



Reserve Forces Act 1996

1996 CHAPTER 14

PART I

THE RESERVE FORCES

Maintenance and composition

1 Power to maintain the reserve forces.

- (1) Her Majesty may maintain each of the reserve forces in accordance with the provisions of this Act.
- (2) In this Act “the reserve forces” means the following forces—
 - (a) the Royal Fleet Reserve, the Royal Naval Reserve and the Royal Marines Reserve (the reserve naval and marine forces);
 - (b) the [^{F1}Regular Reserve] and the [^{F2}Army Reserve] (the reserve land forces); and
 - (c) the Air Force Reserve and the Royal Auxiliary Air Force (the reserve air forces).

Textual Amendments

- F1** Words in Act substituted (1.10.2014) by [Defence Reform Act 2014 \(c. 20\), s. 44\(3\)\(a\)\(4\)](#), 50(1) (with [s. 49\(4\)](#), [Sch. 7 para. 12\(3\)](#)); S.I. 2014/2370, art. 4(a)
- F2** Words in Act substituted (1.10.2014) by [Defence Reform Act 2014 \(c. 20\), s. 44\(3\)\(b\)\(4\)](#), 50(1) (with [s. 49\(4\)](#), [Sch. 7 para. 12\(3\)](#)); S.I. 2014/2370, art. 4(a)

2 Membership of the reserve forces.

- (1) The reserve forces shall each consist of officers and men.
- (2) The men of the Royal Fleet Reserve, the [^{F1}Regular Reserve] and the Air Force Reserve (referred to in this Act as “the ex-regular reserve forces”) may only be—

Changes to legislation: Reserve Forces Act 1996, Cross Heading: Maintenance and composition is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 23 June 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes

- (a) men transferred to that force under [^{F3}regulations made under section 331 of the Armed Forces Act 2006;]
 - (b) men enlisted or re-engaged in that force.
- (3) The men of the Royal Naval Reserve, the Royal Marines Reserve, the [^{F2}Army Reserve] and the Royal Auxiliary Air Force (referred to in this Act as “the volunteer reserve forces”) may only be men enlisted or re-engaged in that force.
- (4) In this Act, any reference (however expressed) to a man of any of the reserve forces is a reference to a person of either sex who is a member of that force and is of or below the rate or rank of warrant officer.

Textual Amendments

- F1** Words in Act substituted (1.10.2014) by Defence Reform Act 2014 (c. 20), s. 44(3)(a)(4), 50(1) (with s. 49(4), Sch. 7 para. 12(3)); S.I. 2014/2370, art. 4(a)
- F2** Words in Act substituted (1.10.2014) by Defence Reform Act 2014 (c. 20), s. 44(3)(b)(4), 50(1) (with s. 49(4), Sch. 7 para. 12(3)); S.I. 2014/2370, art. 4(a)
- F3** Words in s. 2(2)(a) substituted (28.3.2009 for specified purposes, 31.10.2009 in so far as not already in force) by Armed Forces Act 2006 (c. 52), s. 383(2), Sch. 14 para. 25; S.I. 2009/812, art. 3(a)(b) (with transitional provisions in S.I. 2009/1059); S.I. 2009/1167, art. 4

3 Control of numbers in the reserve forces.

- (1) Parliament shall authorise a maximum number of officers and a maximum number of men for each of the reserve forces; and, accordingly, the numbers of officers and men of a reserve force shall not exceed the numbers for the time being authorised for the force.
- (2) The special members of a reserve force shall not be reckoned in the numbers of officers and men for the time being authorised for the force under this section.

Changes to legislation:

Reserve Forces Act 1996, Cross Heading: Maintenance and composition is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 23 June 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations.

[View outstanding changes](#)

Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole Act associated Parts and Chapters:

Whole provisions yet to be inserted into this Act (including any effects on those provisions):

- [Sch. 2 para. 3\(2A\)](#) inserted by [2003 c. 44 Sch. 3 para. 65](#)