STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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# WE WON'T FIGHT AND YOU CAN'T MAKE US: A STUDY OF AMERICAN CITIZENRY THAT WILL NOT SERVE THEIR COUNTRY

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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## ABSTRACT

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Americans no longer feel an obligation to volunteer for military service. Since 1973 when the All-Volunteer Force replaced conscription, the US Armed Forces have enjoyed recruiting and retaining quality personnel. More and more we are witnessing outstanding servicemen and women leave the military sometimes prior to their contracted commitment. Even more disturbing is the fact that the military is loosing the battle to attract potential candidates to serve the nation. Pay, erosion of benefits, optempo, media events, and leadership are the reasons why the ALL-Volunteer Force (AVF) appears to be on the brink of failure. Before entrance standards are lowered or the draft is revived, senior military and civilian leadership must regain the trust of the men and women they lead or wish to lead. Somewhere along the way that trust was lost.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ..... iii

TABLE OF CONTENTS ..... v

PREFACE ..... vii

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS ..... ix

WE WON'T FIGHT AND YOU CAN'T MAKE US: A STUDY OF AMERICAN CITIZENRY WHO WILL NOT SERVE THEIR COUNTRY ..... 1

WHO WILL VOLUNTEER? ..... 4

WHY THEY ENLIST ..... 9

WHY THEY DON'T VOLUNTEER/ENLIST ..... 12

- PAY ..... 14
- EROSION OF BENEFITS ..... 19
- OPTEMPO ..... 23
- LEADERSHIP ..... 25
- EVENTS THAT SHAPE OPINIONS ..... 33

OPTION 1: LOWER THE STANDARDS ..... 35

OPTION 2: REVIVE THE DRAFT ..... 39

SO HOW DO WE FIX IT? ..... 43

ENDNOTES ..... 49

BIBLIOGRAPHY ..... 53

## PREFACE

In the spring of 1978, I arrived at my first duty station, Ft. Stewart Georgia, with great anticipation and motivation. Six weeks later, I phoned my mother to inform her that I had made a serious mistake when I chose to pursue a commission in the United States Army. As a rifle platoon leader, I had assumed more responsibility than I had ever had in my life and felt that I must never let these guys down. What a joke. My platoon sergeant was an alcoholic as well as overweight with a permanent profile. There were only four soldiers out of twenty-eight that had a high school diploma. Drugs, racism, spouse abuse and many other disciplinary problems were prevalent in the Army of the late 70s. After 18 months in the unit, I was assigned to a Ranger Battalion at Hunter Army Airfield, Georgia.

The Rangers were the Army that I had dreamed about serving in. In November 1980, I voted in my first presidential election in which my candidate Ronald Reagan won. Overnight it seemed as though the Army changed. The quality of soldiers coming into the Army in the 80s was incredible. Highly motivated and ready to go to work with little or no disciplinary problems. I have always said that my reason for remaining on active duty was the love that I have for my fellow officers, non-commissioned officers and outstanding soldiers, with whom I have had the honor and privilege of serving with.

Lately I have become troubled over what I see as an Army that has clearly been neglected. Readiness problems, lack of spare parts, shortage of soldiers, recruiting problems, impeachment of the commander-in-chief, general officers having sex with their subordinates wives, politicians who have never worn the uniform and service secretaries attempting to lower entrance requirements in order to gain political favoritism all indicate to me, who in the hell would want to be a part this mess? I have always been amazed when a 19 year old kid with a ruck sack twice his size, waddled up to the door of a perfectly good air force airplane and cast his body into the night. These are the kind of things that have moved me in my 22 years of service. As a youngster, my heroes were those who participated on the gridiron, the hardwood floor and the ball diamond. Today my heroes are the brave men and women who have volunteered to keep our nation safe. May God bless them all.

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1 ..... 6

Figure 2 ..... 36

# WE WON'T FIGHT AND YOU CAN'T MAKE US: A STUDY OF AMERICAN CITIZENRY WHO WILL NOT SERVE THEIR COUNTRY

For the past 25 years, America has been able to go to bed at night and sleep soundly thanks to the men and women of the United States (U.S.) Armed Forces. Real American heroes such as Master Sergeant Gary Gordon and Sergeant First Class Randall Shugart, who were posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for their incredible bravery in the wicked streets of Mogadishu, Somalia, have honored our nation with their volunteer spirit. They swore an oath in the presence of a federal official and repeated those few simple sentences of commitment, ***that I will support and defend the constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic…So help me God.***

America has truly been blessed to have such dedicated professionals ready to go into harm's way on a moment's notice and do whatever the national command authority directs them to do. They are the gallant soldiers who volunteered to rescue American hostages held captive in Iran for more than a year and then tragically lost their lives trying to accomplish this heroic feat. They are the brave warriors who liberated Panama from a ruthless dictator, expulsed the Iraqi Army from Kuwait and continue to stand guard along the 38$^{th}$ parallel. They have maintained peace in the Balkans and defended the Fulda Gap until the Cold War ended. These brave Americans parachuted into

Grenada to deter Cuban aggression and rescued US citizens. They restored democracy to Haiti following a military coup, and always remain ready to lend humanitarian assistance to nations in need. The all-volunteer force successfully performed these and many other military operations because of the quality people that fill its ranks. Men and women who have decided to make a commitment to serve their nation when called and in some cases, forfeit their lives.

Unfortunately the US Armed Forces are failing to meet its manning requirements. Ships are docked because they lack sailors to man their stations. Planes are grounded because pilots and crews are choosing to leave active duty for the more lucrative world of the airline industry. Tanks and artillery pieces remain idle in the unit motor park because there are not enough operators to fall in on the equipment and train with it. Today, soldiers are leaving active duty before their enlistment commitment is complete and others are choosing not to opt for a second tour of duty following their initial enlistment or better known as re-enlist. The late President John F. Kennedy spoke of the volunteer spirit in his inaugural address when he said, "*ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country*". Thirty-eight years later the words could read *ask what can my country do for me.*

The alarm has sounded. As of January 1999, the US Army was 2,300 soldiers short of its required manning strength. Although this figure appears to be small, it is three times more than the total shortfall for the entire year of 1998. The US Air Force is currently short 850 pilots and the forecasted shortfall for the year 2002 is 2,000. "A 15,000-man shortage in sea-going billets has the Navy scrambling to enact policies aimed at keeping on-board thousands of personnel forced back into civilian life by current rules."[1] There are many factors contributing to this dilemma. The most obvious is a booming economy that offers good pay and benefits without having to risk your life and on the other end of the spectrum is the attitude that America does not feel compelled to serve regardless of the state of the economy.

Is the all-volunteer force about to be replaced by conscription or is their time to save it? In order to answer this question we must first examine who do we want to join the military. Then, we must thoroughly examine why America's youth has decided not to visit its local recruiting station and then what can be done to attract those quality personnel into the armed forces. If this cannot be accomplished then the only other option is mandatory public service for every American including military service. Although this option appears, as *no way, it will never happen*, there is growing support in the

military that mandatory service will equally distribute the requirement to serve ones country. The stakes are high and the country's leadership must quickly act and maybe there is time to resolve the crisis. If not then we will have to weather the storm and probably fight a war in order to change today's culture.

## WHO WILL VOLUNTEER?

In order to determine who will volunteer to serve their country it is important to examine why those who have already served were willing to do so as well as those who have the potential to serve in the future. Those who have already served are commonly referred to as veterans and those who have not but are eligible to enlist are referred to as young people or Generation X and Generation Y. The following is an article published on Veteran's Day that is intended to remind the public of the awesome sacrifice made by veterans and that we never take their contributions for granted.

> Veterans are common Americans of uncommon valor and devotion to duty. They are men and women willing to spill their blood if it means Generation Xers and posterity won't be forced to spill theirs - the neighborhood baker who once served on a U.S. Navy warship; the beat cop who once kept the peace as an M.P. at an overseas military installation; the physician who pulled bullets out of wounded troops and sewed them back together; the clergyman who issued last rites to fallen patriots and inspirational words to the battle weary.[2]

Veterans have always been an inspiration to those who wonder what it was like to scale the cliffs at Normandy, parachute into battle or suffer the physical hardships of a Bataan death march. They never refused their country when asked to go and serve.

Now let us examine that group of young people, who have tattooed and pierced their bodies and dyed and bleached their hair blond. When you see them at the ski slopes or out skateboarding, they are labeled as weird or abnormal. Like it or not, Generation X and Generation Y are the potential military leaders of the 21st century. According to the Center for Strategic Studies, "today's troops are ethical, motivated, and focused on combat readiness. With a few years service under their belt, even troopers from Generation X profess beliefs more like those of Audie Murphy than those of Beavis and Butt Head."[3] The following is a fairly accurate description of this unique generation.

> They have never wound a watch, dialed a phone, or plunked the keys of a manual typewriter. Call them Generation Y, Millennials, Echo Boomers or Generation 2000. From Barbie to rock 'n' roll to low fat diets, baby boomers have been dictating popular culture for decades. Now their influence as the nation's dominant marketing force is about to superceded by their kids. Generation Y contrasts sharply with Generation X, the 52.4 million people born from 1965 through 1978. Generation X grew up in one of the most anti-child periods of modern history, a time when divorce rates soared, drug use devastated families and parenthood was disparaged. The debut of Gen Y marked a radical change of heart by society. Protective minivans, "Baby on Board" signs and supportive movies such as

> *Three Men and A Baby* were the rage. Gen X also struggled in an early 1990s economy ridden by dead-end jobs, layoffs and recession. Gen Y comes of age during the hottest domestic economy in memory. In many cities, teens are showered with job offers, from lifeguarding to babysitting to burger flipping. Parents are thriving too, and sharing the wealth with their kids. If you think about 15 year olds, they are not worried about rent or mortgage. They have seen some of the worst things in life: schoolyard shootings, drug use and the Clinton sex scandal. Yet they are far more optimistic than baby boomers and Gen Xers. It's the first generation since the boomers that is showering their passion or zeal for activism. Yet while boomers and their parents were divided over issues like Vietnam and marijuana use, teens and parents today are more likely to see eye to eye. They embrace issues like environmentalism from the same perspective.[4]

Parents have an incredible amount of influence on their children and according to this article, one could make an excellent case that baby boomers, who totally distrusted the military during the Vietnam era are advising their sons and daughters not to be so eager to take the oath or for that matter sign on the dotted line (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

The reason for comparing these two generations is to show that even though these generations appear to be complete opposites, Generation Y is influenced by veterans. The following report is from the Secretary of Defense's office and is entitled *Trends in Propensity to Enlist*. The YATS report concludes that veterans have an enormous amount of clout when it comes to telling the military story. Parents, schoolteachers, and clergymen are unable to connect because they are less likely to have served. According to the New York Times, "The military's recruiting difficulties are due largely to a steady decline in the number of veterans and other "influences" such as teachers and relatives with military service, who often inspire young people to join the armed forces, many Pentagon officials believe. With the end of the draft and the downsizing of the services, the military simply no longer looms very large in the lives of potential recruits and their families the officials say."[5]

Although the YATS study is not the only source used by defense officials to measure the willingness of young people to serve in the military, it can be used to indicate trends as they often change. The office of the Secretary of Defense released the following data from the 1998 YATS Report and what appears most interesting is the propensity for young people to serve.

Since 1975, the Department of Defense has conducted the Youth Attitude Tracking Study (YATS), a computer-assisted telephone interview of a nationally representative sample of 10,000 young men and women. This survey provides information on the propensity, attitudes, and motivations of young people toward military service. Enlistment propensity is the percentage of youth that state they definitely or probably plan to be serving on active duty in one of the Services in the next few years. Research has shown that the expressed intentions of young men and women are strong predictors of enlistment behavior.

Enlistment Propensity Trends

Results from the 1997 YATS show that, overall, young men's propensity for military service has not changed significantly in the last three years. In 1997, 26 percent of 16-21 year-old men expressed propensity for at least one active-duty Service, about the same as in 1996 (27 PERCENT). Propensity for each of the Services also remained about the same in 1997 as in 1995 and 1996.

However, the propensity of young Hispanic men dropped significantly, from 44 percent in 1995 to 37 percent in 1997. Following the Cold War, young black men's propensity dropped from 54 percent in 1989 to the 32 in 1994. White men's propensity also dropped, from 26 percent in 1989 to 22 percent in 1994. Neither propensity of black nor white young men has changed significantly since 1994. Until the current year, Hispanic men's propensity declined only slightly from Cold War levels.

Propensity of 16-21 year-old women also declined significantly, from 14 percent in 1996 to 12 percent in 1997. In the previous 5-year period, as career opportunities in the Services opened to women and more women enlisted, women's propensity had increased gradually, from 12 percent in 1992 to 14 percent in 1996. The 1997-drop, returning women's propensity to 1992 levels is consistent across all four Services. The 1997-drop in young women's propensity crosses racial and ethic lines; for whites, blacks, and Hispanics, 1997 statistics are roughly four-fifths of 1996 figures.

> To downsize the military following the Cold War, the Services reduced their accession objectives below the levels required to replace those leaving military service. Although, the post Cold War decline in young men's propensity was troubling, nevertheless sufficient numbers of men enlisted to allow the Services to meet reduced recruiting goals. Now, as force drawdown objectives are met, recruiting missions are rising to levels required to replace those leaving service. Current YATS results indicate the supply of young men and women with a propensity for military service, relative to accession requirements, is less than before the end of the Cold War. Thus, recruiting high quality youth into the armed services will continue to be a challenge.[6]

According to the study quality is the real issue. "Drug Use and poor education are increasingly eroding the pool of applicants for military service, according to interviews with two dozen recruiters around the country. Chief Petty Officer Will Cawley, who works out of a storefront in West Baltimore, Md., says he rejects more than half of would-be sailors because of their persistent drug use or inability to pass the military's general knowledge entrance test."[7]

Once DOD fully understands the culture and makeup of today's young people, it will be in a better position to connect with them. In order to connect they must offer the incentives that potential enlistees are looking for.

## WHY THEY ENLIST

Today, military recruiters are challenged like never before. They interview between 100 and 120 potential enlistees before they can get a commitment from just one to sign a contract.

"Navy Recruiters typically talk to dozens of potential enlistees just to sign one. Last year, the Navy came up 7000 recruits short of meeting its goal of 54,271. That has sparked a more active effort to recruit enough prospects this year to help the Navy's overall shortage of 22,000 sailors".[8] Strangely enough, some school districts forbid military recruiters from talking to potential candidates while on school property. Again we turn our focus to the YATS Report in order to gain insight on what motivates those eligible to enlist.

> Regardless of their propensity for military service, YATS respondents are asked to provide, in their own words, reasons for joining and not joining the military. The most frequently mentioned reasons for joining are money for college, job training and/or experience, duty to country, pay, travel, and self-discipline.
>
> Most young men and women see postsecondary education as the key to propensity and job security. The percent of youth going to college is increasing, and YATS results show that young people are aware that the military offers money for a college education. Educational funding is the most frequently cited reason for enlisting, and the percent of youth mentioning education funding is growing. In 1997, 32 percent of men and 36 percent of women identified money for college as a reason for joining; comparable 1991 figures were 24 percent of men and 31 percent of women. Extended in-depth interviews with selected YATS respondents suggest that, for affluent youth, acquiring funding for college was never a concern, and military service was never a consideration. In fact, analysis of YATS data shows youth most likely to go to college have below-average propensity but are most likely to cite educational funding as a reason for joining. Nonetheless, many young people have the will and the talent for college, but lack the funds. The Montgomery GI Bill, the Army/Navy/Marine corps College

> Funds, the Service academies, and Reserve Officer Training Corps scholarship programs provide the Services with an effective means of attracting these talented young men and women to the military, and provide these youths the means to gain a college education.
>
> For many noncollege youth, military service offers an opportunity for job experience specialized training. In 1997, 25 percent of men, and 17 percent of women mentioned job training and experience as a reason for entering military service. Others reasons for joining are mentioned less frequently. In 1997, 12 percent of men and 10 percent of women mentioned pay; travel by 8 percent of men, 6 percent of women, and discipline by 6 percent men, and 4 percent of women. The percentages of men and women mentioning job training, pay, duty to country, travel, and discipline as reasons for joining have not changed significantly in the past few years.[9]

One can conclude from the YATS Report, that the number one reason for young people coming on active duty is to qualify for the college fund. This may have been the case in 1997 but in 1998, the college fund was increased to $50,000 and as of January 1999, the US Army reported a shortage of 2,300 soldiers that they failed to enlist. "The Army missed its recruiting goal by 20 percent in the latest quarter, and unofficial estimates suggest that by next fall the service could fall 10,000 troops below its congressionally required roster of 480,000. The shortfall came despite a new ad campaign, signing bonuses and improved college benefits."[10] The number of ROTC scholarships available but are not applied for is increasing. It would

certainly seem that the $50,000 college fund would influence many potential recruits, however; young people are not going after these incentives.

## WHY THEY DON'T VOLUNTEER/ENLIST

There are many reasons why Americans are not enlisting to serve in the military. They range from pay to money for college. Because there are many factors effecting this topic, we will examine only those that are having a negative impact on retention and recruitment of the all-volunteer force.

The All-Volunteer force was created in 1973 following the Vietnam War. At first it appeared to stall. Thinking back we can clearly recall the burning aircraft hulks that crashed in deserts of Iran following the failed attempt to rescue American hostages held captive for more than a year. Following this disaster, Ronald Reagan was elected president and he quickly set out to resurrect American military readiness and preparedness. Once again the Services restored their reputation and a military career became an honorable and attractive profession.

Suddenly, in the late 1990s, the military finds itself in a recruiting shortfall. According to a recent article published in the *Miami Herald,* "Pentagon officials cite a shortage of about 35,000 personnel among the services' 1.4 million volunteers. One reason, according to analysts, is that fewer teenagers see the military as an attractive option. Their

disillusioned and angry Vietnam-era parents discourage some teens. Others find scholarships and grants to civilian schools to be a better deal than military service."[11] The important point to understand from this article is that parents are successfully convincing their children that there are other ways to get an education other than joining the military. Again, we turn our focus to the YATS Report to further explore this point of why they won't enlist.

> The most frequently cited reason for not entering military service concerns lifestyle, mentioned by 17 percent of men and 22 percent of women in 1997. Military service evokes images of discipline and regimentation for most young men, regardless of current or past propensity. These images tend to deter many college-bound youth from interest in the military. Young people believe they have the self-discipline to achieve their goals and see regimentation as stifling. Others, however, see externally imposed discipline as beneficial. Other reasons for not entering military service suggest not rejection to, the military, but commitment to an alternative. In 1997, 10 percent of men and 7 percent of women mentioned other career interests as a reason for not joining. Seven percent of men and 14 percent of women mentioned family obligation; many enlistment-age youth feel they are not able to enlist because they are needed to care for ailing parents or for their own families. Finally, about 9 percent of men and 6 percent of women cite danger as a reason for not entering military service; 6 percent of men and 4 percent of women stated military service was against their beliefs."[12]

It is equally important to note that the media has a tremendous influence on our lives. The generation that we are trying to attract is a well-informed population. They have

witnessed such events as the Rodney King Beating, the trial of OJ Simpson, the tragic disaster in Somalia, and the impeachment of President Clinton. We will explore this point later in the study. Although not related, these and other powerful events can easily persuade young people to mistrust what they hear or promise that have been made to them. In an attempt to better connect with its market, "Army Recruiting Command at Ft. Knox, Ky. will assign corporals, many in their 20s, to recruiting offices this year. The move to connect more directly with young Americans comes as all Services are finding their jobs increasingly rejected by young Americans."[13] Promises that include higher pay and better benefits.

PAY

On March 18, 1997, Chief Master Sergeant (Ret.) Joshua W.Krebs testified before the House Committee on National Security, Subcommittee on Personnel on Military Compensation Reform and Recruiting and Retention Issues.

> Mr. Chairman, one solution to recruiting and retention problems is to stop chipping away at military pay, health care, and other benefits. Many consistently lag behind others remains unchanged as inflation erodes away the value.
>
> Military base pay is tied to the Employment Cost Index (ECI). Yet to save money, current law limits pay raises to the ECI minus one-half of one percent. We thank you for your efforts last year to provide a full ECI pay raise, but military pay is still 13 percent below private sector pay. If the trend continues, it

> will fall even further behind. Full ECI raises are needed to fairly compensate military members and to send a message to those making the enlistment or reenlistment "decisions" that we care enough to provide for their future.[14]

On many occasions commanders are called upon to approve an emergency loan for a service member so that he or she can put groceries on the table for their families? The number of soldiers receiving support from food stamps and food lockers is astounding and senior military officials are aware of the problem but often fail to speak up when they were on active duty in a highly visible leadership position. Former Chief of Staff and current president of the Association of the U.S. Army (AUSA) Gen. Gordon R. Sullivan said,

> We as a nation are driving over-committed, highly trained professionals prematurely out of the armed forces. We have a growing recruiting problem and an emergency retention problem. When a high percentage of soldiers and their families are depending on food stamps, the supplemental program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Army Emergency Relief, credit or parents to provide necessities simply to get by, then our nation has not kept its part of the promise. Currently the pay comparability gap that our federal government officially recognizes between soldiers and citizens is about 14 percent. Even with the proposed pay increases in the next two fiscal years, the pay gap will still be over 10 percent.[15]

The last time the military received a double-digit pay raise was in 1981 during the Reagan administration (14.3%). However, during the Clinton administration pay raises have amounted to very small increases. Here are the figures: 1992 -

4.2%, 1993 - 3.7%, 1993 - 3.7%, 1994 - 2.2%, 1995 - 2.6%, 1996 - 2.4%, 1997 - 3.0%, 1998 - 2.8%, and 1999 - 3.6%. "The nation's military leaders did not come forward sooner to seek additional funds to maintain the readiness of American troops because of their own support for a balanced budget, according to the senior U.S. commander in the Pacific."[16] This quote along with the pay raise figures clearly indicate that senior military officials are not willing to speak up in support of the troops even though pay raises are needed to attract and retain quality personnel.

Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott R-Miss. recently spoke at Ft. Hood TX. where he said, "Service people marry and raise families, plan for retirement and desire the same comforts that other Americans desire—a comfortable home, reliable car, good schools for their children, medical care and food on the table. I have repeatedly asked this administration to address the needs of the service."[17] Many in the military find it extremely difficult to understand how the civilian leadership can deny the armed forces a decent pay raise while at the same time they remain in session until the wee hours of the morning in order to vote a pay raise for themselves. This lack of commitment is consistent considering many in Congress and the Senate as well as the Secretary of Defense and the Commander-In-Chief have never served in the military. Today, everyone in the defense department is on the bandwagon. "We must compensate men and

women in uniform properly in relation to their peers and in relation to the larger economy, Defense Secretary William Cohen said at a Pentagon Briefing."[18] "Gen. Henry H. Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said today's military leaders see the damage that low pay and other problems did to the services during the 1970s. They lived through the terrible years of the hollow force, and they are determined that we will never stand by and allow our superb military force to sink to that level again, Shelton said."[19] According to Army Times, "President Clinton's 267.2 billion defense budget includes the largest military pay raise in a generation and other initiatives designed to halt the exodus of trained troops and stop the deterioration of aging weapons."[20] "Most GIs aren't in the armed services to become millionaires. But they do sacrifice a lot in terms of their personal lives to serve this country. A modest pay raise and improved retirement benefits would boost morale, while helping ensure America has a first-class fighting force."[21]

Considering the pay raise neglect by the Clinton administration during the 1990s, the only obvious thing to do is to increase wages quickly. However, there is opposition. According to Army Times, "A growing chorus of Democrats and military observers is pleading for the senate to slow down its rush to pass a military pay and benefits bill. It contains a 4.8 percent basic pay raise, plus targeted raises of up to 5.5

percent and improvements in retired pay and educational benefits. But key democrats, Defense Secretary William Cohen and the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, all say more time and study is needed before the government commits to such a generous plan."[22]

Even if the proposal is passed there are some that say the proposed pay hike is not nearly enough. "The White House's vaunted 4.4 percent pay raise won't do much to trim the difference between soldiers' and civilian pay scales. The FY 2000 military compensation boost barely touches the 13.5 percent/civilian pay chasm existing since the last DOD pay hike in 1982. The Pentagon's proposed pay increase adds 14.2 billion to DOD's budget through 2005, while estimates indicate it would take some $36 Billion to close the pay gap."[23]

This pay issue concludes that our military forces are not being properly compensated for their sacrifices and that it is a critical reason why recruitment and retention are failing. In a letter to Sen. John Warner (R) Va., Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, that was later published in Army Times, retiring CSM Clifton P. O'Brien wrote, "If you want a committed professional force you have to make commitments, but even more importantly, you have to keep your commitments. Our National leadership has not done that. Freedom isn't free and you must be willing to pay for that security."[24]

EROSION OF BENEFITS

The veterans who stormed the Normandy beaches are often turned away when they need medical assistance. Veterans, who were promised that if they served the nation when freedom was threatened, they would be guaranteed with medical care for life. Tricare and Delta dental are just two of those broken promises.

> Under a proposal pending before the House of Representatives, a panel of experts would be formed to explore the gap between the promises made to retirees and veterans many years ago and the reality of their situation today, when many elderly retirees are denied access to military hospitals and doctors. The proposed task force would thoroughly examine retirees' contention that the government promised them free health care for life in exchange for their commitment to a military career.[25]

Wal-Mart, K Mart, and Macdonald's Restaurants offer equal or better workmen's compensation, retirement, and medical and dental care plans than the military. In an effort to improve veteran's health care, the Clinton administration has made some new proposals.

> Veterans would get better access to government health care and stand a better chance of having their claims processed accurately under the Clinton administration's proposed 2000 budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs. Included in the package is a plan to spend $18.1 billion for veterans' health care. About $17.3 billion of the total must be approved by Congress. The remaining &749 million would come from increased payments by so-called third party insurers, who provide health care coverage for veterans who do not meet VA criteria for free, treatment.[26]

In his testimony before the House Committee on National Security, Subcommittee on Personnel on Military Compensation Reform and recruiting and Retention Issues, Chief Master Sergeant (Ret.) Joshua W. Krebs testified that:

> Health cares need to be improved. Active duty members are provided with free comprehensive health care. But the same cannot be said for their dependents. Military members not stationed within a Tricare "catchment" area (normally within 40 miles of a military treatment facility) must rely on Tricare Standard (the old champus) for medical care. These military members are faced with paying a 300-dollar per year deductible and co-payments between 20 and 35 percent after the deductible is met. DoD has recognized this problem, and is testing a concept that will allow these active duty dependents to pay Tricare Prime rates even though they are not within a Tricare Prime area. Just as Tricare is not a good deal for active duty dependents, the same is true for military retirees and their dependents. The Air Force Sergeant's Association (AFSA) believes that as a minimum, Tricare should be improved to match the level of care authorized by the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program (FEHBP). The cost share should cost the military beneficiary no more than those insured by FEHBP and should include, as a minimum, preventative care, dental care, and a universal (including mail order) prescription drug service.
>
> The situation for Medicare-eligible is even worse. Many facilities now refuse to treat Medicare-eligible population because of cost.
>
> But pay and health care are only a start. The military retirement system has changed three times—each time decreasing the benefit. It has changed in 1986 and now only provides retirement pay based on 40 percent of the high three years of base pay. What effect does the 1986 change in retired pay have on current enlisted retention? These members, many of whom are just about half way to retirement eligibility, are just starting to realize that their retired pay will not compare favorably to that of

> members who joined prior to August 1986. The early numbers indicate that the affected members may vote with their feet. Even if they remain to retirement, many are questioning what other benefits will remain. They see constant attacks on retiree COLAs and ask will the promise of a one-time COLA catch-up, as promised in the 1986 retirement law be there when I reach age 62?
>
> The commissary is another example. It seems that every few years a run is made on the commissary benefit. Is the latest proposal to change to a Performance-Based organization another such attempt? The (AFSA) applauds efforts to improve the management of the commissary, but this transition must be done so as not to undermine the value of the commissary benefit. Full appropriated funding is required to protect this benefit that is so important to enlisted members of the Armed Forces.[27]

As we conclude our examination of eroding benefits, we turn our attention to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Chiefs recently testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the subject of military readiness. When questioned by the committee members on the issue of the current military retirement plan, the chairman replied that prior to receiving negative feedback from the services, he was totally unaware that the retirement system had changed. Troops deserve better. As is the case with substandard pay raises, senior military leaders have failed to challenge those in opposition for obvious political and career reasons. Again, we must refer to a statement made by the Commander of Pacific Command. "The nation's military leaders did not come forward sooner to seek additional funds to maintain readiness of American troops because of their own support for a

balanced budget."[28] In an effort to make up for lost ground, defense officials have taken to the road in an effort to generate support for increased military spending. "In an uncommon setting, Defense Secretary William Cohen appeared before the Illinois House of Representatives to call for increased defense spending and more military base closings. If the military is to attract and retain high-quality personnel, Cohen said, higher pay and other benefits are not only a moral obligation but also a practical necessity. Aides said the speech was a first in a planned series at nontraditional venues to build support for the Clinton administration's plan for the largest sustained increase in defense spending in 15 years."[29] Dr. Joseph Collins, a recently retired Army Colonel and senior fellow at the center for Strategic and International Studies said it best when he wrote, "If we are going to recruit and retain quality people in a vibrant economy, we will have to pay them fairly, scrap the current pension system, and fully restore the 50 at 20 retirement system. In truth, this is a small reward for the sacrifices that make military service today so much more than just another government job."[30] Military leaders bear responsibility for being silent and allowing benefits to deteriorate while simultaneously the civilian leadership which for the most part has never served in the military has directed that benefits be reduced/eliminated.

OPTEMPO

Today, service men and women are deployed more than ever before. In Gen. Reimer's remarks to the National Press Club he said, "If you go back and look at the Cold war, you find that since 1945 to 1989, we used the military, the United States of America did, 10 times. Since 1989, we've found that we have had to use our military 33 times. And so with all this drawdown that's taken place out there in the field, the soldiers do in themselves deploying more and more to different places and doing the things that soldiers do in Southwest Asia, Bosnia, Kuwait, Korea."[31] But if you asked a service person if they joined the military so that they could stay home and not deploy, they would surely reply not no sir, but hell no. However, they will tell you that over time continuous deployments take their toll on unit readiness as well as creating numerous hardships for military dependents. In a recent letter to the opinion section of Army Times, CW3 (P) Joel D. Speller wrote, "Most people, civilian or military, don't understand our current commitments; hell, they don't even know where these places are. ...The reasons for the recruiting problems are not obscure. You have 480,000 active-duty soldiers, and members of the Guard and Reserve, and hundreds of thousands of retirees who have seen their benefits erode over time."[32] Holidays are especially difficult on families. "The nation may be at peace, but many of its military

warriors were too busy being peacemakers to be home for Thanksgiving. Some 122,000 airmen, soldiers, sailors and Marines were on deployment away from their home bases for the holiday, and another 200,000 were stationed at permanent bases in Europe or Asia. At least during the Cold War military duty was fairly predictable, but today's troops are often called up less than 72 hours before they are dispatched to the latest global hot spot."[33] Just prior to the 1998 Christmas season, the headline of a southern newspaper read, "Some 160 soldiers from the 63rd Engineer Company at Ft. Benning are notified they may be headed to Honduras to provide help to the victims of Hurricane Mitch."[34] Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson (R) Texas made a strong point in reference to this issue. She said, "As a superpower, the U.S. must draw distinctions between the essential and the important. Otherwise, it will dissipate its resources and be unable to handle either."[35]

The issue of individual deployability and how the burden is shared is also becoming a concern for leaders. "White women are leaving the military before the end of their first enlistment at a far greater rate than any other group, according to Defense Department statistics, with 43 percent dropping out because of physical problems, pregnancy, failure to adapt or other problems."[36] "In a survey of Army personnel, 32 percent of men and 55 percent of women did not agree that the Army's primary

focus should be on Warfighting."[37] This clearly indicates that those who enlist for reasons other than Warfighting will probably leave early, costing the services millions.

Today, the nation's leadership has failed to recognize the strain they are placing on its most precious asset.

LEADERSHIP

Throughout this study, much has been discussed/examined supporting the claim that civilian and military leadership bears responsibility for the manning crisis that exists in today's military. In order to substantiate this claim we must first go directly to the top. "The Clinton/Lewinsky show didn't play well with retired Army Col. James R. McDonough, and he said so. McDonough wrote a stinging piece for the Wall Street Journal to vent his anger with President Clinton's actions. He denies that article has anything to do with his White House departure. He particularly resented Clinton drumming up congressional support for troop deployment to Bosnia via telephone, while Ms. Lewinsky favored him with oral sex."[38]

It is a well-known fact that President Clinton refused to serve his nation during the Vietnam War and that he also favored open homosexuality in the military. Bound by an oath they have been sworn to uphold, senior military leaders must demonstrate their loyalty to the office of the President, which in this case

is occupied by a President that has been impeached by Congress for lying and obstructing justice. It is extremely important that senior military leaders understand the damage done to our military values as well as the double standard that exists between the military and civilian leadership. One can recall the episode that prevented General Ralston from becoming the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. "Army Lt. Col. Paul Perone, a year away from retirement, is proud that fellow officers have begun speaking out against the regime of Bill Clinton. "Let me be blunt," he writes." The vast majority of today's U.S. military looks upon Bill Clinton with disgust. Perone also is infuriated with the response he got from Rep. Robert Wexler, a Democrat who strongly supports Clinton. Wexler, after listening to Perone's position on Clinton, said the military's ethical standards are too high. Maybe too many public officials read ethics from a manual drafted by the White House."[39]

Another example of growing mistrust for the nation's leader is the controversial POW issue. The Washington Post ran the following story: "*Clinton Won't Ask About POWs.* Bill Clinton will meet for an hour with Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov in Malaysia next week. He won't bring up the issue of Moscow's refusal to release classified KGB documents that could shed some light on the fate of U.S. POWs missing since the Vietnam and Korean wars."[40]

For someone who avoided military service during the Vietnam War, the President must understand the stress he adds to families of those missing. Remember today's parents are from the generation that served or avoided service in Vietnam and they are a major factor when it comes to influencing their children. How could any of them accept this betrayal by the commander-in-chief and then be expected to advise their children to serve in the military? The issue all boils down to integrity.

> If the Big Lie which began 1998 was Clinton's, *I did not have sexual relations with that woman…* the Big One of early 99 may well be Secretary of Defense Cohen's declaration that the U.S. armed forces' readiness is undiminished ten years after the end of the Cold War, and ready for the new century. That is what Mr. Cohen claimed during his opening statement of the DOD budget briefing the other day. Two important things characterize the difference between Clinton's lie and Cohen's, however. First, the result of Clinton's lie was merely to risk the career and legacy of one aging politician. Cohen's big lie, however, risks thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of young American lives.
>
> The second important difference is that the reaction to Clinton's lie became a matter of partisan politics, while former Republican Senator Cohen's big lie is the result of one of the most unquestionably bipartisan acts of recent years: the dismantling of America's armed forces by a Democrat administration with the concurrence of a Republican-controlled Congress.[41]

Recently, Secretary Cohen voiced concern that the Senate has been moving entirely too fast on the Soldiers Bill of Rights that includes a long overdue pay raise as well as returning the retirement plan to pre 1986 levels. This shift in rhetoric

signals a lack of commitment on his part as well as politicizing the entire issue. Some leaders have a hard time dealing with the truth.

In a recent letter to alumni, parents and friends, MG Josiah Bunting III Superintendent at the Virginia Military Institute (VMI), wrote,

> Public Rhetoric is debased. Our countrymen either do not believe what public men tell them or find what they are told to be without relevance to their own lives and purposes. The word "spin" entered our vocabulary, as a synonym for mendacity, only ten years ago: now it is used as often on CNN as "table" or "car" or "meeting." It is no longer expected that those entrusted with public responsibility, particularly those in elected offices, will tell us the unvarnished, Andrew Jackson, Harry S. Truman, George Washington truth. In this regard, VMI's duty to our country is plainer, more urgent, than it has ever been. I want VMI cadets, graduates, to be blunt, forthright, outspoken, unapologetically honest-always. How can a man lay a glove on you, if you've told the truth? [42]

However, the commandant of the Marine Corps has clearly demonstrated that saying what needs to be said and doing what needs to be done are the hallmark of a trustworthy leader. "Gen. Charles Krulak, a Marine commandant, has made moral behavior an essential Marine attribute. He objected when Defense Department civilians last year toyed with the idea of relaxing adultery laws. The Corps openly opposed Mr. Clinton's failed bid in 1993 to allow open homosexuality in the military."[43]

This commitment to high standards and a reliance on traditional values has paid big dividends for the Corps, particularly when it comes to recruiting. Parents feel that the Marines are leveling with their sons and daughters. "The Corps' well-traveled pitch for a *few good men* continues to connect with young people while the other services scramble to meet induction targets."[44]

Clearly, America's senior military and civilian leadership has failed to support those they are leading. If leaders fail to stand up and voice their concerns when they know in their hearts that service men and women needs are being ignored, it should become their duty to bypass the politics, and say what is right. Instead, senior military leadership has strongly stated that they will not resign their positions of responsibility in order to demonstrate their lack of support for such controversial issues as the defense budget, deteriorating military benefits, or insubstantial pay raises for service men and women. The PACOM commander has been quoted several times in this study for his support of a balanced budget and according to him, he had not asked for more funds for soldier programs because this would upset that effort. Admiral Prueher recently relinquished command in the Pacific. The *Washington Times* wrote, "Admiral Joseph Prueher steps down Saturday after three years as commander of the U.S. Pacific Command and has been lobbying the

White House to be named the next U.S. ambassador to China…"[45] One could easily conclude that the admiral thought more of pleasing his superiors (which in the long run would be more beneficial to him personally) as opposed to asking for more funding.

Another example that reflects the negative effect that today's leadership is having on service men and women is the anthrax vaccine inoculation. "Over a quarter of the pilots in a California Air Force Reserve squadron chose to quit rather than submit to anthrax vaccinations. This loss of at least 11 cargo and fuel tanker pilots threatens force readiness at a time when reserve and Guard aviator losses are already a worry."[46] "Twenty-three sailors aboard the aircraft carrier Theodore Roosevelt received administrative punishments, including one-grade rank reductions, for refusing orders to accept anthrax inoculations."[47]

These two examples of insubordination clearly indicate that service men and women no longer trust those who lead them. "Risking your health for something unproven, one man wrote this week on a newspaper sponsored chat line, is almost as dumb as trusting anything the military has to say."[48] "Michael O'Hanlon, a military analyst at the Brookings Institution think tank, said the pentagon has a credibility problem. If people trusted the source from which they were getting the facts, they would accept the vaccine he said"[49] "Thirteen top military and civilian

Reserve officials, trying to ease fears among the troops, received anthrax inoculations. Acting Assistant Secretary for Reserve Affairs Charles Cragin got his shot as a part of a publicity effort meant to convince 1.5 million reservists there is no danger connected with the vaccination."[50]

No matter what leaders do they still have a long way to go to convince the masses of service men and women that their word is good. As previously discussed, today's youth, with advice from their parents, are capable of forming an opinion and understanding complicated issues. When the trust factor disappears, it will take a huge effort to regain it. Military recruiters are currently experiencing that problem. Again that is why potential recruits and their parents do not trust senior military and civilian leaders.

Today, many believe America's military is totally out of touch with civilian society. "Gen. Shelton denies there has been a disconnect between Americas' civilian and military societies. He said although fewer people are pursuing military careers, there is still a shared experience that helps cement the bond between soldiers and civilians."[51] This statement is contradictory because currently the Secretary Of Defense is desperately trying to "reconnect" the military with America through a PR campaign directed at American society; however, many believe that he is the wrong person. "America needs to know

more about its military service members, but it is not clear that Defense Secretary William Cohen, who never served in uniform, is the right spokesman for the Pentagon's new PR crusade."[52]

Following a visit to Alaska, an air force veteran wrote in the opinion section of Air Force Times, "Defense Secretary William Cohen's recent talk to troops at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska failed to address their concerns over retention, health care and long deployments. Instead, his remarks about base closings and missile defense seemed aimed more at state politicians and businessmen."[53]

Also many believe that today's military leaders are more concerned about their careers than they are about the men and women they lead. They often hide behind the loyalty door. Following their testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee, the Service Chiefs were questioned why they reported such a problem with readiness when just 8 months prior they had painted such a positive picture. The truth, which Secretary Cohen later explained, was that he ordered the chiefs to remain silent in an effort to demonstrate support for the administration's budget and he also assumed full responsibility for the chiefs lack of candidness during previous testimony. Leadership must start at the top. It deserves no less.

EVENTS THAT SHAPE OPINIONS

Like no other time in the history of the U.S. have such highly visible news events influenced our opinions and shaped our culture. Consider the impact the following events had on potential recruit's decision whether or not to enlist:

Aberdeen Sex Scandal: Army drill sergeants are convicted of soliciting sex from female trainees.

CSM McKinney Court Martial: Command Sergeant Major of the Army is tried for sexual harassment on a female soldier. Although he was acquitted of those charges he was convicted of obstructing justice.

Gulf War Illness: Veterans from Operation Desert Storm claim their illness is related to the Gulf War, however defense officials disagree.

MG David Hale Charged: Army general returned to active duty to faces charges that he committed adultery with the wives of the soldiers who worked for him.

President Clinton Impeached: The commander-in-chief is impeached on charges that he committed perjury and obstructed justice.

Somalia: Americans watch actual video taken of American servicemen's mutilated remains being drugged through the streets of Mogadishu.

These and many other events like them have had an impact on our society. Following Barbara Walters' nationally televised interview with Monica Lewinsky, it was estimated that more than 70 million Americans tuned in. During a recent CBS Evening News broadcast, pentagon correspondent David Martin visited a high school to ask students what they thought about military service and the growing recruiting crisis. The answers revealed in the report were all negative. Anyone contemplating military service witnessed their peers make it perfectly clear they had no intention of joining no matter how good an offer a recruiter made to them. Several of those questioned asked, that if it was such a good deal, why weren't congressmen's kids jumping at the opportunity?

As we remain tuned to CNN and online with the Internet, we can be reasonably assured that if something important occurs like a barracks full of unsuspecting soldiers is blown up by terrorists, or that the president of the United States is impeached, we can count on our lives being affected.

Thus far, we have spent a considerable amount of effort examining why today's youth does not feel compelled to join the ranks of the military. Now let us focus on what should and should not be done to resolve the problem.

## OPTION 1: LOWER THE STANDARDS

The issue at hand is what is or is not a quality force. "Secretary of the Army Louis Caldera argued yesterday that the Defense Department should allow the Army to recruit more high school dropouts who have passed high school equivalency tests."[54] Caldera has said that Hispanics quit school in order to go to work to support their parents and siblings. He further believes that although a person drops out of high school, they still have a chance to succeed. In March 1999, the Army released a memo entitled *Senior Leader Talking Points* that instructs General Officers how to address the current recruiting crisis to the public. One of the points is rather controversial in that it says, " the Army is not convinced that a high school diploma is the only way to measure quality for service in America's Army. While it may be the best available measure of resolve or stick to it-tiveness, it may not be the best measure of quality at all."[55]

In September 1993, DOD sponsored a conference on the All-Volunteer Force (AVF). The purpose was to look back over the previous 20 years and review/study the lessons learned on how to maintain the AVF's success. Edwin Dorn, the incoming Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness wrote an article entitled *Sustain the All-Volunteer Force*. He said, "High quality recruits are a cost-effective investment and absolutely

essential to unit performance in, and readiness of, the military services. Data show that about 80 percent of high school graduates will complete their initial three-year obligation, while only half of non-graduates will. High school graduates also have fewer disciplinary problems. In addition, higher aptitude recruits learn faster and perform better on the job than their lower aptitude peers (see Figure 2).

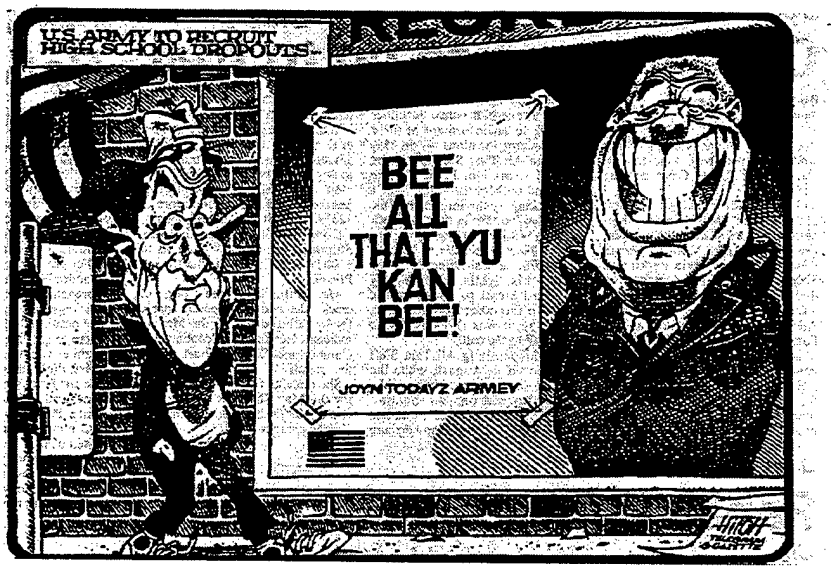


Figure 2

We have determined that resources allocated must be sufficient to ensure that more than 90 percent of military recruits are high school diploma graduates…"[56] This report is totally contradictory to Secretary Caldera's views as well as the talking points memo. Before the current military recruiting

crisis, a high school graduate was considered a quality candidate but today Mr. Caldera says, "this notion that quality is defined by being a high school diploma graduate has put us in a box that is really hurting our ability to recruit."[57] "Rep Duncan Hunter thinks the military should consider recruiting disabled people rather than relying on high school dropouts to perform complex tasks, such as computer programming and other technical chores."[58] Nevertheless, educators are afraid that the Army's new recruiting policy will give young people an incentive not to complete their high school education. In a report released by The Inspector General of the Army, "Recruits show up at the initial entry training (IET) with more personal baggage than they used to, and are not graduating from IET with the skills junior leaders in the field expect of them."[59]

The Navy also stated that it is not lowering the standards for sailors to remain on active duty or enlist. However, this story from a Norfolk newspaper contradicts that claim. "A 15,000 man shortage in sea going billets has the Navy scrambling to enact policies aimed at keeping on board thousands of personnel forced back into civilian life by current rules. Options ranging from relaxing recruiting standards-opposed by Navy Secretary Richard Danzig-to making adjustments for overweight sailors so they can get back in shape, are under consideration."[60]

As the standards for enlistment and retention are relaxed, senior military leaders continue to insist that the standards are not being lowered. "Rear Admiral George E. Voelker, commander of Submarine Group Nine at Bangor, said the Navy's standards haven't been lowered because the service is accepting a larger number of recruits who didn't complete high school… Voelker said the Navy continues recruiting quality personnel…"[61]

"The U.S. military is wasting $300 million a year on training, partly because of its "sign-em-up-now, sort-em-out-later recruiting approach, according to a study by government auditors. Between 1993 and 1997, the study found that about one out of three enlistees failed to complete a commitment to serve a set number of years, most commonly four. Given the fact that it cost more than $20,000 to recruit each of them, the nation effectively wasted more than $1.3 billion during the period, the study concluded."[62] Complaints from the field are that they are not getting quality and in fact, many enlistees fail to complete their tour of duty. According to Petty Officer 1st Class Daniel W. Spenser, the biggest problem is "the reduced quality of today's recruits."[63]

However, the Marines continue to meet and exceed their enlistment goals. "In 1998, the retention of both first-and second term enlistees and of career personnel was on the increase in the Marines … Is it possible that factors other

than money help to explain the hemorrhage of military personnel? One study suggested that those other factors were loss of job satisfaction, micro-management from senior officers and a general lack of confidence in leadership."[64] Before the military decides to lower entrance requirements they should first revisit the commitment made by previous defense officials.

> Secretary Perry recognizes that the AVF will be successful only if we continue to dedicate the necessary resources to recruiting, training, and sustaining our military. Because the military relies on the national labor market for personnel, we must pay particular attention to the pay, the training opportunities, and the benefits we offer service members… To maintain a high state of personnel readiness and ensure a high quality of life for military personnel, DOD intends to implement, monitor, and defend policies and programs that will continue to attract talented, motivated young Americans into the AVF; to train them rigorously, realistically, and often; and to treat them fairly by providing for their health and welfare, and for that of their dependents.[65]

Based on this study one must conclude that DOD ignored Secretary Perry's declaration and in an effort to fix the problem, they now advocate lowering the standards for military service which opens the gate for the flood of undesirables who earmarked the military of the 1970s.

## OPTION 2: REVIVE THE DRAFT

On June 30, 1973, President Nixon along with the US Congress allowed the draft authority to expire. Conscription was used to fill the ranks of the US military during WWI, WWII, Korea and Vietnam. Vietnam is a recent example of how many Americans were

able to become draft exempt due to waivers like educational deferments, conscious objector status and numerous other reasons. Those who could not find a way to avoid serving often fled to Canada. Known as "draft dodgers", they were granted amnesty following the inauguration of President Jimmy Carter. Essentially, they would now have an opportunity to become the heavyweight boxing champion of the world or perhaps even the President of the United States. One thing for sure, they would never have to worry that their names would be engraved along side the 58,000 names on the Vietnam Memorial Wall. This elite status of not having to serve one's nation has been passed from one generation to the next. The entire issue set an historical precedent that the nation will find very difficult if not impossible to overcome.

Many believe that previous draftees helped to make our country strong. In his address to the cadets attending ROTC Advanced Camp at Ft. Lewis Washington, MG Josiah Bunting said,

> Overwhelmingly civilian American professionals who are educated men and women have never, if they are under 45 years of age served in uniform. Since 1973 they have been obliged to serve. And if they are 55, most were draft exempt if they were attending college. I am thinking of the cultivated and learned professionals: the law, medicine, the professorate, journalism, architecture, investment banking, career government service and politics. Since our country has been draft exempt since 1972, hardly anyone in such professions has any knowledge-lived, experienced knowledge-of military life in war or peace. Those whose material stake in our culture is largest and

> most fortunate are least likely, also ever to have to take their places in the ranks, to stand in harm's way for their country's sake. For many of us our grandparents and parents served in WWII Korea and Vietnam. They were not career soldiers. They were draftees. They grumbled at the memory of 0500 reveilles at Ft. Benning and at the irrationality of the orders of their drill sergeants. Yet, they were and are very proud of their service. It was in the military that many of them learned, truly learned, how to judge a man or a woman utterly on the context of their characters when they found themselves in those wonderful WWII platoons that had flung men of all races and creeds and ethnicities: all now judged to be without reference to their wallets or their accents. A great transcending, melting pot experience, we call it. We no longer have it, most of us-nor indeed is it the basic purpose of our army to provide such experience for us. But, we no longer have it, and we are somehow lesser for it.[66]

Because of the current recruiting shortage, many in Congress agree that some form of conscription be enacted in order to make up for the shortfall of personnel. "I would be for a selective draft, but we would still have to make some exceptions,"[67] Rep. John P. Murtha said. Also many believe that too many Americans feel absolutely no obligation to pay back in military service for their good fortunes. "A disproportionate number of the best and brightest might be selected from the oversize draftee pool for military service. But what's wrong with that? They are the ones who probably will get the most out of their country during their lifetimes. Their payback obligation is thus greater than that of the have-nots who bore the brunt of combat burden in Vietnam."[68]

There is also growing support for some form of mandatory service. The following editorial published in *Army Times* supports that view. "A new form of compulsory service, in which draft-age Americans would be required to spend two years in any of several public service areas, including the military, Peace Corps, or other federally funded organizations, could protect the exclusivity of an all-volunteer military force while broadening what has become a shrinking pool of candidates."[69]

Unlike some civilian leaders, the military is opposed to any form of conscription and says so. "Times may be tough but they're not so tough that the services want conscription, said retired Army LTG. Al Lenhardt, the Army's former chief recruiter."[70] Lenhardt goes on to say, "that he remembers the bad old days when the Army took in drug users, slackers and troops who wanted to be all they could be anywhere but in the Army."[71] Because Lenhardt agrees that the Army willingly accepted those undesirables, it is therefore impossible to substantiate his claim that draftees are substandard. As previously mentioned, Secretary of the Army Louis Caldera wants to recruit more high school dropouts. Rather than demand and obtain quality through compulsory military service, senior Army leaders are willing to stay the course although the results are proving disastrous.

Then there is the issue of women. Will we require our daughters who are inducted in the military to fight our wars? There is much study yet to be done before reviving the draft becomes a viable option. The country has gone through many changes since 1973 including the full development of an all-volunteer force. The country decided in 1973 that military service would be on a volunteer basis and if you did not prefer to serve then that is acceptable. Unless we are faced with a WWIII scenario that threatens our very existence on earth, then bringing back the draft would only serve to divide our nation. Although it offers a solution to the manning crisis, reviving the draft is presently not a viable option. The AVF is strongly embedded in today's generation and we must commit whatever resources are needed to ensure that it survives.

## SO HOW DO WE FIX IT?

Throughout the course of this study, it has been fairly simple for one to draw conclusions from the controversial issues that have been raised and examined. Now it becomes imperative that we focus our energy on how to resolve these issues. It is easy to criticize, but more productive to offer the right prescription.

If soldiers are our most precious assets, then let's start treating them like it. Meager pay raises as well as chipping away at medical and retirement benefits are not the way to thank

the veteran who allowed us to sleep soundly last night. The Senate Armed Services Committee is attempting to fix the problem with its Soldiers Bill of Rights Legislation. However, don't stop there. Military personnel should not be required to pay federal income taxes. How does someone working on an oil platform in a foreign country qualify to be tax exempt and a service person that goes in harms way does not? Although the legislation passed the first wicket, there remain many obstacles yet to be cleared. Many in Congress are willing to sacrifice pay raises/benefit programs and redirect the resources into their district in order to support the military industrial constituency.

We all agree that when the oath is administered, the odds of being home at Christmas are very slim. But it would surely make sense if we hired only those who are deployable rather than those who are more likely to become non-deployable. The military should require that women not become pregnant while they are serving in a deployable duty position. On a positive note, the military is currently working to eliminate back to back deployments for service men and women.

One thing for sure is that America needs to get reacquainted with its military. Telling the story of the brave deeds performed by service men and women is the way to reconnect the military with society. The 'Military Channel', similar to other

popular programming and entertainment, would be aired weekly during prime time in order to tell the real story of our military personnel. Certainly, this is worth experimenting with.

As for recruiting, the military must decide where to prioritize this issue. If it is number-one then treat it as such.

The Army will not assign any of its War College graduates, particularly former battalion commanders, to the US Army Recruiting Command. This lack of commitment demonstrates where recruiting stands as far as the Army is concerned. The Marines put a great amount of emphasis on their recruiting commanders and they continue to get positive results. The Army should take the 'Hollywood' out of its advertising campaign and just tell generation x and y that their mission is to fight and win the nation's wars because thus far the college fund has been rejected. The services need to appeal to those who best connect with youth i.e.: teachers, coaches and parents. Target them and then let the chips fall where they may. As concluded earlier, kids trust their parents, not a recruiter. We should also reduce initial enlistment to two years. Two years is enough time to delay a college bound young person.

Military enlistment requirements must never under any circumstances be lowered. We must only assume that anyone advocating this as a method to resolve the manning crisis, does

so for political posturing and social experimentation. Our country deserves a quality manned military and if this means that we assume a shortfall in manpower rather than submit to entrance standards being lowered then that is the right thing to do. Those who served in the late 70s remember all too well the days of the GED 'honor grad'. Our current leadership proposes a stroll down memory lane even though previous efforts to make this controversial issue successful failed miserably.

There is much to be done with the issue of leadership. First, we must all vote. There are candidates who really understand what the military is about and it is ever so important to get them elected. Next, senior military leaders must break their silence and say what is right even if it means self-sacrifice. Our soldiers deserve no less. Today, there is a tendency for senior military leaders to develop an incredible amount of moral courage following retirement that assists in their ability to suddenly change direction and bash. Not one senior military official resigned when the President was impeached for lying and obstructing justice and like OJ Simpson was found innocent. Again, not one senior military leader has said that the reason troops are having trouble with submitting to the anthrax vaccine inoculation is that troops no longer trust leadership. Which brings us to the final conclusion.

They, meaning those we want to join and those we want to remain with us, simply no longer trust us. Those who once served proudly, Elvis, Joe Dimaggio, Joe Louis and Glenn Miller, have all passed through this world and sadly enough their spirit has vanished too. Only time will tell if we are to resurrect that volunteer spirit of years gone by. Perhaps it will take a war to remedy the problem. But for now and the foreseeable future don't be surprised when you hear their cry **"We Won't Fight and You Can't Make Us."**

Word Count: 12,167

## ENDNOTES

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[5]"Young People Being All They Can Be", New York Times, 3 November, 1998

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