

**STRATEGY
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THE ARMY IMAGE: IN NEED OF CHANGE?

BY

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ABSTRACT

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This paper will examine the Army image as it relates to the American public, the recruitment eligible population and to soldiers. It will define what an image is and how the three different groups interpret today's Army image. It will trace the changes in the Army's image from the end of the Vietnam War until the late 1990s, compare the Army's image with the other services and analyze the reasons for that type of image. Lastly, it will determine if the Army's image needs improving. If the answer is yes, it will recommend ways to improve the Army's image.

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THE ARMY IMAGE: IN NEED OF CHANGE?

The United States Army has existed for 224 years. At home and abroad it has served the country well in war and in peace. The Army, especially during wars, has endured as an institution serving as a symbol of national stability. Its ranks have been filled primarily from the middle class but also from those less fortunate as well as those who are more privileged. As the Army enters the 21st Century, our recruiters are encountering considerable difficulties filling the ranks with qualified soldiers. With the collapse of Communism and the disappearance of the Iron Curtain, we no longer face the Cold War Soviet threat. Yet the nation continues to need its Army, which remains engaged in many operations other than war, all around the globe. But no one knows what kind of Army it will be, how big or how small. Who will fill its ranks? What will the American people think of the Army? How will they relate to their Army as we enter a new century?

"From the first days of the United States, American citizens disliked a professional military and openly distrusted a standing army. Although this distrust may well have been a legacy of British rule, these attitudes have prevailed in American civil-military relations from that time to the present."¹ After every major conflict involving the U.S. military, World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam, the United States has traditionally reduced the size of its military. With the termination of hostilities in Vietnam, it was predictable for the military to again reduce its size. But, unlike earlier wars, the Vietnam War had not enjoyed the popular support of the public. As the military reduced its ranks following that war, two things happened: Soldiers returned to their hometowns carrying the burden of a nation's defeat upon their shoulders, and the Army began its transition to an all-volunteer force. These two factors combined to produce a public crisis of confidence in the nation's military – and even in its political leadership.

When President Nixon assumed office in 1969 at the height of the war in Vietnam, he pledged to end the war by bringing about "peace with honor" and to immediately reduce ground forces in Vietnam. Between 1969 and 1973, the Army sought to reduce its active forces from 1.4 million to 780,000 soldiers. At the same time, LT William Calley was on trial for his part in the Mai Lai massacre. Further, the American public was becoming aware that an Army doctor might have murdered his family at Fort Bragg, while blaming the murders on a band of drug-crazed hippies. Anti-militarism was rampant. And the Army itself was reeling from its own ethical problems. Indeed, the Army had an "image" problem.

The dictionary defines "image" as "a mental representation: idea; conception" and "a general or public perception, as of a company, esp. when achieved by calculation aimed at creating goodwill."² The image of the Army is therefore what the people think of it as well as how the Army attempts to portray itself internally and externally. Towards the end of the Vietnam War, the public's image of the Army had reached a significant low point. Bruce Patterson notes the negativity of U.S. newspaper headlines near the end of the American involvement in the Vietnam War:

"NCO Club Scandal", The New York Times, October 8, 1969, or "Former Provost Marshal General Accused in Gun Selling", (Washington Post, October 6, 1969) or "Army Goes to Some Length in Relaxing its Hair Rules," Washington Post, Mar 31, 1970 or even the 29

December 1970 column by Jack Anderson (Washington Post and over 300 other nationwide newspapers) in which he challenged the Army on everything from "medals, marijuana and mediocrity" to "lax discipline, racial tension and ticket punching."

At this juncture, even as the war "winds down," the criticism continues, particularly in this very political year of 1972. The "military-industrial complex" receives ample criticism, some of which appears warranted, due in part to a lack of decision on the part of the military industry continues to develop sophisticated and expensive hardware for real and imagined requirements.³

As America attempted to come to grips with "losing" an unpopular war, such headlines as these showcased the Army's problems. Although some soldiers returned to hostile receptions, not all did. One Vietnam Veteran remembers

Nobody spit on me, nobody called me "baby killer" or any other name. In fact, nobody did anything. I can remember feeling proud in my discharge uniform with my sergeant's stripes and service ribbons. But for all the notice it attracted, I might as well have been stark naked.

The who-cares attitude I encountered was very real, and I learned quickly not to mention my service if I didn't want to "turn people off" or have a conversation end abruptly. Even my own mother told me to "forget it, it's over." For years, the only thing Vietnam Veterans had were each other, because America wanted to forget Vietnam. For veterans that was impossible. Ask any veteran, not just a Vietnam vet, if he can forget his service. For me, it's been 28 years, but not a day goes by that I don't think about it.⁴

Most Veterans were certainly not welcomed home as returning warriors. Many were not merely dismissed or ignored; they were publicly scorned, ridiculed, and called names. By the end of the Vietnam War, many Americans viewed soldiers as little more than baby-killers. Both internally and externally the Army was in turmoil:

The Vietnam War was a turning point in the Army's growing realization that senior military leaders, and not just political leaders, had a responsibility to be able to speak to soldiers, to the American people, and to the press about ethical issues. ...the surreptitious release of the Pentagon Papers proved that the Vietnam War had been conducted with deceit unparalleled in modern American history. ...the Army failed to win the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese people. It failed a second time with its citizenry at home.⁵

Likewise, Hollywood's portrayal of the Army in films like Francis Ford Coppola's Apocalypse Now (1977) showed a daffy colonel ordering his soldiers to surf during an attack on a Viet Cong position and another colonel consumed by the evil of killing other humans, chanting a litany of slaughter of the enemy.

Few films or television shows in the late 1970 and 1980s portrayed the military in a favorable light. It wasn't until the 1990s that Hollywood again produced films and television programs that showed an improved image of the Army and the U.S. military.

THE ALL VOLUNTEER FORCE

During the administrations of Presidents Ford and Carter, the Army transitioned to the All-Volunteer Force. Army leadership was keenly aware of the social climate and the American public's lack

of acceptance of the military, especially of the Army. To counter this, General Creighton V. Abrams, Army Chief of Staff, offered some common-sense optimism at a command conference in 1973:

The Army is and always will be people. Our people are really good. It is a rare man who wants to be bad, but a lot of men are not strong enough to be good all by themselves, and a little help is enough. It does not make any difference where they come from. If we have faith in them and encourage them and keep standing for the right ourselves, the Army will get back into the shape the country needs and has to have.⁶

Even so, the Army faced significant credibility problems with the public. Department of Defense (DOD) was wrapping up an unpopular war fought by many who did not believe in the causes for which they were fighting. With the draft had ended, the nation considered a new way to fill the ranks – the All-Volunteer Force (AVF). But this concept was really not new at all. Volunteerism has always been the backbone of the Army during its history. The draft had been in effect for only about 35 years, mainly during times of war and for a period of 20 years following the Korean Conflict. The last draftee entered the Army in December 1972⁷ and the Army transitioned to the All-Volunteer Force had arrived by then. The Army was reducing its size, but still needed to recruit new soldiers to keep its ranks filled. A report of the Defense Manpower Commission (created in 1974) indicated that the AVF had a rather auspicious beginning:

The Congress specifically required the Commission to look at the socioeconomic composition of the forces. We found that the quality of the Active Forces, measured in mental category and educational level, has improved over the draft years: but the Reserve Forces have been affected adversely. More blacks and women have entered all services both in the Active and Reserve components. Although data is barely adequate to make a judgment, we see no evidence that this is a "poor man's Army." The services still rely upon the middle class for most of their recruits. We found no evidence that any unit had been affected negatively by socioeconomic changes, either as to performance or mission capability.⁸

But it was not easy for recruiters to find the right kinds of volunteers: Who would want to fill the ranks of an organization so deeply mired in scandal? Congress was so concerned that it established the Defense Manpower Commission. The AVF, born in an era of social and political upheaval made the recruiting mission complicated because of the events of the time.

In 1974 the All Volunteer Army came into being. The Women's Army Corps was being integrated into the total force, and in civilian communities the women's liberation movement was in full swing. Between October 1973 and August 1974, moreover, first the Vice President resigned following tax evasion charges, and then the United States lost the President and Attorney General to the Watergate scandal. Reforming the Army in such an ethically relativistic and situational environment was a difficult undertaking: it was complicated by General Abrams' tragic death in September 1974.⁹

Filling the ranks with qualified individuals indeed became a challenge. At the dawn of World War II a thousand score young men dropped out of high schools clamoring to enlist in the weeks after Pearl Harbor. Twenty-five years later as Vietnam deployment began in earnest, colleges and universities were inundated by draftees seeking student deferments.¹⁰ As the AVF came into being new concerns surfaced. Blacks were troubled because they feared that the AVF was simply a way to get them to fight

and die, rather than more affluent, white Americans. By 1979, more than a third of enlisted volunteers in the Army were African-American, nearly triple the percentage of blacks in the population as a whole and nearly triple the percentage serving in 1969.¹¹

Insofar as the military enlisted ranks drew heavily from lower income groups, the developments of the 1970s and 1980s were nothing new. The armed forces in the United States have always depended disproportionately on those less well off financially. The shift in racial composition was different, however, and though Hollings and Simon may have expressed their discomfort with the racial changes in economic terms, it was not the first time that racial fears had been discussed indirectly....Conscience tells us that we need a cross section of America in our armed forces. Defense is everybody's business... A professional army is un-American. Rep. Paul Simon of Illinois echoed this sentiment, saying that the United States was relying too heavily on the poor to fight its battles and die for the country.¹²

Without a doubt, minorities were more willing to join the AVF than were their better-off majority counterparts. So the AVF constituted a new type of force. As the passage above indicates, the Army definitely appealed to the minority portion of the population. The AVF was considered by the black population as a worthwhile opportunity for a career, for education, even a better life.

Yet the image of the military on film and TV still did not support recruiting goals:

Consider the common Hollywood portrayal of Vietnam vets. From The Deer Hunter through Rambo and dozens of solemn flops ...those who served their country in Southeast Asia appear on screen as damaged goods – delusional, dangerous, broken haunted or, at best pathetic. If lazy screenwriters want to explain why a character is homicidal and psychotic, they simply assign him a combat background in Vietnam and the knowing audience is supposed to understand.¹³

Around the start of the All-Volunteer Army only a few TV programs and movies had Army themes. These included Apocalypse Now (79), Private Benjamin (80-81) and MASH 73-84). Then came a series of "Rambo" movies and other movies about Vietnam Veterans returning home and trying to fit back into the small towns of middle America. Most of the movies portrayed these soldiers encountering significant difficulties in adjusting. Some were depicted comically, others bizarrely. During a time when the American spirit needed uplifting, there was little for the American public to cling to or rally behind. Although these movies and television shows were entertaining, they surely did not arouse patriotism. America was still trying to settle in its mind where all the pieces of the Vietnam puzzle fit together. Although the movies made money, they continued to capitalize on the misfortunes of returning Vietnam Veterans. Americans wanted to forget the war we lost.

The current situation only increased the isolation of the Armed Forces from civilian society. Among elite journalists and influential entertainers, precious few have served in the American military and their alternately harsh and pitying attitude reflects this personal history. Especially for those of us who failed to serve in the Vietnam War (including nearly all of Hollywood's most influential decision-makers), a dismissive perspective toward the military helps avoid any lingering feelings of guilt. Portraying the military as irrational and even dangerous can help reassure former war protesters that they were right in the impassioned arguments of 30 years ago.¹⁴

Those in Hollywood who make the movies for the most part have no military experience and hence see the military only from one perspective: the individual who went to Vietnam and returned to the United States, but could not adjust to society. Their beliefs of 30 years ago about the military remain unchanged. As a result, when the American public attempted to resolve these controversial issues during the 80s, they were consistently met with ambiguity and confusion from media depictions of military life. The image of the Army was fraught with conflict and distrust. There was no American hero that they could turn to. There was no soldierly hero that they could tell their children to look up to as a symbol of American pride and goodness. America continued to try to block out Vietnam while searching for something more positive to cling to.

Then gradually the deep-seated scars of Vietnam started to heal. The American public began looking for ways to recognize the Vietnam Veteran and their contribution to the country. Across the nation groups began to publicly recognize the Vietnam Veteran and their contributions. The dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 1982 and subsequent high level public recognition ceremonies for those who served in Vietnam significantly contributed to closing the rift between the American public and the Army.

ARMY OF THE 1980S

During the Reagan era of the 1980s, the American military, especially the Army, was revitalized. Upon assuming his duties as Secretary of the Army, John O. Marsh Jr. sought to restore the spirit of the US Army. He was fully aware of the challenges the Army faced during the 1970s. "That spirit is distinctively American and springs from a fabric of native values that together have produced an Army with special qualities that are its strength and the strength of the nation. To understand such concepts as victory, caring and leadership, one must understand values and be able to make value judgments."¹⁵ Secretary Marsh designated Yorktown-Spirit of Victory in 1981 as the first Army theme. Other year's Army themes were:

- 1982 Physical Fitness
- 1983 Excellence
- 1984 The Family
- 1985 Leadership
- 1986 Values
- 1987 The Constitution
- 1988 Training
- 1989 The Noncommissioned Officer¹⁶

Succeeding themes emphasized the need for the Army to remain physically fit at all times. They expressed the excellence the American public expects of soldiers, stressing the Army's commitment to families and to leadership. Army themes were designed to draw attention to a particular facet of the institution, and each year earlier themes were "rolled up" into the new theme. The adoption of annual

Army themes that stressed specific values forced all soldiers to re-evaluate themselves, to clarify what they stood for and why they were soldiers. Cumulatively they restored value and moral courage to the force.¹⁷ Annual Army themes continued through Marsh's tenure as Secretary of the Army until 1989. Secretary Marsh recognized the importance of ethics and values. He knew that the image of the Army in the eyes of the American people was low. In consort with the Army Chief of Staff, he developed his plan to change the public's image of the Army and to change the Army's image of itself by instilling values. Secretary Marsh declared "The Army is being revised to reflect the restated professional Army ethic".¹⁸

ARMY SLOGANS

Much effort was expended to develop a slogan that appealed to the public – a phrase that the public identified with and could rally behind, one that conveyed a powerful message. The slogan that carried the country for many years was

"I Want YOU". Of all the drawing and portraits of Sam, the most famous first appeared in 1917 as the United States entered World War I. Artist James Montgomery Flagg painted a poster of Sam pointing his right index finger forward as he asked young men to enlist in the Army. "I Want YOU" was printed in large letters under his picture.

Uncle Sam has been a symbol of the US since he evolved from a 1770 political cartoon, but artist James Montgomery Flagg penned the definitive Sam for his famous "I want YOU" Army enlistment poster of 1917.¹⁹

The poster was indeed effective. It portrayed the symbol of our country beckoning young men to serve the republic. It was something for everyone to identify with and rally behind. It was effective because it captured the public's attention and became a rallying point. It remained effective for many years, and although the slogan was replaced, the image of Uncle Sam remained. The new slogan, "Be All That You Can Be", was adopted in 1981 by the Army and has been used for almost twenty years. It was a very successful slogan. Earlier this year, Advertising Age ranked "Be all that you can be" as the No. 2 jingle of the century, behind McDonalds "You deserve a break today" and ahead of Pepsi's "Pepsi Cola hits the spot".²⁰

But has it outlived its usefulness? Army leaders have made no decision and the issue is still under review. Abandoning the 1981 slogan wouldn't be easy because it has been so successfully identified with the Army. Army Secretary Louis Caldera said it has "tremendous value because it is recognizable and part of the military culture". He went on to state "that while the slogan may be retained, future ads may appeal to the patriotic spirit of young people and promote opportunities for self-improvement."²¹

Certainly the American public identifies the slogan with the Army. As the Army attempted to rebuild itself after Vietnam and with the maturation of the All-Volunteer force, this slogan has proven to be enormously successful. More research will be done before any decision is made about dropping the successful ad campaign in favor of another. Roland Rust, Professor of Advertising and Marketing at Vanderbilt University, said the Army slogan rivals Nike's "Just Do It" for staying power. However, he is

uncertain about its current appeal: "You have to ask whether Generation X is wanting to be all that it can be." He ponders whether "It may be the case that the current generation is a little more pragmatic and short term in its orientation. They are saying, What's in it for me?" ²²

So far the slogan has retained its identity with the American public and proved it can endure over time. Many more studies will be completed before the Army decides the fate of its current slogan. Whatever the decision, considerable credit must be given to the process and mechanism that gave rise to the long-standing "Be All That You Can Be" slogan. In a time that the country was looking for something to identify with, when the country was looking for the value of its Army and when the Army was reevaluating itself, the slogan appeared on the scene and seemed to epitomize the effort to revitalize our forces. Further, it complemented the Army Secretary's annual theme quite nicely. The adoption of the Army slogan coupled with annual Army themes implemented by Secretary Marsh have served as contributing factors in a steady improvement of the Army image from the early 1980s to the early 1990s.

As the Army started to practice and live out the annual themes, successful contingency operations in Panama, Grenada and Somalia showed the American people that the Army was a capable, ready and effective fighting force. The Army was improving and beginning to believe in its own improved image. President Reagan used opportunities such as State of the Union Addresses, other speeches and official White House functions to showcase the outstanding performances by service members of all branches – especially in combat. Although this was not the only time that service members were publicly recognized, it did demonstrate a significant effort by our country's top leaders to reconnect the military with the American people. Although the Army was not the only service represented at these functions, it gained significantly from the exposure. America was indeed starting to feel good about itself and started uniting behind its Army.

A verification of public acceptance can be found in symbols. For example, the Yellow Ribbon symbolizes support for a cause. Whether it was the return of hostages or the safe return of soldiers, yellow ribbons demonstrated public support for a cause. As deployments increased, the number of yellow ribbons increased. Individuals displaying yellow ribbons might not support a given political ideology, but they demonstrate support for the soldiers who were deployed. Since America had been looking for something to rally behind for a long time, the opportunity presented itself and the time was right.

RECOGNITION

During the 1980s, Army leadership again looked for ways to recognize the good performance of its soldiers. A practice unique to the military is the public display of awards and decorations. To soldiers, these ribbons speak of his or her accomplishments. Since Vietnam, lower ranking soldiers could earn few awards, so they had little to display. Then the Army introduced the Army Achievement Medal, the Army Service Ribbon, and the Overseas Service Ribbon. These decorations have been worn proudly by the soldiers who entered active duty after Vietnam. It has become their way to show how well they have served. Older soldiers with many years of service viewed the addition of these ribbons and medals as

cheapening the value of the all awards. As the number of deployments increased, campaign ribbons were designed to indicate service at most destinations. The operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm awakened a renewed spirit in America. As the Army returned home victorious over Saddam Hussein America hosted victory parades and welcome-home celebrations. The Army made sure it avoided the dismal demoralizing homecomings of the Vietnam era would not recur. Much care and attention to detail was dedicated to a carefully orchestrated homecoming celebration at the soldiers' home duty station by the stay-behind force. The US Army ensured that celebrations acknowledged the contributions of the unit and the soldier, yet did not needlessly delay the soldier from meeting with the family that he or she had left behind for so many months. Recalling lessons from soldiers returning from Vietnam, the Army learned the importance of publicly recognizing the contributions of the soldiers and units in a short but appropriate ceremony. The Army also wants the general public to know that its soldiers are doing well. In the eyes of the soldiers, the Army image has improved. The soldiers heard it from their superiors; more importantly, they saw it for themselves. Their ability to defeat Saddam Hussein's Republican Guard so convincingly and quickly was a testament to the hard and realistic training they underwent in preparing for the fight that finally came.

The Army of the 1980s fared relatively well as an all-volunteer force. This was due in part to the public appeal to minorities and women. According to Martin Binkin, a senior analyst at the Brookings Institution, "Had the Army not expanded the opportunities for women soldiers, it is doubtful if the All-Volunteer Force could have survived." In 1991 minorities and women constituted 49.1 percent of the Regular Army. The enlisted force included 41.3 percent minorities, with minority women making up 56.4 percent of enlisted females.²³ Clearly, the Army appealed to a couple of different segments of the American population. What the Army offered, a sizable portion of the public accepted. They decided to become a part of it. Those who elected to join the service were not those who could not find other employment or were otherwise undesirable. "Department of Defense spokesmen reminded critics that the Army did not accept men and women who scored in the lowest third of the Armed Forces Qualification Test. Such individuals would be both expensive to train and difficult to place in an organization with very few 'unskilled' jobs."²⁴ So the Army was receiving quality soldiers. Their decisions to join the Army were reflective of their confidence in the institution and their opportunities to succeed. Since the Army was not accepting those who scored in the lowest third of the Armed Forces Qualification Test, the individuals enlisting were good solid quality prospects.

As mentioned earlier, other contributions to the improved positive image of the Army during the 1980s were successful contingency operations such as Urgent Fury in Grenada (1983), Just Cause in Panama (1989) and Desert Shield and Desert Storm (1990 – 1991). These successful missions boosted both the image and relative ranking of the Army as compared to other professions. From its poor ratings soon after the Vietnam War, the information in Table 1, below clearly shows that the military rose to the top of the survey ratings in 1978 and has remained there ever since. The relative ranking of the Supreme

Court and the Congress were added as benchmarks against which the military's position could be measured.

DATE	MILITARY	SUPREME COURT	CONGRESS
APR 78	48	39	18
OCT 80	52	47	34
MAY 85	61	55	39
AUG 90	37	19	9
APR 95	33	20	9
JUL 97	30	25	9
JUL 98	33	24	10
JUN 99	34	20	9

TABLE 1 - CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS

DATA COMPILED FROM GALLUP POLL SURVEYS, 1978 THRU 1999

Americans learned from Vietnam that:

if large numbers of American soldiers were killed in a conflict whose goals were murky and whose time frame was drawn out, then the public would eventually turn against the war. During the Gulf War, U.S. military and civilian leaders were determined to avoid a repetition of Vietnam through clear goals and a rapid strike.

... and American approval for the performance of the president and the military reached record highs. At last blared countless newspapers, magazines, and even Bush himself, the United States could move beyond the legacy of Vietnam.²⁵

Thus, the Army learned that popular support for any military operation was critical. The military's actions in Desert Shield and Desert Storm demonstrated that the Army learned this lesson and was not about to repeat the mistakes made in Vietnam.

Public confidence has also been strengthened by the re-emergence of military heroes in popular American culture. During Desert Shield and Desert Storm not only were enlisted soldiers cited for bravery, their leaders Generals Colin Powell and Norman Schwarzkopf were also viewed as national heroes. This group filled a void in the American culture. They provided the country with heroes to look up to and admire. America yearned for such heroes since the Vietnam War. Desert Shield and Desert Storm produced what the country needed – some successful soldiers around whom they could rally and display their admiration and pride. Parents again had unambiguous figures that they could point to and tell their children “You want to grow up to be just like”.

ARMY OF THE 1990S

Thus America's decisive victory in Desert Storm provided the turning point in recent public opinion of the U.S. military.

Proof that real progress had been made may have been found during the Gulf War of 1990-91 and the humanitarian and peacekeeping missions the Army has undertaken throughout this decade. The vast majority of Americans agreed that the Army had fought in the Gulf with restraint, had avoided many of the problems it had encountered in Southeast Asia, and had performed missions of humanitarian relief in Asia, Latin America, Africa and Europe with total dedication. A 1973 Harris poll had revealed that by the end of the Vietnam War, the American public ranked the military only above sanitation workers in relative order of respect. (And some said that the sanitation workers had gotten a bum rap.) By 1989 a Harris survey found that Americans ranked the military above big business, organized labor, the medical community, banks, newspapers, Congress, television and even the Supreme Court in trust. The Army had come a long way in the years since its nadir in Vietnam.²⁶

The Army thrived on this favorable public opinion after Desert Storm. Soldiers proudly wore their uniforms home and were treated with dignity and respect. For the older veterans of Vietnam who never experienced a joyful homecoming, the public's response was welcome and eye-opening. It was not difficult for the country's leaders to see the dramatic differences between the two groups of veterans.

The ninety's show both positive and negative for the Army image. After a decade of steadily improving performance the Army, along with the other services, was faced with Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Once the mobilization started, public opinion supported the troops. More yellow ribbons started to appear. The American public started to trust again in their military. The 100-hour war came and went and those who participated again felt trust and confidence in their military.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the war was gradual development of immense public support for U.S. forces that went to Southwest Asia. This support did not appear at the outset. Several days after Iraq invaded Kuwait a public opinion poll showed that over 40 percent of the American public opposed sending troops to the Persian Gulf. But communities across the United States rallied around the Regular Army, Army Reserve, and Army National Guard troops as they deployed to Saudi Arabia. That patriotic support remained high through the buildup and the waiting period, the short decisive war, and the demobilization.²⁷

The yellow ribbon remained a symbol of unity for the American people. Whenever soldiers were deployed to any location, yellow ribbons were displayed or worn to show the public's concern for their safe return. The yellow ribbon still symbolizes the country's concern for its deployed soldiers.

However, as the United States embarked on the mission in Somalia at the end of 1992, America's confidence in its military took a downturn. The American public clamored to know how eighteen U.S. Army Rangers died when they were sent in to restore order and end famine. Military leaders had failed to secure the public's support for the totality of the mission in Somalia. The average American could easily understand sending soldiers to a distant land to help feed the hungry and to help build a nation. When the mission changed and our soldiers were required to disarm warring factions, our leaders did not seek the support of the American public. When the situation deteriorated and soldiers lost their lives the

American public demanded to know what happened and why. They demanded to know how a mission to feed the hungry resulted in the deaths of American soldiers, with their bodies publicly dragged through the streets. Americans were enraged. Their confidence in the military quickly dropped.

So the decade of the 1990s has proved to be both good and bad for the Army image. The Army has dealt well with some issues, but not so well with others.

VETERANS AND RETIREES

Soldiers who fought in World War I and World War II returned home to heartwarming hometown welcomes – a welcome unknown to Vietnam veterans. Then Vietnam Veterans saw the welcome given to the soldiers returning from Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Other veterans groups began to notice that the public recognized the contributions of those who fought in our country's recent wars, but little has been said or done for those who fought in Korea and Vietnam. During the Reagan and Bush administrations, efforts were made to recognize the contributions of our soldiers from not only the current wars but from the wars of the recent past – Korea and Vietnam. During White House ceremonies, care was taken to ensure that the military was represented. President Reagan personally recognized soldiers whose outstanding performance clearly showed that they performed above and beyond the call of duty. In speeches given by senior Army leaders, attention was focused on those who served in Korea and Vietnam. Normally the speaker would ask the audience for those who served in the oldest war to the most current operation to stand. As each group rose the speaker would lead the audience in applause. Veterans from Korea and Vietnam received hearty and emotion-filled applause. Such scenarios were repeated over and over at public gatherings across the country.

One portion of our population that has been frequently overlooked is the retiree community. Unlike the Marines, when a soldier retires he or she is considered just that – a retiree. But Marines are always considered to be a part of the U.S. Marine Corps. However, the Army does not have a program that reaches out and embraces its retirees. Further complicating the relationship between the Army and the retiree is that "military retirees are angry over health-care cuts and are not promoting military careers".²⁸ In view of recent personnel shortages, the Army does not need a segment of the population to work against it – especially its own veterans. Retirees want to feel as though they have something to contribute. They need assurance that their many years of experience are not overlooked. Properly treated and respected, veterans can become the backbone of a tradition of service. Just ask a Marine!

RECRUITING AND RETENTION

One of the most visible segments of the Army today is the recruiting force, which consists of approximately 5,700 recruiters. Soldiers and civilians are assigned to recruiting duty in every state and at various locations overseas. Since the military began to downsize, one element has remained constant, the recruiting force. Soldiers who perform duties as recruiters represent for some families their only interface with the military. It is increasingly more difficult to locate families in the late 1990s that have relatives who served in the military.

Prospective recruits consider many factors in trying to decide about joining the Army. Seldom is that type decision made without consulting others. Often other family members are consulted. Perhaps the father or an uncle or maybe even a close family friend is a veteran or retiree. Their opinions carry a lot of weight. If that individual leaves with an unfavorable the impression of the service, then it is highly probable that the new prospect will give that opinion considerable weight. Within the recruiting community, relatives and family friends are referred to as influencers. Their opinions shape the decisions of potential prospects. If the recruiter does not win the confidence of this group, the probability is significantly reduced that the new prospect will be convinced to join the service.

Influencers normally represent a segment of society that is well established within a community - experienced citizens whose opinion and views are valued. Over the years, even this group has changed. At one time veterans were highly represented in both the U.S. House of Representatives and in the U.S. Senate. The percentage of veterans in the House has sharply declined, from over 75 percent in 1971 to about 25 percent in 1999. There was a similar decline in the Senate, although it started later and was somewhat smaller. (See Figure 1). The fact is that a greater and greater percentage of our leaders do not have the military experience to advise today's youth about joining the military. In addition, with the

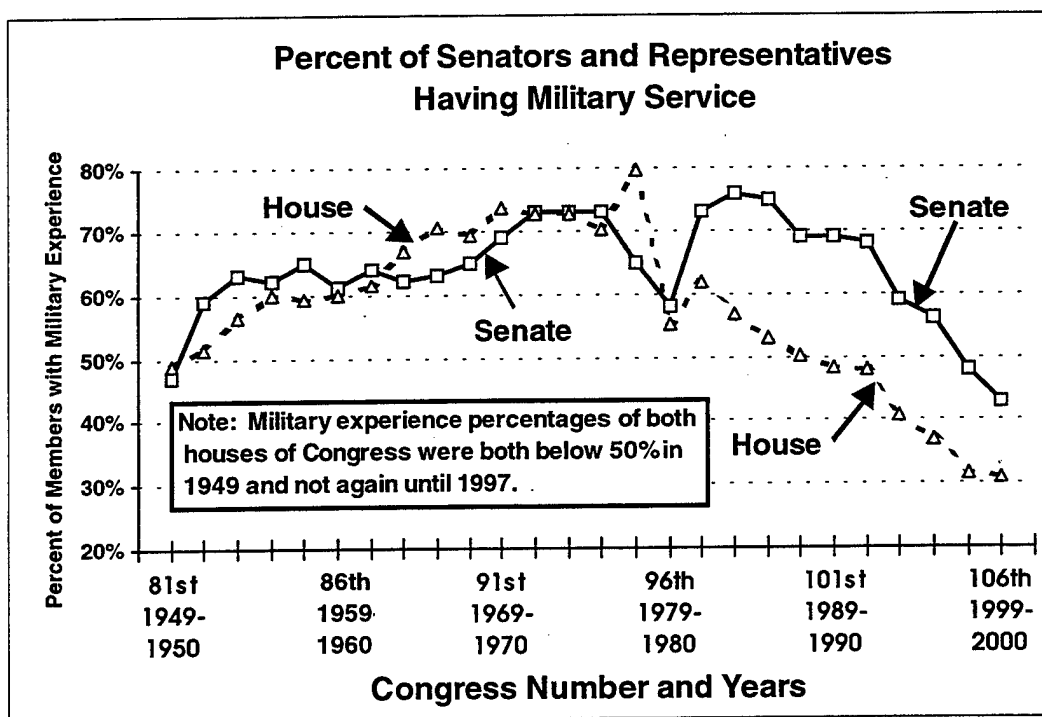


FIGURE 1 - VETERANS IN CONGRESS

number of non-veterans as members of the House and Senate increasing, the concern of equal representation surfaces. Is the nation depending more on the middle class and on those less well off to defend it, while the privileged elite is allowed to forego any type of military service? With the current level of experience in the House and

Senate, some believe that with fewer veterans in national political life, the United States will be more-not less-likely to get involved in military operations abroad.²⁹

Although lack of military service does not in itself indicate an inability to make sound defense-related decisions, it does have an impact on the public's opinion of both the group making the decisions and the organizations about which the decisions are made. Either way, when a large group of non-veterans decides on issues which affect the general population and more specifically which affect the military, the nation has entered a new, uncharted era of decision making, especially in matters of war and peace.

With a downsized military, an extremely fast-paced Operational Tempo (OPTEMPO) and a booming economy, recruiting and retention have become significant challenges. Since the end of the Gulf War the active duty Army reduced from roughly 800,000 to 500,000 by the end of 1995. Target figures for FY 99 indicate that the number will drop to 475,000, the smallest it has been since 1939³⁰. Even with these reduced numbers, getting and retaining quality soldiers has become a monumental task. In FY 1999, the Army failed to reach its goal of 74,500 recruits. For the first time since 1979, the Army fell short of its recruiting goal by about 6,300 soldiers.

Do these figures indicate a decline in patriotism among today's youth? According to John H. Faris,

The dominance of the economic marketplace model in managing the all-volunteer force contrasts with strong evidence of the continuing importance of noneconomic considerations—patriotism and a conviction that by serving in the military one is serving the country—as reasons for joining the armed forces. Research reported by Burk in 1982 indicated that patriotic motivations to enlist persisted from the beginning of the all-volunteer force and "...can be regarded as the most important single reason explaining why youths enlist."³¹

Although Faris' conclusions were probably quite accurate in 1982, they may not adequately explain current shortfalls.

Recruiters are taught to probe applicants to determine their dominant-buying motive. By 1999, patriotism was not the dominant buying motive for recruits. If patriotism were still the dominant buying motive, then it would not have been necessary for the Army to offer significant enlistment and signing bonuses to entice applicants to join before the end of the fiscal year. Additionally, if patriotism remained as the main reason for applicants joining, then much more effort and dollars would have been targeted towards commercials that strongly emphasized patriotism over money. With signing bonuses, the cost per new Army recruit exceeded \$11,000. During the last months of the year recruiters were given the authority to offer large cash incentives to those prospects who met certain requirements and who could ship to basic training before September 30th. In some cases the dollar amount exceeded \$20,000. Perhaps this is indicative of a shift in the paradigm. The U.S. Air Force, who traditionally has little difficulty attaining its recruiting figures, quadrupled advertising spending in 1999, when it launched its first-ever TV ad campaign. The Air Force also expanded the number of hard-to-fill career fields eligible for enlistment bonuses from four to more than 100. Yet it missed its goal by 1,700. With bonuses, the cost per new recruit was up to \$6,089.³² The Navy also missed their goal. This year the cost per new recruit was \$8,835

Much effort has been directed to determine what motivates today's net generation. The decision - partly reflected in today's enlistment bonuses - was that money motivates today's youth. Just like a professional football player gets a signing bonus, Recruiting Command has resorted to the same incentive. One unexpected spin-off has been that the difference in pay between Senior NCOs and new recruits got noticeably smaller. Pay equity thus became an issue. The Army struggled to determine how it could pay the high enlistment bonuses without alienating the NCO already in the force structure.

The pace of military operations has increased steadily over the years. Since the Gulf War, American soldiers have been involved in peacekeeping operations at a staggering pace. In some units, the deployments have become so frequent that some commanders established written policies clarifying the minimum time that a soldier had to be stabilized before he or she could be re-deployed. The issue of OPTEMPO takes on added significance when we note the demographics of today's Army versus the Army of 1980. The majority of today's soldiers are married, so their personal goals are somewhat different from what their single soldier counterparts were in 1980. A fast OPTEMPO requiring many weeks away from home is no longer the drawing card that it used to be. Although today's new soldiers do not mind traveling, they do not want it to become excessive. They also want to spend time at home with their families. The ever-increasing OPTEMPO also poses a serious challenge for units to maintain their reenlistment statistics. If the perception of the soldier and the military family is that the OPTEMPO is too fast, then the Army has lost the faith and confidence of not only the soldier but also of his or her family. Once this occurs, service members are less likely to recommend the military to their family members or friends. Petty Officer 1st Class Felix Martinez admitted that ... "I am willing to die for my country but I will not recommend the military to my son. The military just doesn't take care of its people like it used to".³³ Martinez's opinion is not unique to the Navy; soldiers also share his opinion. This malaise represents one of the greatest challenges to today's recruiters. Such opinions expressed by influential family members, especially veterans, carry considerable weight and will probably convince a young person not to join the military. Martinez complains that the military does not take care of its people like it used to. He may be referring to changes to medical and dental benefits, to the retirement system, or to other benefits that have eroded over time. All of these factors cumulatively represent a perceived decline in benefits that at one time were listed as advantages of joining the military. It is difficult, if not impossible, to change such attitudes without restoring the benefits.

Since recruiters are having such difficulty achieving their annual goal of signing up new soldiers, some individuals have suggested bringing back the draft. Politically this is a very sensitive issue. Most of our elected officials would prefer to avoid it. They know they would have difficulty convincing their constituents to support reinstatement of the draft due to the lack of a readily identifiable threat, combined with an especially strong economy. Supporters of the draft submit that it will equitably distribute the burden of defending the country and reduce the high cost of maintaining an all-volunteer Army. Former New York Governor Mario Cuomo for one flatly asserts "you cannot escape the question of a draft." Critics of the All-Volunteer Force formerly predicted that the services could not attract high-quality

recruits, but today their argument is about "fairness".³⁴ We noted that the number of veterans serving in the House of Representatives and Senate is considerably lower than in earlier years. "By 1973, when we officially instituted an all-volunteer force, the morality of nonservice had been cemented. And with the draft's end, the children – or youthful versions of Fortune 500 executives, professors, congressmen and journalists no longer had to evade service, they simply could ignore it."³⁵

The Army over the years has created a variety of different images with the public. According to MG Evan Gaddis, Commanding General of the United States Army Recruiting Command, "We have an image issue. The youth today still see the Army as three years of basic training with a sergeant yelling in your face." Recruiters struggle to dispel that image of basic training, yet they are faced with a number of greater challenges. Yes, there was a time when the drill instructors yelled at new trainees. With rare exceptions, those days are gone. Today's drill sergeants are trained on how to motivate trainees. The drill instructor still presents that imposing image to new recruits. Since they represent a figure of authority in a new and strange environment, that image will be very difficult to change. Through its television commercials, advertising and other initiatives, Recruiting Command has attempted to show the public that an enlistment in the Army is not just three years of basic training with a drill sergeant yelling at new recruits. Each new applicant is provided a videotape that shows what the Army is like and what to expect from basic training. During the time they spend in the Delayed Entry Program (DEP) awaiting their active duty entry date, each new applicant is given classes about the military. Depending upon availability, some new soldiers are even taken to Army installations where they can see for themselves what soldiers do on a daily basis. Not only are new soldiers offered this tour, so too are others. Individuals who are considered Centers of Influence (COI) are also given the opportunity to tour active Army installations. Since many do not have any prior experience with the military, this opportunity is quite valuable. It changes some of the preconceived opinions and incorrect perceptions of Army life. Those who participate in the program leave with a changed opinion of what the Army is and what it does. They see first hand that soldiers are not yelled at all day long by drill sergeants. They see that soldiers do not spend all day marching and digging ditches. Instead they see that soldiers are trained on state-of-the-art equipment and that they are taught to think and make decisions.

Another initiative undertaken by the Army to dispel the image of basic training is the use of Hometown Recruiters. Soldiers who have completed basic training volunteer to go back to their hometowns to tell their friends about their Army experiences. Sharing their personal experiences with hometown friends serves to dispel many rumors, myths, and stereotypes about military service.

Television and radio do a lot to shape public opinion. The Army is as much a victim of inaccurate media representation as are the other services and the other American institutions. But the Army does not have an effective means to counter TV images. Since the 1980s there have been a variety of television programs and movies about the military that became very popular with the general public, such as Major Dad and JAG. Numerous technical errors in the scripts have not detracted from their appeal. For example, Naval lawyers consistently violate the provisions of *Posse Comitatus* by investigating

crimes off the military installation where they do not have jurisdiction, or the story lines unrealistically show lawyers personally conducting criminal investigations in addition to piloting jet aircraft between courtroom scenes. The public has embraced the concept of the programs, so they have become very popular with highly successful television ratings. But the purpose of the television program is to entertain and do well enough to earn higher television ratings than the competition. These programs met the commercial challenge. Fortunately, they have not detracted from the image of the American military

ATTRACTING AND KEEPING PUBLIC ATTENTION

The Army has an important message to tell the public about what it stands for, what it does and its future. Because of similarities it would be very difficult to separate what the Army does and its future from the recruiting effort. Manning the force however should not be the responsibility of a few – recruiters, the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff. Since the Army belongs to the country, filling its ranks should also be a responsibility shared with the country. All services readily admit that meeting recruiting goals has become increasingly more difficult primarily because young people are not interested and, or are not being persuaded to join. Although our soldiers try, they are often not successful in persuading young people to join. Movies and television are persuasive tools. Those public personalities who make movies and television shows plus sports personalities and others, carry a considerable influence with their audiences. Enlisting their support would draw tremendous attention to the Army, both as an instrument of power and as a potential career choice. Efforts have already been made to court favorable attention from Hollywood. Secretary of Defense, William S. Cohen presented Stephen Spielberg, Director of "Saving Private Ryan" with the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service for his 1998 film in ceremonies at the Pentagon on 11 August 1999³⁶. Additional efforts with and towards Hollywood will continue to draw public and focus attention on the Army.

RACIAL INTEGRATION

The Army has long been viewed as a racially integrated organization. The public's view of the Army's position on racial integration was changed with time. In the 1940s and 1950s the Army was segregated, not unlike much of American society. African-American soldiers served in predominately black units with white leadership. As integration worked its way into the Army in the late 1940s and 1950s, these predominately black units were replaced. African-American soldiers were assigned to a variety of units alongside their white counterparts. Surely there was racial tension. During Vietnam, these tensions were considered a major factor in the deterioration of unit cohesion. Violence between the races was not uncommon. As difficult as the racial situation was in the Army, it was also difficult in the civilian community. The American public was generally not pleased with the racial situation. The Army studied the problem and began to make some changes. With the implementation of the All-Volunteer Force (AVF), the racial composition of the Army started to change. Far fewer college graduates enlisted; many enlistees came from the lower end of the socio-economic scale; and a rising portion were in fact African-American. By 1979, more than a third of enlisted volunteers in the Army were African-American,

nearly triple the percentage of Blacks in the population as a whole and nearly triple the percentage in 1969.³⁷ The large representation of African-Americans in the Army started to concern some people.

In 1983, Senator Ernest Hollings of South Carolina expressed his concern that the AVF had created a military that was not representative of American society. Speaking to a group of Dartmouth students, Hollings declared, "I want to draft everyone in this room for the good of the country...Conscience tells us that we need a cross section of America in our armed forces. Defense is everybody's business....A professional army is un-American." Rep. Paul Simon of Illinois echoed this sentiment, saying that the United States was relying too heavily on the poor to fight its battles and die for the country.³⁸

The larger number of African-Americans in the Army meant that a high percentage were serving in combat units and in positions such as clerks or supply specialists, traditionally non-technical positions. Such assignments were attributed to low test scores that limited the number of positions for which an individual could qualify. The belief was that African-Americans were disproportionately represented in the combat units and in more of the less technically oriented specialties.

And, after the Vietnam War, the services made an effort to reduce the proportion of Blacks serving in combat units, largely from sensitivity to the charges that Blacks were being asked to perform tasks that might result in loss of life more frequently than whites or other ethnic groups. And while a significant percentage of Blacks in the 1970s and early 1980s did serve in combat units, this combat service did not lead to rapid increases in the number of black officers. African-American servicemen still tended to be grouped in the lower ranks, and, again, part of the reason for this was the performance of blacks on the standardized tests used to evaluate personnel for promotion.³⁹

The Army then found it necessary to devise a way to decrease the number of African-Americans serving in combat units. They sought to respond to the public perception that African-American soldiers were over-represented in the combat arms and were being called on to fight the country's wars for those who chose not to serve. There was then the concern that the number of African-American officers did not proportionately rise with the increase in the number of enlisted soldiers. Officers came from either the enlisted ranks via Officer Candidate School (OCS), ROTC, the military academies, or by direct commission. The number of African-American officers commissioned through these sources remained low until the United States Military Academy Preparatory School began admitting, training and graduating soldiers for subsequent training at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Test scores increased, as did the number of African-Americans qualifying for admission at the U.S Military Academy. In addition, the Army began recruiting more heavily from historically black colleges.

The result was that by the 1990s 1 in 9 Army officers was black, and 24 out of 328 generals were black. The appointment of Colin Powell as the first African-American chairman of the JCS, as well as the appointment of Togo West as secretary of the Army in 1993, signified that even within the upper-most echelons of both the civilian and military leadership of the Army, African-Americans could rise to the highest levels.⁴⁰

Earlier, the ability of African-Americans to rise to high levels was demonstrated when Clifford Alexander was appointed as Secretary of the Army in 1983. Such appointments demonstrated that it

could be done. Significantly, the average soldier realized that the possibilities of becoming successful were greater than before.

According to surveys conducted in the early 1990s, black soldiers are twice as likely as black civilians to be satisfied with their jobs. ... After years of examining that satisfaction, they concluded that part of the explanation is that military blacks trust that they will be rewarded for their work, if it is done well, that there is less likelihood in the military than in civilian life that they will be consigned to less prestigious work.⁴¹

Among African-American soldiers, there was a general feeling of job satisfaction and a shared belief that a good job would be recognized and rewarded. The Army therefore looked appealing as a job and as a career choice. Black soldiers report that their view of other races improved after they entered the military, and white soldiers confirm that impression and respond that they too developed a better impression of non-whites after enlisting.⁴² From the perspective of both black and white soldiers, the military appeared to offer a favorable environment.

GENDER RELATED ISSUES

For most of its history, the Army has been a male-dominated organization. Females were not held in very high regard. When the AVF came into being and the number of women in the force began to increase, changes to the all-male system were inevitable. Prior to 1980 most officer and enlisted clubs had "Go Go" dancers. Normally on Wednesday and Friday nights soldiers would flock to their respective clubs and spend at least a couple of hours watching the dancers. Initially women soldiers frequented the clubs, too, but soon they decided that they did not want to participate in this type of behavior. As more and more women joined the Army the pressure to do away with the "Go Go" dancers increased. Gradually the dancers started to disappear from the Officers' clubs. The dancers also started to disappear from the Enlisted clubs. By the mid-1980s "Go Go" dancers were gone from all military clubs. This was a difficult change for the Army to make because over the years the dancers had become part of the culture.

Sexual harassment became a hot topic in 1991, beginning with the Navy's Tailhook scandal. The investigation led to a five-year series of investigations that convinced many that the military was a hotbed of sexual harassment. The Army did not escape untouched by these scandals. Perhaps the most damaging single incident in terms of service credibility occurred in late 1996 when charges were brought against 12 soldiers for sexual crimes committed at Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland. One soldier, a drill sergeant, was charged with 15 counts of rape and 48 related charges of crimes against a total of 21 women who were trainees at the installation.⁴³ Aside from the criminal aspects of this case, the credibility of the Army was dealt a serious blow. Many people believed in and trusted the Army's system to properly train young female soldiers. Through the actions of a few, the public lost faith with the Army and the service suffered. It is every American's right to feel secure in their surroundings. This is what the Army lost. It had an obligation to protect its new female recruits and it failed. Coming closely on the heels of Aberdeen was the case involving two sergeants in Darmstadt, Germany for rape and other crimes against

18 women soldiers. Eventually more charges for similar crimes were registered against soldiers at Fort Bliss, Texas and at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

Nothing adequately explained this sudden increase in sex crimes and sexual harassment in the early 1990s. Women had been serving in the Army for many years. During Vietnam there were over 45,000 women in uniform. Although this constituted only about 2 percent of the total, they served as nurses and emergency relief personnel, positions they traditionally occupied in the previous two conflicts.⁴⁴ Across the Army it was becoming more common to see women in more and more positions. By 1990 the number of women in uniform increased to 86,000. Women were becoming accepted into more and varied specialties than ever before. Even so, the number of incidents involving women steadily increased. Senior soldiers were now becoming the subjects of criminal investigations. In 1994, the Army Inspector General reported 282 complaints involving improper conduct against 118 senior military and 19 Senior Executive Service leaders. These resulted in 24 investigations of which 22 were substantiated. ... Even more confusing to the Army in general were the punishments, or lack of them, for senior leaders who had violated policy or the law.⁴⁵ Cases like SMA Eugene McKinney, MG David Hale, MG John J Maher, and CSM Riley C. Miller hit the headlines and remained there for months as a time. As the senior Army leadership attempted to deal with these issues, the level of public confidence was shaken but not badly. The Army was seen as identifying a problem and attempting to take action to resolve the issue not seen as trying to cover up an issue or protect its senior leaders. The Army tried to show that senior individuals were not immune to justice simply because of their rank. Just as the sergeants in the Aberdeen and Darmstadt cases were taken to task for their crimes, so too were senior leaders. In the cases of MG Hale and MG Maher, the Secretary of the Army personally rendered the decision on their retirement grades. His intent was to send a clear message that conduct and behavior of that nature was unacceptable and would not be tolerated by the leadership.

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Alcohol has long been a part of the Army culture. After Vietnam the image of soldiers was still that of a group of hard drinking individuals. Between the end of Vietnam and 1980, alcohol consumption remained high. Most installations ran three club systems: the enlisted men's club, the NCO club, and the officers' club. As alcohol was deglamorized across the Army, most Army clubs steadily lost money. Clubs were consolidated until eventually most installations had only one club. The officers' club closed, the NCO club closed, and so did the enlisted men's club. The remaining consolidated club serviced all ranks and had limited hours of operation. The Army's efforts to reduce alcohol consumption had succeeded. Punishment for drunk driving offenses was severe, much more severe than punishment for comparable offenses in the civilian community. Alcohol consumption during social events remained low, while increased emphasis was placed on designated drivers. The battle against alcohol abuse had been won.

Drug use and abuse in the Army flourished during Vietnam. Although drug use in the United States was also up it was viewed quite differently in the Army. Leaders deliberated on how to discipline the occasional marijuana user as well as the hard core drug abuser.

In 1967, the Army registered no use of hallucinogenic drugs. But in 1971, according to the Army's own surveys, nearly 15 percent of enlistees had taken hallucinogenic drugs while on tour in Vietnam, nearly 23 percent had used heroin, 20 percent opium, and an astounding 60 percent used marijuana. So severe was the problem that congressional committees investigated the effect of widespread drug use on unit cohesiveness and military competency, and in the process discovered that alcoholism was also rampant.⁴⁶

The tough drug policy of the 1980s significantly contributed to the decline in drug use. According to former Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger, the most effective deterrent of all was the certain knowledge that all who were caught using drugs in any form would be immediately discharged.⁴⁷ The random testing followed by swift and in most cases harsh punishment had the desired effect. Drug use continued to decline through the end of the 1990's. Intervention strategies for self-referred drug users had been developed, were understood by leaders and soldiers, and proved to be successful. The Army's war on drugs proved to be effective, and removed many drug offenders from the ranks of the military.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Most soldiers today would agree that the quality of life in the Army had decreased since they first joined the service. When they entered the Army they understood that they would receive certain benefits and entitlements. Some of these changed. One concern was the rates used to calculate retired pay were reduced. Soldiers entering the Army after 1986 would not receive 50% of their base pay after serving 20 years. Their retired pay would only be 40 % after 20 years. Soldiers complained. They viewed this as a breach of faith. After years of debate, Congress agreed to again modify the retirement system to make it more similar to the original one.

Decreasing medical care has been a significant concern for active duty soldiers as well as retirees. Soldiers complain that medical care for their dependents and themselves has steadily declined. Costs for services have steadily risen while the availability of some services has decreased. Retirees found it difficult to obtain medical care and to get prescriptions filled. Active duty soldiers and retirees felt that their medical care coverage had declined significantly or, was not available at all. Army leaders listened to the concerns and again relayed the concerns to Congress. No solution has yet been found. Further complicating this issue is the drawdown. As installations closed, medical facilities scaled back operations or closed. These reductions and closures had impact on the quality of service for both active duty soldiers and retirees. Both believe that the Army made a promise to provide medical care but did not fulfill its promise.

CONCLUSION

Since the end of the Vietnam War the Army has significantly improved its image internally, and externally. Almost always, public opinion supported the Army's actions. Polls indicate as an institution

the military rated above medicine, education and the U.S. Supreme Court. In those situations where lives were lost, the American public held the civilian leadership responsible, not the Army. From the 1970s to the 1990s the Army made steady improvement in its capabilities and performance, regaining the public's confidence. Veterans and retirees constitute a very influential group. They have the ability to influence enlistment decisions by relatives who are potential recruits. This group represents a significant resource that is yet untapped.

The Army did not receive favorable comments concerning medical care and quality of life both from active duty soldiers and from retirees. Enlistments and reenlistments are effected by the perceptions of the public and by those soldiers still serving. Overall, the Army image received many more positive comments than negative ones.

Within the Army there are areas that need improving such as OPTEMPO, medical treatment and quality of life but overall, the Army image is seen as good by the general public and by its own soldiers. It has shown steady improvement in race relations, sexual harassment, and drug abuse since the end of the Vietnam War. Although much effort has been directed towards recruiting, one of the biggest challenges the Army faces is to meet its recruiting and retention goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Army leaders must strongly emphasize the importance of good public relations. Leaders should emphasize frank and candid relationships with the media as a conduit to the public. It can not be left to chance. The Army should design a far-reaching public affairs campaign with the specific intent of improving the Army's image. This campaign should be separate from responses to public inquiries or current events. It should focus on the future vision. Recruiting ads should support the overall plan but not as the only supporting pillar. Winning and keeping the public's support should be considered a critical task for junior leaders as well as senior leaders. Within the constraints of security, the Army should devise a system that informs the public regularly of its missions, especially those that will place soldiers in harms way. When the mission changes, the public should be informed as soon as practical.

All soldiers should be trained to tell the Army story. The Army should develop a program that trains all soldiers on how to interact with the press and with the public, at home and when deployed. Specific emphasis should be directed to correcting the Army and media relationship.

With an increasing population of Retirees and Veterans, the Army should embrace and employ that portion of the population. Both Retirees and Veterans have a lot to offer as "influencers" in families and within the community. Many only need to be asked. When soldiers retire or leave active duty, a system should immediately welcome them and figure how to make the best use of their many years of experience.

Leaders must remain focused on reducing OPTEMPO, improving medical care and improving quality of life issues. As today's soldiers interact with the public they tell the Army's story. These issues are important to soldiers and retirees and are continually discussed. Until the Army makes meaningful progress on these issues it will continue to be criticized. Clearly articulating the Army's efforts will allow the public to once again determine who is responsible.

WORD COUNT = 11,303

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