

Forging a Total Force traces the evolution of law and policies governing the Guard and reserve, from the militias of the Revolutionary War era to today's high-tempo operational force. In the early years of the republic, the nation idealized the part-time citizen-soldier as the bedrock of national defense. The wars of the 19th and early 20th centuries revealed the need for a more professional force, but policy failed to keep up with the changing necessity. During the Cold War, the nation struggled to provide adequate training and equipment to the reserves until the emergence of the Total Force policy, which better integrated regular and reserve components. Even then, it wasn't until the defense buildup of the 1980s that the ideal of a combat-ready reserve came closer to reality.

The core of this book is focused on what happened next, from 1990 to 2011, with particular emphasis on the decade after 9/11. The Persian Gulf War demonstrated both the effectiveness of the reserve and the challenges it continued to face. The post-Cold War drawdown made the nation more dependent on the reserves than it had been since its founding, but after 9/11 long and costly deployments strained the reserves. Finally, the authors detail the policy changes made midstream to address issues with the overextended force and to further integrate the active and reserve components. The authors conclude by detailing the dilemmas policymakers will encounter as they forge ahead with citizen-soldiers as a key part of the total force.



Forrest L. Marion is a staff historian at the Air Force Historical Research Agency at Maxwell AFB, Alabama. He served 30 years in the Air Force in both active and reserve components, and retired as a colonel in 2010. He holds advanced degrees in history from the University of Alabama and the University of Tennessee, is a frequent contributor to *Air Power History*, and is the author of three books on Air Force history.



Jon T. Hoffman is the chief historian at the U.S. Army Center of Military History. He served 30 years in the Marine Corps Reserve, including 17 years of active duty, and retired as a colonel in 2008. He served six years as deputy chief historian for the Office of the Secretary of Defense Historical Office, and is author, coauthor, or editor of eight books on topics ranging from Marine Corps history to the Army's work on the Panama Canal.

