



# FACT SHEET

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**UNITED STATES AIR FORCE**

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## The IMA Program - Past and Present

The Air Reserve Personnel Center provides day-to-day administrative and personnel support for approximately 12,000 Air Force Reserve Individual Mobilization Augmentees (IMAs). IMAs make up one of the most flexible and cost effective elements of the Total Force. By definition, IMAs are members of the Selected Reserve – an element of the USAFR's Ready Reserve. IMAs are usually assigned to active Air Force units in order to support contingency operations or pre/post mobilization requirements.

Like unit Reservists, IMAs are the first-line back-up for the Air Force in the event of war, national emergency or natural disaster. However, IMAs are unique in that they operate somewhat unilaterally – conducting their service lives outside the traditional organizational structure of Unit reservists and, in conjunction with the needs of their active duty units, often taking the initiative to arrange their own participation and training.

You will find highly trained, professional IMAs working along side their active duty counterparts in nearly all career fields: They serve in weapons systems acquisition, test operations and engineering, aircraft maintenance, civil engineering, fire protection, intelligence, security police, public affairs, medicine, legal, and the chaplaincy. The list of career fields and specialties in which IMAs serve is as varied as the weapons systems and support functions required to carry out the Air Force mission. The IMA mission in peacetime is readiness, and as such, IMAs are an integral part of the Total Force.

### *A Proud Past*

The present Air Force IMA program traces its origin to the late 1940s and grew out of the Army Air

Forces' (AAF) first attempts to train individual reservists in the period between World War II and the Korean War. The AAF leaders were concerned about staying militarily prepared and maintaining a large pool of trained personnel which could be called upon in the event of war or national emergency. In July of 1946, the AAF plan for training both organized reserve units and individual reservists was approved. This plan functioned as the starting point for the Air Reserve Forces from 1946 until October 1948. While a specific IMA program was not identified in this plan, it did call for "individual proficiency training," the means of which was to be determined by the commander of the Air Defense Command (ADC).

The ADC implemented the first IMA training effort in April of 1947 when the ADC commander instructed numbered air force commanders and headquarters staff to assign reservists to key ADC positions. The goal: to have these individuals available and fully familiar with their immediate assignments in case of general mobilization. In December of 1947, the first official definition of an IMA was published in an ADC regulation which was titled "Military Mobilization Assignments for Air Force Reserve Personnel."

Several years later, the Air Force chief of staff directed all major command missions to incorporate specific reserve training responsibilities and the Air Staff published a directive on the assignment, administration and training of individual reservists at active duty bases where no reserve units were located. This directive allowed commanders to determine the number of reservists they could accommodate based on their abilities to train them without regard to specific mobilization requirements.

In 1948, the newly independent Air Force undertook a revision of the AAF Plan for the Air Reserve. This revision resulted in the major commands becoming more directly involved in managing IMA assignments. Also, this revision called for “Regular Air Force” funds, facilities, supplies, and equipment to be used to train all reserves with reserve pay, travel, and clothing allowances remaining chargeable to the Air Force Reserve.

The Korean War – which resulted in the mobilization of more than 141,000 reservists in 1950 – revealed some weaknesses in firm mobilization planning which resulted in inefficient use of the Air Force Reserve. This caused the Air Force to reevaluate all its reserve programs. As a result, the large pool concept of maintaining a reserve force was replaced with a “match-merge” policy of projecting wartime requirements and structuring a reserve force, including IMAs to meet those requirements. While the management of IMA resources has undergone many changes over the years, this match-merge policy of justifying and maintaining IMA resources remains at the heart of the program.

### **The IMA Program – Today**

Today, the Air Force Reserve IMA program is one of the most flexible and responsive within the Department of Defense. Most IMAs have served on active duty with the Air Force prior to their assignments within the Air Force Reserve. Many have valuable scientific and professional expertise or technical skills gained from

previous Air Force assignments or civilian careers. Through the IMA program, the Air Force is able to take advantage of such resources in a very cost effective manner.

IMAs not only fill positions within the Air Force, but also work alongside active duty and reserve professionals from other services in joint and unified assignments. They also serve in Air Force assigned positions of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and Selective Service System.

The responsibility of administering the IMA program is shared between the active and reserve structure. The offices of the deputy chief of staff for personnel, Headquarters USAF, and the Air Force Reserve (USAF/RE), both at the Pentagon, cooperate to provide overall organizational support and personnel policy guidances. Air Force major commands (MAJCOMs) identify and justify their IMA requirements and supervise, train and use assigned IMAs.

The Air Reserve Personnel Center in Denver provides the day-to-day management and administrative personnel support for all IMAs and also centrally manages career programs for legal, chaplain and medical IMAs attached to active duty organizations throughout the Air Force. ARPC is also responsible for budgeting and allocating the funding required for IMA training.

As Air Force Reservists and contributing members of active duty Air Force, as well as other defense related organizations, IMAs share a proud citizen airman heritage and represent an integral and important part of the Total Force.