

## **Plan needed for the Reserves**

RICK GARBER (feat. DAVID PRATT)

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Former defence minister David Pratt has provided an insightful think-piece. While I might disagree with his perspective on mobilization planning (full disclosure -I was the last Army staff officer responsible for modelling and analysing mobilization planning, I believe), he hits the nail on the head in identifying the need to plan for a post-Afghanistan environment.

Readers need no reminding of the reserves' successes, from the days of the Fenian raids, through Vimy, the Battle of the Atlantic, D-Day, and the rest.

However, public discussion of what's next for our part-time soldiers, sailors, airmen and airwomen is indeed necessary -at least if one sees a continued need for a professional, well equipped and adequately funded reserve force, ready to complement the full-time military, while maintaining connections with civil society in over 100 locations nationwide.

Having had the honour to serve in the Militia (or "Army Reserve") for some 32 years, in my humble opinion, the reservist of today is by far the best trained, best equipped, soldier that our nation has produced.

When serving side-by-side with his or her full-time counterparts, our modern day reservist is essentially indistinguishable from members of the Regular Force.

But, as history has shown, our peacetime reserve forces (if such a quaint idea as "peacetime" exists in the modern world) tend to be vulnerable, an easy first place to cut in hard financial times.

This is a serious challenge -and conversely, a timely opportunity for Canada to continue to leverage the investment in our reserves, while giving them the tools they need and deserve.