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Miles de soldados británicos se niegan a ir a Irak

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El gobierno británico lanzará una campaña publicitaria para captar reclutas tras la renuncia de unos seis mil soldados de la Armada Territorial (TA), quienes se niegan a participar en la ocupación de Irak.

Resumen de [The Times](#). 31 de Octubre 2005

[Lire en français](#)

Debido al rechazo de los militares de prestar servicios en territorio iraquí, la TA cuenta en estos momentos con el número más bajo de efectivos desde su surgimiento en 1907, revela hoy el periódico Sunday Times.

La presencia de las tropas británicas en ese estado árabe también ha causado la desertión de los militares que rechazan la ocupación de ese país.

A pesar de la disminución de sus fuerzas y de que el ministerio de las Fuerzas Armadas invertirá más de 10 millones de dólares en una campaña para captar reclutas, la TA encubre su carencia de personal al negar su situación.

Gran Bretaña, junto a Estados Unidos, invadió Irak y después de la ocupación mantiene en ese territorio más de ocho mil hombres, desplegados en el sur iraquí y con el cuartel general en la localidad de Basora.

Desde entonces, murieron cerca de un centenar de soldados, en su mayoría blanco de los atentados de la resistencia.

Iraq factor takes toll on the TA

Manpower levels are in free-fall with reservist troops leaving at the rate of more than 500 a month.

By Michael Evans

[The Times](#) October 31, 2005

THE size of the Territorial Army has reached a record low, with more than 500 soldiers leaving every month this year. With five reservists having died while serving in Iraq since the start of the military campaign in 2003, the Iraq factor is considered one of the reasons why the TA manpower levels are in free-fall.

John Reid, the Defence Secretary, has also acknowledged that the death of four young soldiers at the Deepcut training barracks between 1995 and 2002 has also affected recruiting for the regular Army.

The strength of the TA is currently 35,500, about 6,000 fewer than the Government said was needed when it published its strategic defence review in 1998. The Ministry of Defence said that attitude surveys carried out with all TA personnel on being demobilised had not singled out the campaign in Iraq as the main reason for their wanting to leave.

However, the figures of soldiers leaving the TA show that since the war began, the numbers have risen significantly, from 160 in April 2003 to 690 in November of that year, and 540 in August this year.

The TA has had to supply about 10 per cent of the British troops in southern Iraq since March 2003, when 8,690 reservists were mobilised to support Operation Telic, codename for the campaign, either in Iraq or in the United Kingdom, for six months at a time. This dropped to 2,460 in 2004 and to 1,430 this year.

Reservists are also expected to be part of the larger British troop contribution being prepared for Afghanistan. The Government is expected to make an announcement soon on reinforcements to be sent to the country from March.

The continuing dangers of service in Afghanistan were underlined over the weekend when a British soldier was killed and five were wounded in the northern city of Mazar e-Sharif. They were attacked while travelling through the city. The MoD said last night that the dead soldier was not wearing body armour because the area was thought to be safe.

The man came from the Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment which has only just deployed to Afghanistan for a six-month tour. It is also the last operational tour for the regiment before it amalgamates with the Devonshire & Dorset Regiment and becomes subsumed into the larger Light Infantry, as part of the Army's restructuring plans announced last year.

The attack was the first of its kind against British troops in Mazar e-Sharif since the Taleban were overthrown in 2001-02. The soldiers in the northern city help to run a provincial reconstruction team aimed at improving the lives of Afghans in the area.

Britain currently has just under 1,000 military personnel in Afghanistan, including an RAF Harrier GR7 detachment in Kandahar in the south.

Mr Reid, speaking on the Sunday AM programme on BBC One yesterday, confirmed that more British troops were to be sent to the south next year, to be based at Helmand, north of Kandahar.