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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

**REASSESSING THE INDIVIDUAL READY RESERVE'S ROLE IN THE
MARINE CORPS TOTAL FORCE**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

by

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From a Strategic Asset to an Operational Force: Reassessing the Individual Ready Reserve's (IRR's) Role in the Marine Corps Total Force

Subject Area: Reserve Manpower

TITLE: FROM A STRATEGIC ASSET TO AN OPERATIONAL FORCE: REASSESSING THE INDIVIDUAL READY RESERVE'S (IRR'S) ROLE IN THE MARINE CORPS TOTAL FORCE

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AUTHOR: MAJOR SHANNON SHINSKIE

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THE OPINIONS AND CONCLUSIONS EXPRESSED HEREIN ARE THOSE OF THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT AUTHOR AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF EITHER THE MARINE CORPS COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE OR ANY OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCY. REFERENCES TO THIS STUDY SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOREGOING STATEMENT.

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Much of the insight included in this paper was from the author's service on the Operational Planning Team tasked with developing and implementing a strategy to increase the number of ready Marines in the IRR qualified for involuntary recall. In 2007, the Involuntary Mobilization of the IRR highlighted the selfless and patriotic nature of young Marines and those that lead them. I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to my mentor, Dr. P. Otis for her assistance as I completed this work. My deepest admiration is owed to Brigadier General Darrell Moore who had the vision and energy to demand from his command that which is owed to the Marines now serving in the IRR. In the conduct of this research, MCFU's funding made possible the detailed gathering of relevant and timely data. I thank Colonel Patrick McCarthy, Colonel Lisa Hynes, Mrs. Janet Bedwell, Mr. Steve Simmons, Mr. Rod Davis, and Gunnery Sergeant Jansen for their patience and assistance as I asked for more and more information.

From a Strategic Asset to an Operational Force: Reassessing the Individual Ready Reserve's (IRR's) Role in the Marine Corps Total ForceCSC 2008

Subject Area: Manpower

Executive Summary

Title: From a Strategic Asset to an Operational Force: Reassessing the Individual Ready Reserve's (IRR's) Role in the Marine Corps Total Force

Author: Major Shannon L. Shinskie

Thesis: The IRR should be used as an operational force at the onset of major conflict. This will strengthen the overall Total Force concept and maintain a higher level of manpower availability for a longer period of time.

Discussion: The Reserve Component (RC) of the Marine Corps, those manpower assets considered a part of the Total Force and not in the Active Component (AC), is employed today in ways and numbers never considered during the Cold War era. The Cold War postured the reserves as a strategic asset to be mobilized along the attitude of, "Break Glass In Case of Emergency." Out of necessity of meeting the manpower requirements in Afghanistan and Iraq, reserve personnel augmented the Total Force in unprecedented levels over the past seven years. By all accounts, the reserves transformed from a strategic asset to an operational force. In all levels of planning, the RC is considered a viable, important, and necessary component to the overall manpower pool.

However, this shift in manpower planning has been limited in scope. The use of reserves as an operational force has been limited to the Selected Reserve (SelRes), while the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) is still largely considered a strategic asset to be used in a last resort (on an involuntary basis). The "Break Glass" approach is still prevalent in decision-making process of IRR Involuntary Mobilizations. Whether this mindset remains because leaders believe that in "preserving" the IRR they preserve a viable pool of manpower for the future, or whether it stems from political considerations of a large public outcry, maintaining the IRR as a strategic asset is not viable in prolonged periods of conflict.

The finding of this report is not the result of the original direction or design of the research. Rather, this research was originally intended to discern whether Marine Corps Mobilization Command's (MOBCOM's) efforts to employ a new strategic plan was successful, and whether or not that success translated into higher percentages of readiness. However, during the conduct of the research, it was evident that despite the command's best efforts to improve screening, training, and engagement of its members, it struggled to find 2,500 qualified candidates to Involuntarily Mobilize in 2007.

Conclusion: The readiness of the IRR declined from 2003 to 2007 in spite of the fact a large scale Involuntary Mobilization did not occur. Moreover, when the Presidential Authority to Involuntarily Mobilize 2,500 Marines did materialize, it was largely overlooked by the media. The most opportune time to Involuntarily Mobilize the IRR is within the first months of the need for additional personnel. In keeping with the MAID-P, the Presidential Authority to mobilize the IRR at the beginning gives the Marine Corps a wealth of manpower that otherwise is unavailable after waiting (because the Marines discharge). Furthermore, Marines mobilized early have not bore the

brunt of many combat deployments because they separated from active duty before the deployments started, so they are less likely to be medically unqualified or qualify for D,D&E. This stronger manpower pool is wasted if the Involuntary Mobilization is delayed, because they Marines will discharge from the Marine Corps.

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"The services are required to conduct "continuous screening" of all members of the Ready Reserve (including the IRR) to make certain that only personnel viable for involuntary mobilization are retained and to prevent "significant attrition . . . during mobilization." Although IRR members are contractually obligated to participate and comply with muster and screening requirements, the services, with the exception of the Marine Corps, have not made an effective effort to maintain a screening program as mandated by statute."—Commission on the National Guard and Reserve, Transforming the National Guard Into a 21st Century Operational Force, Final Report to Congress and the Secretary of Defense, 31 January 2008

Meeting Manpower Requirements Today and Tomorrow

The Reserve Component (RC) of the Marine Corps, those manpower assets considered a part of the Total Force and not in the Active Component (AC), is employed today in ways and numbers never considered during the Cold War era. The Cold War postured the Reserves as a strategic asset to be mobilized along the mentality of, "Break Glass In Case of Emergency." Out of necessity of meeting the manpower requirements in Afghanistan and Iraq, reserve personnel augmented the Total Force in unprecedented levels over the past seven years. By all accounts, the reserves transformed from a strategic asset to an operational force. In all levels of planning, the RC is considered a viable, important, and necessary component to the overall manpower pool.¹

This shift, however, has been limited in scope. The use of reserves as an operational force has been limited to the Selected Reserve (SelRes), while the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) is still largely considered a strategic asset to be used in a last resort (on an involuntary basis). The "Break Glass" mentality is still prevalent in decision-making process of IRR Involuntary Mobilizations. Whether this mindset remains because leaders believe that in "preserving" the IRR they preserve a viable pool of manpower for the future, or whether it stems from political considerations, maintaining the IRR as a strategic asset is not achievable in prolonged periods of conflict. The IRR will weaken over time during prolonged conflict regardless of Involuntary Mobilizations, and the political considerations of using this force are overblown. The IRR should be used as an operational force at the onset of major conflict. This will strengthen the overall Total Force concept and maintain a higher level of manpower availability for a longer period of time.

The finding of this report is not the result of the original direction or design of the research. Rather, this research was originally intended to discern whether the command's efforts to employ a new strategic plan was successful, and whether or not that success translated into higher percentages of readiness. In that regard, the command was successful and the numbers prove it. However, during the conduct of the research, it was obvious that despite the command's best efforts to improve screening, training, and engagement of its members, it struggled to find 2,500 qualified candidates to Involuntarily Mobilize in 2007.²

If the command improved its ability to find and contact its members, educated tens of thousands Marines, spent millions on training and engagement activities, why did they struggle to find a mere 2,500 qualified Marines out of the 60 thousand Marines assigned to MOBCOM? First, the research shows that the command's strategic plan, the Individual Ready Reserve Engagement Strategy (IES) did work by explaining what IES is, how IES evolved, and proving a statistical correlation between tactical engagement and improved percentages of readiness. Then, the research compares those Marines that were engaged by IES and their response to the Involuntary Mobilization to discern whether or not the engagement activities affected the Marines' responses to the Involuntary Mobilization. Last, the research looks at those Marines found unqualified for mobilization to seek an explanation to the dilemma posed by the fact that IES produced more names, but less and less Marines were qualified for mobilization.

To conclude the report, the public reaction to the Involuntary Mobilization is presented for evaluation. Very few articles were written, and those that were published were largely the responsibility of one journalist. The large public outcry that was expected in response to the Involuntary Mobilization never materialized. Public reaction to the Involuntary Mobilization was minimal.

Introduction to the Total Force Concept

The Marine Corps Total Force is the nation's Total Force in readiness. Comprised both of Active Component (AC) and Reserve Component (RC) Marines, the Marine Corps Total Force is prepared to operate anywhere needed to support the needs of the nation. Integration of RC Marines into AC units involves unique considerations of command and control, training, logistics, and administration. Marine Corps Order P3000.19, the U.S. Marine Corps Total Force Mobilization, Activation, Integration and Deactivation Plan (USMC MAID-P), is the Marine Corps' approach to support contingency planning for rapid augmentation of the Active Component with Reserve Component (RC) forces. ³

Commander, Marine Forces Reserve (COMMARFORRES), through delegated authority from the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC), is responsible for the training and equipping of Reserve Component (RC) units and individuals. COMMARFORRES exercises command over all reserve units until they are activated. The path to employing those forces, and thus, the Marine Corps' Total Force Concept in action, is prescribed in the MAID-P. When mobilization authority is given under Title 10, Marines are activated and assigned to Commander, Joint Forces Command (COMJTRFORCMD), who then provides RC forces to the designated unit, usually a Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF), from the request of the combatant commander. The MAGTF, when equipped with AC and RC units and/or individuals, deploys to meet the needs of the combatant commander. ⁴

Reserve units and individuals are organized according to their designated response to mobilization. The Title 10 authority to activate RC units and individuals defines who maintains authorization to order the activation, which Reserve Component Category is activated, the number of that particular category authorized for activation and the duration of that particular activation. The Reserve Component's main categories are the Ready Reserve, the Standby Reserve and Retired

Marines. Within these categories are subcategories that further dictate the nature (duration and number) of their employment in the Total Force Concept. Within the Ready Reserve, Marines are classified as Selected Marine Corps Reserve (SelRes), or Individual Ready Reserve (IRR).⁵

Marines within SelRes are either a member of an SMCR unit, belong to Individual Mobilization Augmentation (IMA) detachment, or serve within the Active Reserve (AR). Marines of the AR fulfill a unique mission and are not subject to the mobilization considerations of the first two. Marines in SMCR units and IMA detachments are subject on involuntary recall to active duty according to 10 S.S.C. Section 12301(a), 12303 and 12304.⁶

Marines of the IRR are members of the Ready Reserve, but are not affiliated with an SMCR unit or IMA detachment. As a Headquarters, Marine Corps manpower asset, Marines of the IRR are subject to involuntary recall to active duty per Title 10, sections 12301(a), 12302 and 12304. An integral part of the total overall Marine Corps Total Force concept, the 60 thousand members of the IRR represent the largest single group within the RC, and a significant portion of the Total Force concept. However, a mobilization of the entire IRR at any given time is unattainable because of a variety of factors ranging from insufficient time left under a Marine's contract to medical or personal disqualification for mobilization. Even so, maximum availability and readiness of this population directly impacts the potency of the Marine Corps Total Force personnel posture.⁷

Strengthening the IRR to Strengthen the RC

Understanding why the IRR must be at maximum readiness for mobilization is clear. Understanding how to do it is not. The IRR population is difficult to lead because the Marines no longer have an active duty commitment, no longer fall under the UCMJ unless performing voluntary active duty, and are geographically spread across the globe. Some Marines are not even

aware they are still in the Marine Corps. They separate from active duty, serve three or four years in the IRR, and discharge years later without knowledge of their status or legal obligation.⁸

Within that period of reserve service, Marines are only eligible for involuntary mobilization for a period of roughly 24 months when traditional limits are applied (under current DoD policy Marines in the IRR cannot mobilize within 12 months of active duty separation and cannot mobilize with less than 12 months until reaching their Military Service Obligation (MSO) date. Once they fall within 12 months of the date of their MSO, and unless they reenlist, they are no longer considered a mobilization asset under current guidelines.⁹

Marine Corps Mobilization Command (MOBCOM) is a Major Subordinate Command of MFR. MOBCOM maintains operational and administrative control of the IRR. In 2005, Brigadier General Darrell Moore assumed command of MOBCOM. Understanding the critical role the IRR played in the Total Force Concept, coupled with evidence of declining numbers of voluntary mobilizations, BGen Moore initiated an overall strategic campaign to increase the readiness of the IRR. The campaign, named the IRR Engagement Strategy (IES), was designed to lead the IRR rather than manage the IRR and meet the strategic objective of providing ready Marines to the active duty either through voluntary or involuntary mobilizations. In the development of IES, Lines of Operation clearly emerged that linked engagement tactics to the strategic goal. Specific operational goals of increasing IRR reenlistment rates, increasing the command's ability to contact IRR Marines and decreasing the number of Marines unqualified for mobilization were linked to specific tactical engagements and implemented under IES.¹⁰

Two years after the implementation of IES, a statistical analysis of recent data reveals that IES reached many of its goals. In short, IES was successful at the operational level. However, these operational successes did not translate into a stronger mobilization response during the Involuntary Mobilizations of 2007. In fact, the actual number of potential names had to increase from one muster to the next in order to meet the manpower requirements from higher headquarters.¹¹

Development and Successes of IES

Assessing the possibility that manpower shortages within the active duty would require IRR augmentation, coupled with the reality that the IRR's population of qualified Marines was decreasing due to combat-related conditions, BGen Moore organized an Operational Planning Team in 2005 to study and produce operational objectives capable of linking MOBCOM's current tactical engagements (marketing, solicitation, mustering) to the command's strategic objective of providing ready Marines.¹²

The planners were without the benefit of a recent large-scale Involuntary Mobilization of the IRR, and therefore, without the associated research of tracking "show" rates, Delay, Deferment, or Exemption (D,D&E) processing, medical and legal issues considerations, and lessons learned from the basic process of returning massive amounts of Marines to active duty. The absence of "battlefield testing" created information voids. For example, the planners knew that having current contact information on a Marine was required, but defining "current" was a challenge because Marines moved frequently as they settled into civilian life, thus making "current" arbitrary. The planners had to discern between "current" and "correct," and identify the best business practice of locating the maximum numbers of Marines under conditions of limited resources. Through research conducted at screenings and surveys at Administrative physical screening musters, interviews with IRR Marines in focus groups held in Kansas City and at musters, telephonic contact made through the MOBCOM solicitation cell, and centuries of combined experience of the hundreds of civilian employees working at MOBCOM, planning assumptions were made.¹³

The planners first had to consider who actually comprised the IRR. The demographics of Marines in the IRR are the near-perfect reflection of populations at Marine Corps' Recruiting Depots four years earlier. However, from one end of enlistment to the other, young men and women change dramatically.

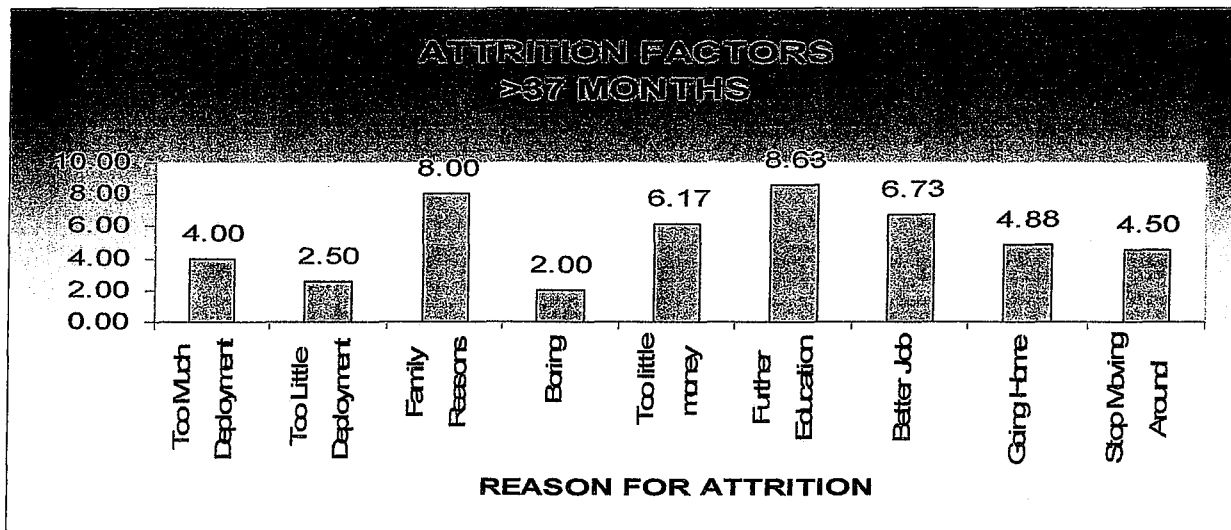
Per Title 10, Marines in the IRR are required to maintain current contact information within the Marine Corps Total Force System (MCTFS). They have the ability to update their information through Marine On Line (MOL), or request changes through contact with MOBCOM.

Additionally, Marines of the IRR may “muster,” a physical screening of personnel conducted no more than one time per year in a major city. At the end of the Marine’s Reserve End of Current Contract (RECC), the Marine is discharged with no further obligations to the Marine Corps.¹⁴

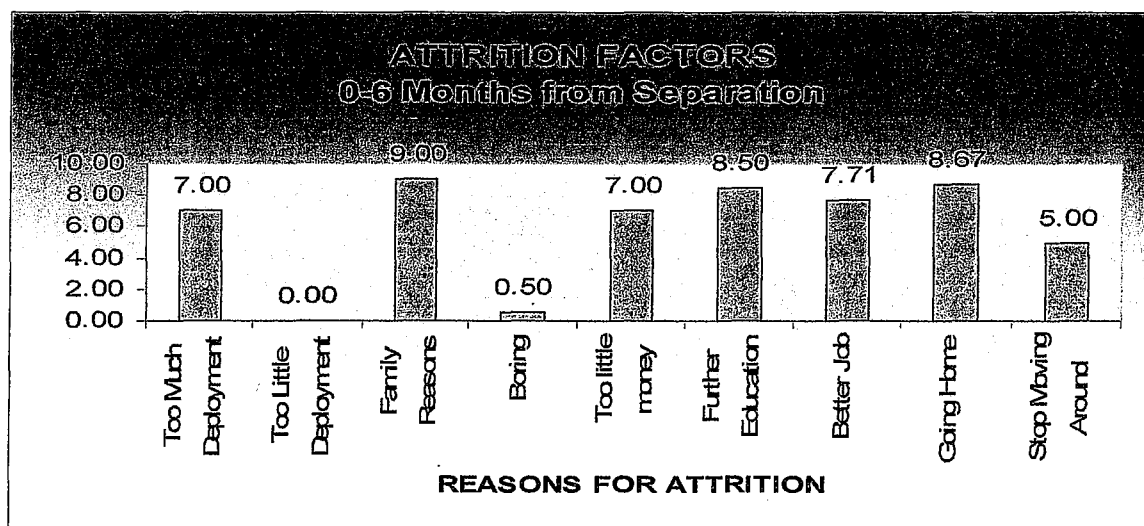
In the conduct of musters, or screenings, MOBCOM conducted anonymous surveys of Marines in attendance in an effort to discern possible motivations for greater participation. MOBCOM hoped that understanding why the Marines attending the muster left active duty rather than reenlisting might reveal possible motivators for their future participation in the reserves. In other words, understanding why they “got out” in the first place seemed important to understanding what would motivate them to return, participate, or at the very minimum, meet the basic requirements of keeping updated contact information. The subsequent data and graphs visually depict the results of the muster held in Chicago in July 2006.¹⁵

The first graph is the results of the posed question, “*Why Did you Get Out?*” The groups were broken down into a 0-6 month timeframe from separation, 7-12 month timeframe, 13-18 months, 19-24 months, 25-36 months and lastly, an over 37 month timeframe. A critical point of analysis came from the study of the over 37 month timeframe because at the time of the survey, Marines separating over 37 months ago separated no later than August 2003, but likely earlier because of the 2003 stop loss. For the 90 percent of the IRR population that completes a four year enlistment contract, this implies that these Marines entered boot camp in August 1999, before 9/11, and more significantly, before the major deployments experienced by the other populations. For these reasons, their answers reflect a different enlistment experience than those of later enlistments (shorter time since separation). This group was only slightly less inclined to choose “Too Much Deployment” over “Too Little Deployment” as a reason for attrition. See the below

chart.¹⁶



Compared to the below graph representing the weighted responses of the Marines (at the time of the survey) that separated within the last six months, MOBCOM realized that the mental disposition and combat history of the population of the command was changing. These Marines separated no earlier than February 2006, corresponding to a date of entry no earlier than February 2002. The majority spent 2002 in boot camp, School of Infantry and subsequent Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) training, reporting to their first duty assignment right before the major conflict started in Iraq.¹⁷



Nearly 80 percent of this group served multiple tours in the combat zone. Their answers reflect that experience. "Too little deployment" did not receive a single response in this group compared to the responses of the "Over 37 month" group.¹⁸

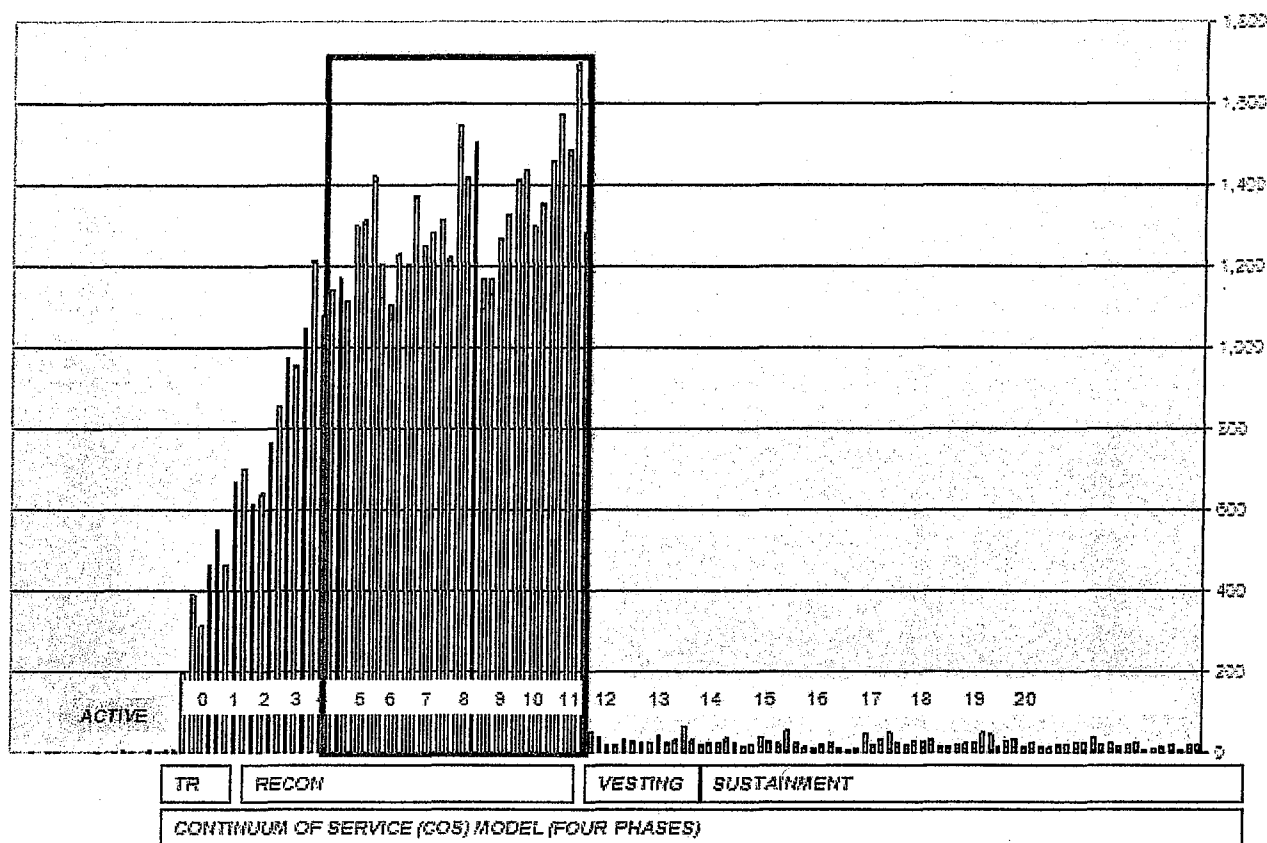
The results of all of the groups' surveys were analyzed. Through that comparison of responses to events of the specific periods of enlistment, MOBCOM planners inferred that events and circumstances of a Marine's enlistment impacted Marines' feelings toward the Marine Corps, the IRR, the IRR commitment, and the reserves in the future. Applying that knowledge to the reality that **very few joining the IRR today enlisted during a time of peace** and nearly all have endured one or more deployments, MOBCOM planners realized that the IRR faced a growing leadership challenge because each month and until 48 months after the major combat operations slowed, the command would continue to join more Marines with multiple combat tours.¹⁹

Evident was that the strength of the IRR no longer resided in the massive list of names standing ready for mobilization as in the past. Focus groups held in Kansas City revealed that throughout the country, in factories, college campuses, homes, schools, etc., IRR Marines feel they must strive to "catch up" to their peers. Many IRR Marines feel they are behind their peer group, not by discounting the life experiences they share, *but by focusing on the life experiences they do not*. They seek advancement, success, and family security. The strongest overall (mean of all groups combined) response to the question, "**Why Did You Get Out?**" on both the questionnaires and in the focus groups was the desire to further education, while the response "too little deployment" weighed in the least.²⁰

IES planners studied key points in "time," during a typical tour in the IRR, but in doing so, realized that despite the generally accepted "four years" in the IRR notion, time in the Delayed Entry Program reduced a Marine's IRR service by the same number of months spent in the DEP. Focusing limited resources on achieving maximum results, the OPT not only determined the critical

times to engage Marines along the Continuum of Service, but also the critical times NOT to engage the IRR Marine because it was not a judicious application of resources.²¹

RESERVE POPULATION SNAPSHOT



The tactics of IES supported six Lines of Operation. Based on planning assumptions that a better educated, more aware, more involved IRR Marine would more readily and competently mobilize, MOBCOM devised a strategy to maximize the number of Marines the command could contact, increase the participation and awareness of the Marines of the IRR, and increase the IRR reenlistment rate. After two years of IES, MOBCOM improved its capability to contact Marines, educated over 8,000 Marines through administrative screening musters, and increased the IRR reenlistment rate.²²

The six Lines of Operation resulted in three main Operational Objectives. Before a Marine was considered "ready," the command had to be able to find and contact the Marine. The first Line

of Operation was based on increasing the "contactability" of each Marine. With over 60 thousand names on the alpha roster, planners realized a systematic approach was necessary. The second Line of Operation was the screening and sorting effort of those Marines identified with 1) issues precluding mobilization, 2) Marines unable to be contacted, and 3) Marines identified as "ready." ²³

Of those Marines that were mobilization assets, a Line of Operation of Engagement would provide time-specific training and participation opportunities to encourage participation and retention. In order to manage all of IES activities, data gathering and delivery systems were developed, forming the fourth Line of Operation, the Systems Development Effort. The fifth Line of Operation, IES Assessment, was designed to form a system of metrics aimed at analyzing the overall effectiveness of IES. The final Line of Operation was at the leadership level, an effort at the highest level to deliver command guidance, seek higher headquarters support and funding, and foster and develop the necessary relationship that IES needed with other commands. ²⁴

Until IES implementation, the IRR was organized into five Reporting Unit Codes (RUC's), with no discernable organization of personnel other than an administrative effort aimed at the last two digits of a Marine's social security number. The planners concluded that members of the IRR were most related to one another and therefore, best organized and engaged, by their time in the IRR. For instance, when a Marine first joins the IRR, they do so with 2,000 other Marines that entered boot camp around the same time. In the initial months of their IRR membership, most members of a time-driven cohort experience a period of transition, often times making several moves, entering a new profession or starting college, and making the shift to civilian life. As time progresses, Marines in a cohort usually continues to experience similar life events, continue to earn the same membership points, continue to see promotions around the same time, and when approaching their Mandatory Service Obligation date, face the similar decision of whether or not to reenlist in the reserves. **Time in the IRR formed the basis of IRR organization in the framework of IES.** The result of this assumption was a 48-month time-line cohort framework of

organization of the 60 thousand Marines comprising the IRR, based on months until a Marine's Mandatory Service Obligation (MSO).²⁵

The time-driven organization served as the basis for the systematic delivery of IES tactics aimed along all the Lines of Operation, with the goal of targeting the right Marine, with the right product, at the right time. For example, the Reserve Counterpart Training (RCT) annual budget was roughly \$1 million. Planners realized that this resource was most judiciously spent on corporals and sergeants, rather than Majors or Colonels, as had occurred in the past. By limiting this opportunity to only those within certain windows of their time in the IRR, limited resources were best spent on encouraging retention and participation of the Marines within the period of mobilization potential based on their MSO. Research revealed that a typical colonel with over 20 years of service is normally willing to perform duty for retirement points alone, so spending financial resources on this asset "cost" the Marine Corps "more ready and more engaged" corporals and sergeants.²⁶

Results of IES

The six Lines of Operation identified in the IES Campaign plan formulated the initial operational objectives. The first objective, Increase the Command's Ability to Contact Marines, was improved by IES. From October to December 2005, 16.7 percent of all Administrative Screening orders were returned to the command, the assumption being that the address was incorrect. From August to February 2007 the return rate of Administrative Screening orders was 3.1 percent. At the .01 significance level, the two tailed P-Value = .03, so the null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that implementation of IES had an impact on the command's ability to contact Marines. Whether that was because the staff improved its ability to research addresses or the improvement of addresses in MCTFS is unknown. What is known, however, is that when MOBCOM sought to contact a Marine to send them orders, they were better able to do so after implementation of IES.²⁷

The second operational objective, increasing the participation of the IRR, presents unique challenges for analysis. The administrative requirement to report duty points and the inherent human error of late or incorrect reporting limited the scope of analysis to the command's Solicitation database rather than counting participation points. Furthermore, this provided greater insight into how "hard" the solicitor had to "sell" the duty through an analysis of the phone calls logged per exercise. In one month in 2006, the solicitation cell recorded 78 "Yes" responses for 2394 phone calls or emails made. In the same month of 2007, the solicitation cell recorded 341 "Yes" responses for 3514 phone calls. At the .01 significance level, the two tailed P-Value = .03, so we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that implementation of IES had an impact on the percentage of "Yes" responses upon solicitation of IRR Engagement opportunities. Moreover, the number of contacts increased from 2394 to 3514, a 146 percent increase. ²⁸

MOBCOM developed training packages under IES to engage the right Marine at the right time. A Corporal's course was developed for Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) development. Significant overhaul to the Mobilization Training Units (MTU's) invigorated this program and provides training and participation options to Marines that wish to remain engaged, just not willing to fully commit to the Selected Marine Corps Reserve (SMCR). ²⁹

The third operational objective, increasing the reenlistment rate from 3 percent to 5 percent was exceeded. The IRR reenlistment rate over the past two years is 8 percent. At the .01 significance level, the two tailed P-Value = .033, so we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that implementation of IES had an impact on the IRR's reenlistment rate. ³⁰

Translating Operational Success to Strategic Results

Despite achieving operational success, MOBCOM realized early in the 2007 Involuntary Mobilization process that success at the operational level was unlikely to produce the strategic results it expected. ³¹

The authority to mobilize up to 2,500 Marines of the IRR came in 2006 and mobilizations started in 2007. Initial estimates of the MOBCOM staff believed it would take 1.5 names to produce one effective "Boots on Ground" (BOG) Marine. The actual number in the April 2007 call up was a 3:1, meaning that out of the 1,800 Marines that received mobilization orders in April, only 587 reported in October.³²

As the pool of potential names for mobilization increased, so did the growing list of Marines found unqualified for mobilization for reasons associated the prolonged period of conflict. Despite the best efforts of the IES Strategy to find and identify a strategic force capable of providing effective augmentation to the active duty, the effects of multiple combat tours on the readiness and willingness of some Marines proved insurmountable.³³

IES linked tactical engagements to operational successes but failed to produce strategic results. Was this the product of improperly identified operational goals or was something else preventing strategic success? In research to determine whether IES affected the Involuntary Muster results thereby supporting the conclusion that success at the operational level should have resulted in success at the strategic level, the populations of Marines ordered to Involuntary Mobilization in 2007 and those that ultimately reported for mobilization (considered "Boots on Ground") were analyzed.

One of the most resource dependent tactical engagements of IES is the Administrative Screening muster. MOBCOM conducted "musters" in major cities across the country, once or twice a month, beginning in 2005 and is still continuing to do so. The average cost per muster was \$80 thousand between 2005-2006 (including \$196 muster stipend to each attending Marine). To determine whether attendance at these musters had any effect on a Marines propensity to involuntarily mobilize, a statistical analysis was conducted. Of the 587 that reported and qualified for deployment, 106 had previously attended an Administrative screening muster over the past 24 months. This does NOT show a correlation between having attended a muster and ultimately

fulfilling Involuntary Mobilization orders. The proportional analysis of the “BOG’s” failed reject the null hypothesis and therefore the higher percentage of actual mobilizations who previously attended an Administrative Screening Muster is attributed to chance rather than on the fact they attended a muster.³⁴

$$\frac{\text{ADMIN MUSTERED and BOG} = 106}{\text{ADMIN MUSTERED and ORDERED TO INVOL} = 261} = 40.61\%$$

$$\frac{\text{OVERALL BOG} = 587}{\text{ORDERED TO INVOL} = 1800} = 32.6\%$$

Null Hypothesis = Average Show Rate = 32.6

Alternative Hypothesis = Show Rate $\neq$ 32.6

$$Z=1.60000933$$

The two-tailed P value equals 0.1096

By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be not statistically significant.

However, what can be attributed as an IES success, and specifically, a success of the Administrative Screening muster program, is the overall rate of compliance that Marines demonstrated in response to receiving Involuntary Mobilization orders. Compliance is defined as having successfully navigated the Involuntary Mobilization process, culminating in disqualification, Delay, Deferment or Exemption, or mobilization. Through an analysis of the overall compliance rate of both groups (1 – percentage of NO SHOWS), a correlation was found between a higher overall compliance rate and attendance at an Administrative Screening Muster. This infers that the tactics of IES did, in fact, better educate Marines of their responsibilities and increase MOBCOM’s ability to contact Marines, rendering the higher compliance rate.³⁵

$$\frac{\text{ADMIN MUSTERED and COMPLIANT} = 257}{\text{ADMIN MUSTERED and ORDERED TO INVOL} = 261}$$

= 98.5%

$$\frac{\text{OVERALL COMPLIANT} = 1654}{\text{ORDERED TO INVOL} = 1800}$$

= 91.8%

Null Hypothesis = Average Compliance Rate = 91.8

Alternative Hypothesis = Compliance Rate $\neq$ 91.8

Z=2.44200492

The two-tailed P value equals 0.0146

By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be statistically significant

Nonetheless, the higher compliance did not necessarily translate into higher mobilizations. It poses the possibility that either the operational objectives were misaligned to the strategic objective, or, that despite MOBCOM's best efforts, the effects of the prolonged period of conflict degraded the overall mobilization potential of the IRR.

Answering the Question: Where Were All the Qualified Marines?

In an effort to understand why it was increasingly difficult to find qualified Marines for Involuntary Mobilization, despite the fact that IES increased the ability to contact Marines, and that more Marines reenlisted and participated, a study of the Marines found disqualified from mobilization was conducted.

Through an analysis of those Marines failing to mobilize due to medical reasons, Marines in the most heavily deployed cohort, those with a Reserve End of Current Contract (RECC) between February 2010 and August 2010, corresponding to a Date of Entry of February 2002 to August 2002 and an End of Active Service of February 2006 to August 2006, **were statically more likely to be found medically unfit for mobilization.** The mean proportion of all medical cases to all RECC's receiving Involuntary Mobilization orders was 24.65 percent. For the most heavily deployed cohort

of February 2010-August 2010, the weighted percentage of Marines with medical problems to Marines in that cohort receiving orders was 45.65 percent. Statistically, Marines that deployed the most were most likely to have a medical exemption.³⁶

$$\frac{2/10-8/10 \text{ RECC and Medical} = 21}{2/10-8/10 \text{ RECC and issued orders} = 46} = 45.65\%$$

$$\frac{\text{OVERALL Medical} = 392}{\text{All RECC's (excluded officers)} = 1590} = 24.65\%$$

Null Hypothesis = Average Medical Rate = .2465
Alternative Hypothesis = Medical Rate $\neq$.2465

$$Z=4.215$$

The two-tailed P value equals 0.0001

By conventional criteria, this difference is considered extremely statistically significant.

Through an analysis of those Marines qualifying for Delay, Deferment or Exemption, Marines in the most heavily deployed cohort, with a Reserve End of Current Contract (RECC) between February 2010 and August 2010, corresponding to a Date of Entry of February 2002 to August 2002 and an End of Active Service of February 2006 to August 2006, **were statically more likely to qualify for D,D&E.** The mean proportion of all D,D &E's for all RECC's receiving Involuntary Mobilization orders was 11.069 percent. For the most heavily deployed cohort of February 2010-August 2010, the weighted percentage of Marines that qualified for D, D &E to Marines in that cohort receiving orders was 30.43 percent. Statistically, Marines that deployed the most were most likely to qualify for D, D &E. ³⁷

2/10-8/10 RECC and D,D&E = 14
2/10-8/10 RECC and issued orders = 46

= 30.43%

OVERALL D,D&E = 176
All RECC's (excluded officers) = 1590

= 11.069%

Null Hypothesis = Average Medical Rate = .111

Alternative Hypothesis = Medical Rate $\neq$.111

Z=4.201

The two-tailed P value equals 0.0001

By conventional criteria; this difference is considered extremely statistically significant.

In seeking the correlation between a higher rate of combat tours and different RECC's, a data error was discovered that made the analysis of the sample of Involuntarily Mobilized Marines corrupt. When looking at Primary Military Occupational Specialty (PMOS) codes, it revealed that certain PMOS's were much more likely to have combat tours than others. For instance, for the 50 0302 officers on the list, 49 had a combat tour, or 98 percent. Conversely, the PMOS 3043, Supply Clerk, only had a 4.67 percent rate of combat deployment. As the distribution of PMOS's in this study is not equal among the different six-month cohorts of Marines analyzed, the different "weights" that associate with PMOS's corrupt the normal distribution. For instance, in the entire 1,800 Marines on the Involuntary Mobilization list, 25 percent came from the PMOS 3533, which had at 94 percent deployed rate; however, in the RECC cohort of 2/10-8/10, only 13 percent came from this MOS. With the data gathered for this study, it would be inaccurate to relate each cohort to a combat tour qualification.³⁸

Instead, a better analysis was made looking at the entire Marine Corps, because recruiting efforts by in large reflect previous years and therefore, six-month cohorts would likely resemble one

another in PMOS distribution from year to year. In that sense, the PMOS distribution is considered constant. In 2005, the IRR had a combat deployment rate of 23 percent. In 2006, the rate was 76 percent and rising monthly. The 2006 rate (76 percent) reflects the 2/10-8/10 cohort because of their date of separation and time of enlistment. Therefore, it is possible to infer, combined with historical knowledge of unit deployments and Marine Corps history, that Marines separating in 2006 had more combat deployments (both multiple and more distribution) than Marines separating in 2005.³⁹

Knowing that the Marines separating in 2006 had a higher rate of medical disqualifications and D,D&E occurrences, and that this group spent more time in a combat zone, it is plausible to conclude that a higher rate of deployment during an active duty enlistment lessens a Marine's effectiveness for future Involuntary Mobilization from the IRR. As shown above, the 2/10-8/10 cohort had statistical correlation between their cohort and medical and D,D&E disqualification.

IES: Doomed From the Start?

Despite the best efforts of the IES Strategy to find and identify a strategic force capable of providing effective augmentation to the active duty, the effects of multiple combat tours on the readiness and willingness of some Marines proved insurmountable. While the tactics of IES did lead to a percentage increase in the stated operational objectives, these increases did not statistically translate into their stated strategic goal. Prolonged periods of combat operations diminished the IRR's ability to act as a strategic reserve of mobilization assets. Just as the active duty forces experienced a decline in qualified manpower as a result of the current operations, the same degradation or greater, has affected the IRR.⁴⁰

However, in light of the diminished return on the IES investment, had the IRR NOT implemented IES, thereby increasing its ability to contact Marines, the ratio of candidates to "Boots on Ground" would have been much higher. MOBCOM improved its ability to find, send and track

orders to Marines by 13.6 percent. In terms of the Involuntary Mobilization, that represents 25 Marines that were contacted for mobilization that would not have been contacted without IES. As the Involuntary Mobilizations continued, that number increased. Moreover, because MOBCOM maintained the ability to "reach out and touch" the compliant rate was higher. There is no way of knowing how many Marines might have considered disregarding their orders and not reporting to Kansas City for screening because they held the belief that MOBCOM was unaware of their whereabouts. Through the multiple mailings and contacts made by IES, most Marines have some contact with MOBCOM at least once a year, with the goal of multiple contacts. Statistics do show that Marines that previously attended an administrative screening musters had a higher propensity to comply with orders. It is unknown what affect the "Welcome Aboard" package or Individual Retirement profile had on a Marine's behavioral response. ⁴¹

Most important, however, is that IES provides leadership to a group of young adults that occasionally need to be reminded that "Once a Marine, Always a Marine" does remain true. IES provides the Marine access to Veterans' Affairs key personnel through national partnerships with the VA and MOBCOM. In fact, many of the most successful administrative screening musters were held in partnership with VA hospitals in major cities. MOBCOM formed national relationships with the VETS' Centers leadership, and after one particular muster, the local VETS office reported that 250 Marines called for services the week following the muster. Award ceremonies in hometowns bring local and regional recognition to Marines as they transition, and for one Silver Star recipient, a full scholarship paid for by the Congressman that was present at the ceremony. ⁴²

The Marine Corps Total Force and the Role of the IRR

Title 10 authorizes IRR mobilizations as early as 15 days from the Presidential declaration an EO, and sooner than that on a voluntary basis. Understanding that time degrades the

effectiveness of the IRR during prolonged conflict, the optimal time to mobilize the IRR is in the beginning of a conflict, rather than waiting until the end, because as time progresses, the IRR weakens, the "stronger," (less deployed) Marines discharge, only to be replaced by the same group of Marines that bore the brunt of the major deployments WITHOUT the mobilization of the IRR. In keeping with the Total Force concept, and upon partial mobilization of the reserves, the IRR should be considered a viable source of manpower. As time progresses, the IRR, just as other reserve and active duty units, will weaken in combat potential as highly deployed separating veterans join the IRR, complete with the conditions of a very stressful period of enlistment. The research shows that because of the inventory cycle of the IRR, the notion that each month roughly 2,000 Marines join MOBCOM and roughly 2,000 separate, but four years of time separate the periods of their enlistments. In these four years, their attitude, wiliness and ability to continue serving in the IRR is shaped.

Public Outcry

There was not a public outcry when the Commandant announced Involuntary Mobilization of the IRR. One reporter's work was essentially the basis of any other report made and most stories were short, concise and factual. Through extensive research, I could not find one editorial written about the IRR Involuntary Mobilization. Only one local television outlet covered the story of Marines reporting to MOBCOM for initial processing, with no public response in the aftermath. The only public forum where the issues were discussed at length was a website named, MarineParents.com. But on the IRR Involuntary Mobilization topic, only 280 of the nearly 25 thousand members contributed to the IRR pages. ⁴³

Strengthening the Total Force

By understanding that time in prolonged periods of conflict weakens the IRR in spite of efforts to “preserve” the strength, and knowing that there will not likely be a large public outcry upon hearing about the Involuntary Mobilization, fused with the reality that at the beginning of the conflict, many Marines within the IRR actually LEFT active duty BECAUSE they did not deploy (separated prior to the conflict), the most opportune time to Involuntarily Mobilize the IRR is within the first months of the need for additional personnel. In keeping with the MAID-P, the Presidential Authority to mobilize the IRR in the beginning gives the Marine Corps a wealth of manpower that otherwise is unavailable by waiting (because the Marines separate). These Marines, having not bore the brunt of many combat deployments, are less likely to be medically unqualified, nor qualify for D,D&E. This pool of manpower is lost to the Marine Corps each month it delays the Involuntary Mobilization, and the ultimate affects of the conflict on the IRR will start in 24 months and continue until 36 months after the major deployments (active duty) stop.

¹ Commission on the National Guard and Reserve, Transforming the National Guard Into a 21st Century Operational Force, Final Report to Congress and the Secretary of Defense, 31 January 2008

² (McCarthy, Chief of Staff, Marine Corps Mobilization Command 2007)

³ (United States Marine Corps 2005,1-3)

⁴ (United States Marine Corps 2005, 6)

⁵ (United States Marine Corps 2005) (U.S. Code, Title 10)

⁶ (United States Marine Corps 2005)

⁷ (United States Marine Corps 2005)

⁸ (McCarthy, G-1, Marine Corps Mobilization Command 2005)

⁹ (United States Marine Corps (MARADMIN 397/06)

¹⁰ (Overy 2005)

¹¹ (McCarthy, Chief of Staff, Marine Corps Mobilization Command 2007)

¹² (Moore 2006, 1)

¹³ (Overy 2005)

¹⁴ (U.S. Code, Title 10)

¹⁵ (Simmons 2007)

¹⁶ (IES OPT Product 2006)

¹⁷ (IES OPT Product 2006)

¹⁸ (IES OPT Product 2006)

¹⁹ (O'Very 2006)

²⁰ (IES OPT Product 2006)

²¹ (IES OPT Product 2006)

²² (McCarthy, Chief of Staff, Marine Corps Mobilization Command 2007)

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- ²³ (Moore 2006, 1-19)
²⁴ (Moore 2006, 1-19)
²⁵ (Moore 2006, 3-7)
²⁶ (O'Very 2006)
²⁷ (Gunnery Sergeant Jansen 2007)
²⁸ (Gunnery Sergeant Fuentes 2007)
²⁹ (Hynes 2007)
³⁰ (I.B.Bressler 2007)
³¹ (McCarthy, Chief of Staff, Marine Corps Mobilization Command 2007)
³² (McCarthy, Chief of Staff, Marine Corps Mobilization Command 2007)
³³ (Gunnery Sergeant Jansen 2007)
³⁴ (Gunnery Sergeant Jansen 2007)
³⁵ (Gunnery Sergeant Jansen 2007)
³⁶ (Gunnery Sergeant Jansen 2007)
³⁷ (Gunnery Sergeant Jansen 2007)
³⁸ (Gunnery Sergeant Jansen 2007)
³⁹ (IES OPT Product 2006)
⁴⁰ (McCarthy, Chief of Staff, Marine Corps Mobilization Command 2007)
⁴¹ (McCarthy, Chief of Staff, Marine Corps Mobilization Command 2007) (Hynes 2007)
⁴² (McCarthy, Chief of Staff, Marine Corps Mobilization Command 2007) (Hynes 2007) (Simmons 2007)
⁴³ (Johnson 2007) (Johnson, More IRR Marines face involuntary call-ups 2007) (MarineParents Copyright © 2003-07 MarineParents.com, Inc.)

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