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The U.S. Secret Service should further enhance its recruiting efforts to compete successfully with other Federal agencies for the best candidates. Evaluating military recruiting processes and implementing applicable methods will help the Secret Service compete effectively with other premier law enforcement agencies.

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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

TITLE: Military Recruiting and the Secret Service

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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Executive Summary

Title: Military Recruiting and the Secret Service

Author: Brian C. Sharlow, United States Secret Service

Thesis: Although the U.S. Secret Service has made significant progress in recruiting recently, it must continue to progress in such endeavors. Evaluating military recruiting processes and implementing applicable methods will help the Secret Service compete effectively with other premier law enforcement agencies for the best candidates.

Discussion: Law enforcement agencies are experiencing substantial challenges in attracting and hiring quality candidates. The U.S. Secret Service is no exception and faces unprecedented challenges concerning recruiting. The U.S. military faces similar issues and dedicates significant research and efforts towards recruiting. The largest branch, the U.S. Army, spends sizable amounts of time and money in order to recruit high quality candidates.

The Army conducts extensive research into identifying motives and characteristics consistent with high quality candidates. Based on that research and analysis of recruiting trends, the Army tailors its marketing and advertising. The Army continuously evaluates its recruiters and processes and makes changes as necessary. When research and results indicate a certain procedure or methodology is unproductive, the Army explores the issue and implements a new and viable alternative to increase successful recruiting results.

The military's example of in-depth research and continuous adjustment of recruiting efforts presents a model for law enforcement agencies, to include the Secret Service. Several Federal law enforcement agencies utilize similar processes. Most states have state-wide accreditation boards to implement consistent standards and streamline procedures. These boards alleviate some burden from individual agencies. Federal law enforcement agencies should evaluate whether a similar process would work at the Federal level.

Conclusion: The Secret Service should review and assess various military recruiting methods to determine their applicability and implement such measures if feasible. Federal law enforcement should also consider combining recruiting programs in order to share the burden of resources as well as streamline the recruiting process.

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Preface

Both the military and law enforcement today face similar challenges regarding attracting and recruiting high quality candidates for their organizations. I believe people make the difference when considering highly successful organizations. Therefore, attracting and recruiting the best candidates proves essential towards achieving organizational success.

The occasion presented to me to attend Marine Corps University, Command and Staff College, is a significant opportunity. My intent in choosing this thesis topic is an effort to hopefully provide some return on the investment afforded me by both the Marine Corps University and the U.S. Secret Service. The potential lessons garnered from researching military recruiting strategies and potential applicability towards Federal law enforcement could prove substantial. It entails more than merely implementing one potentially effective measure and terminating all other efforts. Effective recruiting requires an open and analytic mindset that remains flexible, adaptable, and innovative considering recruiting strategy.

I wish to acknowledge and express my sincere appreciation to the many individuals who provided assistance, guidance, and insight regarding this topic: Marine Corps University Research Library staff, my fellow students, my professors, and especially my mentor, Doctor Douglas Streusand. I also thank the Secret Service, namely the Talent and Acquisition Division and the Office of Strategic Planning, for their assistance in this matter. I finally wish to acknowledge my three sons, for without their enduring support, understanding, and patience with me during this academic year I certainly would have failed with this endeavor.

Introduction

Employers want to recruit successfully enough top-quality individuals who will perform and contribute to the success of their agency or company. These traits prove more desirable when considering potential candidates for sensitive law enforcement positions. All law enforcement agencies seek to attract a large pool of highly qualified applicants. The mission of the United States Secret Service makes the agency's requirements especially demanding. This is especially true for an agency such as the United States Secret Service. The Secret Service's statutory mandate requires it to, "...ensure the safety of the President, the Vice President, their families, the White House, the Vice President's residence, visiting foreign heads of state, former United States Presidents and their spouses, and events of national significance."¹ The Secret Service also investigates criminal offenses directed against the financial integrity of the United States. However, the U.S. Secret Service competes with other Federal law enforcement agencies to fill thousands of Special Agent positions. The Secret Service faces a time currently where it must also increase the size of its workforce.²

With so many agencies at every level, Federal, state, and local seeking the best qualified applicants, the competition amongst law enforcement agencies is fierce. Military veterans historically and traditionally have transitioned well to law enforcement and the Secret Service is a good fit for veterans. Traits associated with military service, such as patriotism, duty, discipline, experience, and intelligence, all serve as valuable assets for the Secret Service. The U.S. Secret Service, while making speedy progress in recruiting and hiring efforts, should evaluate and utilize applicable military recruiting methods and concepts to compete effectively with other premier law enforcement agencies.

Problem Background

All levels of law enforcement, Federal, state, and local, face increasing difficulty attracting qualified applicants. Unfortunately, most agencies today are not garnering as many applicants as in years past. Gone are the days when hundreds if not thousands of applicants showed up to test for a few open vacancies.³ Law enforcement agencies no longer have highly qualified candidates competing for their positions. The media portray routinely law enforcement negatively.⁴ This negative attention, along with the lower salaries compared to private sector positions, often discourages potential candidates from pursuing careers in law enforcement.

Hiring difficulties have left the Secret Service short of staff since 2013, especially since the 2013 sequestration. The 2013 government sequestration served as a significant catalyst for this issue as the agency decided to forgo hiring. This caused a reduction in staffing levels.⁵ Reduced staffing did not cause two security incidents at the White House; however, it attracted significant media attention. On May 6, 2014, an incident involving an unauthorized vehicle entry onto the White House grounds occurred and on September, 19, 2014, an individual scaled the White House fence and gained entry into the building.⁶ Congress subsequently mandated an independent review panel to analyze these incidents and the operations of the Secret Service.

In October 2014, the Secretary for the Department of Homeland Security, the Department that oversees the Secret Service, established an independent panel of experts referred to as the U.S. Secret Service Protective Mission Panel (PMP). The panel reviewed security at the White House and conducted a holistic overview of the Secret Service.⁷ The Protective Mission Panel's report presented 19 recommendations for the Secret Service to implement. The report states, "An agency that needs the best agents and officers on the front lines needs a hiring process run by human resources experts valued for their specialized knowledge about how to recruit and retain

talent, in a timely and efficient manner.”⁸ The Panel’s fifth recommendation is to “Reform and professionalize recruiting, hiring,…”⁹

The Panel called upon the Secret Service to recruit and hire the best. Given the Secret Service’s no-fail mission regarding high-level protection, as well as its jurisdiction and responsibility considering the nation’s financial infrastructure and security, this concept seems obvious. The integrated mission entailing both protection and criminal investigations can be a deterrent for individuals when considering applying to the Secret Service. The *Secret Service Strategic Plan for FY 2018 – FY 2022 (SSSP)*, formulated by then Secret Service Director Randolph Alles, addresses one of the most critical challenges facing the Secret Service.¹⁰ Former Director Alles highlights the “critical” and “overarching” effort required to recruit a diverse and professional workforce.¹¹

One hindrance for the U.S. Secret Service in achieving its recruiting goals, is its reputation as a challenging agency to work for.¹² A simple sports analogy presumes a winning sports program attracts and recruits the best athletes available while a losing program experiences difficulty in recruiting talented athletes. The same analogy arguably applies to law enforcement agencies. Candidates desire to work for the best perceived agency. While there is no debate that the Secret Service continues to improve in this regard, it requires significant time for public perception to alter its opinions. In 2016, the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) results revealed the Secret Service scored last in employee engagement with 32.8 points and ranked nearly last among Federal agencies in the Best Places to Work.¹³ One must look at the circumstances at the time to understand the low scores. The Secret Service, while courageous in their efforts to complete its mission, experienced detrimental effects resulting from low staff levels in concert with increasing protective operations. This led to a severe lack of work-life

balance and resulted in morale and attrition problem for the agency. Fortunately, Secret Service leadership recognized this issue and instituted several measures to combat the problem.¹⁴

The U.S. Secret Service Strategic Plan requires achieving optimal staffing levels to ensure employees maintain a positive work-life balance. The more agents available to deploy on assignments means a more equitable distribution of the workload. To accomplish this, the strategy logically calls for an increase in the number of employees.¹⁵ However, a prolonged period of negative work-life balance with low morale influenced the attitudes and opinions of potential applicants. Several measures implemented by the Secret Service to improve retention and increase morale are proving effective as recent Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey results reveal positive gains.¹⁶ Today's agents seek to attain a better work-life balance and the Secret Service is enhancing this aspect for its employees.

A prestigious law enforcement agency such as the Secret Service, a reputation for a good work-life balance, and positive employee morale are powerful recruitment tools that will attract highly qualified candidates. In today's law enforcement job market where agencies compete for highly qualified applicants, the Secret Service must continue its efforts towards research, flexibility, and enhancing its strategy to remain competitive with other agencies. The Secret Service is unique compared with most other law enforcement agencies in that its unique mission, and proximity to the President of the United States, conveys additional scrutiny and constant pressure to exceed in a no-fail mission. Any little infraction of security protocol or procedures, and rightfully so, subjects the agency to further oversight and analysis. These facts lend to increasing justification for researching and implementing extreme measures to recruit the best qualified candidates.

U.S. Army Recruiting

The United States Secret Service workforce consists of a significant number of military veterans. The transition is seemingly natural and beneficial for both entities. Military veterans possess a wealth of experience and positive character traits. These include patriotism, loyalty, dedication, discipline, adaptability, real-world experience, and intelligence to highlight just some. The Secret Service also requires and fosters these qualities within its organization and therefore looks to attract individuals with the same characteristics. Recruiting is highly competitive between the military branches as is the competition between the Secret Service and other Federal law enforcement agencies. Each military branch devotes significant amounts of money and resources into developing the best recruiting research and methods. The U.S. Army alone spent on average \$1.5 billion annually between 2001 and 2014.¹⁷ It should be noted that the Army requires the highest number of enlistments, almost double, compared with the other branches.¹⁸

Given that the military and the Secret Service look for the same characteristics, and the significant presence of veterans within the agency, the Secret Service should examine military recruiting methods and utilize applicable processes. While the Secret Service is not targeting young individuals right out of high school as is the military, the Secret Service seeks the same qualities and characteristics in a candidate. Officers routinely attain higher education and possess highly desirable traits. If for nothing else, the better the Secret Service understands the military, the more effective it will attract and successfully recruit military veterans.

A 2019 Rand Corporation study authored by Beth J. Asch titled, “Navigating Current and Emerging Army Recruiting Challenges: What Can Research Tell Us?” researched current U.S. Army recruiting trends. One of the first highlights noted is the challenging state of recruiting.¹⁹

The issues discussed in this report seem familiar when comparing them with the challenges facing law enforcement today. A low unemployment rate in the civilian sector challenges efforts to recruit the best candidate for both the military and the U.S. Secret Service. A December 2019 Bureau of Labor Statistics report indicates an unchanged historically low unemployment rate of 3.5 percent.²⁰

The Rand study notes a significant hurdle is that less than 30 percent of young adults meet eligibility criteria to enlist.²¹ The report also states that one in ten young adults express a desire to enlist. Stated another way, less than 10 percent of young adults aged 16 to 21 express a positive desire to enlist. Subsequently, the majority of enlistments result from recruiters convincing those not predisposed to enlist.²² To combat these challenges, the military possesses greater resources and flexibility than the Secret Service. The Secret Service maintains far fewer recruiting instruments as compared with the military's arsenal of enticing incentives. Military service also offers other monetary benefits such as special pay, bonuses, medical and housing benefits, and ultimately retirement pay if qualified.²³

One obvious factor the military considers when determining effective measures are motives for enlisting. Understanding a person's decision to enlist influences how the military implements its recruiting strategy. The Rand report discusses a March 2018 New Recruit Survey where Army recruits indicate the top five reasons for joining the Army: "pride or self-esteem/honor (67 percent), travel (66 percent), life betterment (64 percent), gain experience or work skills (59 percent), and salary (56 percent)."²⁴ Also worth noting in this survey is that 62 percent of new Army recruits indicate that they view the Army as a stepping-stone for their future career outside of the Army.²⁵ The above-listed motives for joining the Army are similar reasons for joining the Secret Service. One particular item of note in this survey is the desire to

travel. The Secret Service could certainly implement measures in its advertising and recruiting efforts to emphasize the vast travel opportunities, domestic and foreign, that a career with the Secret Service entails.

The military believes that how and where it deploys its recruiting resources and staff influences the number of candidates. The Army expends great effort and research into the selection, training, and allocation of recruiters.²⁶ Greater focus is placed upon recruiters and recruiting stations where research indicates the greatest number of high quality enlistments will occur. The Army also invests considerable time and resources determining how, where, and what type of advertising mechanisms to employ. Social media plays a significant role and requires a unique perspective in implementation. An interesting note from the Rand study mentions that consistently over time, advertising, higher pay in comparison with lower civilian pay, higher bonus amounts, and enhancing the number of recruiters significantly increases higher quality enlistments.²⁷

The most recent U.S. Army recruiting video titled, “What’s your warrior?” presents several themes in the span of one minute. The futuristic portrayal combines with exciting career opportunities including helicopter pilots, technology positions, and even researchers wearing white laboratory coats. The commercial insinuates career opportunities involving travel, education, satellites, and learning a foreign language. It portrays a sniper image with the associated underlying caption of mastering the elements and includes soldiers parachuting from the sky. Words prominently displayed during the video appeal to the viewer’s desire for individualism, as well as belonging to a team with a significant role and crucial mission. This Army advertisement appeals to these multiple topics in only 60 seconds.²⁸

Another key incentive the military prominently advertises is educational benefits. A 2018 Department of Defense (DoD), Joint Advertising Marketing Research & Studies (JAMRS) survey reveals that 49 percent of students identify paying for college as a reason for enlisting.²⁹ In this current day of high student debt, educational incentives prove essential to recruiting in both arenas, military and civilian. The Secret Service initiated educational benefit packages as both a recruiting and a retention incentive. The tuition reimbursement and student loan payment programs implemented by the Secret Service prove widely utilized and popular.³⁰ A key takeaway from the above military study indicates that educational incentives are a significant recruiting tool. The study even suggests that offering lucrative educational perks trump other recruiting incentives.³¹ Subsequently, the Secret Service may consider if their educational programs are equally, if not more enticing, compared with educational incentives other premier law enforcement agencies offer.

A key component revealed to affect military recruiting is the individual recruiters. How they conduct business and interact with the applicant matters. The Rand study reveals that increasing the number of recruiters leads to an increased number of high quality enlistments. Recruiters, like any employee, must be properly managed to perform at peak efficiency.³² Recruiters determine the focus and level of their energy on potential candidates. The Army determined that if recruiters faced insufficient incentives for pursuing high quality recruits, and simply maintained quota requirements, recruiters only processed enough low quality recruits to meet the quota. Subsequently, the study highlights the importance of managing recruiter efforts to maximize overarching recruiting strategies.³³

Another issue discussed in the Rand study is whether or not recruiting goals should be assigned per each recruiter or assigned by the recruiting station. The Army determined station

missioning encourages teamwork amongst recruiters. This approach allows recruiting stations flexibility to maximize individual capabilities and talents. The last known 2008 Army study regarding this dilemma of individual versus station goals, revealed that results varied. When the Army assigned low numbers or considerably high numbers for recruiting goals, the individual recruiter approach dominated. However, for mid-level goals, the station approach dominated. The conclusion of the study remained vague other than to positively suggest that a flexible approach makes the most sense to successfully meet recruiting goals.³⁴

The Army determined that attention to recruiter characteristics also influences their productivity. Recruiters under the age of 30 are significantly more productive than older recruiters. Recruiters from traditional combat arms, such as infantry and intelligence, proved more successful than other administration or support arms. Private contractors or retired military recruiters were less successful with younger candidates.³⁵ In looking at assigned recruiter locations, recruiters similar to the population they operate in tended to have more success. The study points out that female recruiters sign more women than do men, and African-American recruiters are up to four percent more productive than non-Hispanic white recruiters in signing high quality prospects in markets with large African-American populations. These results suggest that the more the candidate identifies with the recruiter and sees them having characteristics in common, the more likely they are to enlist.³⁶

The Rand study conducted interviews with Army recruiters and inquired about their motivation to perform well. Army research reveals that incentive systems for recruiters, such as medal and recognition awards, affect productivity regarding the quality, number, and timing of enlistments. Well planned recruiting incentives, when properly designed and implemented, are effective in attaining enlistment goals. When recruiting plans and systems are poorly designed,

efforts can suffer unintended consequences. A 2010 study revealed Army recruit screening results proved poorer at the end of the month when recruiters are under pressure to meet quotas and accumulate monthly incentive plan points.³⁷

The results of this research suggest that it is difficult to design an effective incentive plan. In FY 2018, U.S. Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) approved team-based incentives, such as the Commanding General's Heavy Hitter award and the USAREC Gold Standard, to reward the achievement of recruiting stations and companies. By eliminating individual incentive plans, however, the Army loses a potentially powerful tool for managing recruiter productivity.³⁸ In FY 2011, the Army ended its recruiter incentive awards program due to an easier time recruiting. Requirements now however, are increasing and it faces the many challenges already mentioned, such as a strong economy and civilian job market. The Army must consider ways to improve recruiter productivity. Rewarding exceptional individual performance might be considered again. More than likely, the Army will adopt a flexible incentive plan combining both individual and team rewards. Whatever plan the Army institutes for its recruiters, it must consider if it is rewarding quantity over quality.³⁹

The Army realizes how essential recruiting is to the success of its organization. Recent emerging issues are concerning for the entire military.⁴⁰ The Rand study discusses one significant issue as a growing military-civilian divide. A dwindling level of personal contact between the two entities, combined with a general lack of knowledge about military service is concerning. A 2016 DoD Joint Advertising Marketing Research and Studies (JAMRS) survey noted that less than half of surveyed youth reported that the military has "people like them."⁴¹ Additionally, youth progressively lacked knowledge of the benefits of enlisting, such as education and preparation for a future civilian career.⁴² If research indicates youth progressively

distancing itself from the military, this will also translate into a growing divide between government institutions, especially law enforcement, and the rest of society.

Another issue the Rand report mentions is a decline in civic engagement among young people. In a 2010 survey, young adults are less likely than their 1970s counterparts to exhibit nine out-of-ten important characteristics of citizenship, such as voting. The survey results indicate that few high school seniors hold trust in their government or elected officials. The same 2016 JAMRS report analyzed data from a nationally representative survey of high school seniors. Today's youth continue to place importance on family, careers, and personal relationships, but desire more socially impactful careers that also allow them to experience life outside of work.⁴³ The Army should implement measures to mitigate the above concerns if it desires to conduct successful recruiting efforts. The Rand report states, "The Army should evaluate which outreach measures should be considered, to whom they should be directed (e.g., which segment of the youth market, which influencers), what key information should be communicated, and how success could and should be measured."⁴⁴ The Secret Service might consider the above concerns of today's youth and evaluate its measures to mitigate such circumstances.

Implementing proactive and effective measures is key to successful recruitment. However, one must not forget how one goes about determining if a program is successful. The Rand study states that evidence is critical in determining the return on investment. A lack of supporting evidence relative to the value of military sponsorship of sporting events, such as the Army's sponsorship with NASCAR, is a case in point. The Army engaged in NASCAR activities without first implementing assessment methods. Without these mechanisms in place, the Army

could not accurately determine the return on its investment and the program eventually terminated resulting in a potential waste of efforts.⁴⁵

The Army is increasing emphasis on targeting youth via the internet and social media in addition to traditional media. The Army's presence on the internet, such as GoArmy.com, Twitter, and Facebook are instrumental, but recent research suggests areas for improvement, such as enhanced catering to specific audience interests. Implementing these enhanced measures and developing additional metrics to measure their communication effectiveness is crucial to successfully win the recruiting competition amongst the military branches.⁴⁶

Specific audience messaging and targeting can be key, especially if young people fail to adequately view how an Army career can meet their interests and aspirations. As previously discussed, different reasons for joining vary across multiple factors, such as diverse geographic regions of the country possessing different views on military service.⁴⁷ One final point the Rand report mentions is that recruiting should be fully integrated with retention decision making. The message in the study is that given particular times and circumstances, it might prove more productive to increase retention incentives versus recruiting incentives when considering the best overall outcome for the agency's goal of maintaining an effective workforce.⁴⁸

Some potential lessons from U.S. Army recruiting methods are that the Secret Service should conduct in-depth research regarding recruits and their motives for choosing to join the Secret Service. Is it because they truly desired to become a Secret Service agent, or is it because the Secret Service called first to offer the position? Analyzing recruit demographic statistics could prove influential in determining crucial recruiting effort decisions. This information also applies to decisions regarding advertising efforts. Survey results from newly hired employees could determine the most influential social media platforms, where specific targeting and

messaging could be applied best, and if such measures as local television or radio advertising are feasible with younger candidates today.

Another significant aspect garnered from U.S. Army recruiting methods is the considerable amount of emphasis placed upon its recruiters. While the Secret Service is not the military and does not possess the many tools and resources the Army may employ, the Secret Service might consider developing some mechanisms that align with some methods the Army utilizes. The Secret Service maintains only a handful of full-time agent recruiters at its headquarters. While it is apparent that each Secret Service employee possesses a role in recruiting, enhancing the number and disbursement of full-time recruiters for the Secret Service may prove extremely beneficial. It is also necessary to review current incentives for recruiters. The agency should study whether implementing individual recruiter incentives or applying incentives for the overarching field office might prove more advantageous.

The Secret Service should study where its primary source of high quality candidates originates from and assign full-time agents and officers in the local field offices as recruiters. If deemed appropriate, these positions could be assigned as a long-term temporary duty travel (TDY) status. Another option is to assign recruiters similar to how the Secret Service assigns polygraphers. Polygraphers are operationally controlled by headquarters but are stationed in field offices. This would aid in efforts directed towards providing applicants increased one-on-one attention as most field office agents conduct recruiting duties in addition to other agent responsibilities, such as protection, investigations, and travel. A potential candidate may mistakenly decide that another agency is more interested merely due to the Secret Service agent being unavailable due to traveling or on another assignment. Assigning full-time recruiters to field offices might yield more high quality candidates and prove a good investment.

The primary takeaway from U.S. Army recruiting strategy is that the Secret Service should conduct in-depth and purposeful research, in concert with proper analysis, to make informed decisions to compete with other premier law enforcement agencies. The Secret Service must engage whole-heartedly with all means at its disposal if it desires to obtain the best candidates possible. Other agencies are investing significant time and resources to recruit the best qualified candidates given the current competitive environment. A significant lesson from the U.S. Army is that the Secret Service should research effective trends and remain open-minded, flexible, and innovative when considering the best recruiting methods to employ.

Veteran Recruiting

As mentioned previously, military veterans comprise a significant portion within the Secret Service. Veterans are a natural transition and welcome addition to the agency. This author's recruiting class, 24 total, consisted of 12 military veterans. The other half possessed law enforcement backgrounds. The most apparent and logical means of attracting veterans is to target and advertise specifically towards them. This should include various mechanisms limited only by one's imagination. Veterans engage in multiple platforms and research should entail methods to determine the most effective methods. Initially however, logical recruiting methods are applicable for veterans in the same manner as other potential applicants.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a report in July 2019 titled, "Improving Federal Recruiting and Hiring Efforts."⁴⁹ One of the first suggestions noted is to author a position vacancy/job announcement in a clear and concise manner. Many job announcements tend to be lengthy and convoluted. Creating concise, clear, and straightforward job announcements aid the applicant in reducing wasted time and effort. This also communicates

a message to the applicant that from the very beginning of the hiring process, the agency is acting in a transparent manner. One presumes that the agency will continue to be transparent in its dealings.

Directly addressing veterans in marketing is essential. The more the veteran identifies with the Secret Service as a good fit for themselves, the more apt he or she will apply. If there are special considerations in the hiring process for veterans, such as veteran's preference points, this should be highlighted and explained at the beginning of the process. The FBI's recruiting homepage maintains a "veterans" tab at the top linked to a distinct page with specific messaging and instructions for veterans. Accessible to all interested candidates, the FBI's webpage includes in-depth coverage and details regarding its hiring process, standards, and training once hired.⁵⁰ These measures present multiple messages to the applicant, such as transparency, organization, and professionalism. These characteristics are promulgated in the military and make the transition easier as the veteran considers his or her civilian career.

Active duty military personnel are required to attend a civilian transition seminar before departing the military. Each branch of the military mandates this requirement particular to their branch program. The United States Marine Corps for example requires personnel transitioning to the civilian sector to attend their Transition Readiness Seminar (TRS). The TRS is a five-day workshop that includes mandatory training and information to aid in transitioning to civilian life. This includes civilian job aptitude testing to see what particular career suits them after the military.⁵¹ Outside companies and other agencies can attend and speak at these seminars. These workshops could be a valuable opportunity for the Secret Service to attract and recruit veterans by enhancing interaction and relationships with the military.

The military changed its retirement system on January 1, 2018. Recruits presently fall under the Blended Retirement System (BRS). The military retirement previously provided zero pay or benefits if a service member left the military before twenty years of service. This new system allows for contributions throughout one's career into a retirement account. Under the BRS, service members who discharge from the military before completing twenty years receive a guaranteed monetary benefit depending on the number of years served.⁵² This may influence service members to transition sooner to the civilian side, compared to the prior system where veterans received no compensation upon departing the military. This could benefit the Secret Service in that the military could experience increased numbers of departing service members seeking civilian employment with Federal law enforcement agencies.

Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

A Federal law enforcement agency with similar challenges in recruiting an adequate number of qualified applicants is the United States Customs and Border Protection agency (CBP). Executive Order 13767 required CBP to hire an additional 5000 Border Patrol agents, as well as an additional 2,000 CBP officers and 500 AMO personnel (Air and Marine Operations). The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) published a report in 2018 regarding CBP's hiring challenges and efforts. The GAO report entailed comparing certain aspects of CBP's hiring process with that of three other agencies: Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Bureau of Prisons (BOP), and the U.S. Secret Service.⁵³ The GAO utilized these other agencies for comparison to CBP due to them being components of the Department of Homeland Security. They also utilize similar hiring processes that involve rigorous hiring procedures and stringent minimum standards for hiring.⁵⁴

To cope with the additional hiring requirements, in November 2017, CBP hired a contracting agency, Accenture Federal Services, to assist the agency in meeting its hiring mandate.⁵⁵ CBP directed the contractor to utilize the same hiring process but allowed Accenture the flexibility to experiment with new hiring initiatives. The Accenture contract entails five years and is not to exceed \$297 million. Under this performance-based contract, Accenture is responsible for enhancing CBP's recruitment efforts and managing the hiring process for those applicants it recruits.⁵⁶ This is one aspect of innovative solutions which CBP is employing to accomplish its hiring mandate.

In addition to the above contracting agency, CPB's recruiting budget increased substantially from approximately \$6.4 million in FY 2015 to over \$12.7 million in FY 2017. CBP also emphasized a more proactive recruiting methodology. For example, CBP increased participation at recruiting events from 905 events in FY 2015 to approximately 3,000 in FY 2017.⁵⁷ Coincidentally, the number of applications received by CBP increased. In FY 2013, CBP received approximately 27,000 applications and in FY 2017, CBP received more than 91,000 applications for its Border Patrol Agent position. During this same timeframe, CBP officer position applications increased from approximately 22,500 to over 85,000. Presently, it is still unknown whether these achievements are attributable to the contracting agency, CBP's enhanced efforts, or a combination of both.⁵⁸

For informational purposes, CBP maintains eleven steps in its application and hiring process, which is very similar to most Federal law enforcement agencies:

1. Application through USAJOBS.
2. Entrance Examination.
3. Resume review for minimum qualifications.
4. Medical Examination.
5. Physical Training test.
6. Background investigation.
7. Interview.
8. Polygram examination.
9. Provisional security clearance issued.
10. Drug test at any point during the hiring process.
11. Job offer and official Enter-On-Duty date determined.⁵⁹

Additional Recommendations

The military, especially the U.S. Army, invests considerable resources towards research and implementing new and effective recruiting methods. While each branch persistently competes with each other for recruits, the military does share some processing mechanisms. Most recruiting offices are represented by each branch where their presence is warranted. The Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard recruiters can be located under one roof in one location, thereby sharing the building expenses. When a candidate enlists in the military, they report to the Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) where tests are administered to recruits joining each of the branches.⁶⁰

Another recruiting activity the military promotes is its presence and engagement with educational institutions. Given the results of studies mentioned in this paper indicating the poor perception of law enforcement and the continuing divide between the military-civilian sectors, engaging today's youth may be paramount to the future quality and success of our law enforcement agencies. The Secret Service should engage consistently with educational entities, especially at the collegiate level. Professors know their students and the better the relationship with the Secret Service, the more likely the professor would recommend the agency as a future employer to their student. Another aspect entails the prospect that students may not be considering the Secret Service as a career. With a consistent presence on campus, it may be more likely that a highly qualified candidate might entertain applying to the Secret Service. This should not be limited to criminal justice majors as capable students may be pursuing other fields and not have thought of the Secret Service previously. By reaching out to multiple academic disciplines, a wide net is cast thereby eliminating the chance that a talented individual might have missed an opportunity to utilize such abilities as a Secret Service agent.

As mentioned previously, most Federal law enforcement agencies maintain the same hiring process as described with Customs and Border Protection. A concept perhaps foreign to many Federal agencies that may be worthwhile exploring is the feasibility of combining resources and efforts between agencies. There are numerous possibilities and flexibility considering this premise. To reduce costs and save time, agencies could standardize certain initial positional requirements, such as testing for special agents or officers, and combine processing efforts across multiple agencies. The Department of Homeland Security could issue one standard application, written test, physical test, and medical exam for all special agent applicants. This concept is not brand new. A considerable number of state law enforcement accreditation boards implemented similar measures several years ago.

The State of Michigan for example formed the Michigan Commission On Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES).⁶¹ Several other states maintain similar entities regarding peace officer standards. These commissions are responsible for implementing peace officer candidate regulations and processes. In the State of Michigan, a potential peace officer candidate who desires to apply to a police department must first take a written test and a physical training test that is administered by MCOLES. Upon applying to a police department, and prior to gaining acceptance into a police academy, a candidate must successfully pass these tests. By administering these tests, MCOLES alleviates a burden from individual police departments and ensures uniformity concerning processes and accreditation.⁶²

This concept could apply to Federal law enforcement on a small or large scale. A significant number of agencies align under the Department of Homeland Security. The Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Glynco, Georgia certifies criminal investigators in their initial Criminal Investigator Training Program (CITP). Multiple agencies send their

recruits to this program for certification prior to reporting for their individual agency specific training program. A recruiting program could be implemented where the process is operated by an overarching entity comprised of joint interagency personnel in multiple locations across the country. Alleviating some of the individual agencies' burden pertaining to resources and efforts would be popular. If a significant number of States and their law enforcement boards deemed it more effective to implement such measures, such as exist with MCOLES, then the concept and applicability should at least be studied to determine its feasibility with Federal agencies.

Conclusion

Law enforcement faces challenging times recruiting enough qualified candidates. Federal law enforcement, to include the U.S. Secret Service, is not immune to this issue. The issues facing law enforcement are complex and multi-faceted. Specific challenges in one area of the country are vastly unique compared with the particular situation facing other parts of the country. The Secret Service faces similar challenges as most law enforcement agencies, but also faces its own unique set of challenging characteristics. While the Secret Service has endured negative public scrutiny in the past, it continues in recent years to positively improve its image and employee morale each year.

The military faces similar recruiting issues. Veterans comprise a good percentage of Secret Service staff and are a welcome addition to the agency. The best qualified applicants today have multiple choices to choose from and will pick the agency that meets the majority of their wishes. The military spends enormous time and resources towards identifying and implementing the most effective methods to attract and recruit highly qualified candidates for service. Perhaps the key learning aspect garnered from the military is the receptive and flexible

attitude towards initiating innovative and efficient methods for recruiting. One might describe this as a mindset entailing objectivity, resourcefulness, and creativity when facing difficult challenges.

The U.S. Army demonstrates how in-depth its efforts and resources extend regarding recruiting. The U.S. military and the U.S. Secret Service possess similar challenges and goals pertaining to recruiting efforts. If the U.S. Secret Service wishes to progress and compete amongst premier law enforcement agencies, it should review and implement applicable military recruiting methods deemed most effective and beneficial to the Secret Service. Employing the best qualified candidates as Secret Service agents ensures the successful future of a crucial Federal law enforcement agency.

Endnotes

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