

Written by Simon Roberts

Around 310 reservists are currently mobilised and deployed in support of operations in Iraq compared with 270 for the same period last year and 640 in December 2006. With the forthcoming withdrawal of UK forces from Iraq, the overall number of reservists deployed to theatre is expected to reduce during this year. But because there is a continued need to call out reservists, particularly to assist with the logistics and service support elements of the operation both in the UK and overseas, the UK Government has today made a further call-out Order to cover the whole of 2009.

Over 17,000 members of the Territorial Army, Royal Naval Reserve, Royal Marines Reserve and Royal Auxiliary Air Force have served in Iraq or Afghanistan since 2003. Restructuring of the Army in 2004 saw the government change the TA's status to reserves of the regular regiments – an acknowledgement that its recruits were now being asked to do much more.

Reservists are an integral part of the UK's military activities, and can often end up in the front line. Duties can include escorting vehicle convoys, providing security on bases and providing protection to British personnel, along with other logistical support. The past few months have seen the following fatalities among reservists.

SERJEANT CHRIS READ

6th BATTALION THE RIFLES (6 RIFLES)

Serjeant Reed was killed in action in the Garmsir District of Helmand Province, Afghanistan on 1st January 2009. Serjeant Reed was attached to C Company of the 1st Battalion The Rifles (1 RIFLES) Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT) Battle Group and was Second in Command of his team of 8 Riflemen working alongside

their Afghan National Army (ANA) counterparts. The OMLTs assist and teach the ANA in all aspects of military operations. Serjeant Reed was killed by an improvised explosive device whilst conducting a vehicle patrol alongside the ANA in the desert of Helmand.