USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

RECRUITING AND RETENTION, A FORCE PLANNING DILEMMA

by

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The views expressed in this academic research paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or any of its agencies.

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ABSTRACT

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In the future, the U. S. Armed Forces may suffer negative force planning consequences because of an inability to recruit and retain the quality personnel necessary to perform its mission, and transform itself for the 21st century. As the economy rebounds from the post September 11th slow down, and the Department of Defense intensifies its transformation, it is increasingly important to examine the factors and variables necessary to sustain the quality and commitment of the men and women who will make up the force of the future. Different types of battlefields, changing roles and missions, multiple flash points around the globe - all of these factors and more dictate the need for maintaining a high level of manpower quality.

The focus of this paper is on the trends and factors influencing recruiting and retention, and how they may impact the quality and readiness of the future force. Among the trends and factors influencing recruiting are demographics, economics, education, patriotism, and propensity to serve in the military. Retention is impacted by economics, but also by organizational leadership, job satisfaction, compensation benefits, and quality of life. What are the critical factors? What is the magnitude and direction of the underlying trends? Finally, how will the military's ability to recruit and retain quality personnel influence future force structure, and other areas that will determine whether the men and women in the military can meet the future needs of the military service's transformation efforts, and the needs of our national security. This paper will begin by primarily discussing the need for quality personnel, then recruiting trends, followed by retention concerns, and finally it will proffer some recommendations for enhancing these areas, as well as new approaches for the future.

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RECRUITING AND RETENTION, A FORCE PLANNING DILEMMA

> We must transform the way the Department of Defense is run, especially in recruiting and retention…
>
> —George W. Bush

In the future, the U.S. Armed Forces may suffer negative force planning consequences because of an inability to recruit and retain the quality personnel necessary to perform its mission, and transform itself for the 21st century. As the economy rebounds from the post September 11th slow down, and the Department of Defense (DOD) intensifies its transformation, it is increasingly important to examine the factors and variables necessary to sustain the quality of the men and women who will make up the force of the future. Different types of battlefields, the war on terrorism, changing roles and missions, multiple flash points around the globe-all of these factors and more dictate the need for maintaining a high level of manpower quality.

The focus of this research is on the DOD's need to recruit and retain quality personnel that are innovative and adaptive, and who possess the capability to use increased technology, in order to sustain the ongoing transformation of the Services. The paper will examine the trends and factors influencing recruiting and retention, and how they may impact the quality and readiness of the future force. Among the trends and factors influencing recruiting are demographics, economics, education, patriotism, and propensity to serve in the military. Retention is impacted by economics, but also by organizational leadership, job satisfaction, compensation benefits, and quality of life.

What are the critical factors? What is the magnitude and direction of the underlying trends? Finally, how will the military's ability to recruit and retain quality personnel influence future force structure, and other areas that will determine whether the men and women in the military can meet the future demands of the military service's transformation efforts and the requirements of the national security. This inquiry will begin by discussing the need for quality personnel, then recruiting trends, followed by retention concerns, and finally it will proffer some recommendations for enhancing these areas, as well as new approaches for the future.

DOD NEED FOR QUALITY PERSONNEL

The next twenty years will be particularly challenging times for military force planners and decision-makers. Manpower is becoming scarcer and scarcer, and does not match the

demands of the recruiting challenge. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld clearly articulated this need in the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review Report (QDR):

> "Skilled, talented, and motivated people are the foundation of a leaner, more flexible support structure. Improving the skills of the existing workforce and recruiting, retaining, training, and educating new people must be a top priority. Many of the skills the Department needs are the same ones most in demand in the private sector. The Department must forge a new compact with its warfighters and those who support them-one that honors their service, understands their needs, and encourages them to make national defense a lifelong career."[1]

INCREASED TECHNOLOGY

A steady flow of intelligent, well-educated young men and women is critical to the American military, and there is an ever-increasing demand for skilled manpower, driven by the need to use advanced technology. "To a great extent, we are not experiencing a worker shortage, but rather a skill shortage."[2] This need for quality personnel will only continue to grow. "Barring an economic downturn, this trend will continue since neither industry nor the military can afford to lower its standards for admission, given the increasingly technological nature of the work."[3] General Shelton, the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in Joint Vision 2020, further emphasized the military's requirement for qualified, technologically adept individuals:

> "The missions of 2020 will demand Service members who can create and then take advantage of intellectual and technological innovations. Our vision of full spectrum dominance and the transformation of operational capabilities have significant implications for the training and education of our people. The tactics of information operations, as well as the complexity of the modern tools of war, all require people who are both talented and trained to exacting standards."[4]

The military must attract talented, innovative, and adaptive young men and women, who are not only technologically savvy, but also are bright, task focused, self-starters who can handle the growing complexity of military systems and operations.

INNOVATIVE AND ADAPTIVE PERSONNEL

The above factors suggest the future service member will be working in a more technologically advanced, information-intense, and rapidly changing environment, than the service member today. In order to operate effectively in this environment, the future service member will depend upon well-learned procedures for handling predictable situations as well as

the ability to solve problems and make critical decisions in situations where things don't go according to plan.[5] Increasingly, the military will need men and women who shoulder responsibility, who understand their place in the organization, who can handle complex tasks, and who adapt swiftly to changed circumstances. Secretary Rumsfeld, once again in the 2001 QDR, pointed out:

> "The Department of Defense must recruit, train, and retain people with the broad skills and good judgement needed to address the dynamic challenges of the 21st century. Having the right kinds of imaginative, highly motivated military and civilian personnel, at all levels, is the essential prerequisite for achieving success. Advance technology and new operational concepts cannot be fully exploited unless the department has highly qualified and motivated enlisted personnel and officers who not only can operate these highly technical systems, but also can lead effectively in the highly complex military environment of the future."[6]

In general, the 21st century service member must have the ability to observe, focus, and act quickly during ambiguous situations. Additionally, there will be more available information provided to the member that will necessitate seamless processing and quick judgement.[7] As massive force is replaced with technological advances, there will be an increasing need for maintaining a strong and innovative, quality force. Once again, General Shelton discusses people in Joint Vision 2020:

> "The core of the joint force of 2020 will continue to be an All Volunteer Force composed of individuals of exceptional dedication and ability. Their quality will matter as never before as our service members confront a diversity of missions and technological demands that call for adaptability, innovation, precise judgement, forward thinking, and multi-cultural understanding. Our people will require a multitude of skills, and must have the mental agility to transition from preparing for war, to enforcing peace, to actual combat, when necessary."[8]

Quality people, who are innovative and adaptive, are critical to the military's future transformation efforts.

SUSTAINING THE TRANSFORMATION

Transformation is more than improving technology and warfighting capabilities-it's about recruiting, training and retaining quality personnel, and developing agile, versatile, and adaptive leaders. To ensure continued investment in people and military transformation, the DOD must remain focused on manpower and recruiting issues relevant to success in the dynamic and challenging recruiting marketplace.[9] The issues and difficulties with recruiting and retention are exacerbated for the 21st century, given that transformation requires the Services to make on-going changes to their force structure. The Army's Objective Force, the Expeditionary

Aerospace Forces (EAF) of the Air Force, the Marine Corps' Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare (EMW), and the Navy's Naval Expeditionary Warfare all reflect the necessity for transformation. With transformation, and the requisite organizational changes, recruiting and retention will not be made easier. The effects of these new initiatives must be well understood and planned for.

Sustaining the military transformation will require a focused effort in order to attain the level of quality necessary for the force of the future. What is the necessary recruit product? Does it match future requirements? Is the soldier recruited today capable of operating the future combat system, or the sailor, capable of manning the multi-mode workstations of newly designed ships, or the airman, capable of piloting unmanned aerial combat vehicles? These future service members should be recruited from young men and women who are accustomed to learning with computer assisted tools, and who have the physical strength and stamina compatible with the force of the future. They will have to cope not only with stressful environments and complicated choices, but also with a complex network of sophisticated command, control, intelligence, weapons delivery and surveillance systems.[10] As a result of these types of changes, there is an increasing awareness that service members in the next 20 years must possess better problem solving and decision-making abilities that will enable them to go beyond the use of rote skills, and think "outside the box."

Further amplifying the manpower requirements for transformation, Secretary Rumsfeld stated:

> "Throughout the transformation period, we will still require forces to meet the needs of the Nation; for this we will continue to rely on the current force, as we are today as we begin the campaign against terrorism. We must acknowledge and plan for the impact that aggressive transformation and experimentation could have on the near-and-mid term ability of the force to execute actual peacetime and warfighting missions. People remain our critical asset."[11]

The military is all about the men and women who serve the country. The DOD Risk Construct defines Force Management Risk as the ability to recruit, train, and equip sufficient numbers of quality personnel to sustain a force capable of meeting the policy goals.[12] General Meyers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in the Pre-Decisional Draft of the National Military Strategy commented:

> "Quality people, in adequate numbers, who are properly trained and well led, are fundamental to the employment of the capabilities of the Joint Force. The strength of the Joint Force has always rested on such people - disciplined, skilled, dedicated, professional, and well educated - more than advanced technology. They must also be innovative and imaginative to meet the needs of "in-stride" transformation."[13]

OUTLOOK

How applicable are today's recruiting quality standards? Are they valid for today's youth and for the force needed for today and tomorrow? The military of the future will face a number of challenges in recruiting and retaining the right people needed to meet these standards. Even though the current trend for recruiting and retention is good, there have been mixed signals regarding the quality of recruits. "The number of enlistees scoring in the top half of the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) has dropped since the early 1990s."[14] Table 1 reflects enlisted accessions by AFQT category.[15]

YEAR	I-IIIA	IIIB	IV	UNK
1990	68.0	28.3	3.1	0.7
1991	72.1	26.5	0.5	0.9
1992	74.9	24.5	0.2	0.4
1993	71.1	27.7	0.3	0.4
1994	70.6	28.3	0.7	0.4
1995	70.1	28.8	0.7	0.5
1996	68.5	30	0.7	0.7
1997	68.3	30.3	1	0.5
1998	67.5	31.1	1	0.4

TABLE 1. ACTIVE ENLISTED ACCESSIONS BY AFQT CATEGORY (PERCENTAGE)

This decline in recruit quality can have important implications for the performance of military personnel in the future. Studies conducted by the Rand Institute show that personnel quality, and AFQT scores in particular, is positively related to individual and unit performance. An experiment using junior Patriot Air Defense operators that involved tactical scenarios in a computer-driven simulator, and written tests, found that those with higher AFQT scores were able to kill more hostile aircraft in accordance with tactics in the simulations than those with lower scores.[16] As another example, the Rand Study found that Navy personnel quality, of which AFQT score is a key component, strongly affected ship readiness scores.[17] The research findings above imply that a decline in personnel quality will translate into a decline in performance among military personnel. Figure 1 shows the correlation between AFQT scores and job performance.[18]

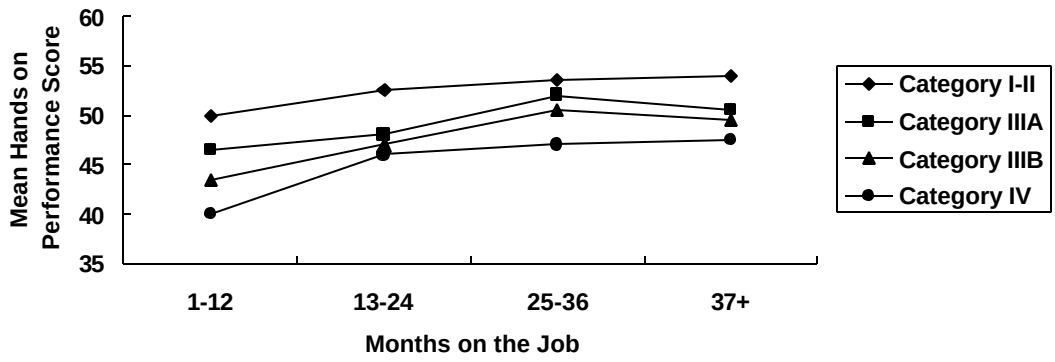

FIGURE 1. JOB PERFORMANCE AND AFQT SCORES

A 1999 Symposium on Military Recruiting and Retention for the 21st Century, attended by senior service representatives, published many concerns for future recruiting and retention. The consensus of the Symposium participants was that there is a problem. The former Secretary of the Army and the Director of Manpower and Personnel for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in particular, expressed their perceptions of the problem. Secretary Caldera stressed that manning the forces is the most important function of the Services. "Having the right numbers and skill mix is critical to performance and impacts readiness." He went on to comment: "The serious recruiting and retention challenges the Services' face impact manning."[19] Attendees used the catch phrase "Houston we have a problem…," emphasizing that the Services have difficulty sustaining the force. In addition, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) were more cognizant of early signs of quality and experience erosion, emphasizing the problems of recruiting and retaining the most skilled people.[20]

In the past there was a direct correlation between recruiting expenditures and recruit quality, but until just recently, quality began to decline despite increased funding. The Air Force had trouble attracting potential airmen and officer candidates, particularly in the engineering, scientific, and medical fields.[21] This negative trend puts more pressure on the recruiting force to recruit and retain adequate numbers of quality personnel necessary to meet operational requirements. Also, lower retention rates result in increased out-year recruiting and training costs. This is not a simple numerical shortfall; potential recruits must meet specific educational, moral, and AFQT requirements. There is one school of thought that advocates lowering quality standards in order to meet the numerical requirements. Lowering standards, however, is an

unsustainable strategy. Enlistees of lesser skills, abilities and potential, who see the military as a last resort, cannot meet the increasing demands required of high-quality military personnel.[22] Beth Asch sums up why lowering standards is not a feasible alternative:

> "The likely reduction in military performance associated with declines in recruit quality is likely to be felt for some years to come. Past research shows that the quality of personnel the military recruits is the average quality that it retains over the career of a given cohort. In other words, the military seems to retain the same quality of personnel it recruits. Therefore, declines in recruit quality are not overcome within a given cohort. If that recruit quality is lower, then so is the quality, and therefore the expected performance, of an entire generation of enlisted personnel. Thus, declines in recruit quality are of particular concern."[23]

While the overall recruiting picture is cause for cautious optimism, there are many that think a return to the draft would solve recruiting and retention problems, and the force-planning dilemma.

NEED FOR A DRAFT?

Since the Services are finding it more and more difficult to attract, recruit, and retain quality personnel, perhaps a return to conscription would provide the solution. Because of the draw down of the 1990s, and even before the war on terror opened, the armed forces were significantly undermanned. One way to resolve their serious shortages is to bring back the draft.[24] Current recruiting strategies of financial incentives appeal to those who have the greatest economic disadvantages. That is, those incentives have greatest appeal to those with the fewest alternatives in the college or labor market relative to their peers.[25] A draft could dramatically upgrade the quality of recruits, because it would give the military access to a true cross-section of youth. Most telling, over a third of new military members currently fail to complete their enlistment, whereas only one in ten draftees didn't complete their two-year obligations when the U.S. last had a draft.[26] Recruiters continue to recruit from some of the most disadvantaged sections of society. "Continuing with business as usual will lead to an "economic conscription", and we will become a society in which the most prosperous let the poorest citizens take responsibility for defending the nation."[27]

Based on the armed services' need for larger numbers of high-quality enlistees, perhaps the draft is a viable solution. The national leadership, to include the military service chiefs, understands the importance of recruiting and retention on executing the nation's military strategy.

> "In testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee, the Army Chief of Staff, General Shinseki acknowledged the need for a larger Army to tackle the

> missions imposed by the current strategy. He further cited recruiting's constraint on that growth: When Senator Cleland asked: "Are we running out of Army and are we in need of more personnel? ", General Shinseki replied: "I've got to go and fix my recruiting challenge. We came up short last year…it's hard for me to make an argument for more end strength even though the analysis makes that case, if I can't demonstrate we can recruit."[28]

This difficulty to recruit may justify the reestablishment of the draft, but opponents argue that the modern military requires a high level of technical skills that cannot be achieved by short-term personnel. When weighed politically, the draft is probably not a viable option. "Conscription is an industrial-age concept well suited to manning mass armies, but of little use in manning a force to conduct warfare in the information age."[29] It would contradict the military's vision and desired goal of having talented young men and women who are bright, innovative, and adaptive, and who can handle the growing complexity of military systems and operations. Nevertheless, recruiting achievements will not come easily, and will continue to be a struggle.

RECRUITING TRENDS

Efforts to recruit quality individuals are challenged by a variety of factors, including demographic patterns, a recovering economy, a slowing of patriotic fervor, and a higher propensity of high school graduates opting to attend college. In the non-college market, youths have found ample opportunities for civilian training and job placement. Figure 2 shows the enlistment process.[30]

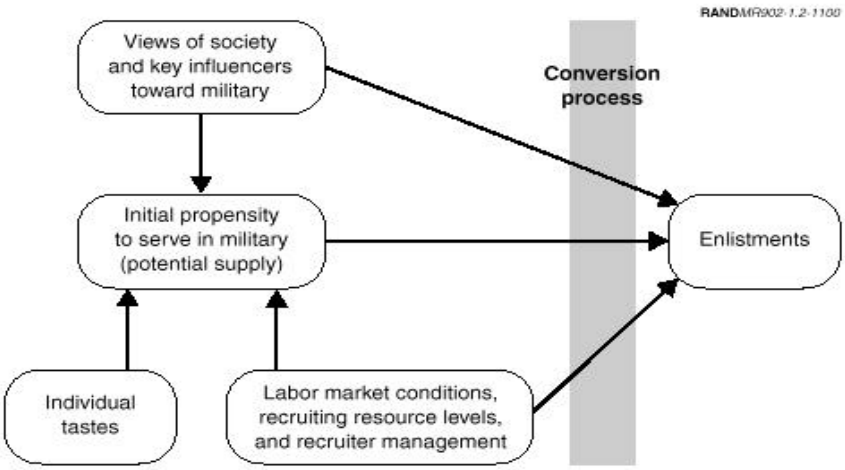

FIGURE 2. CONCEPTUAL VIEW OF THE ENLISTMENT PROCESS

Each of these considerations, along with the incentives to enlist has a dramatic effect on future force planning considerations. The recruiting challenge may be daunting, but getting a high caliber of young people to join the military will remain an imperative throughout the 21st century. Recruitment to the armed forces is constrained by the broader social environment in which young people grow up.[31] A key part of that environment is the changing demography of the youth population.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The excessively large military draw down of the early 1990s required an increase in accessions to maintain constant force size as the pool of potential re-enlistees was reduced. Coupled with other societal factors, this could translate into a possible manpower shortage.[32] Projected needs for the next 20 years are expected to remain at the current level of about 1.2 million enlisted personnel, and about 200,000 new recruits are needed each year to meet this requirement. Figure 3 shows the total DOD accession objective.[33]

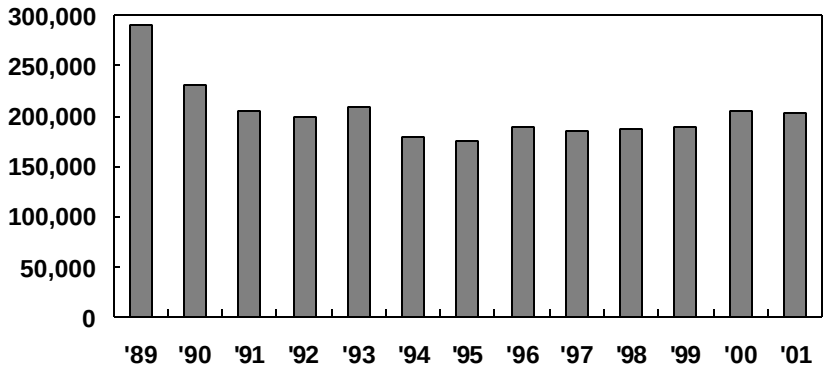

FIGURE 3. TOTAL DOD ACCESSION OBJECTIVE

The good news for recruiters is that a growing number of young people now are reaching military age compared to just a few years ago. About four million young people in America reached age 18 in 2000. This number, based on U.S. Census data, is expected to increase to 4.5 million by 2008 and then steadily decline until 2015.[34] (See figure 4).[35]

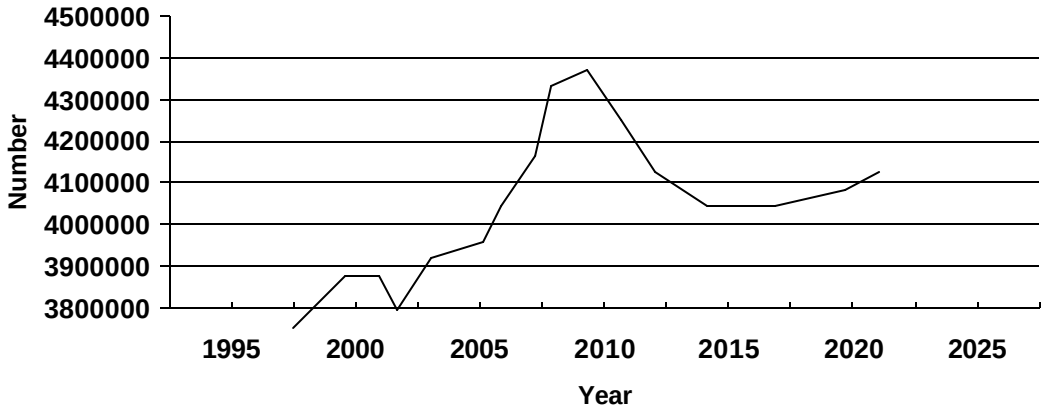

FIGURE 4. PROJECTED 18 YEAR-OLD POPULATION

The pool of high school graduates has also been increasing for most of the past decade as the children of the baby boomer generation come of age. Additionally, reports reveal that throughout the 1990s, there were actually more potential recruits available in the pool of high-quality youths than before the drawdown, relative to accession requirements.[36] With these types of statistics the recruiting challenge should be easy to remedy. The reality of recruiting, however, is quite the opposite, indicating that there may be other societal factors working against the recruitment effort.

The ethnic and racial diversity of the population as a whole is increasing, with large growth among young Asian, Black, and Hispanic men. (See figure 5).[37]

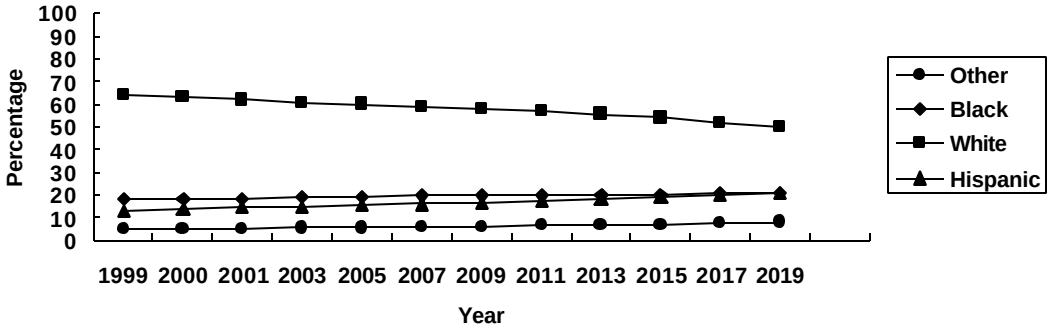

FIGURE 5. PROJECTED RACE/ETHNIC MAKEUP 18 YEAR-OLD POPULATION

This growing diversity of the population will be very evident in future recruiting. As these population groups increase, a larger portion of the pool from which the military recruits will also be from these demographic groups. Because the perception of civilian opportunities versus costs differs among individuals, different demographic groups may have different propensities to enter the military; consequently, demographic variables, such as race and ethnicity, may also enter the manpower relationship.[38] Some observers of the civilian labor market have found this trend disturbing. Their concern stems from the persistent margin of educational attainment of blacks and Hispanics relative to whites. (See figure 6).[39]

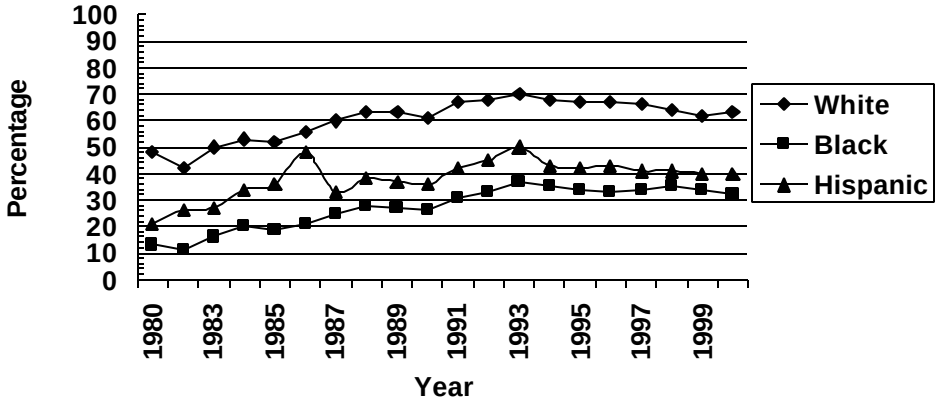

FIGURE 6. HIGH QUALITY APPLICANTS BY RACE/ETHNICITY

The downward trend in propensity to enlist is greater for high-quality minority youth, particularly African-Americans, whose propensity has fallen more steeply than that of other race and ethnic groups.[40] On the other hand, Hispanics are one of America's more martially inclined ethnic groups whose youth consistently indicate above-average interest in enlisting.[41]Based on recent patterns, the percentage of Hispanic youths will increase dramatically. Figure 7 indicates propensity trends by race/ethnic group.[42] In 2000, approximately 14 percent of 18 years olds were of Hispanic origin, a population sector that will gradually increase over the next five years.[43] Unfortunately, Hispanics are the most poorly educated demographic group, and paired with the fact that they have the lowest high school graduation rates, makes meeting recruiting quality standards from this group extremely difficult. Figure 8 shows high school graduation rates for different ethnic groups.[44]

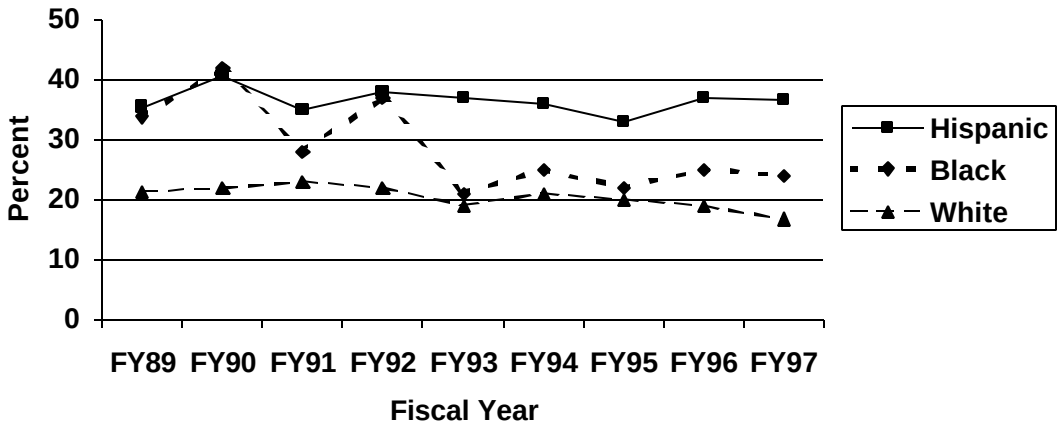

FIGURE 7. PROPENSITY BY RACE/ETHNIC GROUP

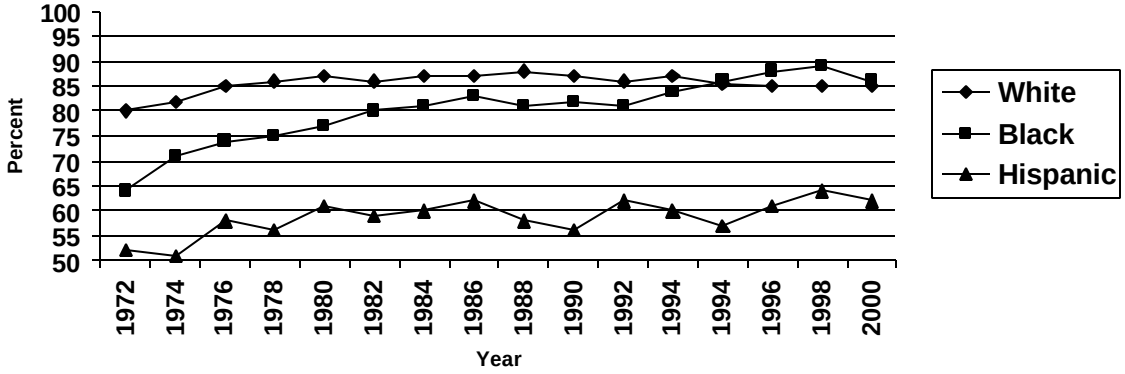

FIGURE 8. HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES BY RACE/ETHNICITY

This mismatch between the military wanting high-quality youth, and the low educational standards of a large Hispanic youth market, creates a supply and demand dilemma. Difficulty in recruiting high quality youths from the black and Hispanic demographic groups raises additional concerns about the military's ability to continue to achieve the level of social representation that it has today.[45] Although the military needs more qualified personnel, the lower scores on educational achievement tests by both blacks and Hispanics, and lower high school completion

rates for Hispanics, may indicate that they are not prepared for the advanced education and training needed in an increasingly technological military.

Immigration has always been an important part of U.S. population growth. Women of immigrant groups, traditionally have high fertility rates, and will raise a growing percentage of enlistment eligible youths.[46] Past immigration patterns show that such growth was primarily from Europe, and that there was a strong desire to quickly adapt to, and assimilate U.S. culture. More current immigration trends indicate that ethnic groups are more likely to isolate themselves within their own communities and have less desire for mainstreaming. This may result in a much lower participation rate among certain of the new immigrant groups, such as Asians and Arabs, and could result in a further loss of potential applicants.

Another demographic challenge for the military will be dealing with the effects of an ever-changing composition of American families. The population of the future will come from reconfigured families. The major conclusions are (1) more than one out of every four children is born to an unmarried woman (2) more than two of every three children under age six have a mother employed outside the home, and (3) fewer than three of every ten adolescents will have lived in a continuously intact family through all 18 years of their youth.[47] Fatherless children may be more prone to economic, academic, behavioral, emotional and health problems than children from two parent households. As this social pattern continues to grow, the military will increasingly draw on recruits from single-parent homes. This trend may very easily have negative implications for the trainability, motivation, and performance of future military personnel.

Other social-economic factors, as well as physical limitations and behavioral patterns of potential applicants may have negative effects on successful recruiting. The socioeconomic characteristics of parents, such as their levels of educational attainment, have a large impact on the aspirations and decisions of youths, especially concerning their desire for higher education.[48]

With regard to physical problems, current trends suggest certain health conditions, such as obesity and asthma, are on the rise, both of which make youths ineligible for service. Figure 9 reflects increasing youth obesity rates.[49] Additionally, increased drug use and criminal activity result in more and more waivers necessary for enlistment. The overriding point here is that social demographics have dramatic implications on recruiting and the size and composition of future military forces.

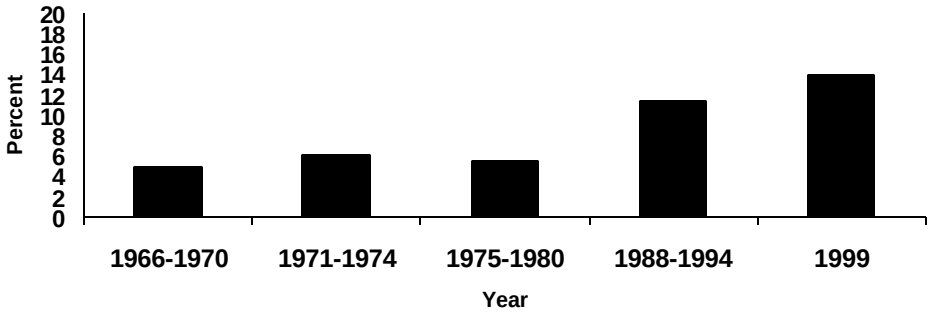

FIGURE 9. TRENDS IN YOUTH OBESITY RATES

Despite the generally successful recent recruiting record, the situation may not be as good as statistics make it seem. An article by Don Snider in the Wall Street Journal argued that recruiting will continue to struggle and be dependent on economic fluctuations in the coming years.[50]

ECONOMICS

The U.S. economy has been thriving until the last year, and there seems little reason to believe that it will continue to slump for an extended period of time. A strong economy makes it more and more difficult for the military to attract quality youth for enlistment. As the economy rebounds, and the service sector continues to expand, the demand for entry-level skilled workers will continue to grow. It's no secret that when unemployment is down, military recruiting is more difficult. When the economy is booming, it puts extra pressure on the military, both to recruit and to retain. It pulls people away from the Services and creates recruiting difficulties because young people have many more opportunities.[51] It causes more and more competition between civilian employers and military recruiters for the entry-level youth market. As with the DOD, many civilian employers are having trouble filling vacancies. The institutions of America - the military, higher education and industry - are engaged in a competitive "death match" for the services of America's youths.[52] If recruiting is to effectively support the national security strategy, this competition must be changed into a system where institutions work together for their common good and that of the country.

With more competition, the military finds itself having to expend more resources to attract both the quantity and quality share of the youth market necessary for manpower solvency. Because of this increase in competition, the cost of recruiting an individual youth today totals

nearly $12,000 compared to $5,800 in 1989. Figure 10 shows rising recruiting costs per recruit.[53]

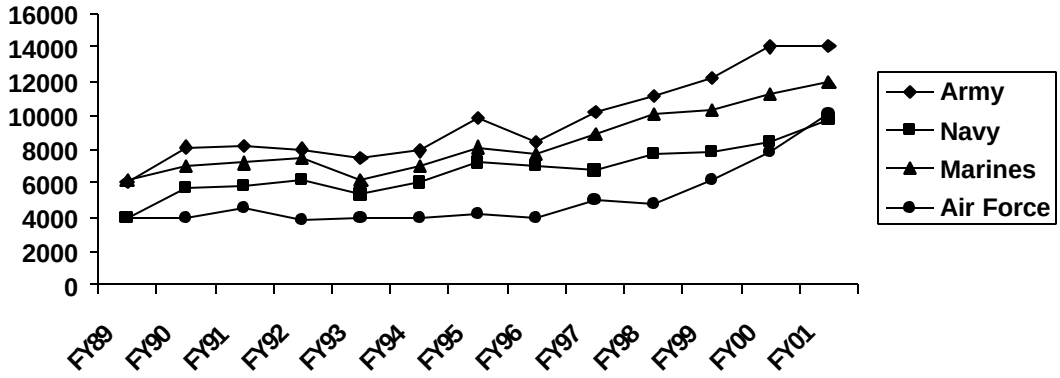

FIGURE 10. RECRUITING COSTS PER RECRUIT

This increase in expended resources includes large increases in advertising dollars, as well as increases in the number of recruiters on the street. Figure 11 shows the services' increased advertising expenditures.

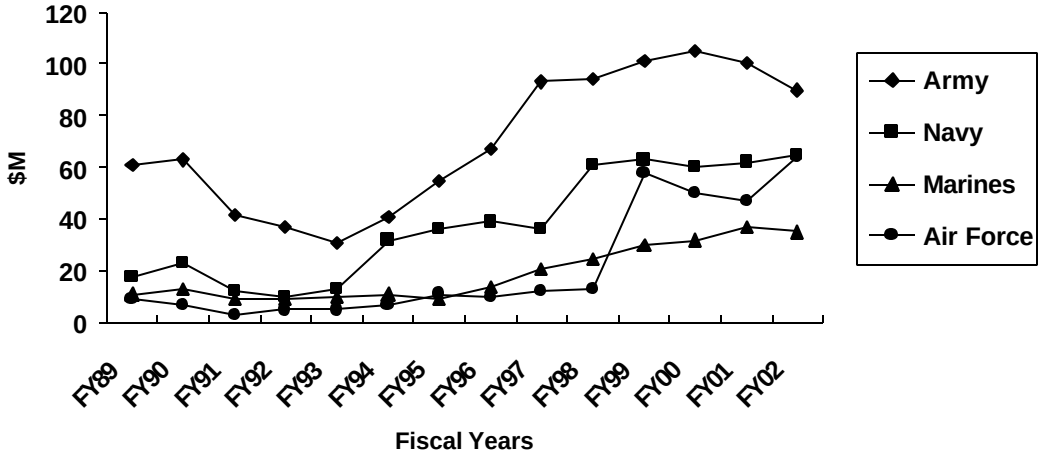

FIGURE 11. TOTAL ANNUAL ADVERTISING EXPENDITURES BY SERVICE

Table 2 shows the increase in the number of assigned recruiters.[54] Both are expensive propositions in an already increasingly tight defense budget.

	FY95	FY96	FY97	FY98	FY99	FY00	FY01
Army	4,895	5,319	5,538	6,098	5,813	6,208	6,194
Navy	3,501	3,770	3,832	3,630	4,514	4,492	4,588
Air Force	880	956	990	831	850	1,108	1,384
Marines	2,563	2,664	2,655	2,754	2,325	2,650	2,650

TABLE 2. ACTIVE-DUTY ENLISTED PRODUCTION RECRUITERS

Looking through the lens of an economic analysis, there are many factors that highlight the recruiting dilemma. Table 3 indicates supply and demand factors influencing recruiting.[55]

Type of Factor	Factor	Characteristic
Supply	Youth population Recruiting resources Civilian opportunities	Size, composition Recruiters, advertising, educational benefits, cash bonuses Unemployment rate, pay, job security, educational opportunities
Demand	Military opportunities Recruiting resource management	Occupations, terms of service Allocation of resources, recruiting quotas (quality, quantity), recruiter incentive programs

TABLE 3. SUPPLY AND DEMAND FACTORS

Changing youth preferences, growing opportunities for potential enlistees, a dwindling veteran population that espouses military service, and the above mentioned demographic trends all contribute to recruiting difficulties.[56] Faced with multiple choices and options, the benefits of military service struggle to compete. If the benefits of joining the military do not outweigh the perceived costs, no one joins.

High school graduates who enlist in the military give up either immediate further schooling or civilian job opportunities. Two variables are commonly used to capture the attractiveness of

civilian opportunities: unemployment and the average level of civilian pay opportunities.[57] The civilian economy underwent an unusually robust and long-lasting growth period in the second half of the 1990s and early 2000-2001. This growth saw unemployment drop and led to massive expansion in civilian employment opportunities, both of which drove up wages for the civilian labor force. Although military pay also grew, civilian pay grew at a faster rate. Since there is less risk of unemployment, and the pay is competitively higher, more and more graduates entered the civilian work force. The strong economic growth has now somewhat slowed, at least temporarily. Economic analysis consistently shows that high-quality enlistments are positively affected by increases in the civilian unemployment rate and by increases in military pay relative to civilian pay. Thus the recent weakening in economic growth may have a salutary effect on military recruiting.[58]

There is no easy answer to the recruiting challenges of the 21st century. The answer is as simple as it is difficult to implement: the military will have to accept that it is just one among many competitors for the youth of the country.[59] Potential recruits must believe there are real benefits to enlisting. Only part of the problem can be addressed with pay. Another, and perhaps more appealing competitor to military recruiting is young people's desire to immediately, after high school graduation, attend college. Goals that shape youth's career decisions are more than just about pay, they are often tied to their aspirations for higher education.

EDUCATION

The college attendance rate among graduating high school seniors has risen substantially over the last decade. Figure 12 shows the propensity to attend college.[60] This higher college attendance rate reduces the size of the traditional high-quality recruiting market. Nearly two-thirds of high school seniors in the U.S. enroll in college immediately after graduation, and enlistment is often viewed as an impediment to further education.[61] Officials concerned with recruiting are likely to have mixed feelings about college-bound high school students. On one hand, the college-bound are less likely to be interested in military service, but on the other hand, those planning on college are high in the skills and abilities necessary for increasingly technical military roles.[62]

Recent trends indicate that the gap between attending college and enlisting in the military is widening. A 2001 Youth Attitude Tracking Study reported an upward trend in how youth value a post-secondary education. Indeed, studies of U.S. youth indicate that value for post-secondary education is the single most compelling differentiating factor for contemporary youth.[63]

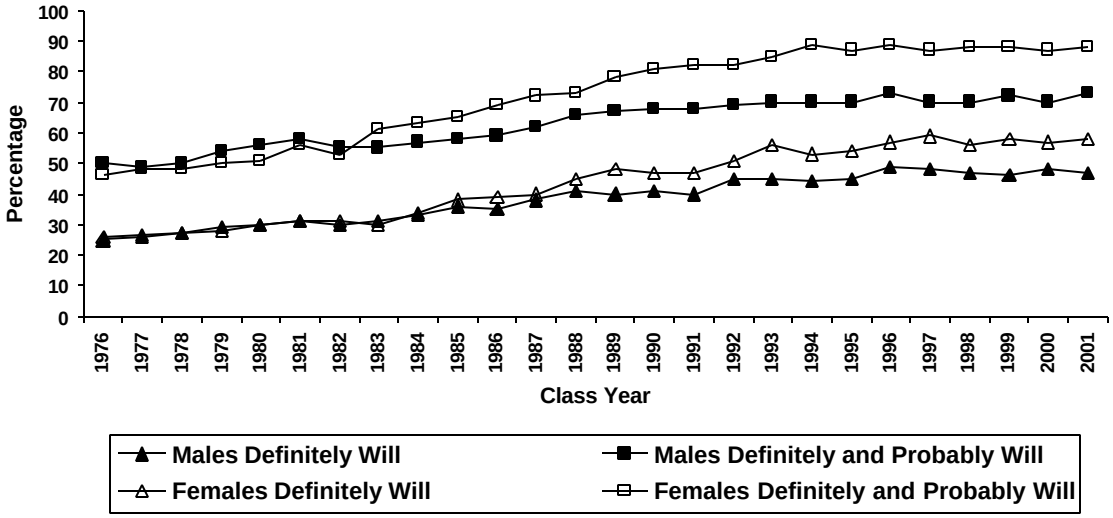

FIGURE 12. TRENDS IN PLANS TO GRADUATE FROM A FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE PROGRAM

Financial assistance for post-secondary education is widely available, and the growth of public and private college funding has significantly diluted the effectiveness of the military's GI Bill and other college fund programs.[64] The policy implications for military recruiting are important, and new strategies will have to be developed to appeal to this segment of the youth market. These future strategies must help recruiters communicate that the military is a bridge to a college education because it provides young people with the discipline, desire, and financial means of achieving their education goals.[65]

With young people's focus on college, the military needs to develop ways for them to serve, while also earning a degree. The National Academies' National Research Council encouraged the military to offer mechanisms that permit a closer link between military service and simultaneous pursuit of higher education.[66] "We have to learn how to recruit a different type of person. Twenty years ago less than half of the high school graduating class went to college. Today the number is approaching 80 percent."[67] The continued focus, by recruiters, on high school graduates may not be enough. It might be much better to include the growing pool of college students and graduates, and even dropouts. Pursuing these groups who are slightly

older and not normally targeted for recruitment is another way to expand the universe of likely enlistees. Convincing these types of people to commit to military service may require offering them new opportunities not currently available. Pursuing higher education is a critical variable in determining propensity to enlist, and is a major factor in recruiting trends. Along with education, patriotism is another strong influence on potential enlistees.

PATRIOTISM

After the tragic events of September 11th, 2001 there was an initial upsurge of patriotic fervor and an increased sense of civic responsibility. This flag waving however did not translate into an increase in the number of young people seeking to enter the armed forces. Despite the symbolism, recruiting still remained a principal concern. Much has been written about the growing civil-military gap, and nowhere is it more evident than in the youth's feelings about military service. Increased difficulty in attracting young people to the military is reflective of this gap between the armed forces and society. In addition to this civil-military gap, there is a lack of motivation on the part of young people to do something for their community or their country. There seems to be fewer and fewer that want to serve.

There is a lack of familiarity between civil society and the military, which leads to disinterest and a sense of ambivalence. The significance of these developments for force planning and national security is that the quality of the association between the military and society affects numerous facets of military resourcing.[68] The attitudes of the American people and Congress impact significantly on budgets, manning, and policies. An insulated military will not find much support in an already neutral to negative public. One reason for this growing gap is that the military is no longer a nationally shared experience. In the recent Congress, among men, only 40 percent of Senators and 30 percent of House Representatives were veterans. This number has been declining for some years, but will drop significantly in the near future.[69] Fewer and fewer Americans will have had military service, and they increasingly see it as something for someone else to do. Consequently, recruiters are working in, at best, a neutral climate.[70]

What motivates potential recruits to seek the armed services as a career choice? American youths' life goals have remained generally the same for 25 years, but fewer and fewer parents and young people believe a military career is the best way to satisfy those goals.[71] Figure 13 reflects parent's rising negative attitude toward enlistment.[72] It has been almost three decades since the U.S. had a draft, and the young people today are the first generation to come of age without the same example of civic duty that motivated their parents. There is a whole

generation of Americans who did not serve in the military, and who do not view service in the military as their civic duty.[73]

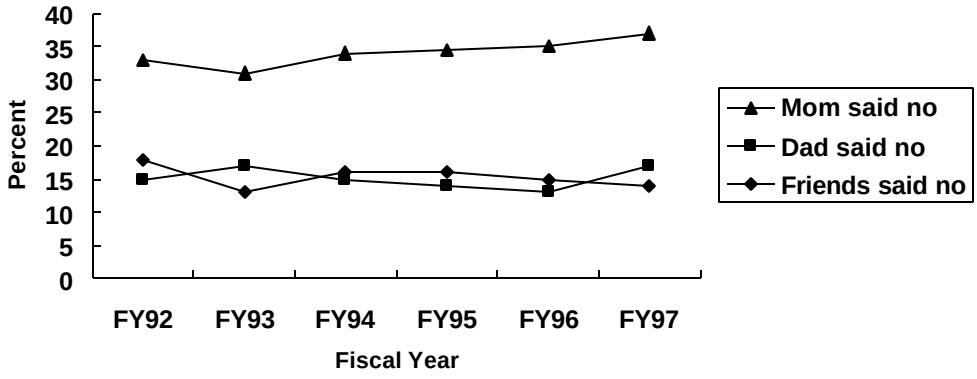

FIGURE 13. KEY INFLUENCERS' ATTITUDE TOWARD ENLISTMENT

Although fewer young people value making a contribution to their country, the segment that does is more likely to join the military. Patriotism is a multiplier, but is it an issue for the youth the military is trying to recruit? There may be other factors, including, the value of military training, experience, travel, and adventure, that motivate the potential recruit. Nevertheless, in order to reconnect the people to their military and posture both for success in the 21st century, a civic virtue of service must be rebuilt across society.[74]

One way to reconnect the military and civilian society is through role models in the public sector. This may be difficult though, because the vast majority of Americans no longer have contact with military members. Fewer than six percent of Americans under the age of 65 have served in the military, and there are too few influencers at home and in school who inspire enlistment for the sake of duty alone.[75] The people in the community - the scout masters, church leaders, and the adults in the YMCA and Boys Clubs who were role models 20 years ago - usually had some military experience, but they just aren't there any more.[76] Societal views and the impact of role models play a significant part in the decision making process of young people. These views and role models affect the counsel youth receive as they reach a final decision about joining the military, and they may also affect the access of recruiters to youth in school, or

at home, to discuss enlistment.[77] One way to counter this loss of positive influence is to energize the veterans.

The military has always known the influence veterans have on young people considering military service. No one should lose sight of one of the verities of recruitment - the best recruiter is a credible veteran with a positive military experience.[78] Having a friend or a family member who has served in the military greatly assists the recruiting effort. Knowing a veteran can create awareness, aid comprehension, and develop a young person's desire to join the service.[79] Even though there is a declining veteran population, they still remain a strong link between the military of the past and the military of the future. Recognizing the veteran's role, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Jones stated: "Veterans play a critical role in sustaining our mutually beneficial connection with the public we serve, recruiting future generations, and promoting the Marine Corps as an institution."[80] These veterans' efforts need to be harnessed to assist the recruiting effort. Without these role models to stress the military option, today's youth may find other career options more attractive. Short-term recruiting success may be achieved, but an effective long-term solution to the military's recruiting dilemma may only be possible if there is a solution to the divide in civil-military relations. Each of the recruiting trends discussed above impact youth propensity to serve in the military.

PROPENSITY TO SERVE IN THE MILITARY

Propensity, as used by the military manpower experts, is the amount of interest America's young men and women have in joining one of the armed forces. Recent success may be just a temporary blip on the radar screen, because trends indicate a downturn in interest, indicating tough times ahead for the military. According to youth surveys from 1980 to 1999, the number saying they definitely will not serve in the military has increased from 40 to 63 percent.[81] The propensity to enlist in the military is affected by other activities and opportunities faced by youths. These activities include higher education, work, and marriage. As these activities have changed over time, so has the propensity to enlist. Figure 14 shows enlistment, enrollment, and employment choices, by percentage, for young males.[82] Potential recruits balance the advantages and disadvantages of each activity in order to choose their most appropriate option. Throughout the history of the All-Volunteer Force, manpower has been assumed to be available in whatever quantity the military needed. With the changes in the economic and educational environments, the term "all-volunteer force" is a misnomer; today's American military is really an "all-recruited force."[83]

Each year the Department of Defense administers the Youth Attitude Tracking Study to a sample of roughly 10,000 American youth. The survey queries individuals about their future plans and about how likely they would be to serve in the military. The usual measure of youth attitudes toward the military is the number of youths that respond with a positive propensity to enlist. Positive propensity is measured as the fraction that says "definitely" or "probably" to the question, "How likely is it that you will serve in the military?"[84]

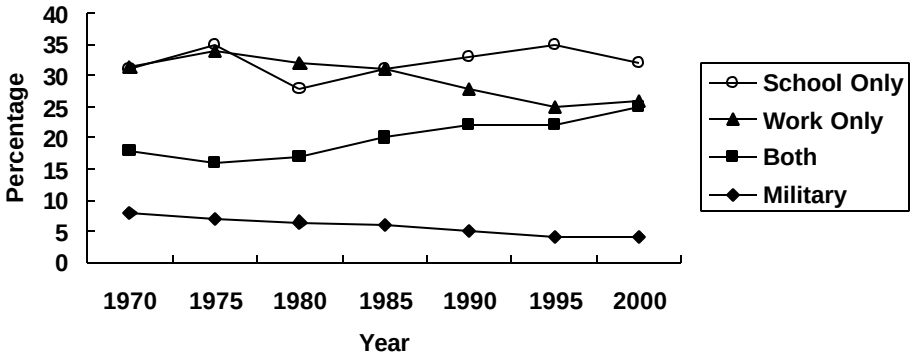

FIGURE 14. ENLISTMENT, ENROLLMENT, AND EMPLOYMENT CHOICES FOR YOUNG MALES

On the basis of past Rand research, there is a strong relationship between youths' stated propensity to join the military in surveys and their actual enlistment decisions.[85] There has been a steady decline in youth propensity to enlist throughout the 1990s and early 2000-2001. As the military has raised the quality of its recruits over the last decade and as more civilian youth are choosing to attend college, the alternatives available to potential recruits have changed. More and more potential applicants are opting to attend college or enter the workforce in skill-intensive occupations.

Another reason for the decline in propensity to enlist is that young men and women want to exceed their parent's lifestyles, and there is a sense of urgency to succeed. Increasingly, military age youths regard the three or four year military commitment as something that would delay their quest for a better paying job, rather than as a means to achieve a better civilian standard of living. Today's youths also want more stability in their lives, not exactly what the military has to offer, especially with the increased operational and personnel tempo of the last few years. They are also concerned about the inherent risks of military service in a world that sees the U.S. possibly involved in war, increasing contingency operations, and the open-ended

war on terrorism. Today's youths have many attractive opportunities, which makes the military's ability to attract and retain the desired number of highly motivated and highly qualified individuals much more challenging.[86] Future recruiting difficulties may require the military to respond to competition from colleges and industry in new and different ways. Existing incentive programs may need to be expanded or new options developed.

INCENTIVES TO ENLIST

In order to attract and recruit quality applicants, the services must offer incentives. Surveys show key reasons for young people enlisting are skills training; money for college; and programs to pay off school debts. The military has attempted to satisfy all these desires in some way or another. It also plans to focus attention on youth that are college-bound. The Army "College First" program for example, proposes to pay enlistees attending college $150.00 per month for up to two years, after they have signed a contract to enlist, but before they actually ship.[87] The Navy is also targeting college-bound recruits under a separate program. The "Navy College Assistance Student Headstart" program allows selected recruits in the nuclear and submarine fields to be placed on active duty while they are in college, receive entry level pay for up to one year, and then attend basic training.[88] The military also offers a myriad of opportunities to combine college and military service.

The Army has its "Concurrent Application Program" which allows recruits to apply for colleges but defer admission while they fulfill their service commitment. Furthermore, credit hours attained while in service are accepted by the participating institutions.[89] Both the Army and the Marine Corps offer college fund programs, and the Navy is offering "Technical Preparation Partnerships", where they coordinate with community colleges to allow recruits to earn their associates' degrees while they are serving their first enlistment terms.[90] While the Air Force does not have a college fund, it offers recruits educational opportunities via the Community College of the Air Force. Both the Army and Navy are also offering loan repayment programs that help enlistees repay their federal student loans. The attractiveness of military service is increasingly dependent upon college fund programs, as well as military pay, and other incentives.

In an effort to more directly compete with private sector pay and benefits, the Army has developed a "Partnership for Youth Success Program."[91] Under the program the Army obtains guarantees of job placement for soldiers, from private companies, after successful completion of their enlistment. The companies benefit from getting skilled workers, and the soldiers have a job waiting for them. The enlistment bonus program is another critical resource that pays applicants

bonuses for enlisting in short or critical fields. Figure 15 displays increasing enlistment bonus expenditures for each of the services.[92] Enlistment incentives, however, by themselves, are not enough. Pentagon officials attribute recent recruiting success to the pay raises of 2000, therefore, focused attention on future pay and benefit issues will be required.

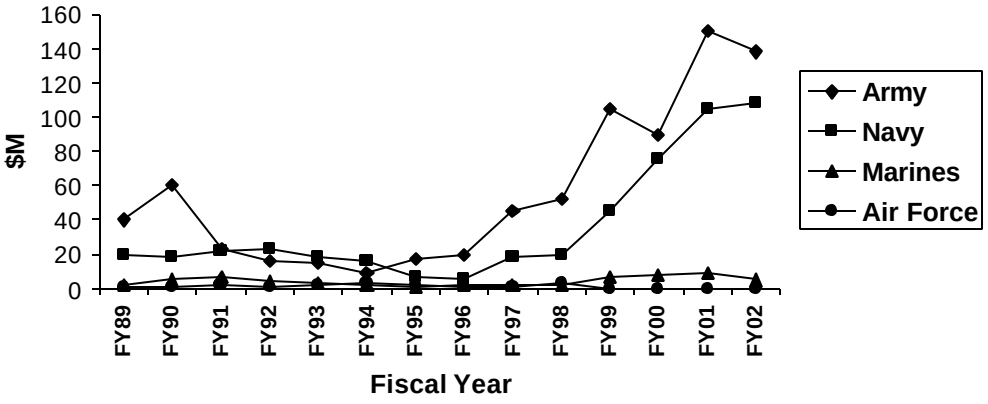

FIGURE 15. ENLISTMENT BONUS EXPENDITURES

As pointed out earlier in this discussion, as the need for quality people increases, the competition between civilian companies and the military will become greater. Civilian firms have already started offering GI-Bill type benefits, further reducing the service's appeal. No amount of money can attract young people to enlist and stay for a career if they are not already pre-disposed to military service. However, non-competitive wages will prevent youths from even considering the military as an option. Even with increased incentives, the military will continue to expend large resources to attract the quality personnel it will need for the future. The key will be how to balance the force planning requirements for people and the necessary resources to recruit and retain them.

EFFECT ON FORCE PLANNING

A key component to readiness and force planning is a steady flow of high quality recruits. Each service must enlist enough people each year to provide a pool of qualified personnel for overall manpower requirements. Figure 16 reflects the recruiting accession mission achieved for the last ten years.[93] Although successful, spikes of difficulty are clearly present. Accession

goals are on the upswing, which will put additional pressure on the services to recruit and retain, not just the raw numbers, but also the quality necessary for the military of the future.

Force generation is the ability to provide ready forces with the capabilities necessary to perform a full range of operations. It involves the recruitment, training, education, and retention of highly qualified people.[94]

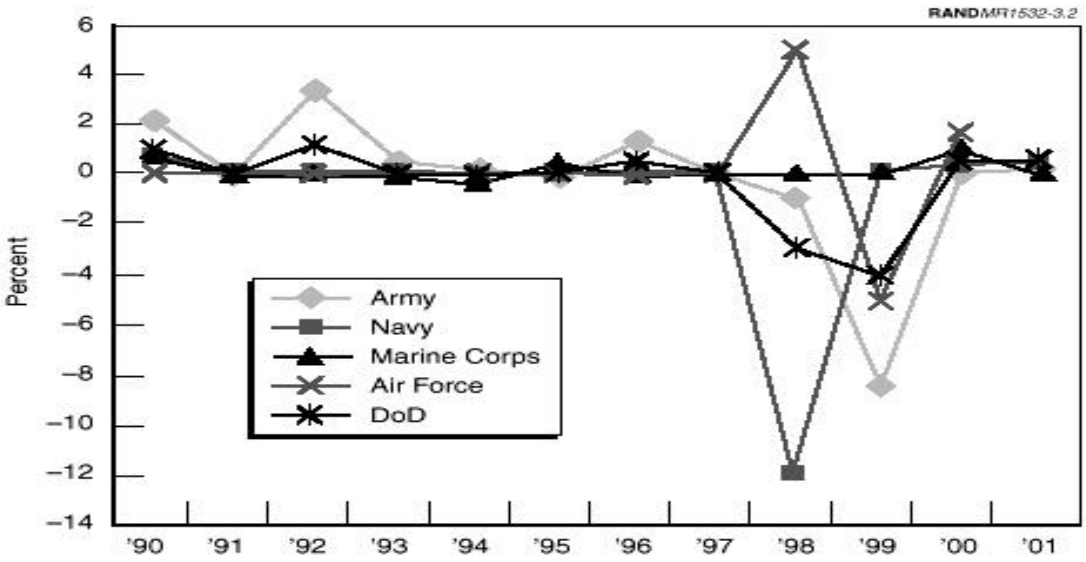

FIGURE 16. PERCENT OF TOTAL RECRUITING ACCESSION MISSION RECEIVED MINUS 100 PERCENT

It is sometimes easy to overlook that manning the force is an integral part of the United States National Military Strategy. Increasing worldwide demands for U.S. military presence have placed greater requirements for increased personnel strengths.[95] If military recruiting is unsuccessful in attaining its quantity and quality goals, the military will be unsuccessful in accomplishing its mission. All the strategic thinking, force structure work-arounds and improved technologies will not win the next war. The young men and women in the services will be the ones that accomplish it.

To succeed in manning the force, the U.S. must invest in quality people, and increase military and civilian recruiting force capability and effectiveness. To set the conditions for success on future battlefields, manning the force is the most important thing we do.[96] Simply

put, the inability of the U.S. armed forces to meet their recruiting requirements may become a strategic constraint on the military's ability to support the National Security Strategy. Just as recruiting is important to force planning, retention may be even more critical.

RETENTION

Similar to recruiting, retention was under duress throughout much of the late 1990s timeframe. Figure 17 graphically charts first-term retention rates.[97] Investment in training

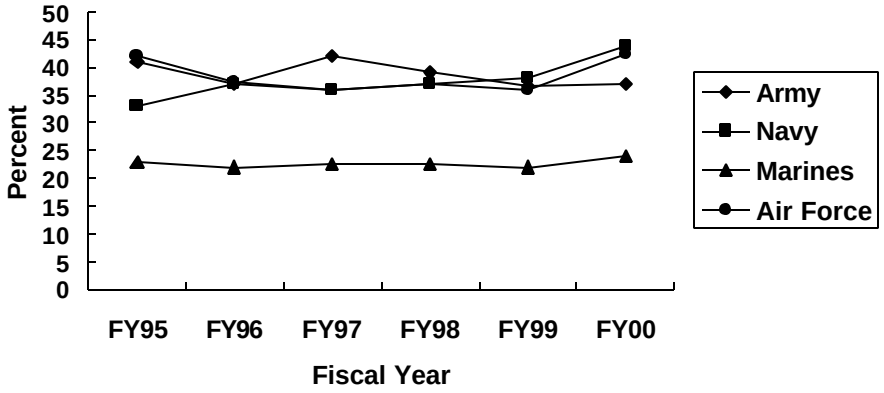

FIGURE 17. FIRST-TERM RETENTION RATES

personnel with high technology skills is expensive, time-consuming, and difficult to increase, especially if recruiting numbers are down. Therefore measures must be taken to ensure that the highest quality personnel are retained within the armed forces. None of the Services have been immune to retention problems, and the factors have varied based on the time frame. Although the current retention outlook is good, the military should not have a false sense of hubris. A shift in continuation rates can accumulate over time and translate into troublesome shortfalls in manpower and declines in the pool of mid-career personnel from which future senior leaders are drawn. [98] The Services attribute retention problems to four factors: trends in the civilian economy; operational tempo; job satisfaction; and quality of life.

ECONOMICS

Economic conditions have an effect on retention similar to the effect they have on recruiting. If the economy is doing well, there is less of a job security risk perceived by

personnel contemplating exiting the services. As military members, especially the well educated and those with critical job skills, survey the civilian job market, they find ample opportunity for employment, with less uncertainty and hardship than the military routinely offers. Demand for trained workers can be unusually strong in certain sectors of the civilian economy, such as information technology, security, and the aviation industry. This demand can have an adverse impact on military retention of low-density, high-demand skills. After many years of being able to retain the necessary personnel, the military now finds itself in heated competition with the civilian sector.

JOB SATISFACTION

A critical aspect of retention is job satisfaction; without it, very few other incentives will be effective in retaining quality individuals. Job satisfaction is comprised of favorable impressions of leadership, and knowing that there are ample resources and opportunities for job performance and accomplishment. Poor impressions of these factors by service personnel can lead to greater post-first-term attrition. The significant investment the military makes in recruiting and training necessitates that they do their very best to retain their quality personnel.

Although leadership sounds like a basic tenant to retention, it is much more complex than that. The overarching hypothesis is that the American military has been moving away from an institutional format to one that resembles that of an occupation.[99] By transforming to an occupation-oriented organization, the military loses some of its martial characteristics and warrior spirit, and its leadership suffers. The military must move away from growing occupationalism and re-institutionalize itself. The Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Jones, summed it up nicely: "By our actions and example, retention is the daily responsibility of every leader, from our junior NCOs to the senior officers who develop policies and make decisions that directly impact the day to day lives of our Marines. I expect commanders and leaders at all levels to create a command climate that makes our Marines want to stay Marine."[100] This is not occupationalism; this is leadership. A perception of unfairness on evaluation reports and the climate of a "zero defect mentality" must be guarded against in order to assure retention. A commander struggling with limited resources to meet increased mission and readiness requirements often communicates these difficulties to subordinates.[101] They become challenges without solutions, and a source of frustration. The culture of the service must be geared to guard against the perception of always "doing more with less."

The American military is one of the best-trained forces in the world that strives for excellence. The lack of resources and training dollars have become more than just irritants. To

professionals, such shortfalls in equipment, spare parts and supplies are demoralizing and an impediment to excellence.[102] These conditions result in longer working hours, frustration and a sense of dissatisfaction. The lack of adequate resources, when left untended for extended periods, creates the perception that the chain of command, the Congress, or the nation are not interested enough to support the sacrifices being asked of service members and their families.[103] This loss of faith can translate to a lack of job satisfaction and retention problems. The military must cultivate an environment that cares for the lives and needs of the service members. One important aspect of those needs is adequate compensation benefits.

COMPENSATION BENEFITS

Erosion of benefits, or at least the perception of erosion, is also a significant factor in retention. Notwithstanding the recent restoration of more lucrative compensation, military retirement plans remain a factor of great concern to a new generation of service members desiring greater portability of benefits."[104] Although benefits such as the Thrift Savings Plan, albeit unmatched funds, have helped, more needs to be done to enhance retention. The need to increase compensation of the skilled career force is necessary. Targeted pay raises have helped, but there still is too large a gap between entry-level personnel and careerists. Pay raises and bonuses must also be focused on the career force and retention, not just during the accession process. Competitive wages are crucial for retaining quality personnel capable of meeting the challenges in the years ahead.

Changes in medical care, with less access, increased payments, and perceptions of dwindling quality, contribute significantly to retention problems. Access to quality health care at a reasonable cost must continue to be a priority for military leaders and Congress.[105] Recent expansion of retiree health benefits has helped, but concurrent receipt of disability benefits is still only partially funded. Addressing these concerns and other retention issues will not come cheaply, and difficult resource decisions will have to be made. Increased operational and personnel tempo follow closely behind compensation as a cause for poor retention.

OPERATIONAL TEMPO

The overall reduction in the size of the military with a non-commensurate reduction in commitments has required fewer people to do more. The impact of increased operational tempo on service members and their families is profound. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld stated:

> "Excessive operational demands on the force have taken a toll on military personnel. Since the end of the Cold War, the Armed Forces experienced a reduction of total personnel, but an increase in the demands placed on those

> smaller forces. The high tempo of operations, coupled with continued demand for workers in the private sector, adversely impacted the ability of the armed forces to recruit and retain quality people."[106]

This increase in operational tempo negatively impacts service members' morale, family relations, and ultimately results in decreased readiness. Secretary Rumsfeld addressed operational and personnel tempo in the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review Report:

> "First and foremost, end strength sufficient to meet strategic requirements at a sustainable OPTEMPO and PERSTEMPO must be maintained, or our greatest military asset - quality people - will be placed at risk. I believe that sustaining an end strength and force structure capable of executing the new defense strategy at moderate risk will be a significant challenge. The services must balance limited resources between the significant QDR transformation and quality of life priorities and the competing requirements of operations."[107]

While operational tempo is a difficult issue to address while the nation is in conflict, the DOD must not ignore this vital element's impact on military retention. In addition to operational tempo, quality of life issues will demand additional resources to make continued military service attractive.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Quality of life and retention issues are complex and involve both single and married service personnel. Money is not the main reason that service members stay in the military; often they remain for the life-style, military support systems, and military installation services. This makes it more difficult for the military than the civilian sector to meet these expectations. The social contract between the member and the service demands that the military be responsible for the full array of quality of life programs, to include those portions outside of the work environment.[108] Substandard housing and threats to eliminate commissary privileges are not the right signals to send for retention purposes. The increasing percentage of personnel with family members will require a commitment to family-oriented community support programs.[109] Besides family housing, enlisted barracks habitability concerns are prevalent among all services. Installation services, such as retail commercial activities and childcare are becoming more and more important to retention programs.

As the competition for resources increases among the many military priorities, quality of life funding must not be short-changed. A lack of funding in these programs results in reduced benefits, and can adversely impact retention. Understanding the importance of quality of life issues, Secretary Rumsfeld commented:

> "The quality of life in the military is critical to retaining a service member and his or her family. In recognition of the changing demographics of DOD's military families, DOD will review existing quality of life services and policies to guarantee that they have kept pace with modern requirements. The armed forces must not only retain the service member, but also retain his or her family."[110]

Quality of life programs directly impact readiness and operational responsiveness. The DOD and Services must meet this challenge in order to enhance both recruiting and retention. In addition to answering quality of life concerns, the military also has other tools and incentives for encouraging retention.

INCENTIVES TO REENLIST

The services have implemented numerous other programs to increase retention rates. These programs involve both policy changes and financial incentives. One policy change that has increased retention rates has been the modification of high-year-tenure rules, or "up-or-out" promotion policies, allowing service members to stay longer, rather than being forced out. Another way of addressing retention challenges, the services have dramatically increased their reenlistment bonuses. Figure 18 displays the increase in each of the services' selective reenlistment bonus programs.[111]

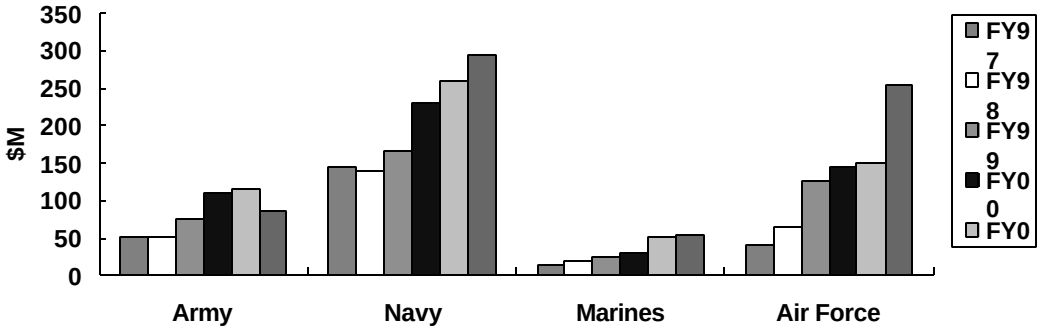

FIGURE 18. SELECTIVE REENLISTMENT BONUS BUDGETS

Military personnel have numerous opportunities to improve their educational level during military service, and these opportunities have become more and more important to service members when making retention decisions. Recently, the services have embraced an apprentice program that allows members with critical skills to meet civilian certification standards for their particular professional occupational skill.[112] The services see this as a morale

builder, as a method for recognizing skilled members, and as a tool to retain more experienced personnel. Each of these incentives is designed to increase retention and have a positive effect on force planning.

EFFECT ON FORCE PLANNING

The trend for retention will probably remain relatively constant. Current career level service members provide the quality the Services enjoy today. A drop in retention rates however, could result in a need for more initial accessions, requiring a larger recruiting effort, and a need for allocating more scarce resources. Retaining better people in the right numbers will help reduce the recruiting problem, and the reverse is also true.[113] Besides the increase in recruiting requirements, the loss of experience and skills would be difficult, if not impossible to rapidly replace, especially in the technologically advanced military of today.

Effects of low retention would persist well into the future. Tomorrow's forces will be faced with quantum leaps in technology; therefore retention must be a priority. The military must have high quality members who can use that technology and convert it to a force multiplier asset. The loss of people with this type of talent and experience would be devastating from the standpoint of leadership, training, and combat capability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Current recruiting and retention efforts are not broken. The success is based not only on external variables, but also on internal policies. There is much to be optimistic about, however this current success may be only temporary, as it has been in the past. Therefore, to secure the soundness of the military's recruiting and retention efforts, ongoing improvements will always be necessary. The following recommendations are provided:

RECRUITING

The difficulty in effectively recruiting from all ethnic groups is a force planning concern, especially as it relates to the social diversity of the armed forces. Establishing special preparatory programs would enable more of today's inner-city youths to enlist. These programs would be along the same line as performing arts schools or trade schools, only in this case they would focus on military science. The purpose of the prep schools would be to assist in qualifying urban youths for future military service. Since a large proportion of the military's future recruiting pool is resident in these areas, it only makes sense to cultivate these prospects.

Everyone is told that the American economy is great. It's not all great; the average is great. "The joke is that if my neighbor is out of work, it's a recession. But if I'm out of work, it's a depression." There are large pockets of unemployment, and the military should reach out and touch them. One program being tested by the Army Recruiting Command is cooperating with state unemployment agencies. Before applying for unemployment benefits, applicants are screened for possible military service and referred to recruiters. There is a large market of unemployed, migrant workers, and frequent movers who are potential quality applicants. Including these and other groups in the recruiting market would expand the base for recruiters, but others caution that it could also lead to greater retention problems downstream.[114]

Other suggestions include continuing to expand the Army's Partnership for Youth Success program, as well as new programs such as allowing delayed entry participants access to exchange, commissary, and recreation facilities.[115] Paying a nominal stipend to delayed entry applicants might also reduce enlistment pool attrition rates. Even more creative solutions have suggested lateral entry by talented civilians at levels high enough to be attractive to successful executives or professionals.[116] A contribution based retirement system - like a 401(k) - could be a powerful recruiting tool if structured to meet the desires of current youth, especially if it includes things like personal choice, competitive returns on investment, transferability, and vesting short of 20 years.[117] This program could expand on the current Thrift Savings Plan.

The competition with secondary education for high quality applicants is intense, and will only continue to grow. In order to take advantage of this trend, recruiters need to be placed on college campuses with state-of-the-art technologies, such as cyber-recruiting stations, virtual offices, and internet engagement opportunities.[118] Another way to enter the college market is to increase the recruiter presence on community colleges, looking for youths that may have changed their mind since graduating high school, or may have dropped out from larger scholastic institutions. A potential appeal to this market could bundle lower initial pay and a short term of service with complete post-service educational benefits.[119]

Other educational initiatives could include expanding the Army's General Educational Development (GED) Plus Enlistment Program, which enables applicants who currently have not graduated from high school to be sponsored by the military to attain enlistment standards through an attendance-based course.[120] Another example would be to offer high school seniors an option that would allow them to attend college before serving in the military. For instance, a high school senior would attend college at the expense of the military, and then enter the military at a higher rank.

Yet another option would be to implement a two-four-two enlistment program for qualified applicants. This enlistment option would pay for two years of junior college in the applicant's local area, followed by a four-year active duty commitment in which the member's remaining two years of college could be completed during off-duty hours, at no expense to the member. Members could also opt to complete their education after their active duty, once again at no expense to them. This option allows prospective applicants who are qualified, and normally inclined to attend college, to start school, stay in the local area, mature, receive financial assistance, and at the same time be contracted to the military. The military gets a better-educated youth, who is self-motivated, and more apt to complete the initial enlistment.

The civil-military gap and transitory patriotism presents unique challenges to recruiting and retention efforts. One significant step to bridge the gap must occur outside the military environment and inside the institutions of education.[121] The expansion of Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) units would greatly facilitate this need. Courses on civil-military relations, military history, and military sociology must be incorporated in the curriculum. JROTC comprises a critical element of the marketing mix for the military, and provides a vehicle to develop desire and induce conviction in students.[122]

In addition to JROTC, groundwork must be established during middle school years and followed up in high school. Values, duty, citizenship, and patriotism are all subjects that need to be stressed. Community involvement by military installations and increased visibility of the services might also help. Other suggestions involve the education of the civilian public rather than the military. Courses in high schools and universities dealing with civil-military issues and national civic responsibilities could contribute to more successful recruiting efforts. Mathew Morgan in "Army Recruiting and the Civil-Military Gap" stated:

> "It seems intuitive, and supported by evidence, that in order to continue access to sufficient numbers of high-quality youths, senior leaders will need to address far-reaching concerns involving the overall relationship between the military and society. Failing to be more progressive in the military's relationship with the public may cause further problems. Without attention to the social underpinnings of recruiting, it may be difficult for the armed forces to attract social support needed to sustain operations in the 21st century."[123]

A final issue is the role of parents in the enlistment decisions of their sons and daughters. Their key role suggests that additional efforts must be made to reach them.[124] The armed services must ask military members, parents, civilian employees, retirees, and veterans to talk up the service in the private sector, act as positive role models, and influence today's youth and future enlistees.

RETENTION

This paper offers few recommendations for retention efforts. Other than a disciplined staying of the current course, only marginal improvements are recommended. An expanded apprentice-like program similar to the Navy's would create more technically proficient service members, which in turn will be an incentive to extend enlistment. Also, very important to retention efforts, is prior service recruiting. This program taps recently separated service members who are already trained and provide a rapid infusion of critical skills where needed. In addition to these programs, further educational opportunities are proven retention tools and they should be continued.

In order to continue achieving high retention levels, the armed forces will have to place increasing emphasis on quality of life issues; compensation benefits comparable to the civilian sector; quality and affordable health care; upgrading bachelor and family housing; expanded educational benefits, perhaps even to family members; and finally, fostering greater job satisfaction. These retention incentives are easy to state, but much more difficult to achieve in an austere and highly competitive budget environment.

NEW APPROACHES

The above recruiting and retention recommendations offer an array of possible improvements, but new approaches are sometimes needed, especially in the dynamic and ever changing fields of recruiting and retention. Hi-tech innovations in recruiting tools, such as virtual recruiting offices, will be the marketing tool of the future. Young people will be able to explore opportunities in the military, learn about the services, and even start the recruitment process. This is how the youth of today communicate and do business, and the military must be a part of it.

Among the new marketing avenues is the use of commercial telemarketing to identify and screen leads and potential applicants.[125] Once the propensity to enlist is determined, the lead would be turned over to the nearest recruiting office. Service preference, as well as DOD requirements, could be factored into the marketing mix. Using commercial telemarketing practices to generate leads from centrally produced lists of potential recruits, and consolidating lead development under a single DOD entity, avoids multiple-service redundancy in contacting prospects.[126]

Another new initiative is contracting out some portions of the recruiting effort. This includes hiring prior-service recruiters as field representatives, as well as using alternative methods for enlistment physical examinations and aptitude testing. The goal is to find more

cost-effective methods to attain military recruiting goals, and return a large recruiter population to the operating forces. While many private companies have used headhunters for recruiters, the military has been hesitant to use outside resources. From a military standpoint, recruiting is not a core competency, and private contractors could play a more active role in the recruiting process.[127]

Finally, the services should continue to explore joint recruiting efforts. By its nature there is no coordination, only competition among services for a finite pool of applicants. This discourages cross-service operational communication and causes recruiters to duplicate each other's efforts.[128] Consolidating functions such as advertising and telemarketing across services could free recruiters to enter markets where they have been absent, and allow them to focus more on recruiter to applicant interfacing. Creating DOD-wide incentive and college programs could streamline the recruitment process and save valuable resources for other programs. Each of the new approaches described above is intended to make recruiting easier and use scarce resources more effectively. No one option is a panacea, but perhaps together they provide a framework for more successful and efficient recruiting.

CONCLUSION

The next twenty years will be particularly challenging times for military force planners and decision-makers. As resources are becoming scarcer and scarcer, the need for more qualified personnel is increasing. The requirements to operate and maintain the systems envisioned for the future will require increasing numbers of innovative and adaptive personnel. The military must attract these types of individuals in order to sustain the transformation currently underway.

The outlook is cautiously optimistic, however recruiting and retention trends are anything but constant, and the services need to guard against hubris. Although current recruiting and retention goals are being met, a multitude of variables, such as the economy or the world political situation, can slow down these efforts. A return to the draft would appear to solve fluctuating recruiting trends, but it does not lend itself to the current quality needs of the armed forces. The difficulty in recruiting is more than just raw numbers; it is attracting and keeping high-quality individuals to lead the force of the future.

Demographics, the economy, civil-military relations, and a greater propensity among youths to attend college, all pose significant issues, and will require continuous analysis to ensure scarce recruiting resources are being put to use in optimal ways. Creative and effective incentives will continue to be necessary in the competitive employment markets of the military

and the civilian sectors. The military must meet its accession goals, both in quantity and quality, in order to accomplish its mission.

Retention must be stressed at all levels to ensure that the military's best and brightest are kept in uniform. This means addressing concerns about compensation benefits, job satisfaction, operational tempo, and quality of life. Effective incentives must be continued in order to compete with the advantages of the civilian sector. The military must keep the types of people who can use technology and convert it to a force multiplier.

Ongoing efforts are needed to ensure the soundness of military recruiting and retention. Current policies and tools are effective, but there is always room for improvement. Recommendations for progress in recruiting and retention must continue to be solicited, reviewed for potential, and implemented if warranted. In a dynamically changing manpower environment, the military must also continue to embrace new approaches to the recruiting and retention battle.

Recruiting and retention are vital elements in national power, and are critical to the military meeting its national security commitments. While the recruiting picture is cause for cautious optimism, there is still risk to meeting the quality necessary for the force of the future. Since its inception, the all-volunteer force has been fragile, and has required constant vigilance by strategic thinkers. A dependable source of quality manpower is critical to force readiness, and is a constant force planning dilemma. Therefore, it is imperative that strategic planners continue to examine ways to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of recruiting and retaining the quality personnel necessary for success of the military, today - and tomorrow.

WORD COUNT = 11616.

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