



**STRATEGY  
RESEARCH  
PROJECT**

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Defense or any of its agencies. This document may not be released for open publication until it has been cleared by the appropriate military service or government agency.

**THE CHALLENGE OF MANNING  
THE POST-COLD WAR ARMY**

**BY**

**LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOHN P. MIKULA  
United States Army**

**DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A:  
Approved for public release.  
Distribution is unlimited.**

**USAWC CLASS OF 1999**



**U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CARLISLE BARRACKS, PA 17013-5050**

**DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED 4**

**19990521 025**

**The Challenge of Manning  
the Post-Cold War Army**

by

Lieutenant Colonel John P. Mikula  
United States Army

Colonel Richard Gribling, DMSPO  
Project Advisor

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Defense or any of its agencies. This document may not be released for open publication until it has been cleared by the appropriate military service or government agency.

U.S. Army War College  
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A:  
Approved for public release.  
Distribution is unlimited.



## **ABSTRACT**

**AUTHOR:** John P. Mikula, LTC, United States Army

**TITLE:** THE CHALLENGE OF MANNING THE POST-COLD WAR ARMY

**FORMAT:** "USAWC Strategy Research Project"

**DATE:** 15 APRIL 1999 **PAGES:** 36 **CLASSIFICATION:** Unclassified

Following the end of the Cold War, the Army embarked on a significant force reduction program that spanned nearly an entire decade. As the Army approached the end of that drawdown period, the All-Volunteer Force was beginning to show signs of buckling. High attrition, a declining propensity to serve, and a significant gap between civilian and military pay had the Army struggling to bring young men and women into its ranks. Rumblings of a "hollow Army," reminiscent of the post Vietnam days, were again being heard in discussions among Army leaders. This paper will examine the Army's manning crisis and the factors that have contributed to the challenges it faces today. Are the Army's current personnel policies contributing to the problem? This paper contends they are and will offer solutions to help the Army overcome the current manning crisis.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	III
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS .....	VII
I. THE POST COLD WAR ARMY .....	1
II. THE MANNING CRISIS.....	2
FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PROBLEM .....	2
In Search of a Strategy .....	3
Reaping the Peace Dividend .....	4
Society and the Soldier .....	6
The Declining Propensity to Serve.....	7
III. IN SEARCH OF A CURE.....	9
THE MONEY SOLUTION.....	10
DO LOWER ENTRY STANDARDS MEAN MORE SOLDIERS? .....	12
THE CALL FOR NATIONAL SERVICE.....	13
ASSESSMENT .....	16
IV. NEED FOR A NEW PARADIGM.....	17
PLAY TO YOUR STRENGTH.....	18
DETERMINE REQUIREMENTS; EMPHASIZE LEADERSHIP .....	19
V. CONCLUSION .....	20
ENDNOTES.....	23
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	27



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURE 1: DEFENSE SPENDING: 1940-1998	5
FIGURE 2: ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY PERSONNEL DURING PERIODS OF CONFLICT	8



*To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace.*

G. Washington 1790

## I. THE POST-COLD WAR ARMY

“The task of maintaining a large peacetime standing force wholly through volunteers is very challenging. In fact it may be the most critical challenge facing the Department of Defense for the next decade.”<sup>1</sup> Those prophetic words in a foreword to a collection of essays on the draft by Martin Anderson are as true today as they were in 1982 when he published his work. However, much has changed for the United States Army as the end of the century draws near. In a world without the Soviet Union, the Army is smaller than it has been in more than three decades.<sup>2</sup> But despite its smaller size, it is having difficulty attracting enough soldiers to fill its ranks. The All-Volunteer Force that has sustained the Army for over a generation is beginning to crumble. With increasing frequency, the expression “hollow Army” creeps into discussions or conversations on force manning levels and readiness. The expression was popularized in the 1970’s when the Army was trying to right itself in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. Used more recently by Senator John McCain in his 1994 white paper, Going Hollow: the Downward Spiral of Military Readiness, the term suggests a mismatch between people, equipment, and missions.<sup>3</sup> The 1998 Congressional testimony of the Chairman and the Joint Chiefs on force readiness highlighted once again the perceived gap between assigned missions and the requisite forces needed to execute those

missions; the beginnings, many would say, of a hollow force.<sup>4</sup> Though the nation's Armed Forces are busier, as evidenced by the increase and duration of deployments; support for the Army and the other services, when measured by defense spending, continues to decline.<sup>5</sup>

## **II. THE MANNING CRISIS**

The Army faces a major manpower crisis that has significant implications for the short-term readiness of the force and the long-term viability of the institution. If this problem is not addressed soon and appropriately, it will mean another first battle with excessive casualties. What are the dynamics that have created this situation and why is the nation and its political leadership seemingly unconcerned about the Army and its current state of personnel readiness? This paper will assess the impact of the post-Cold War environment on manning the U.S. Army, and propose solutions for overcoming the crisis.

### **FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PROBLEM**

Three major factors shape the Army as an institution. They are the nation's military strategy, dollars appropriated for defense spending, and the attitudes and perceptions of American society. Some defense analysts argue that in the wake of the Cold War, the national military strategy is ill defined as there is no strategic consensus on what the threat is to this nation.<sup>6</sup> The nation is also in a period where defense spending, as a percentage of Gross National Product (GNP), has steadily declined since 1986.<sup>7</sup> The most optimistic projections show defense spending will hover at about

2.8 percent of GNP, a figure most defense analysts argue is insufficient to adequately resource the services to execute the national military strategy.<sup>8</sup> Finally, most young Americans are less interested in military service as reflected by the declining trend in propensity to serve.<sup>9</sup> A closer review of these factors will show how they influence the Army, and how they have contributed to the personnel shortfall it now faces.

### **In Search of a Strategy**

The National Military Strategy plays an important role in determining how the Army and the other services are funded and what force structure will result. For nearly half a century, the United States adhered to a strategy predicated on checking Soviet expansionism and halting the spread of communism. The collapse of the Soviet Union invalidated that strategy, and also invalidated the template planners used for years to shape the Army. Since that time, this nation has been unable to reach a strategic consensus on what the threats to our interests are and what national policies should guide our efforts in countering those threats.<sup>10</sup> While the prospect of global nuclear war is unlikely, valid threats to our interests and security remain. These threats range from asymmetrical attacks on our information infrastructure, to terrorists wielding weapons of mass destruction, to a potential high intensity conflict on the Korean Peninsula. Given that the near future will be characterized by a potentially hostile world of failed states, rogue nations, and transnational criminals, what has emerged to fill the strategic vacuum is a policy built upon the concept of engagement and enlargement.<sup>11</sup> It is an adaptive strategy that fits virtually all situations, from fighting a major theater war to conducting humanitarian assistance operations. It is also the strategy that has

committed U.S. forces abroad at an ever-increasing rate, while the absence of a readily identifiable threat has caused defense budgets to languish.<sup>12</sup> The growing gap between the increasing number of deployments and dollars appropriated to man and maintain forces at the higher operational tempo (OPTEMPO) raises the specter of the “hollow Army” Senator McCain mentions in his article.

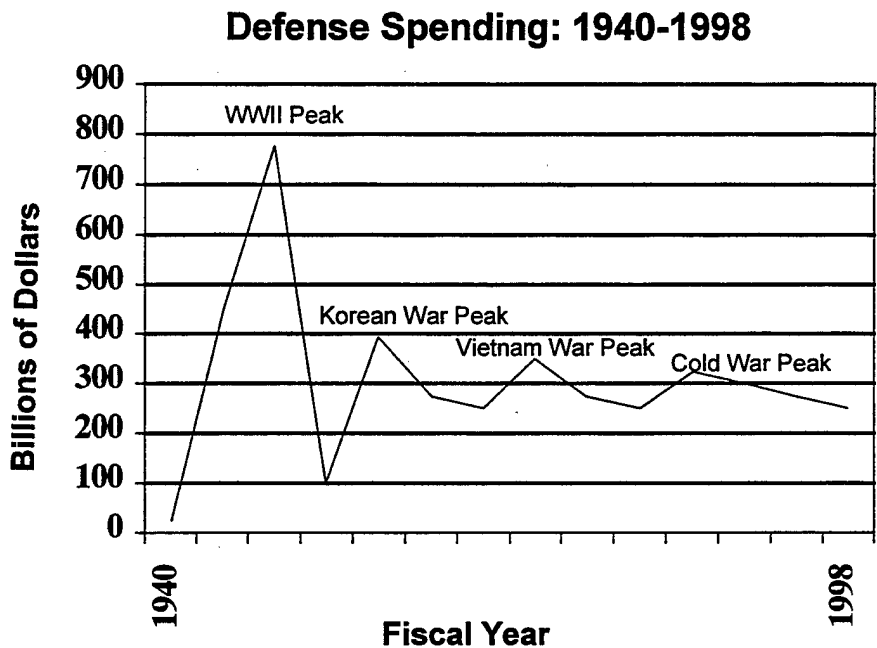
### **Reaping the Peace Dividend**

During the Cold War period, the United States committed a large portion of its resources towards Defense spending.<sup>13</sup> According to one defense budget expert, the Army and the other services are paying the price for victory in the Cold War.

“...Defense critics have complained that the scale and longevity of the Cold War defense commitments entailed enormous sacrifices in economic growth, budget deficits, and unmet domestic needs. Their usual conclusion is that post-Cold War defense budget cutbacks can and should redress these sacrifices”.<sup>14</sup>

Defense budget analyst Dr. Frank Ippolito noted that when there is no strategic consensus or clear strategy, there is a tendency for the defense budget to shrink as dollars are shifted to domestic programs. However, the spending cutbacks of the post-Cold War era are not unique to this decade. Historically, a linkage exists between threats to our interests and Defense expenditures as shown in the chart at figure 1. Declining Defense spending after each major conflict, from World War II to Vietnam, and now in the post-Cold War period, has been accompanied by a corresponding reduction in manpower levels. Though the diversion of discretionary defense dollars to domestic programs after the fall of the Soviet Union should have been expected, what

was not anticipated was the impact the new strategy of engagement and enlargement would have on OPTEMPO and how that and lower defense spending would negatively impact manning the Army and the readiness of the forces.



**FIGURE 1**

For the Army, approximately a third of its budget is targeted for personnel programs with the bulk of those dollars being spent on military compensation that includes pay and allowances, enlistment and reenlistment bonuses, and other monetary incentives for soldiers.<sup>15</sup> Obviously, smaller defense budgets mean fewer dollars for personnel programs, which in turn contributes to the growing pay gap between military compensation and that offered by civilian employers. It also means reduced funding for retirement plans and the reduction or elimination of enlistment and reenlistment bonuses. Also, fewer dollars may be budgeted for quality of life issues, such as better on base housing for soldiers and their families. All of these issues are important to soldiers and their families, and watering them down further handicaps the Army's ability

to recruit and retain soldiers. The Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Dennis J. Reimer summed it up as follows: "Today, our principal readiness concern must be recruiting, retaining, and taking care of our soldiers. Retirement and pay are very, very important to our people, the two issues that we think are top priorities."<sup>16</sup> However, the priorities of the nation's military leadership do not always match those of American society or its political leadership.

### **Society and the Soldier**

The Army, as an institution, has been an integral part of American society since the birth of this nation, and Americans significantly influence the values, beliefs, and composition of their Army. However, American society has shown a dislike for maintaining a large standing Army. Coates and Pellegrin, in their book, *Military Sociology*, sum it up succinctly. "Despite the fact that the nation was born in warfare and has engaged in it frequently since that time, military institutions in the past have been significant in national life only in wartime."<sup>17</sup> Similarly, Samuel Huntington attributes the distrust of large Armies to our founding fathers and their liberal philosophy and conservative Constitution.<sup>18</sup> He argues, "...first, liberalism dominated American thinking from the revolution through the first half of the twentieth century. Second, liberalism does not understand and is hostile to military institutions and the military function."<sup>19</sup> Our forefathers drew a clear distinction between a professional standing Army and a citizen-dominated militia in the Constitution. The wording of the Constitution in reference to the Army states; "to raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years."<sup>20</sup> This

highlights the temporary nature of Army as an institution. It is formed when the nation has a specific need, namely armed conflict, and then is disbanded when the crisis has passed. Further, the Constitution places a significant responsibility on the militia, namely "... to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel invasions."<sup>21</sup> Clearly, the intent of the founding fathers was that the militia would assure the day to day security of the nation. Unlike the professional soldier, the militiaman posed little threat to civilian control of the military.

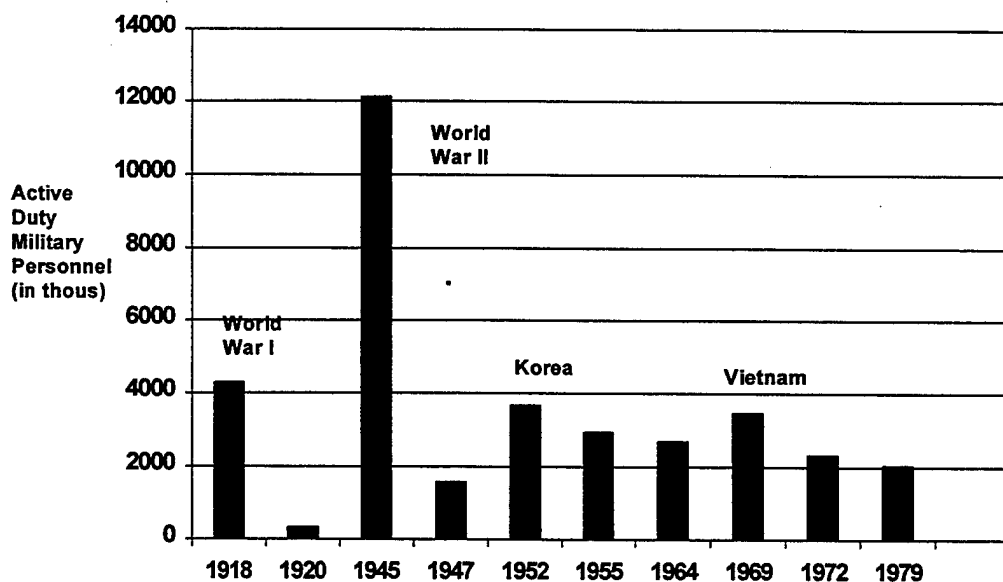
### **The Declining Propensity to Serve**

The individual response to military service is similar to American societies' dislike of a large standing Army. The results of the 1997 Youth Attitude Tracking Survey (YATS), a computer-assisted telephone interview commissioned by the Defense Department, show that fewer young men and women are interested in military service than in years past. The trend is alarming, showing a steady and consistent decline from 17% to the current 11% since the end of the Gulf War. The survey "provides information on the propensity, attitudes, and motivations of young people toward military service"<sup>22</sup> and has become a key barometer for the services to assess the recruiting environment and gauge the challenges they may face. Undoubtedly, many factors contributed to this decade's downturn in propensity to serve. Exactly what motivates men and women to serve in the military is difficult to nail down. Patriotism, which motivated many generations of Americans, may no longer be a sufficient incentive.

Many of the members of the post World War II baby boomer generation felt a sense of obligation or duty to serve in the military.<sup>23</sup> Many had fathers who had served

in the conflicts of World War II, Korea, or Vietnam. However, times have changed. The current group of service age men and women largely have parents that have not seen military service. Military role models are increasingly hard to find, and will become more scarce in the future. Sadly the nation loses 1,000 veterans every day from the World War II generation.<sup>24</sup> Further, appealing to Americans to enter the military for patriotic or selfless service reasons is difficult when there is no clear threat to our national interests. Generation X, as they are known, entered the window for military service in the 90's. Sociologists indicate they are motivated by a different set of factors, and that their

**Active Duty Military Personnel during Periods of Conflict**



**FIGURE 2**

values are different as well. They point to the world in which they grew up; one of divorce, single-parent families, day care, AIDS, and environmental pollution.<sup>25</sup> While Boomers shared many of the same values as their WWII generation parents; money,

quality of life, rewards, training, and feedback motivate Generation Xers.<sup>26</sup> What Generation X is expecting from their employer is exactly what is so difficult for the Army to deliver. Constant deployments with less time for families, fewer high tech training opportunities than the private sector, and compensation that lags civilian equivalents make the Army less attractive to young men and women entering the work force. And there's more bad news around the corner, as Generation Y, those currently approaching military service age, have the same expectations as Generation X.

The downturn in propensity to serve, a new strategy that has accelerated OPTEMPO, and declining defense spending have created a significant challenge for the Army's leadership as they attempt to overcome the manning crisis. However, today's disassociation of society and the military is similar to other such periods that have occurred throughout the history of this nation. During times of relative peace as we are in now, the Army shrinks; and when conflict or crises occur the Army grows to counter the threat. If one plotted the strength of the nation's Army on a chart as shown in figure 2, it becomes a picture of peaks and valleys. The highest points representing times of conflict and the lowest periods of relative peace. Though the current decline was deliberately planned and executed, the fact remains that the Army is hard pressed to meet those lower manning levels.

### **III. IN SEARCH OF A CURE**

The Army has not been sitting idly on the sidelines as this manning crisis has unfolded. In fact, the Army's leadership and some members of Congress have aggressively explained the problem to the public and have actively sought solutions to

stem the crisis. The remedies that the nation's senior military and political leadership are pursuing fall into two categories. The first is monetary incentives which include raising pay and compensation for service members; the other is lowering entry standards so more applicants are eligible to serve. A third alternative, returning to some form of compulsory service, has received little attention thus far. In 1998, the Army, faced with dropping enlistment rates implemented several monetary and qualitative initiatives to bolster the recruiting effort. The rationale for those initiatives follows.

#### THE MONEY SOLUTION

With recent articles citing a growing pay gap or less attractive retirement plans, it is becoming more and more apparent that compensation and quality of life issues are important to potential recruits and to those considering making the military a career.<sup>27</sup> The Army, however, is facing stiff competition from the private sector, which is benefiting from the nation's booming economy. According to a senior Pentagon official, "(when) the Cold War was raging, inflation was soaring and the United States had 2.2 million men and women in uniform. Fifteen years later, inflation is very, very, low, the force is smaller (1.4 million) and the military is competing with a very robust economy."<sup>28</sup> Supporting that assertion is a DCSPER study which shows a direct correlation between 16-19 year old unemployment and Army recruiting efforts.<sup>29</sup> When youth unemployment is high, recruiter production is high as well. So a strong economy that generates higher youth employment, as we've experienced since the end of the Gulf War, further hurts the Army's efforts to recruit and retain quality young men

and women. Low unemployment and better civilian compensation have contributed to a pay gap that ranges anywhere between 8.5 to 13.5 percent.<sup>30</sup>

But will more money solve the problem? According to LTG David H. Ohle, the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, in the recruiting business, "...money talks."<sup>31</sup> Believing that to be a part of the solution, the Army recently offered two new initiatives to lure potential recruits. One is a \$3,000 signing bonus that the soldier would receive upon completion of all entry-level training, and the other is raising the maximum on the Army College Fund from \$40,000 to \$50,000.<sup>32</sup> The Army leadership's support for such initiatives may be based on numerous studies that detail the relationship between compensation and desire to serve. One such study conducted by the Rand Corporation and detailed in the Army Times seems to support the Army's leadership on this issue. According to Rand, pay increases have a positive impact on retention and productivity.<sup>33</sup> Cites the study; increasing basic pay for selected individuals based on merit would boost retention by 4.5 percent.

Besides improving compensation, the Clinton administration recently announced plans to reinstate the 50% retirement for all soldiers that have completed 20 years of service.<sup>34</sup> This would reverse a 1986 decision which changed the rate to 40% for soldiers entering the service that year or later. Military lobby groups have long claimed that the 50% retirement was a significant factor in both attracting and retaining people. Returning to that formula for retirement would likely have an immediate and positive effect on retention.<sup>35</sup>

These two initiatives taken together, closing the pay gap and reinstating the full retirement plan for all soldiers could help the Army gain ground in a very tough

recruiting market. Will it be enough to turn the tide in this battle is a question that must be answered soon.

## DO LOWER ENTRY STANDARDS MEAN MORE SOLDIERS?

In addition to improving compensation, the Army is cautiously reviewing its entry standards. Lower standards may increase the number of eligible recruits, but it could also impact on the quality of the force. Leaders characterize today's Army as a high quality force. The Army's fixation with quality is perhaps driven by the negative experiences of the senior officers that served during or immediately after the Vietnam War. Many of them recall the painful period in the late 1960's when the Army took in less than qualified troops in the "Project 100,000." The 300,000 soldiers brought in under that program "got into more trouble and were harder to train and keep from deserting."<sup>36</sup> Years later, those same officers led a much different Army from victory in the Gulf War through the drawdown period that followed the end of the Cold War. The conclusion drawn from their experiences is that a quality force is directly linked to high entry standards. The problem associated with the rigid entry standards is the size of the population the Army and the other services target. For years the military has sought high school graduates with better than average entry test scores, and clean records. However, that population is very small. For example, of the 17-21 year old male population minus those in college, medically or morally disqualified, or with unacceptable test scores; only 12% are eligible for service under current standards.<sup>37</sup> Forty two percent of that group had less than qualifying test scores. The math is

simple. By adjusting standards, the Army can enlarge the pool of eligible recruits and help solve their recruiting shortfall.

In fact, the Army did lower standards in an effort to meet its recruiting goal. In October 1998, the Army agreed to grant home-schooled applicants the same status as high school graduates. And what may soon follow, the Army is considering allowing more holders of general equivalency diplomas (GEDs) to enter the service.<sup>38</sup> This is a big step for a quality conscious Army as statistically GED holders have not performed as well as high school graduates in training.<sup>39</sup> All this follows a 1997 change which raised the maximum percentage of non-high school graduates serving in the Army from 5% to 10 percent.<sup>40</sup> In an increasing high tech, computer driven Army, the case for further lowering standards becomes even more problematic for quality advocates. The requirement for talented, computer literate young men and women meets only a portion of the Army's force structure needs. The Army still has the mission of closing with and destroying the enemy, and that gunfight often requires a different type of talent. The potential benefits of adjusting entry standards are obvious and could offer a simple solution to the tough problem of recruiting soldiers. The Army has only played around the margins of the entry standards issue out of a fear of compromising the quality of the force. What is clear however, is that the Army is coming up short in the recruiting business and recruiting projections for the near term are not any better.

#### THE CALL FOR NATIONAL SERVICE

Besides increasing compensation and revising entry standards, another less discussed alternative to overcoming the manning problem is to scrap the All-Volunteer

Force and return to some form of compulsory military service. However, improving compensation or modifying entry standards would draw praise as relatively simple solutions compared to the prospect of reintroducing the draft. Not since the end of the Vietnam War has an individual been brought into military service against his or her own will. Since the draft ended, the current All-Volunteer Force has become an institution in American society. For over two decades, volunteers have entered the Army and the other branches of the military in numbers sufficient to meet Congressionally mandated end strengths. However, the widely held notion that "most Americans and average citizens believe that in a democratic society, men and women will serve their country voluntarily when given proper encouragement, incentives and respect"<sup>41</sup> does not always hold true, as appears to be the case today. Since the numbers stepping forward to join the Army is steadily declining, compulsory service does present a viable option for maintaining a strong, ready force.

The arguments surrounding compulsory service hinge on two issues. First, is some form of compulsory service socially and politically acceptable; and second, will such an initiative provide both the quantity and quality of individuals the Army needs to man the force in the next century?

Historically, the United States has resorted to the draft or conscription only during times of war or national crisis. Surprisingly, the longest period of compulsory service is also the most recent, spanning the Cold War period from the Korean War through the war in Vietnam. Maintaining a large standing Army is a recent development in our history and some argue it is associated with our emergence from World War II as a major world power. This recent example notwithstanding, manning the Army

through conscription has been the exception rather than the rule. Proponents of national service see benefits to both the military and society. Former Secretary of the Navy James Webb had this to say on mandatory service:

“When we had a draft, families throughout the nation paid close attention, because nearly all of them were at risk when troops were sent in harms way. Additionally, a constant stream of veterans was returning to communities through out the country, and despite constant media reports to the contrary they were bringing home a positive story about the military service and the challenges of wearing the uniform.”<sup>42</sup>

Another positive effect of compulsory service is that the military would more closely resemble American society itself; a situation which has not existed since the end of the draft. Put another way, compulsory service gives Americans a stake in its Army.

Arguments against the draft are equally compelling. Opponents are quick to point to the two and a half decades of success with the All-Volunteer Force and the demise of the Soviet Union as two strong reasons for not returning to conscripted service. Further, any effort to return to compulsory service during this period of relative peace would lack historical precedent. Coupled with the lack of a significant threat to United States interests, any argument for compulsory service is truly difficult to fashion.

Aside from the social issues surrounding a return to compulsory service, what are the potential benefits of mandatory service? First, it would create a much larger pool of prospective recruits, and given today's smaller force could in all likelihood eliminate the manning problem. Second, it has the promise of providing the Army individuals with high aptitude test scores; the high quality soldiers it so desperately seeks. However appealing the draft may be, it is not a panacea. It does little if anything to help the Army with its attrition problem nor does it address any future challenges with retention.

Though national service or conscription offers the Army a solution to help overcome its manning woes, it's very unlikely that such an initiative would gain much popular support. Whether conscripted or not, the fundamental dilemma of public support for large peacetime Armies remains an issue. In the end, the social costs associated with compulsory service are far too high for American society to absorb. The issue of manning this American institution will likely remain a problem for the Army and its leadership to resolve.

## ASSESSMENT

So how is the Army doing in its efforts to bring in good people from a society which is both unsupportive and unresponsive? How have promises to close the pay gap and provide for a better retirement affected recruiting and retention? The results are mixed. For the last quarter of 1998, the Army fell short of its recruiting goal by 20% or 2,345 soldiers.<sup>43</sup> At the same time, attrition for soldiers serving on their first enlistment climbed to levels as high as 41%, a situation which further stresses a system which is not achieving its entry level numbers.<sup>44</sup> It's a problem that greatly concerns Army leaders, and they have rightly targeted it for corrective action. In the retention arena, the Army units are meeting their established reenlistment goals. Though the retention numbers are a positive sign, it alone will not see the Army through this manning crisis.

What do these initial statistics signal for the future? What is the next step for the administration and the Army's leadership? Additional spending for pay raises beyond the proposed increases for FY 2000 is unlikely as some critics in Congress are

indicating that "it's not clear not clear that higher pay and better retirement benefits ...will actually help the Pentagon keep more troops in uniform."<sup>45</sup> Assuming that the Army and the other services have achieved as much of an increase in funding as can be reasonably expected, perhaps it's time for the Army to develop a new strategy to achieve its manning requirements.

#### **IV. NEED FOR A NEW PARADIGM**

The military culture in this country is changing, and the institutional processes that support the Army must change as well. The economic prosperity of the '90s, the lack of a clear threat to the nation's vital interests, and all the earlier identified changes in this post-Cold War period have eroded the Army's ability to sustain the All-Volunteer Force. The current strategy of attempting to "buy" a professional force is failing and similarly, holding the line on entry standards is further handicapping the Army's ability to man the force. Simply put, the Army needs to change its manning paradigm. A more effective approach would integrate existing initiatives such as fair compensation and benefits with a new focus on service to the nation. Current themes such as money for college and high tech job skills are important, but other employers can make similar offers. What they can't offer, however, is a chance to be a warrior; a chance to serve one's country. At the same time, the Army needs to review its entry standards with the goal making military service an option for more young men and women in this country. Those two actions undertaken together can help the Army overcome this manning crisis and avoid short-term damage to readiness and long-term harm to the institution.

## PLAY TO YOUR STRENGTH

The first part of the solution is to renew the bond between the Army and the American people. Somewhere between the end of Vietnam War and the beginning of the post-Cold War drawdown, the Army lost its strong tie with American society, and that's surprising considering that very few organizations or institutions in this nation have as rich a heritage and record of service to the nation as the US Army. Many generations of Americans have served their nation, and they have taken their service experiences back to their communities and shared it with their families, friends and neighbors.<sup>46</sup> Being a veteran, or having served, was both an accomplishment and a source of pride to previous generations. Where did the Army lose that bond with society? It can't be solely attributed to the current generation and the many changes of this decade. By contrast, the Marine Corps appears to have retained its niche in American culture and is successfully selling the idea of service to country. The Marines are getting more than just "a few good men," as they are in front of the other services in meeting their recruiting target.<sup>47</sup> Their focus on discipline, commitment, and service allows them to attract recruits without having to reference pay or retirement or money for college. Granted, they have a much smaller recruiting quota than the Army, but there is a message in the Marine Corps strategy. The Marine Corps is selling an American institution, not job training and not college money, and their strategy is working. The Army can't compete with the private sector when it comes to job training or compensation, but it can compete when it offers something that they can not—a chance to be a soldier and a chance to serve.

## DETERMINE REQUIREMENTS; EMPHASIZE LEADERSHIP

In addition to recapturing its image as a national institution, the Army needs to carefully analyze its quality requirements. It must get beyond its statistical bias that individuals without stellar test scores are harder to train, have higher attrition rates, and cost the Army more money in the long run. Though a return to the recruiting practices of the Vietnam era would be unwise, a prudent approach would be to revise existing standards so the Army has a chance of meeting its recruiting target. This in no way would lessen the Army's goal of having a high quality force. A quality force is as much a product of process as it is the raw material entering the system. Solid leadership makes a quality force possible.

Leadership has been discussed in countless books and articles and has been portrayed as the catalyst for organizational success, just as a lack of it has been associated with organizational failure. Has a lack of leadership contributed to first term attrition rates hovering near record levels at 38 percent? Perhaps leaders at all levels, aided by the drawdown, have become victims of the notion that it is easier to get rid of a marginal soldier than to invest more time in helping the soldier achieve the standard. Undoubtedly, the drawdown has contributed to the problem as marginal soldiers would be the first to go when commanders were faced with decisions on how to pare down the force. But the drawdown is over and today's Army can ill afford to have a revolving door policy for first term soldiers. With a stronger focus on leadership and a little more restraint in separating soldiers, the Army can help itself get better.

## THE NEW MANNING PARADIGM

With the Clinton administration and the Congress fully supporting successive pay raises to help close the pay gap, the Army is in an excellent position to implement a new manning paradigm. Several things need to happen. First, the Army must fix the internal problem of attrition. Leadership is the underpinning here, but reasonable goals and statistical data on first term attrition would help commanders with their decision making process. Once goals are established, the Army can monitor attrition and provide feedback to the field. Those two actions will help the Army lower first term attrition. Next, the Army should refocus its marketing program and develop a campaign that stresses patriotism, service to the nation, and the warrior spirit. The Marine Corps is having great success with such an approach, and the Army should follow suit and develop a similar advertising program. Lastly, Army leaders must reexamine the self-defeating fixation on quality. They have unfairly linked quality to intelligence and aptitude and that, as discussed earlier, is limiting the number of people the Army can recruit. A slight revision of entrance standards could be a boon to the Army's recruiting effort. The Army benefits from having a wide array of jobs that appeal to large cross section of young Americans. Fortunately, the job requirements and the skills needed to succeed in them vary significantly. Soldiers of varying aptitude and intelligence can excel in the same Army, and it can still be a high quality force.

## V. CONCLUSION

At last report, the Army was projected to fall short of its accession mission by about 7,000 soldiers. That translates to an endstrength of approximately 474,000, well

below the established target of 480,000. Though those numbers are alarming, the shortfall will not be felt immediately by the Army in the field. It will take about a year for the current recruiting shortfall to result in vacant positions in the Army. However, if the negative recruiting trend continues, shortages will be compounded and will continue to grow until corrected. Too many missions, and too few people; it is a situation which bears much similarity to Senator McCain's "hollow Army." The first signs of a hollow Army are appearing, but some in the Army are refusing to acknowledge it. Worst yet, the American people are unaware of the implications of this manning crisis, and the real dangers of a hollow force. For many, the memories of the Army's stinging losses at the onset of the Korean War have faded. That after all, was a generation ago, and the nation vowed not to ever again be caught so ill prepared to protect American interests. The evidence shows the Army moving again in that direction, and with each passing day the Army is less capable of averting another such disaster.

Unfortunately, there is no quick fix or simple solution. The challenges of developing a focused national strategy, gaining a larger share of the federal budget, or changing societal views on military service are issues that the Army can not solve by itself. So far, attempts to craft a cogent national strategy, similar to the one that guided the nation through the Cold War, have fallen short of the mark. Dedicating more Defense dollars for military compensation has not produced the expected results. Lastly, there is a lack of passion for military service among Americans. However, the Army needs to attack the problem in the areas where it can make a difference. First, it must rebuild the bond between the service and the American people. We must strip away the notion that being a soldier is just a job, and that the Army is just another

American corporation. Americans must have a stake in their Army and what it is asked to do. Second, the Army must tackle the tough issue of quality and what it takes to be a good soldier. For many leaders, this is a paradigm shift of significant proportions, but it is an issue that they must address; and the sooner the better. The Army must spearhead the attack on the manning crisis, and make the hard decisions that will reverse the movement toward a hollow Army. In the end, it is a small price to pay to avoid another first battle with far too many casualties.

Word Count 5790

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Martin Anderson, The Military Draft (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1882), xiii.

<sup>2</sup> David H. Ohle, "Briefing: Quality Soldiers: The Essence of America's Army" presented to the U.S. Army War College, November 1998, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Senator John McCain, Going Hollow: The Warnings of the Chiefs of Staff, An Update (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, September 1994), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Harry G. Summers Jr., "Joint Chiefs at War with Congress," Army Times 26 October 1998, 54.

<sup>5</sup> Association of the United States Army, Army Budget, Fiscal Year 1999 An Analysis a report prepared by the Institute of Land Warfare, June 1998, 79.

<sup>6</sup> Dennis S. Ippolito, Federal Budget Policy and Defense Strategy United States Army War College, Joint Processes and Landpower Development (Carlisle Barracks, PA, 1998), 9.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>8</sup> Senator McCain, 2.

<sup>9</sup> Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense, "1997 Youth Attitude Tracking Survey," memorandum for Assistant Secretaries (M&RA; MRAI&E) of the Military Departments, Washington, D.C., n.d.

<sup>10</sup> Ippolito, 9.

<sup>11</sup> The White House, A National Security Strategy for a New Century (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997), 2.

<sup>12</sup> Senator McCain, 2.

<sup>13</sup> Ippolito, 9.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> AUSA, Army budget, 79.

<sup>16</sup> Gerry J. Gilmore, "Army 'as small as it can go,' says Reimer" Army News Service, 8 October 1998, 1.

<sup>17</sup> Charles H. Coates and Roland J. Pellegrin, Military Sociology: A Study of American Military Institutions and Military Life (University Park, MD: The Social Science Press, 1965), 21.

<sup>18</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, The Soldier and the State (New York: Vintage Press, 1957), 143.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 144.

<sup>20</sup> Congress, the House of Representatives, The Constitution of the United States of America (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997), 5.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Youth Attitude Tracking Survey.

<sup>23</sup> Webb, 3.

<sup>24</sup> James H. Webb, Jr., "Military Leadership in a Changing Society" lecture at the Naval War College Conference on Ethics, 16 November 1998.

<sup>25</sup> Shannon P. O'Brien, "Motivating Generation X" n.d., available from <<http://www.npd.com/genx>>; Internet; accessed 23 October 1998.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Judith Haverman, "Waging War on Military Attrition Could Be Costly" Washington Post, 23 December 1998, A21.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Steve Walker, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, interview by author, 10 November 1998.

<sup>30</sup> Matthews, 3.

<sup>31</sup> Ohle lecture at AWC.

<sup>32</sup> Richard J. Newman, "Dumbing down the Military" U.S. News and World Report, 23 November 1998, 22.

<sup>33</sup> Tobias Naegele, "The Pay Gap" Army Times, 9 November 1998, 3.

<sup>34</sup> Haverman, A21.

<sup>35</sup> Matthews, 3.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, "Market Expansion Chart", November 1998.

<sup>38</sup> Newman, 22.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Webb, 2.

<sup>43</sup> Steven Komarow, "Enlistments in Army Fall 20% Short" USA Today, 29 January 1999, 7.

<sup>44</sup> Rick Ballard, Opinion/Commentary: "Y2P: Manpower meltdown to hit in fiscal year 2000" Army Times, 22 February 1999, 55.

<sup>45</sup> Rick Maze, "Poking holes in the Soldiers' Bill of Rights" Army Times, 22 February 1999, 17.

<sup>46</sup> Webb, 2.

<sup>47</sup> Rowan Scarborough, "U.S. Marine Corps is Getting a Lot of Good Men" Washington Times, 18 February 1999, 1.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense. "1997 Youth Attitude Tracking Survey." memorandum for Assistant Secretaries (M&RA; MRAI&E) of the Military Departments. Washington, D.C., n.d..
- Anderson, Martin. The Military Draft. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1982.
- Association of the United States Army, Army Budget, Fiscal Year 1999 An Analysis. a report prepared by the Institute of Land Warfare, June 1998.
- Ballard, Rick. Opinion/Commentary: "Y2P: Manpower meltdown to hit in fiscal year 2000." Army Times, 22 February 1999, p.55.
- Coates, Charles H. and Roland J. Pellegrin. Military Sociology: A Study of American Military Institutions and Military Life. University Park, MD: The Social Science Press, 1965.
- Gilmore, Gary J. "Army 'as small as it can go,' says Reimer." Army News Service, 8 October 1998, p1.
- Haverman, Judith. "Waging War on Military Attrition Could Be Costly." Washington Post, 23 December 1998, A21
- Huntington, Samuel P. The Soldier and the State. New York: Vintage Press, 1957.
- Ippolito, Dennis S. Federal Budget Policy and Defense Strategy. United States Army War College, Joint Processes and Landpower Development. Carlisle Barracks, PA, 1998
- Komarow, Steven. "Enlistments in Army Fall 20% Short." USA Today, 29 January 1999, p.7.
- Maze, Rick. "Poking holes in the Soldiers' Bill of Rights." Army Times, 22 February 1999, p.17.
- McCain, John. Going Hollow: The Warnings of the Chiefs of Staff, An Update. Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, September 1994.
- Naegele, Tobias. "The Pay Gap." Army Times, 9 November 1998, p3.
- Newman, Richard J. "Dumbing down the Military." U.S. News and World Report, 23 November 1998, 22.
- O'Brien, Shannon P. "Motivating Generation X." n.d. Available from <http://www.npd.com/genx>. Internet. Accessed 23 October 1998..

Ohle, David H. "Briefing: Quality Soldiers: The Essence of America's Army." presented to the U.S. Army War College, November 1998.

Scarborough, Rowan. "U.S. Marine Corps is Getting a Lot of Good Men." Washington Times, 18 February 1999, p.1.

Summers, Harry G. Jr. "Joint Chiefs at War with Congress." Army Times, 26 October 1998, p.54.

The White House, A National Security Strategy for a New Century. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997.

U.S. Congress, House of Representatives. The Constitution of the United States of America. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997.

Walker, Steve. Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel. Interview by author, 10 November 1998.

Webb, James H. Jr. "Military Leadership in a Changing Society." Lecture at the Naval War College Conference on Ethics, 16 November 1998, p2.