



**STRATEGY
RESEARCH
PROJECT**

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U.S. ARMY RECRUITING: PROBLEMS AND FIXES

BY

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U.S. Army Recruiting: Problems and Fixes

by

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ABSTRACT

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“What is wrong with Army recruiting?” This question is often followed by another question: “What is the strategy to fix it?” Each question prompts a range of responses. Many cite changes in propensity of American’s youth to serve, as well as the rewards offered for Army service. While the solution may be to re-institute the draft or some type of compulsory service, simply focusing on this option—along with the daily barrage of “outside-the-box” incentive programs—may miss the target altogether. The real problem might rest with the Army’s inability to develop a holistic accession strategy, to institute program modernization, to provide outstanding customer service, and to embrace change of outdated procedures. Each of these problem areas receives little attention when recruiting problems are discussed and study groups are assembled to find solutions. This study proposes institutional reform of Army recruiting, thereby offering an Army solution to a perplexing Army problem.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Prior to my current assignment, I had the unique opportunity to experience up-close the challenges of meeting our military recruiting goals. During that tour, I commanded the third largest Military Entrance Processing Station in the country. From that position, I often adjusted systems and procedures to assist all Services in meeting their mission. In this role from January 1996 to July 1999, I saw early indications of troubled times ahead.

This research project will examine some of the reasons I think recruiting in general—and Army recruiting in particular—is experiencing difficulties. I will offer some recommendations to assist the recruiting effort. Many of my recommendations are based on examination of strategy documents and trends, as well as my first hand experience in directly supporting the recruiting effort for 42 months as a battalion commander.

Assisting me in acquiring the extensive historic documents and statistical information used in this study, were LTC Gregory Hoscheit, Director, Program Analysis and Evaluation, United States Recruiting Command, and LTC Denise Daily, Recruiting Policy, Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Headquarters, Department of the Army. They provided their time and energy while actively participating in the Army's recruiting effort. Each freely and generously provided updated materials and direction. In addition, Major Joan Vallance-Whitacre, National Imagery and Mapping Agency, Bethesda, MD, was very helpful in providing current information from media and periodicals.

I also extend my gratitude to Lieutenant Colonel Carl Nowack, Deputy Commander, Baltimore Military Entrance Processing Station. Carl often validated and reviewed facts and figures for accuracy. He is a great Air Force Officer and friend. He is one of the most knowledgeable persons in the military concerning processing potential soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen into military service. Our nation owes a great debt to this great American.

Finally, Colonel Cortez Dial has been an excellent mentor and project advisor. His advice and direction were instrumental in completing my project. Colonel Dial freely offered advice on this project in an effort to change policy and make life better for soldiers. His advice was a positive force in completing this research.

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U.S. ARMY RECRUITING: PROBLEMS AND FIXES

It may be laid down as a primary position, and the basis of our system that every Citizen who enjoys the protection of a free Government, owes not only a proportion of his property, but even of his personal services to the defense of it.

*George Washington*¹

In FY99 the Army projected a shortfall of nearly 6000 recruits to fill the ranks, while the Air Force, which historically has no problem filling its ranks, began airing television ads for the first time ever! Only the Marines (having by far the smallest recruiting mission) stayed on target to meet their yearly objectives. The Navy, which was recovering from a recruitment shortfall in FY98, nearly met all of its goals.² Overall, our military is having difficulty in attracting personnel under the All Volunteer Force policy. This year alone the Army missed its target of 74,500 recruits by 6,300, but made up the shortfall by exceeding its reenlistment goal of 65,000 by almost an equal number.³ The Army's typical response to recruiting shortfalls is to call for traditional panaceas: greater recruiting incentives, force structure increases for the United States Army Recruiting Command, and additional dollars to support the overall recruiting effort.

The Army's recent difficulty in meeting its congressionally mandated end-strength has generated attention from almost every segment of American society. Not a day goes by without some news of what is wrong with recruiting and proposals to fix it. Many of these reports cite young Americans' lack of interest in military service, advertising failures, and proposed incentives to lure more young people into the Services. The Army's leadership and recruiting experts appear to be focusing their efforts on many creative and "outside-the-box" ideas to attract potential soldiers into the ranks. While new and creative ideas should be welcomed to correct the current recruiting shortfall, this study offers a different view of the problems and recommends some "inside-the-box" solutions.

In seeking radical solutions, the Army may be overlooking obvious ills of its recruiting program. The Army lacks a holistic recruiting strategy document; the Army's program should be modernized; Army recruiters are not sufficiently customer-oriented; the Army has been reluctant to change unwieldy recruiting procedures. In short, the Army needs to do a lot to clean up its recruiting activities. No matter what happens outside the box, the Army can improve recruiting performance by better success inside the box. In FY99, the army had 201,982 candidates successfully pass the enlistment test for service but was only able to recruit 95,288 to take a medical examination.⁴ This means that 106,694 were lost at this early stage of the accession process. I think that more effective recruitment of these 201,982 potential enlistments could have easily made up the 6,300 shortfall in the FY99 accession mission.

Since January 1973, when Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird announced an end to the involuntary drafting of America's youth, the United States has manned its military forces using the All-Volunteer Force strategy.⁵ The current difficulties in meeting endstrength objectives using this method

require a policy review to determine if this current strategy needs revision or replacement. The review should ensure the program's strategy is carefully formulated, using an end, ways and means approach.

If the United States is to maintain its position as world leader and coalition partner of choice, it must prepare to meet the challenges of the next century with a strong, fully manned military, along with its other instruments of national power. The future environment (2010 and beyond) indicates no change to the nation's fundamental and enduring security needs: protection of the lives and safety of Americans; maintenance of the sovereignty of the United States, with its values, institutions, and territory intact; and provision for the prosperity of the nation and its people.⁶ Satisfying these security needs requires a military manpower procurement strategy structured to compete for the best human resources in a strong and robust economy. Meeting this requirement becomes more difficult under the current AVF policy because of a smaller market and declining propensity among American youth to join the military.

As the Army continues to transform into a more mobile and technology-based force, it will continue to need high quality young men and women to fill the ranks. If the Army is to successfully man the force without having to conduct wild scrambles during the last quarter of each fiscal year, only a better recruiting strategy will meet the challenge. The Army's recruiting challenge is so great that it must review all areas of its program to find efficiencies and better ways of executing this program. We should not discount even the most remote suggestions. Some reformers call for some type of compulsory national service. Indeed, our strategic leaders must start with a clean slate to reinvigorate the recruiting program and should not discount, without study, a conscription service option.

The Honorable Louis Caldera, Secretary of the Army, in his 5 August 1999 memorandum to some of the Army's top strategic leaders offered his observations into the complex task of recruiting the force. He directed the Army to focus on improving the program. The SA also challenged the leadership to, "think creatively and not be limited by traditional notions of time and resources."⁷ His memorandum gives us a great start: It directs us to seek improvements in the Army's recruiting program and to generate plans for more successful recruiting.

The individuals tasked to lead the SA's working group are the Assistant Secretary of the Army, Reserve and Manpower Affairs, and the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel. They are tasked with developing a plan for improving the selection, training, equipping, and positioning of the force for better market penetration, as well as more effective management of the recruiting force.⁸ This group should develop a long-range recruiting strategy document that has identifiable ends, ways, and means.

ORIGINS OF THE CURRENT RECRUITING STRATEGY

Strategic art is the skillful formulation, coordination, and application of ends, ways, and means to promote and defend the nation's interests.

USAWC⁹

It is extremely difficult to find any document that fully specifies the Army's holistic strategy to recruit and man the force. It is even more difficult to find a recruiting strategy that employs the Army War College's concept of strategy, one that addresses strategy in terms of ends, ways and means. The AWC strategic concept provides a framework to develop a strategy that makes a connection between where we are today and where Army recruiting wants to be tomorrow. This concept would also assist in developing the resources needed to support the program. Many of the nation's recruiting strategy documents do not meet the AWC strategic standards. They generally offer comments about how important "quality personnel" are to the future of our country. Lack of strategic direction leaves the executors of the current AVF manpower procurement strategy in a beleaguered position. The National Security Strategy, National Military Strategy, Quadrennial Defense Review, or the Officer Personnel Management System Task Force XXI documents reveal very little critical thinking about an overall strategy to meet current and projected recruiting requirements. The following document review demonstrates the degree each document addresses recruiting and personnel matters.

The *National Security Strategy* identifies "quality people" as the nation's most critical asset as America approaches the next century. The NSS then clearly directs that our leaders must continue to place the highest priority on initiatives and programs that support recruiting, quality of life, and the training and education of military personnel.¹⁰ This statement lays the groundwork for transforming the aging force structure manning policy to meet the challenges of the 21st century. However, this document falls short of actually formulating the administration's manpower procurement strategy. It does, however, call for the nation to explore new approaches for integrating the Active and Reserve components for future missions, modernizing forces, and ensuring the quality of military personnel.¹¹

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has not observed the guidelines and spirit of the NSS in the current *National Military Strategy—Shape, Respond, Prepare Now: A Military Strategy for a New Era*. The NMS generally affirms the thought behind the current AVF policy. It states that the nation is committed to the AVF policy, thus the military will continue to procure manpower in the future without consideration of other ways to achieve the objective of having a quality force.¹² The NMS fails to shape, respond, and prepare a manpower procurement strategy to respond to pressures in enacting the AFV concept and our ability to recruit the force.

In view of the huge amount of attention the Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review 1997 has received over the last few years, surely it should contain a new direction and strategy. It does not. The QDR focuses mostly on force structure and composition. It does note that the future defense strategy and military power is anchored in *quality people*, ready forces, and superior organization, doctrine, and technology.¹³ Statements concerning the Services requiring "only" the highest quality, dedicated, and well-trained personnel to succeed in a complex and fast-paced future environment are also contained in the document. While the QDR proposes strategy to protect our interest into the future, it fails to recommend a "new" strategy to recruit and man that future force. The only other personnel-related topic the QDR addresses is quality-of-life within the force.¹⁴

In July 1996 the Army organized the Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS) Task Force XXI to assess the viability of the OPMS for both current and future requirements. This TF recommended how the Army should manage, develop, and promote officers in the future. This new force structure concept shapes the officer corps to respond to evolving challenges well into the XXI century.¹⁵

In developing this new system, the Army published the ways to manage the officer component of the force under this concept. But it did not include a strategy to recruit this force, nor did it include the entire force. OPMS XXI provided a revolutionary approach to shape, respond, and prepare the future officer component. But OPMS XXI missed an excellent opportunity to lay the groundwork for the accession and recruiting strategy for the emerging force structure of the Army. Once again the Army did not take this opportunity to publish a holistic strategy to man the force.

In November 1999, The Army Chief of Staff assembled another task force to review the Enlisted and Warrant Officer Personnel Management Systems (EPMS and WOPMS).¹⁶ In addition to EPMS and WOPMS review requirements, this task force has a charter to, "specifically examine recruiting, retention, and attrition, and, provide recommendations for changes necessary to ensure continued readiness."¹⁷ I think this TF will fail to adequately research and recommend a holistic strategy to recruit the future force. This task force will surely focus on the "ways" to manage the force once it has been accessed. Addressing the warrant officer and enlisted personnel systems for Force XXI, Army 2010, and the Army-After-Next is important. But such studies should also address the ends, ways and means to recruit that future force.

The last document to provide in any detail a strategy for recruiting the force was published in 1995 by the United States Army Recruiting Command as part of its annual report. *Recruiting for the 21st Century* provides a framework for planners, leaders, and most importantly recruiters to succeed in attracting the personnel needed to man the force. This comprehensive document describes the challenging environment in which the Army will compete to recruit future soldiers. It also addresses the rapid acceleration of information and the need to attract personnel who can process it and make quick judgments.¹⁸ This portrayal of the Army recruit of 2010 and environment in which this potential soldier will come from alerts the USAREC force and gives them direction. It also gives programmers the strategy that will be employed to recruit this force.

Recruiting for the 21st Century challenged USAREC to change its business practices to improve the recruiting process. It announced changes to its business practices in the Success 2000 program. This program's strategy for change was to simplify the mission and enhance teamwork at the station level for a more efficient and productive recruiting force. It also directed a new way to determine how success at all levels would be viewed in the future.¹⁹

Review of these strategy documents raises the serious question of whether the U.S. Army has a holistic, published strategy to recruit the force for 2010 and beyond. When manning is addressed, we find only general comments about the quality needed in the force. None of these documents fulfills the Army War College's definition or intent of strategy. The Army should develop and publish its strategy to recruit

the force of tomorrow based on the AWC model or one that identifies the end, ways, and means components in its strategy. The Army's current strategy contains several ways (enlistment incentives, reenlistment bonuses, college fund benefits, and the GI Bill) to achieve enlistment goals. Task forces working to discover what is wrong with recruiting should meet the requirement to address the ends, ways, and means to recruit the next Army. This strategy should be flexible enough to adjust to the environment when conditions change to favor recruiting. It is amazing Army recruiting remains functional without a detailed strategy that shapes, prepares, and responds to our nation's needs. Army recruiting strategy should start by shaping the market by means of articulating why service in the Army is a worthy option for a career. This effort should include shaping opinions of those who influence our potential employees. Preparing the program for success involves instituting measures to modernize tactics, techniques, procedures and systems to support the program. In addition, adequate funding of the program also plays a major role in preparing Army recruiting for success. Shaping and preparing will better enable the program to respond to the nation's needs.

FACTORS BEARING ON MEETING RECRUITING GOALS

Strategic leadership is the process used by a leader to affect the achievement of a desirable and clearly understood vision by influencing the organizational culture, allocating resources, directing through policy and directive, and building consensus within a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous global environment which is marked by opportunities and threats.

USAWC Primer²⁰

Several factors affect recruiting today. They range from program leadership to size of the recruiting market. In addition to issues widely reported in the media (robust economy, low unemployment, competition from sister services, the private sector, and post-secondary educational institutions), there are others that may prove beneficial to discovering what is wrong with recruiting. Such factors include identifying a program Czar, modernizing the customer service process, and the Army's reluctance to change procedures. The above are a few lesser-reported contributing factors to what is wrong with recruiting, if the Army identifies and acknowledges these problems, then they can be fixed.

WHO IS THE RECRUITING CZAR?

A major issue in discovering what is wrong with recruiting is attempting to identify the Department's strategic leader or program Czar. By definition the Czar is the executive who sets the vision, strategy and direction for the entire program. Commander of the United States Army Recruiting Command is the obvious candidate to fill this role. However, the USAREC commander, like most commanders, devotes most of his energy to the actual day-to-day mission of recruiting soldiers. The current recruiting climate leaves little time for strategic thinking. A recent reorganization has placed USAREC under the Training and Doctrine Command. Does this reorganization now make the TRADOC

Commander the "Recruiting Czar" for the Army? With this reorganization, the Commander TRADOC has assumed some of the duties of the recruiting czar. This is evidenced by TRADOC's mission statement now including "access the force" as its opening statement.²¹ In addition, the TRADOC Command Plan now includes three recruiting related goals. This arrangement would mirror the manner in which the Air Force is organized to accomplish the training and recruiting mission. In addition, the TRADOC Commander has the structure in place to assist in accomplishing Czar responsibilities.

Another candidate for recruiting Czar is the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel. This position has the following recruiting tasks in its mission and function statements:

Develop and manage the annual accession plans . . . for Regular Army and United States Army enlisted, Regular Army and United States Army Reserve AMEDD officer, and all other special categories of accession recruited by USAREC...Develop recruiting policies and procedures in support of the above...Develop recruiting policy and procedures in support...Develop and manage active and reserve component incentives for enlistment...Develop and manage the Total Army Officer Accession Plan...Develop accession policy and missions for Reserve Officer Training Corps, United States Military Academy, and Officer Candidate School...Develop warrant officer accession policy for direct commission and warrant officer accession policy...Establish and monitor policy for direct commission and warrant officer appoints.

DCSPER Missions and Functions²²

This job description clearly appears to designate the DCSPER as the Army's recruiting czar. Although the DCSPER's mission includes a major role in developing accession policy and strategy, it does not specifically designate the DCSPER as the overall Czar.

The Army Chief of Staff is another strategic leader who could be added to the list of candidates. However, Title 10 does not assign statutory recruiting responsibilities to the CSA. But surely the top uniformed officer has a role to play in the recruiting process.²³ The current CSA, General Shinseki, has truly provided Czar type of leadership the recruiting program has lacked during these troubled times. In a bold move to assist in the recruiting effort he directed that everyone in the Army is a "recruiter." This act required everyone to do his or her part to help the recruiting program. From his position, he appears best equipped to provide strategic leadership for recruiting.

The question of who wears the recruiting Czar's hat appears to be resolved by Title 10, United States Code. Title 10 gives statutory responsibility for recruiting to the Secretary of the Army.²⁴ This responsibility is then delegated in HQDA, General Orders Number 10, Assignment of Functions, Responsibilities, and Duties within the Office of the Secretary of the Army. This Order specifies the ASA (MRA)'s responsibilities:

The ASA (MRA) shall have as the principal responsibility the overall supervision of manpower, personnel, and reserve component affairs of the Department of the Army. The ASA (MRA) acts with the full authority of the Secretary (of the Army), unless otherwise restricted, in the execution of assigned responsibilities. Among the responsibilities of the ASA (MRA) are—Recruiting and recruiting advertising...

ASA (MRA) Mission Statement²⁵

This order seems to clearly designate the recruiting czar. However, the actual day-to-day execution of this responsibility is shared among all the strategic leaders mentioned above. In the current shortfall environment, all of these leaders are actively sharing some role in formulating and executing the Army's recruiting strategy.

The recruiting program desperately needs a single undisputed strategic leader. In addition to developing overall strategic vision and focus, this leader could develop and manage the manpower investment strategy. This role is critical to managing and protecting recruiting program dollars. An example of mismanagement is the careless manner in which the Army has failed to program additional resources for recruiting. Mismanagement of recruiting budgets is not just an Army problem as stated by Congressman Steve Buyer in his opening statement before a House Arms Services Sub-Committee hearing 8 March 2000. Congressman Buyer stated, "it is apparent that personnel authorities in the armed services have difficulty winning budget battles on recruiting and retention. There is not a single service, active or reserve component, that does not have an example of a recruiting account that is funded in the fiscal year 2001 budget request at less than what the services is expecting to execute in that account during fiscal year 2000."²⁶ In FY99 the Army programmed \$844.1m for the struggling recruiting program. The FY 00 budget reflects a decrease of \$30m. In fact the Army was the only service to decrease funding for recruiting and advertising budgets for FY00. Congress noted the shortfall and responded by providing a \$45m Congressional plus-up for Army recruiting.²⁷ This plus-up was part of a \$117m service-wide increase for recruiting. The recruiting Czar should serve as the program's advocate to protect resources during the budget process.

On the surface, there appears to be a simple answer to the question of who is the recruiting Czar. But in practice the Army does not have a single recruiting Czar who assumes responsibility for developing the vision, writing the strategy document, reviewing program performance, and ensuring that the program successfully competes for its proper share of budget dollars. The recruiting czar must be the program's strategic leader, responsible for making strategic decisions about recruiting. Fixing what is wrong with recruiting starts with the Czar's vision on recruiting. Simply designating a recruiting czar in name will not correct what is wrong with recruiting, unless the czar is actively performing czar type duties.

Our Concerns...

Recruiting Resources
(Constant FY 2000 Dollars)

•With exception of Army, all Active Components increased recruiting and advertising budgets for FY 2000
•With Congressional plus-ups, overall spending for FY 2000 exceeds spending for FY 1999

	FY 1999 PB	FY 2000 PB	FY 2000 Appropriations	Total FY 2000
Army	\$844.1M	\$814.1M	\$45M	\$859.1M
Navy	\$444.6M	\$455.2M	\$45M	\$500.2M
Marine Corps	\$212.6M	\$213.2M	\$10M	\$223.2M
Air Force	\$236.2M	\$260.7M	\$10M	\$270.7M
Joint	\$128.6M	\$153.1M	\$7M	\$160.1M
Total	\$1,866.1M	\$1,896.3M	\$117M	\$2,013.3M

Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense (Force Management Policy)

October 1999

FIGURE 1. RECRUITING RESOURCES

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Another area that receives little attention in discussion of what is wrong with recruiting is customer service to applicants applying for acceptance into the Army. Customer service (or the lack of it) is most visible when applicants visit a Military Entrance Processing Station. A MEPS is a one-of-a-kind jointly staffed DoD organization located in 65 cities nationwide. The Military Entrance Processing Command is not a part of the USAREC structure, yet it plays an important role in the accession triad, along with recruiting services and the training base. MEPS's mission is to ensure the quality of military and federal service accessions during peacetime and mobilization in accordance with established service and DOD standards. This mission includes such essential tasks as conducting the following:

- Student/enlistment aptitude testing
- Medical examinations
- Initiating background screening checks
- Enlistment contracts
- Personnel data transmission
- Feeding and lodging of applicants
- Transportation requirements²⁸

A major problem with the Army's customer service is the Army's inability to evenly schedule applicants to these stations in a manner that allows for quality and customer oriented service. This occurs because the Army simply schedules more applicants than their structure could possibly process in a day. Thus applicants spend untold hours sitting and waiting to see USAREC guidance counselors. Although there is no supporting statistical data compiled at USAREC, many enthusiastic applicants become frustrated with the process and depart the MEPS without entering the Army. Many of these turn-offs can be attributed to the extraordinary waiting time to talk with a guidance counselor and then to complete voluminous administrative requirements.²⁹

The scheduling problem is worst on Army mission day. This is the final day of the month (normally the last Monday of the month) for USAREC to meet the monthly recruiting goals established by the Department of the Army. Figure 2 shows a typical processing flow of applicants through a MEPS; however, the closing time is often extended to 2400 hours to process applicants into the Army. Again this occurs because the Army schedules more applicants than they can process. That means an applicant could physically be in a MEPS from 0515 until after 2400 hours. This meat-grinder approach is a terrible introduction to the Army for our potential "new" employees. Would IBM or any other major employer treat potential employees in this manner?³⁰ It is difficult to imagine that such a reception would be given to potential employees. This first impression presents a negative image of the Army that could impact the recruiting effort.

This lack of customer service also results in applicants being asked to return to the MEPS the following day to complete processing. Many choose not to return for processing because of school and employment considerations. Such losses could be avoided with better scheduling of applicants to MEPS and improved customer service. The Army could ease this negative situation by requesting more than one mission day a month from MEPCOM. Why not have 2 or 3 mission days a month? A mission week could also be used to better schedule and prepare applicants to process at the MEPS. A very workable solution would be to request MEPS open for processing on additional Saturdays during the year. Currently the MEPS is opened only 12-13 Saturdays a year. The additional Saturdays would provide the Services additional processing days to even out the scheduling of applicants to a MEPS. Suggestions for changes of this type often are met with "Too hard to do!" by those charged with executing the program. This change-resistant attitude makes it very difficult to improve programs and services. The Army is not alone in poor customer service on mission days. Each service has a designated mission day to close out their monthly recruiting missions. In addition each service, with the exception of the Air Force, has difficulty in scheduling applicants into MEPS on mission days. The Air Force manages their applicant scheduling process in a customer friendly manner that avoids the mission day, meat-grinder approach employed by the other services.

Another way to improve customer service is to improve the readiness of an applicant to process through a MEPS. Failure to prepare the applicant and associated paperwork slows down and often prevents an applicant from successfully processing each station on a single visit. On any given day 25-

30% of applicants fail to have data properly entered into data bases; fail to have necessary documentation (high school diplomas, medical records, and other administrative requirements) when processing starts; and fail to have vital information that would speed and enhance the processing experience.³¹ These failures have second and third level effects on recruiting. One of the effects requires a recruiter to visit the MEPS and deliver documentation or return an applicant home to obtain information. These actions take the recruiter away from the active recruiting process.

MEPCOM's Eastern Sector Commander has employed a Prime Directive to improve customer service to applicants. It demands high standards of customer service and prompt, responsive support to all customers. The Prime Directive (Figure 3) sets forth the sector commander's vision and expectation of how his command conducts customer relations. Its strong message emphasizes that Eastern Sector will ensure that each applicant is treated with dignity and respect.³² This directive has led to improved customer service to applicants and recruiting Services. But directives alone cannot compensate for USAREC's lack of customer service. I think the Army is losing many potential recruits at the precise time when they are ready, even eager, to join the Army. Quality customer service by all involved in the recruiting process is vital to meeting the recruiting mission. Each soldier, sailor, airman, marine, civilian, and contractor must be actively involved in the customer service business.

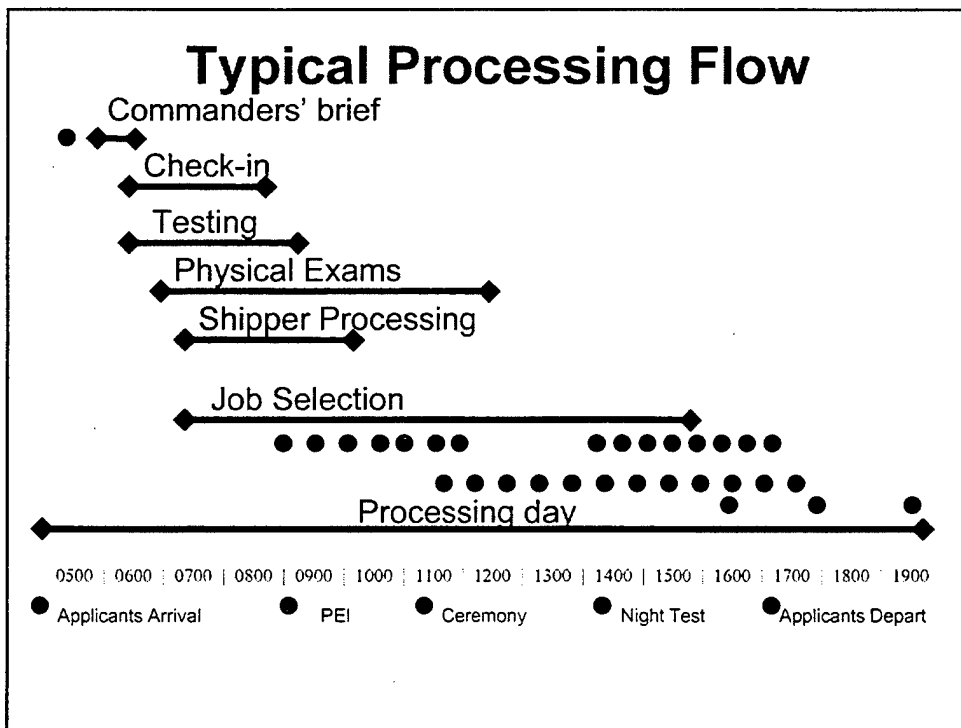


FIGURE 2. TYPICAL PROCESSING FLOW

The Prime Directive

Take care of our customers (applicants, recruiting services, reception centers and the American people) as you would want and expect your family or yourself to be treated. Understand and execute our regulations and policies within their intent. Make them work to the benefit of the customer whenever possible. Ensure internal operating procedures do the same and your management of resources support this goal. Always accomplish our mission to standard, not to time. Respect and take care of the customer and each other. Do all possible to achieve success as "one team" with "one standard" regardless of the task or circumstances. We exist to support our customers and our success is measured in how well that's done.

Eastern Sector USMEPCOM



Freedom's Front Door



11/24/04

FIGURE 3. THE PRIME DIRECTIVE

PROGRAM MODERNIZATION

Modernization of the recruiting program is long overdue. Several automated enhancements are programmed to assist the individual recruiter on the ground, including laptop computers to aid in the recruitment process. Yet there is still a need to modernize the administrative process within the Army guidance counselor shops located at the MEPS or increase the force structure within this choke point in the accession process.

This phase of processing is critical to young Americans preparing to swear allegiance and join the Army. A complete overhaul of this section would streamline and simplify this vital and time-consuming process. Modernization will bridge the resources gap that exists in this section. Ironically, this section is the recruiting element most likely to be denied resources when recruiting hits hard times. Scarce resources generally go first to recruiters in the field. It does the Army little good to herd hundreds of applicants to a MEPS front door, if the Army guidance counselor cannot process them efficiently because of un-modernized or time consuming accession procedures.

Need for modernization can also be seen in an outdated REQUEST system used to obtain jobs reservations for applicants. This system cannot adequately support the 65 guidance counselor shops around the country. Maintenance is a major problem, since it causes unnecessary delays in the

recruitment process. When this system fails, it can delay recruit processing across the entire country for hours! This results in applicants at best being delayed and at worst deciding not to join because of this frustrating experience.

PLANTING SEEDS

Finally, the Army needs to invest more heavily in growing and shaping opinions in America's youth and those who influence them. The United States Marine Corps does an excellent job of shaping America's youth vision of the Corps by supporting such programs as Toys For Tots and the Young Marines program. The Marines have been involved with the Young Marines since 1993, when Congress asked the Services to develop programs promoting anti-drug messages for youth. Since that time, the program has grown to serve over 11,000 youths in 189 units across America.³³

This program is designed to teach respect, proper conduct, and leadership skills to boys and girls between 8 and 18 years of age. These "young marines" get a very mild taste of Marine life and are encouraged to embrace the traditions of the Corps. Volunteers, many of them former USMC members, staff the organization. A very small fee of \$3.00 per participant helps underwrite program costs. Each student who attends pays the fee. In addition, the Marines received a \$1.4 million grant to underwrite the program's training activities. It also pays for various uniform items, such as the hats, belt buckles, and T-shirts.³⁴ This is a very simple and inexpensive way to enhance the recruiting process: The Marines have learned to plant seeds and grow their own recruits.

The Army can plant seeds for the future is by increasing its investment in Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps programs. An exemplary program is the Chicago Military Academy-Bronzeville. This military academy is a part of the Chicago Public School System, which supports the nation's largest JROTC program. Students in the program cite discipline as the top drawing card to school. This theme is appealing to both students and their parents.³⁵

Such programs have not received much attention from those attempting to discover what is wrong with recruiting. Attention is normally focused on a robust economy, low unemployment, competition from sister services, the private sector, and post-secondary educational institutions and decline in market size. But clearly the Army has access to some inside the box and low-cost ways to improve recruiting. JROTC is one of those inside-the-box programs that can assist the recruiting effort. While JROTC is not a recruiting program, its goal of motivating and developing young people to be responsible citizens can assist recruiting efforts by providing an awareness and introduction to the Army.³⁶ Many Americans are eager for the nation's young people to be exposed to Army values, which are themselves good for recruiting.

CONSCRIPTION OR ALL VOLUNTEER MANNING STRATEGY

The Congress shall have Power to ...provide for the common Defense ...of the United States; ...To raise and support Armies; ...To provide and maintain a Navy; To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces.

U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section 8

The exact method of how to man U.S. military forces has been debated throughout American history. Some advocate conscription; some, national service; and some, voluntary service. All seek to ensure that America's interests, values, and purpose are secure. There are basically two methods (ways) to ensure that America can procure and retain necessary manpower to achieve a diverse and strong force to fulfill its ultimate mission, "to fight and win the nations wars." Each concept has merits as well as potential problems. The principal ways to man the force are to retain the current AVF (with enhancements) or to restore compulsory service.

The current AVF policy continues our reliance on a system that only marginally meets the nation's manpower needs. Throughout its use, the AVF policy has yielded problematic rates of enlistment and retention. Table 1 shows the Army's accession performance using the AVF strategy between FY74 and FY99. This performance indicator shows the Army failing to meet its accession mission six times over the past 26 years.³⁷

Sufficient investment to keep this policy functional is critical to success. The recently signed FY00 Appropriations Bill reflects the continuous and substantial investment needed to attract and retain America's finest. The bill includes a 4.8 percent across-the-board pay raise. It also reforms the pay table for members by targeting increases at certain ranks. Some 75 percent of all service members will receive a further pay raise on 1 July 2000. The changes to basic pay, retirement, and the military pay table and pay raises to Defense Department civilians total about \$35 billion during the next six years.³⁸ This type of investment in military manpower is necessary to keep our ranks filled with quality personnel.

The second and third level effects of retaining this policy are the high cost of pay and benefit packages, which deflects large portions of the budget away from domestic programs, as well as, unneeded pay and benefit increases if the economy weakens and the recruiting and retention problem disappears.³⁹

The second way to man the force is through conscription. This method is not a new concept for manning the force. Conscription service has been proposed and used periodically in American history, normally to provide military personnel during mobilization.⁴⁰ Conscription is a very emotional topic among the American people. It prompts two divergent visions of society: One vision respects individual choice so thoroughly that conscription, even for war, is regarded as undesirable. Conscription is accepted in the U.S. only in the greatest of national emergencies. The second and competing vision is of the nation bound by common commitment. Everyone in such a society serves everyone else, and no privileges are free of obligations. The obligation to serve is shared by all.⁴¹

	FY74	FY75	FY76	FY77	FY78	FY79	FY80
TOTAL OBJECTIVE	198,000	204,600	192,600	182,200	137,000	159,200	172,800
TOTAL ACCESSIONS	199,196	208,915	193,024	180,718	134,428	142,156	173,228
% OF OBJECTIVE	100.6%	102.1%	100.2%	99.2%	98.1%	89.3%	100.2%

	FY81	FY82	FY83	FY84	FY85	FY86	FY87
TOTAL OBJECTIVE	136,800	125,100	144,500	141,753	125,300	135,250	132,000
TOTAL ACCESSIONS	137,916	130,198	145,337	142,316	125,443	135,531	133,016
% OF OBJECTIVE	100.8%	104.1%	100.6%	100.4%	100.1%	100.2%	100.8%

	FY88	FY89	FY90	FY91	FY92	FY93	FY94
TOTAL OBJECTIVE	115,000	119,901	87,000	78,241	75,000	76,900	68,000
TOTAL ACCESSIONS	115,386	120,558	89,617	78,241	77,583	77,563	68,038
% OF OBJECTIVE	100.3%	100.5%	103.0%	100.0%	103.4%	100.9%	100.1%

	FY95	FY96	FY97	FY98	FY99
TOTAL OBJECTIVE	63,000	73,400	82,000	72,550	74,500
TOTAL ACCESSIONS	62,931	73,418	82,087	71,753	68,209
% OF OBJECTIVE	99.9%	100.0%	100.1%	98.9%	91.6%

TABLE 1. ACCESSION TRENDS (FY74 - FY99)

The conscription service option would even the gap in talents and skills in the force by drawing from the society as a whole. This option would provide a better quality force to operate in the high tech environment envisioned as a result of Revolution in Military Affairs enhancements. It also brings better representation from the middle class and offsets the paucity college graduate in the enlisted ranks. College-educated members enrich the skill level and commitment of military units in peace, as well as in war. The failure of the military to mirror the composition of civilian society also generates political and moral concern about the disproportionate combat risks shouldered by minorities and the poor.⁴² A national service option would reduce this concern by requiring service from the full spectrum of society.

The second and third level effects of instituting a conscription service option are it encourages resentment, while it makes the enlisted ranks somewhat more representative of our society. But its effects in this regard would not be substantial. However, it continues the greater propensity of those from poorer backgrounds to volunteer and reenlist. Finally, it produces a probable resistance or reluctance among those called to serve.⁴³

FUTURE CHALLENGES 2010 AND BEYOND

The major manpower challenge for 2010 is recruiting quality people to operate more complex technologically advanced equipment and undertake more complex joint operations. These challenges alone dictate the need for a different strategy to man the force. The quality of personnel demanded by the information revolution described in the RMA fundamentally changes the way U.S. forces fight.⁴⁴

These changes surely will require better quality people in adequate numbers to operate in this highly technical world.

In addition, projections for a booming economy make it very difficult for the services to compete with the private sector for employees. This forecast—along with competition for budget dollars to support a “justly” compensated force—will continue to highlight a need for a holistic strategy to man our armed forces for the foreseeable future.

Finally, another factor that will play a role in meeting manpower goals is the low American birthrate in the 1970s and early 1980s. This reality has reduced the number of Americans of recruiting age to the lowest it has been in 25 years! Increases to this pool will not occur until 2005.⁴⁵ Until this population matures the Army should attempt to improve all systems to better support the recruiting effort.

CONCLUSION

The objective of the U.S. security strategy is to enhance our security, bolster America’s economic prosperity, and promote democracy. These objectives require a quality Army as part of a joint force that has a high state of readiness.⁴⁶ To meet this national end, the Army must defend and protect U.S. national interests by promoting peace and stability and, when necessary, by defeating adversaries.⁴⁷ In order to perform its mission, the Army must be properly manned with a representative and quality mix of young men and women. It must explore and develop a recruitment and accession strategy that supplies the quality force demanded on the future battlefield.

In developing this strategy, the Army must start from ground zero to identify the ways and means to man the force. This approach should include clear identification of a recruiting Czar who publishes the manning vision and strategy document to focus the effort. Taking advantage of off-the-shelf and emerging technology to replace a simply outdated and time consuming administrative process are critical to improving the customer service environment when applicants visit a MEPS to quality to serve the Army. While MEPCOM has improved customer service by automating and streamlining most administrative and medical processes, the Army has failed to keep pace with these enhancements.

As the cost of employing the next Army increases, better ways of recruiting must be investigated. Such alternatives may include asking for legislative changes that allow some form of conscription service option if the concept can be properly designed and marketed to the American public. The Army cannot continue to ignore the warning signs contained in reports indicating a negative change in propensity among America’s youth to serve. Nor should it continue to rely on the outcome of year-end battles to man the force because this method is difficult and unpredictable. The cost of not meeting the recruiting mission is failure to man the force.

RECOMMENDATION

To deliver the Army soldiers it will need to man the force for 2010 and beyond, The Army's strategic leaders must include the following items as part of its emerging concept to recruit the force. These areas should be part of an overall reform effort within recruiting:

- Designating the Commander TRADOC as the Army's recruiting czar to provide program oversight, vision, and strategy.
- Developing and publishing a comprehensive Manpower2010 and beyond strategy to recruit and man the force.
- Researching alternative ways of manning the force other than the current AVF policy.
- Simplifying and modernizing administrative processes in USAREC guidance counselor shops.
- Marketing the Army way of life to America's youth by continuing JROTC investment.
- Developing an investment strategy as a way to grow and influence future recruits and those that influence them.
- Improving customer service within USAREC.
 - Developing alternatives for processing applicants on mission days.
 - Improving the quality of an applicant's readiness to process.

Word Count 6640

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