other reserve programs and if active duty billets are not filled by organized reservists, the VAR members can get in a few hours of actual flying time during the summer.

**Many Subjects**

Though it is a far cry from their past program, air force reservists do get courses in a variety of subjects that some day may come in very handy—fighter-bomber tactics, Soviet air power, military intelligence, ground warfare, arctic navigation, air defense, aircraft maintenance, statistical control, air installations, and a long list of allied subjects. Col. Elmer H. Stambaugh commands the group and Lt. Col. James C. Langdon is the commanding officer of the Medford flights.

The army ground forces have three reserve outfits here—6310th logistical training division, the 382nd quartermaster

battalion, and 478th quartermaster service company.

### Draw Pay

Though they do not go by that name, the two quartermaster units are on a par with organized reserves in other branches in that they draw pay for meetings attended and have preference for billets in summer training camps. Lt. Col. William H. Prentice and First Lt. Arthur Cook command the two units. The 6310th is still a volunteer-type outfit, but is about to be reorganized on the same basis as the other two. Col. Thomas F. Gunn commands.

Concerned mainly with supply and transportation problems, the units are supplied with elaborate visual aids that make their lectures and training sessions somewhat above average in interest, and there are certain periods each month set aside for actual paper work, called on-the-



**EQUIPMENT PROVIDED**—Naval reservists in the electronic warfare company in Medford have at their disposal thousands of dollars worth of modern, up-to-date electronic equipment provided by the 13th naval district for training purposes. The reservist shown here is receiving messages from one of a battery of radio receivers in the radio room at the reserve headquarters. Also available but not shown in this picture are two destroyer type transmitters for sending messages to Seattle and Eugene and radar equipment.



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