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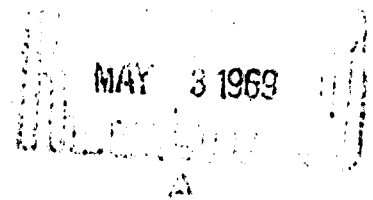
March 1969

Recruit Reactions to Early Army Experience

by

Richard Snyder and John S. Caylor

Based on
Military Presentations, 1962



HumRRO

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Prefatory Note

This paper is based on presentations made to members of staffs of the Department of the Army and the U.S. Continental Army Command in November and December, 1962. The research was conducted by the Human Resources Research Office Division No. 3 (Recruit Training) at Monterey, California, under Work Unit TRANSITION, Research on Factors of Civilian-Military Transition of Army Recruits, and under an earlier Work Unit, CAREER, The Army as a Career for Existing and Potential Qualified Personnel.

The data and interpretations in this paper were for the 1960-62 time frame; the paper has not been updated. Since that time, many changes have taken place in the manpower pool for the Army, in Army personnel policies and management, and in Army training and training management; consequently, findings or implications concerning the Army system of that time are not directly applicable to the Army system of today. These findings can, however, serve as a backdrop for other more recent research and can help broaden understanding of the parameters affecting personnel problems.

Because of the continuing relevance of the subject matter of the paper, it is being issued as part of the HumRRO Professional Paper series. This series was initiated in order to provide permanent record of specialized aspects of HumRRO work, and deposit in the scientific and technical information storage and retrieval systems of the Department of Defense and the Federal Clearinghouse.

RECRUIT REACTIONS TO EARLY ARMY EXPERIENCE

Richard Snyder and John S. Caylor

INTRODUCTION

For the foreseeable future the standing Army will depend for its enlisted strength on two categories of enlisted soldiers—Regular Army career men and "short-termers." For the most part, noncommissioned officer leadership at the higher levels must be provided by the longer service group, and it is therefore critically important that the Army attract into the career ranks as large a proportion as possible of men with potential for effective leadership—that is, men with ability, ambition, emotional stability, and the capacity for independent action. At the same time, the Army can neither ignore nor subordinate the needs of short-termers—including not only drafted men, but also Regular Army volunteers—who enlist for various reasons but, from the start, have no thought of career service. Short-term soldiers make up the bulk of the enlisted force and must perform in close teamwork with more permanent members of the organization to accomplish Army missions.

Even under conditions of utmost urgency, fully trained soldiers are not produced in a few short weeks. However, the initial few weeks of active duty are extremely important; they are the soldier's first direct experience with Army life, and they offer not only the first, but perhaps the best opportunity the Army will have to instill the values and beliefs it considers important for effective service. Also, this very early experience represents the only experience that *all* enlisted men have in common. The nature of this experience is likely to have an important bearing on the entire subsequent performance of the short-term soldier. In many cases, it will start a train of events leading directly to the critical second-enlistment decision for the potential career man.

BACKGROUND

This paper presents results from data collected from October to December 1961 on recruits undergoing Basic Combat Training (BCT) at Fort Ord, California. In the work reported here, which comprised the later stages of Work Unit CAREER and has continued under Work Unit TRANSITION, the possible changes in induction processing, early orientation, and basic training have been studied. The ultimate goal is to improve the motivation, morale, and attitudes of the Army recruit, so that he will be more willing to learn and to identify with the Army as an organization. The research has undertaken to consider all components of the enlisted force. However, the major interest has continued to be directed to the problem of building up the permanent career

enlisted force with competent, highly motivated soldiers who can provide effective noncommissioned officer leadership.

The paper includes three phases of the work done:

First, a brief summary is given of some of the research under Work Sub-Unit CAREER II, which was a survey designed to plot the course of attitude development during the early weeks of training. The survey was aimed at gathering facts and diagnosing the situation.

Second, data are presented from an experiment in Work Sub-Unit TRANSITION I on the effects of contact among different types of recruits when they are mixed together in their basic training units.

Third, some further results from TRANSITION that supplement the earlier CAREER study are described. Some information on recruit reactions to basic training is discussed, and some data are presented relating to a special group that appears to have a high career potential and may merit extra attention.

CAREER II RESEARCH

In CAREER II a panel sample of volunteer and drafted recruits was surveyed on two occasions—immediately after they had arrived in the Reception Center, and again at the conclusion of their basic training. Because of the rather elaborate research procedures used, this panel sample had to be kept quite small. Data from the panel were supplemented with data from an additional larger sample, surveyed only at the end of basic training.

Data from CAREER research indicated that, in some respects, the recruits most attracted to the Army were those who appeared to be the least qualified for effective service. This trend was evident at the time the recruits arrived in the Reception Center. It tended to be even stronger at the conclusion of their basic training.

To obtain more information on this condition, measures of general technical aptitude (GT score), need for achievement, need for independence, and personal aggressiveness were combined into a single "index of desirability." In other words, the index was a measure of how desirable the men could be considered by the Army as potential career soldiers. The recruit sample was divided into thirds (low, medium, and high) based on this composite score, and the proportion of men in each third who had high scores on another measure, that reflecting recruits' expectation of satisfaction from Army service—from a life as a soldier—was calculated. Results are shown in Figure 1.

The recruits with the highest scores on the index of desirability proved to be the ones who anticipated the least satisfaction from life as a soldier. For all three groups, attitudes were less favorable by the end of the training period, but it was the men higher on "desirability" who showed the greatest decline. Actual experience in the Army, in other words, seemed to intensify their initial trends.

Men with the most favorable attitudes toward the Army tended strongly to be volunteers. To a large extent, the results just considered simply

Life as a Soldier

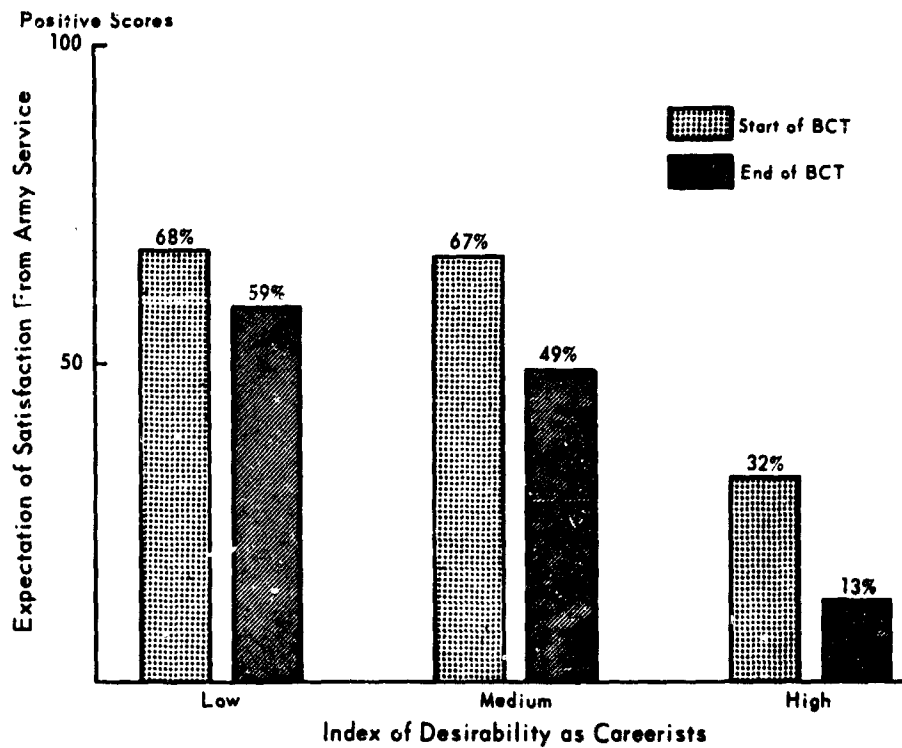


Figure 1

reflect differences between the volunteer and nonvolunteer recruits. Since recognition of differences among recruit components was central to the planning of the next research effort, brief characterizations of the three components in the recruit input—volunteers, draftees, and reservists—are necessary. These characterizations are based on the CAREER data.

Volunteers, first of all, were noticeably younger and less educated than the other components. Many indicated keen awareness of their own lack of maturity, and acknowledged some difficulties in adjustment. They appeared to be somewhat low in self-esteem. The volunteers displayed more favorable attitudes toward the Army than did the other groups. Attitudes of the noncareer-oriented volunteers were not as favorable as those of the career-oriented, but they were still appreciably more favorable than those of the draftees or reservists.

Draftees, in addition to being almost uniformly older than volunteers, were better educated, less concerned about personal problems, and in general exhibited somewhat more stability and a higher level of self-esteem. Few showed any real interest in long-term service, and attitudes of these draftees toward the Army were distinctly less favorable on the average than those of the volunteers.

Considerably less information was obtained on the reservists in the CAREER sample. Of all the recruit groups, reservists tended to be the

least career oriented and to have the least favorable attitudes. These men, while slightly younger on the average than the draftees, were significantly older than the volunteers. They had, by a substantial margin, the highest educational level of all three groups.

The CAREER survey was designed not only to provide a description of trends, but also to furnish leads for possible corrective action. One finding of the CAREER survey suggested that the composition of the basic training platoon had a bearing on the development of attitudes during this early training period. It appeared that those recruits—including both volunteers and nonvolunteers—trained in platoons with a large proportion of volunteers ended the cycle with more favorable attitudes; those trained in platoons with few volunteers ended with less favorable attitudes. The data were too sparse to permit firm conclusions, but the indications were strong enough to suggest further exploration. For this reason a systematic study of platoon composition effects was undertaken in Work Sub-Unit TRANSITION I.

TRANSITION I PLATOON COMPOSITION EXPERIMENT

CAREER data showed that recruits have definite preconceptions of what Army life will be like, and it was assumed that these preconceptions would play a large part in determining standards recruits would adopt for judging Army experiences. The hypotheses tested during the TRANSITION I experiment were that (a) the majority component in a platoon would influence attitude formation within the platoon; (b) the volunteers would be more susceptible to influence than members of the other components; and (c) subgrouping would occur when recruits from different components were mixed in the same training unit, but if all three components were mixed in a platoon it would be difficult for recruits to find a stable basis for subgrouping.

DESIGN

The experimental design chosen was essentially simple. Recruits from the three components were assigned to a number of training companies in proportions that would permit the formation of platoons according to a prearranged plan. Instructions were then given to each company at the start of the training cycle concerning the desired component composition of the several platoons. Finally, at the end of the training cycle, questionnaires were administered to all recruits to obtain a measure of the dependent variables—attitudes and opinions toward the Army—and also to obtain information from which details of the process of social influence might be inferred.

Thirty companies were used for the experiment. Ten companies were composed of recruits from all three components, and for these companies—the only ones involving reservists—the emphasis was on the effects of mixing volunteer minorities with majorities from the other components. The other 20 companies were composed of volunteers and draftees only. The platoon composition for all 30 companies is given in Figure 2. Each company included at least one platoon composed entirely of recruits from one component to provide baselines for attitude comparisons. To

determine whether minority groups of volunteers had been influenced in their views of the Army, attitudes of volunteers in the mixed platoons were compared with attitudes in the all-volunteer platoons at the end of the training. Similar comparisons were made for draftees.

**Design of the Platoon
Composition Experiment**

	VOLUNTEERS	DRAFTEES	RESERVISTS
10 COMPANIES			
1st Platoon	ALL	-	-
2nd Platoon	1/3	2/3	-
3rd Platoon	1/3	-	2/3
4th Platoon	1/3	1/3	1/3
5th Platoon	Not Specified		
20 COMPANIES			
1st Platoon	ALL	-	
2nd Platoon	1/3	2/3	
3rd Platoon	2/3	1/3	
4th Platoon	-	ALL	
5th Platoon	Not Specified		

Figure 2

RESULTS

The effects that being in mixed platoons had on the attitudes of particular components of the last 20 (volunteer-draftee) companies is shown in Figure 3. Findings for the first 10 companies concerning the effects of volunteers generally confirm the finding on the volunteers of the last 20 companies. In Figure 3 the bars represent differences from attitude baselines (the average attitude scores in a pure draftee or pure volunteer platoon for each component). Results of the experiment support the major hypotheses that attitudes of minority components are influenced by the attitudes of the majority component.

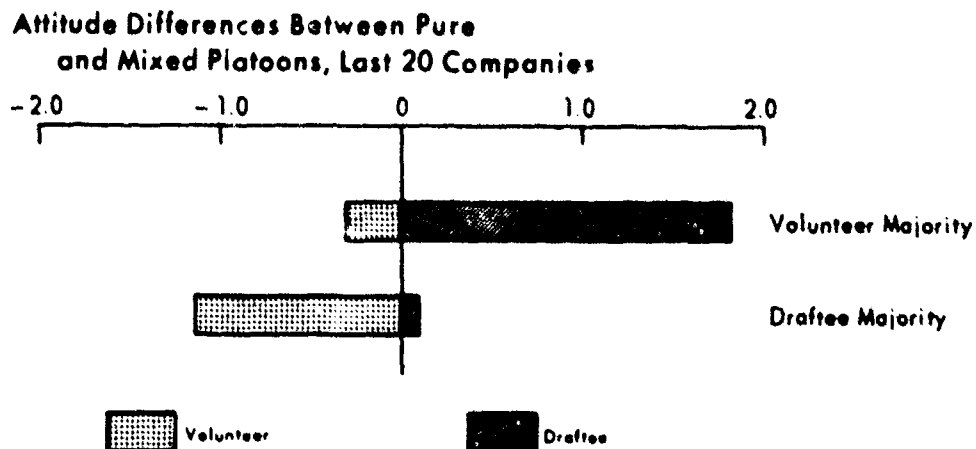


Figure 3

The hypothesis that volunteers in a minority would be more susceptible to influence than would a minority of nonvolunteers was not supported. Draftee minorities were more consistently influenced toward more favorable attitudes than volunteers were toward less favorable attitudes.

Concerning subgrouping, groups did tend to keep separate. On a friendship sociometric question, volunteers tended to choose other volunteers, draftees to choose other draftees. However, choices were different on a prestige sociometric question; asked which men in their platoon they respected most, both draftees and volunteers nominated draftees nearly twice as often as they nominated volunteers.

These results have implications for the formation of training platoons. A definite majority of volunteers mixed with small proportions of draftees may produce a net gain for the Army in development of more favorable draftee attitudes.

The results of the study present other implications that may be important. The average response to the question, "Taking everything into account, what is your honest opinion of your own platoon?" is shown in Figure 4 (information from the first 10 companies) and Figure 5 (information from the last 20 companies). For all 30 companies the results seem quite clear—the larger the proportion of draftees in a platoon, the more favorably it was rated by its members.

**Trainees' Rating of Own Training Platoons,
First 10 Companies**

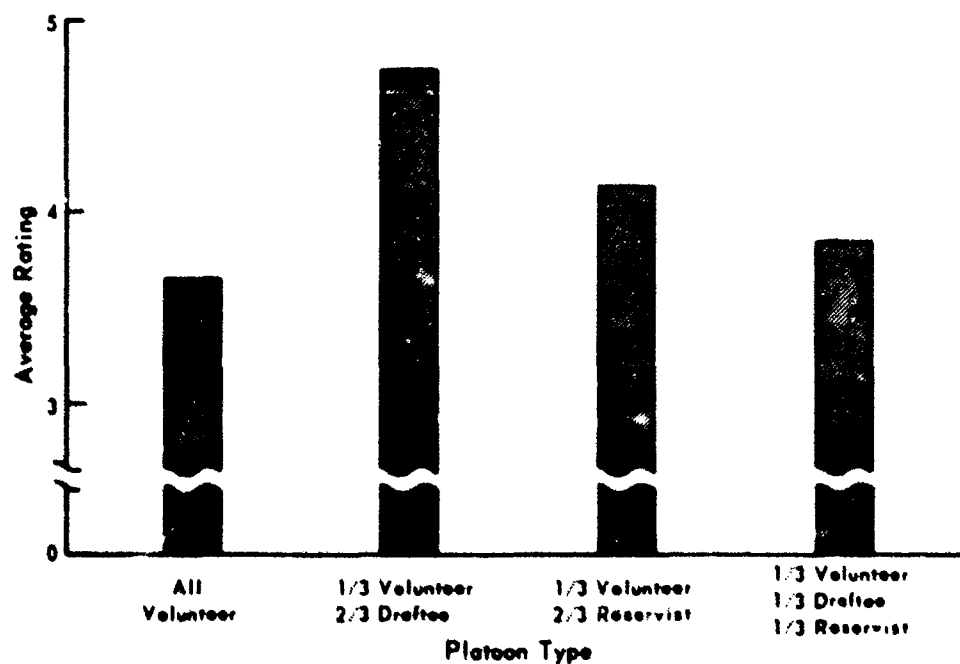


Figure 4

**Trainees' Rating of Own Training Platoons,
Last 20 Companies**

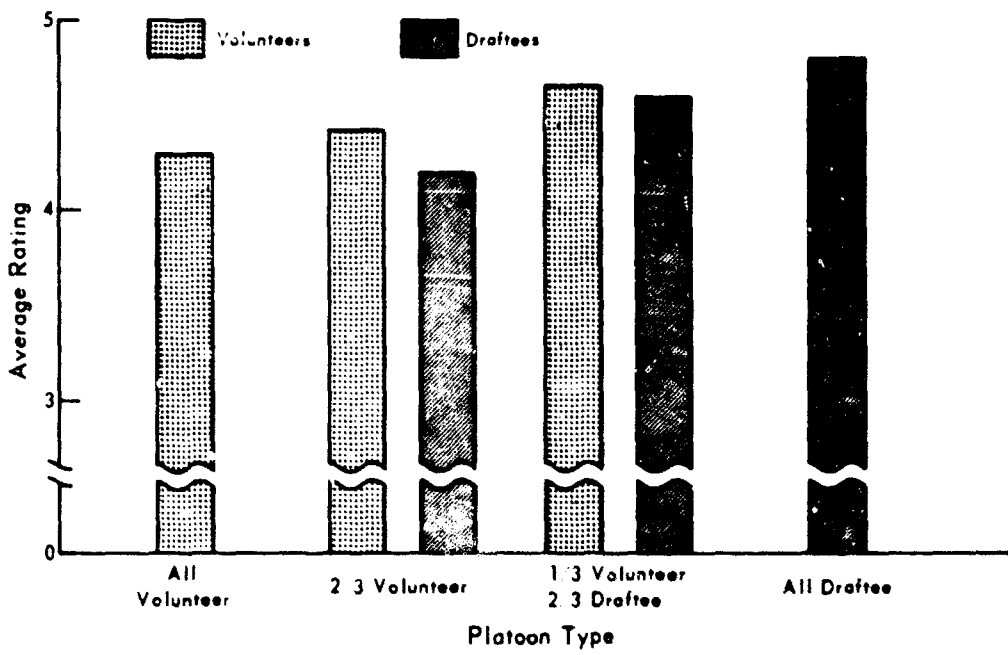


Figure 5

Further study of the actual training achievement of the platoons—as measured by scores for rifle qualification, the graded proficiency test in basic combat skills, and the physical fitness test—indicated that a platoon's judgment of its value was not heavily influenced by its performance. However, results were different when the platoon members' own rankings were compared (Figure 6) with that of the company commander (which is based heavily on such things as house-keeping inspections). There was a clear correspondence in the ratings. Apparently by the end of the training cycle, trainees and the training cadre had adopted similar criteria in judging the worth of a training platoon.

It is disturbing that trainees' judgments of the effectiveness of their own platoons bore little relation to objective measures of what trainees had actually learned. This was probably due to two factors:

**Proportion of Platoons With
Self-Rating Above Average**

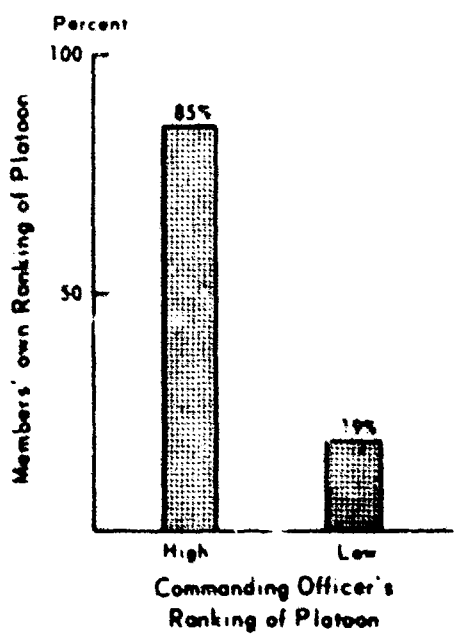


Figure 6

(1) The proficiency test served more as a final review of certain major points in training than an actual assessment of training progress.

(2) High achievement in training often brought little reward—a recruit might put forth a great effort and then receive little recognition.

The second factor is important when considering motivation, particularly of volunteers. Many volunteers are intelligent, ambitious, and well disciplined, and have a very real interest in an Army career. These are the men the Army needs to find and encourage. If this group finds there is no significant reward for extra effort to acquire the most important skills and knowledges, and that docility is all that is required, motivation to pursue a career may drop.

TRANSITION 1 RESULTS THAT AMPLIFY CAREER RESULTS

The data presented here are an amplification of some results of the earlier CAREER study, based now on the much larger TRANSITION sample. They serve not only to reinforce the earlier conclusions, but also permit us to make statements about particular groups of recruits for which the CAREER sample was too small to permit separate analysis.

RECRUITS' CAREER ORIENTATION

In looking at the results from CAREER, use was made of the concept of career orientation; the sample was divided into two groups, called career-oriented and noncareer-oriented, according to the recruits' joint responses to two questions: "If things work out well for you in the Army, what are the chances that you will reenlist when your present tour of duty is finished?", and "Would you have enlisted in the Army if there had been no draft?"

The distribution by components of responses to the two career-orientation questions is presented in Figure 7. Draftees and reservists are strongly concentrated in the block at the lower right. Not only did these recruits indicate no interest in remaining in service beyond their obligated term, they also make it quite clear that they were in the Army only because of the draft. Volunteers, unfortunately, are not similarly concentrated in the upper left—the block considered as corresponding to the highest degree of career orientation. Only about a fifth of them are there, and another fifth are down in the lower right along with the majority of the nonvolunteers; the remainder are scattered. These data illustrate the wide range of motivation for long-term Army service among the volunteers.

The question about reenlistment intentions "if things work out well" was used in order to include in the sample of career-oriented men those recruits who might have some negative reactions to basic training, but who might remain in the service if they decided the Army was an organization in which they could achieve their major goals.

Answers to another question, "Right now, what do you think the chances are that you will reenlist in the Army after your present tour

**Career Orientation of Recruits at end of BCT:
Past and Future "Action"**

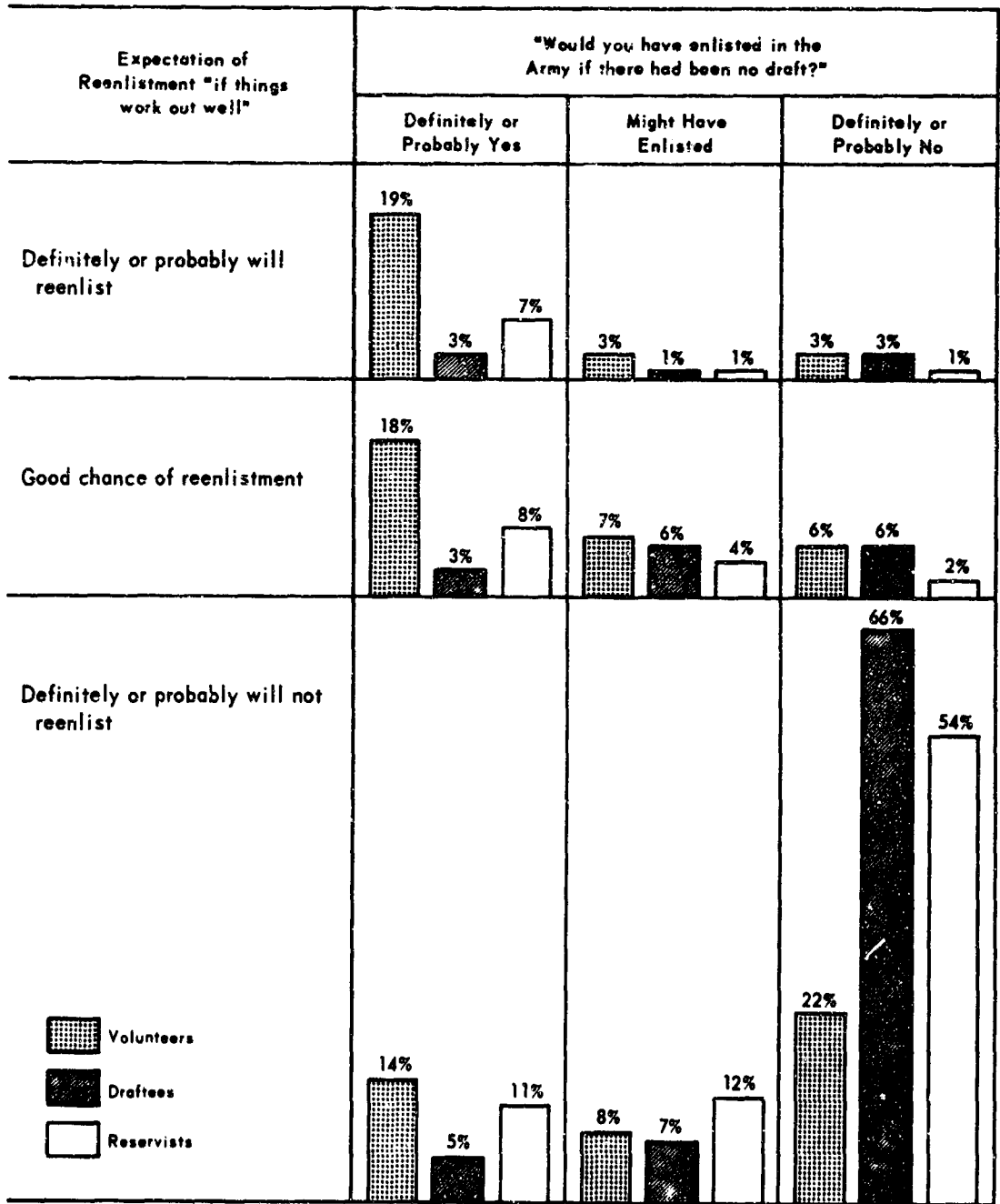


Figure 7

of duty?" indicated that at the end of basic training not so many trainees were very favorably inclined toward remaining in the service. The percentages of men in each block who said that "right now" they would probably or almost certainly reenlist are given in Figure 8, (which is Figure 7 with the additional data).

A question might be raised about whether reports from recruits after only nine or ten weeks in the Army are really any basis for expectations about future reenlistment behavior. For many men, subsequent experiences in the service would be likely to change attitudes markedly. To obtain information about how precise the predictions were, a follow-up report form has been placed in the personnel records jackets of each recruit in the sample. At the time of the recruit's first separation, each form is to be returned by the Personnel Officer who processes the separation. Ultimately, information will be available concerning not only reenlistment, but also a number of questions relating to the soldier's performance during his initial term of service. The results from analyses of these follow-up forms should be of considerable value.¹ In the meantime, there seems to be enough evidence, from the consistency of the answers, to justify interpreting them as accurate reflections of the soldier's intentions and expectations at the time the data were gathered.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CAREER-ORIENTED AND NONCAREER-ORIENTED RECRUITS

To summarize, the TRANSITION data strongly confirmed earlier conclusions concerning differences between those recruits who were interested and those who were not interested in the possibility of an Army career.

Age

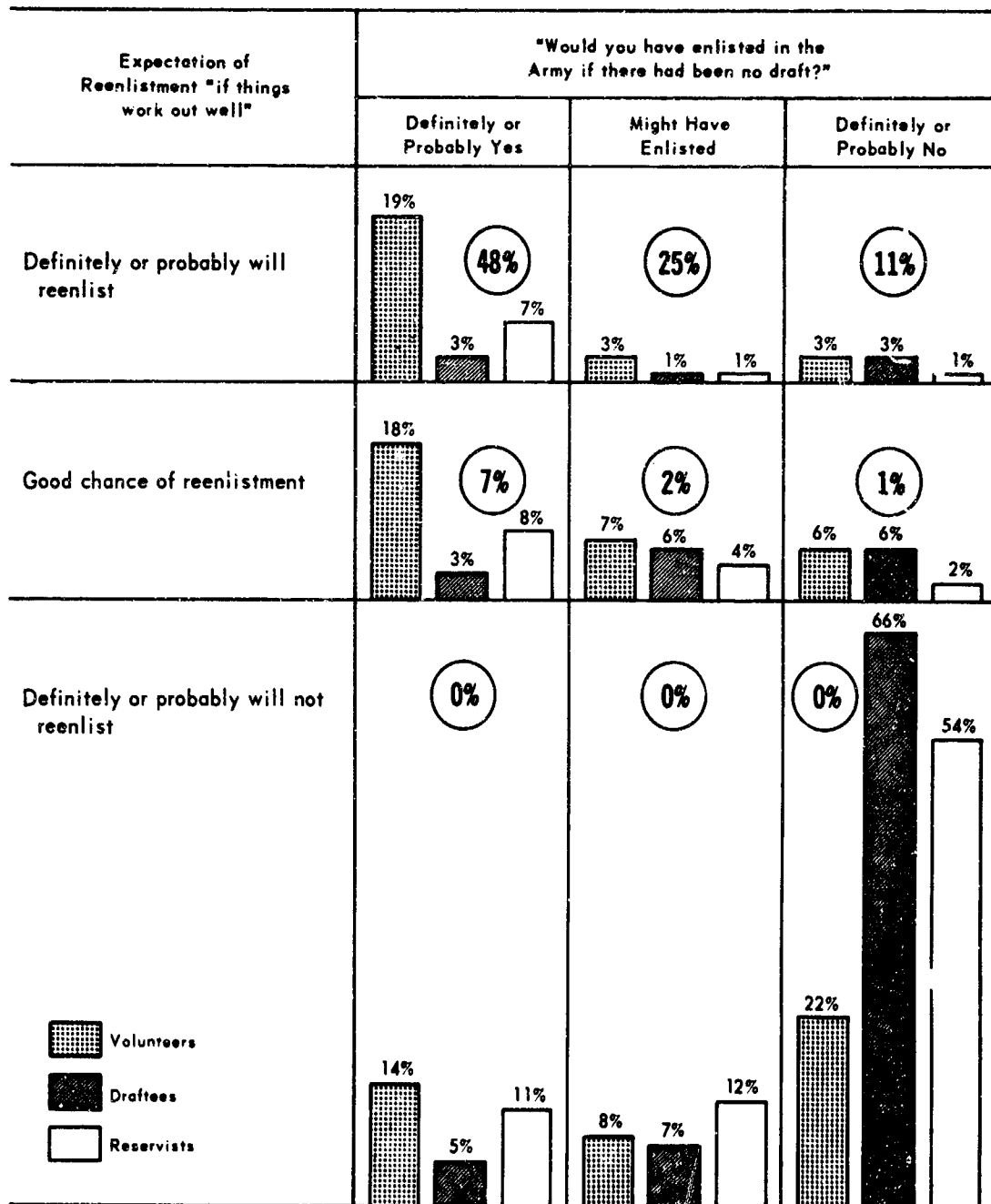
The career-oriented men were, first of all, much younger. This is true even when only the volunteers are considered. Of the career-oriented volunteers (upper left corner of Figure 7), 61% had not reached their nineteenth birthday; of the noncareer-oriented (lower right corner of Figure 7), only 24% were less than 19. Comparable differences are found for draftees and reservists.

Education and Aptitude

Differences were also apparent in education and aptitude. Here it should be mentioned that the sample—recruits from Fort Ord—was clearly not representative of all Army recruits. Data available indicated that the average educational level and aptitude test scores of the sample recruits were significantly higher than those for the country as a whole. This fact should not affect the relationships discussed, but it

¹Ed. Note—The results from analysis of the follow-up forms are contained in a HUMRRO Technical Report in preparation on the relationship between Army recruit characteristics and first tour performance.

**Career Orientation of Recruits at end of BCT:
Present "Action"**



Note: The percentage circled in each block refers to the percentage of men in that block who answered that "right now" they think they would probably or almost certainly reenlist.

Figure 8

probably does mean that the various subgroups distinguished in the sample would be proportionately larger or smaller at other Training Centers.

Among the volunteers, educational level was most strongly related to career orientation; of those who were noncareer-oriented, only 15% failed to graduate from high school; of the career-oriented, nearly half (49%) lacked a high school diploma. There were also differences in aptitude scores, but they were not so large. In the TRANSITION I sample, 56% of the career-oriented and 77% of the noncareer-oriented volunteers had GT scores of 106 or higher. The career-oriented volunteers appeared to include a large proportion of men with very good potential as far as mental ability was concerned. For many of this group, educational potential seemed not to have been realized.

Among the draftees and reservists, interest in a military career was very strongly related to aptitude as well as to education. Of the draftees designated as career-oriented, only 18% had GT scores as high as 106; of the career-oriented reservists, only 14% had similarly high scores. In other words, while the proportion of nonvolunteers who showed an interest in long-term Army service was not trivial, it would appear that the bulk of these men either would not meet, or would barely meet, Army minimum standards for reenlistment. At all events, the real career potential certainly lay among the volunteers.

Background

The differences in education led to some study on differences in the background of those recruits who were career-oriented and those who were not career-oriented. Such differences appeared in the CAREER survey, and analysis of the TRANSITION I data confirmed them further. Career-oriented recruits were somewhat more likely to come from families that were relatively low in the social and economic scale, as indicated by the level of parents' education, family size, and other evidence. Probably stemming in good part from the differences in family background were differences, also, in financial aspirations and expectations, in values and interests, and in other personality characteristics.

Autonomy

Of rather special interest, perhaps, were data indicating that the two groups placed rather different emphases on those things that might be considered important in choosing a career. Recruits were asked: "In choosing your life's work, how important do you think each of the things listed below will be for you?" The question was followed by a list of eight items the men were asked to rank. Items ranked higher by career-oriented recruits were:

- (1) Early, comfortable retirement.
- (2) Doing new and different things.
- (3) Being treated with respect.
- (4) Having good friends to work with.

Items ranked higher by the noncareer-oriented recruits were:

- (1) Being my own boss.
- (2) The amount of money I can earn.
- (3) Time off for recreation (a slight difference).

The lower ranking by career-oriented men of the item "being my own boss" was entirely consistent with other results. In TRANSITION I, as well as in CAREER, results indicated great differences in need for independence or autonomy. In the main measure of this need for autonomy, high scores reflected great importance assigned by the recruit to such things as "being able to run my own life," and "being able to get jobs done in my own way;" they reflect low importance assigned to such things as "working for someone who tells me just what he wants." The proportions of the various groups in the sample who received high autonomy scores are shown in Figure 9. The relation of autonomy scores to career interests is very large indeed, especially for the volunteers. It may not be surprising that men who object to working under constant, close control and direction find military life somewhat uncongenial. However, the number of leadership positions for noncommissioned officers (NCOs) that require readiness and ability to take independent responsibility is constantly increasing. These results have particular relevance, therefore, for the problem of retaining in career servicemen who can fill the positions most effectively.

Need for Autonomy

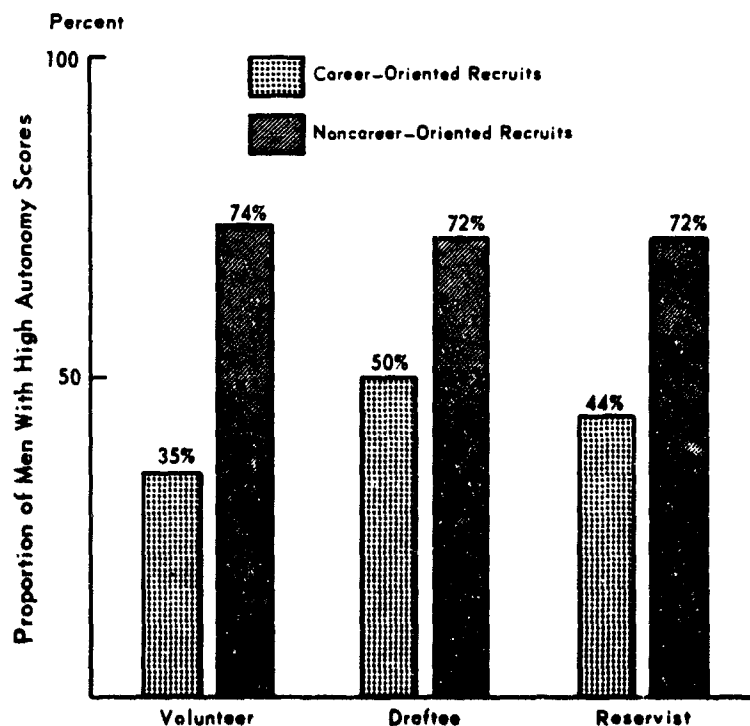


Figure 9

RECRUITS' REACTIONS TO THEIR BASIC TRAINING EXPERIENCE

Complaints about treatment of recruits that reach the Army through civilian channels—including Congress—might suggest that a good deal of the difficulty lies in unwillingness of recruits to accept the necessary rigors of military training. The CAREER and TRANSITION I

data have not supported this conclusion, and since these data are pertinent to the whole question of how to improve the character of the basic training experience, some of the pertinent findings are reviewed here. The data contain responses to questions that explicitly requested recruits' reactions to basic training.

In analyzing these data the sample was divided not only into the major groups—volunteers, draftees, and reservists—but also on the basis of aptitude scores. Although aptitude is certainly only one measure of soldierly potential, it is an important one. For this study, a high-aptitude group was defined as a group with GT scores of 106 or higher. These include about 60% of all the trainees in the sample.

Three questions and the responses to them are shown in Figures 10, 11, and 12 (neutral responses were omitted). In spite of some change from the responses of the CAREER sample, especially in reactions to physical aspects of the training, it is clear from these results that many trainees were by no means being pushed to the limit for which they were prepared. It is particularly noteworthy that the trainees in the high-aptitude group were ready for a "stiffer" program, not only intellectually but also physically. Based on the trainees' own

**"Has your life during basic training been
rougher or easier than you expected?"**

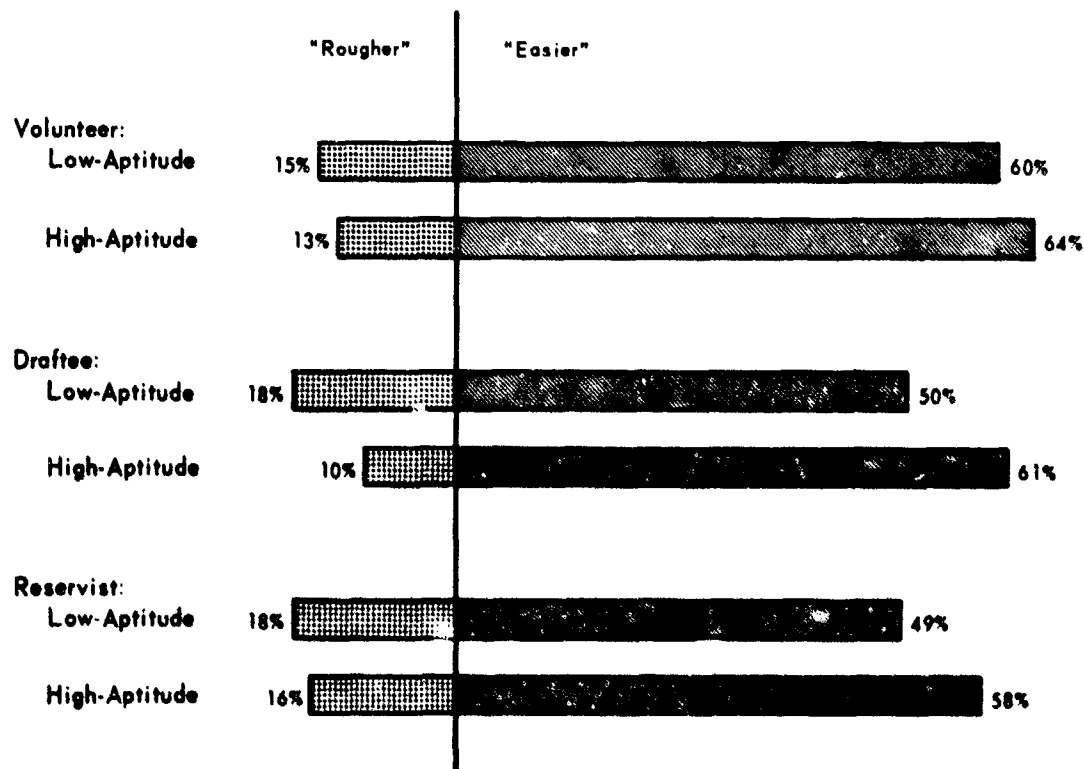


Figure 10

"As far as the physical side of basic is concerned,
do you think it should be made easier or tougher?"

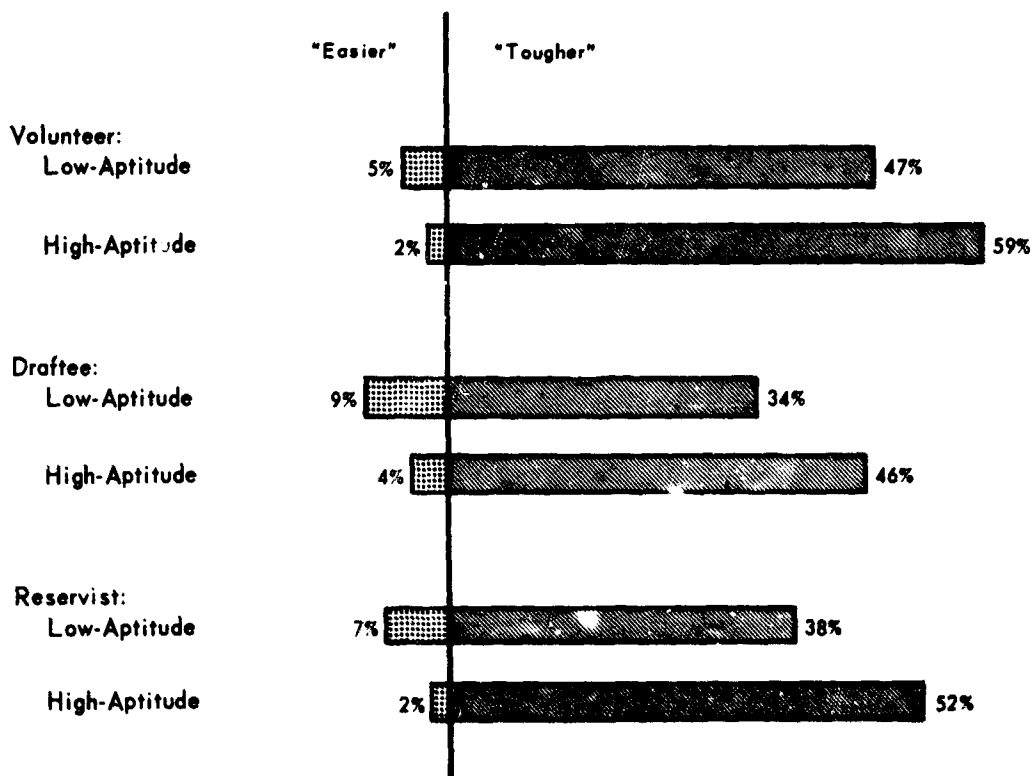


Figure 11

responses, there appears to be some doubt whether the needs of the high-aptitude and low-aptitude men can both be met adequately with the same program.

Data from one other question reinforce this doubt. Instructions were given as follows: "For each of the following aspects of basic training indicate whether things have turned out better or worse than you had expected." Then a list of nine questions was presented. One of these questions is particularly important—the one on "efficiency of the training." The responses to it are summarized in Figure 13 (neutral responses were omitted). The great difference in response between the men of higher and of lower aptitude tends strongly to reinforce the doubts that any one training program can suffice for the whole broad range of recruits entering the Army.

However, those doubts are not based on trainee opinions alone. An earlier experimental study yielded good evidence that a program which is perhaps optimal for men with lower aptitudes is by no means efficient for those with higher aptitudes. This work was done under a research task designated HIAPT, which was aimed primarily at investigating possibilities of briefer training for high-aptitude

"As far as you are concerned, do they try to teach too much in basic training or could you have learned more in the same amount of time?"

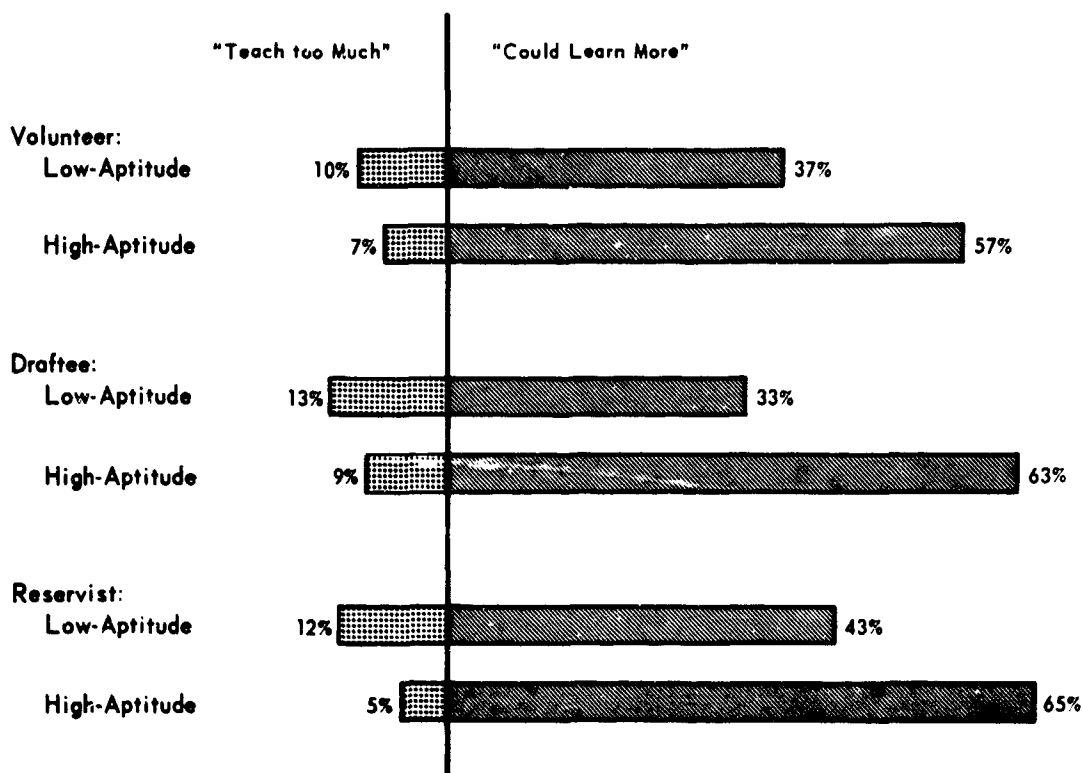


Figure 12

men under conditions of rapid mobilization.¹ That study demonstrated that for men of higher aptitude, but not for men of lower aptitude, substantial savings in training time can be made without significant loss in training achievement.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE JUNIOR ROTC PROGRAM

A major problem studied has been that of retaining for career service recruits with high potential for effective leadership. The data made it clear that many of these men were, from the very start, so little interested in long-term service that there was probably little hope of changing their views. The problem has become primarily one of most effectively encouraging the interest of those recruits who not only have high ability but who also display some predisposition toward an Army career. These men are in a relatively small

¹The HIAPT study, performed under Work Unit BASICTRAIN, is reported in Victor B. Cline, Alan Beals, and Dennis Seidman, *Evaluation of Four-Week and Eight-Week Basic Training for Men of Various Intelligence Levels*, HUMRRO Technical Report 32, November 1956.

"Has the efficiency of the training turned out to be better or worse than you expected?"

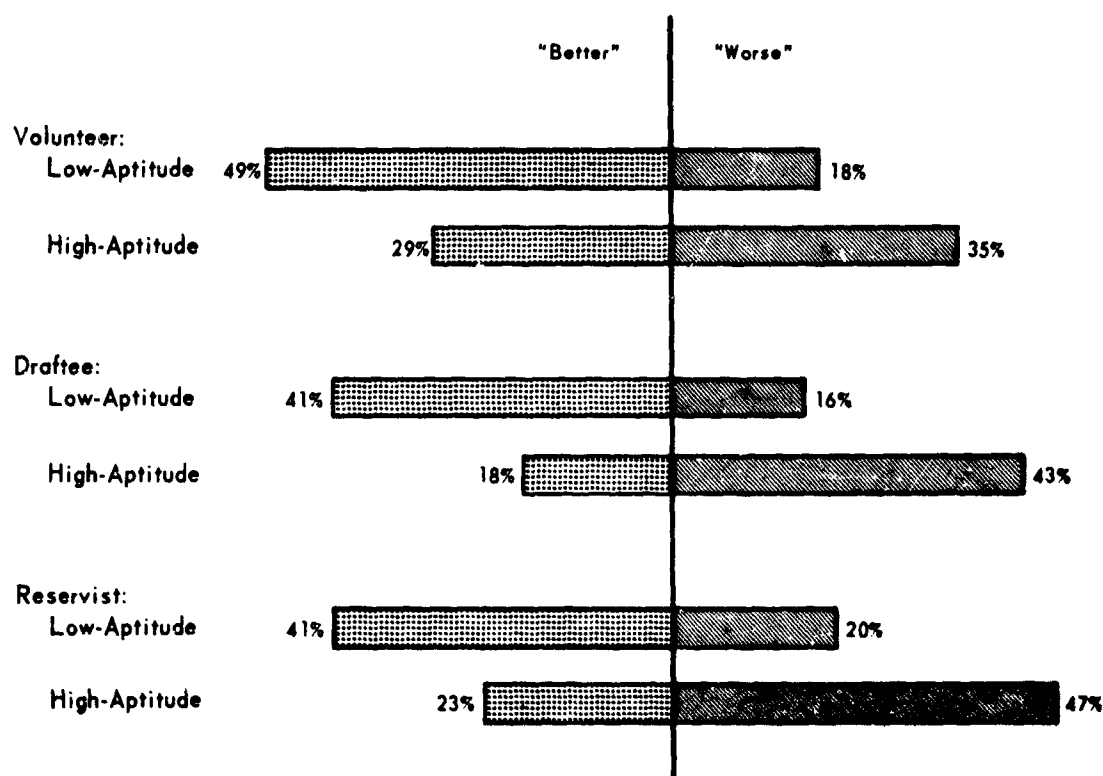


Figure 13

minority, even among the volunteers. Under present conditions, there is considerable likelihood that they will "lose their identity" in the mass of other recruits with whom they receive their introduction into the Army. If there were some practical way of identifying these young men and of focusing some extra effort and attention on them, from the very first day, the cost of any added resources required probably would be returned manyfold.

For a number of reasons, it is not considered practicable to use opinion questionnaires in operations—in contrast to research—to identify these highly motivated recruits. However, providing special training and extra attention in proportion to the recruits' commitments could be equitable if the opportunity to compete for them were open to all. In other words, the basis for any such selective treatment would have to include some act on a recruit's own part to signify his availability and readiness to participate. To support an argument for serious consideration of such a program, therefore, it would be desirable to have evidence indicating that an appreciable number of recruits with high career potential would have the extra motivation and interest required.

One of the best potential indicators of extra motivation should be prior civilian participation in some military program such as the

Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC). In the CAREER sample, the number of men having taken ROTC in high school was too small for separate analysis, but the TRANSITION sample contained nearly 500 of them. Comparisons between these men and the other recruits definitely confirmed the proposition that the high school ROTC group does, to a large extent, exemplify those characteristics in which the Army is much interested.

Three points based on analysis of this group are of special interest. First, men from high school ROTC were significantly more likely than other men (56% vs. 42%) to enter the Army as volunteers. These data are summarized in Figure 14, which shows the percentage distribution of men with and without high school ROTC over the three components.

Distribution of Recruits With and Without High School ROTC

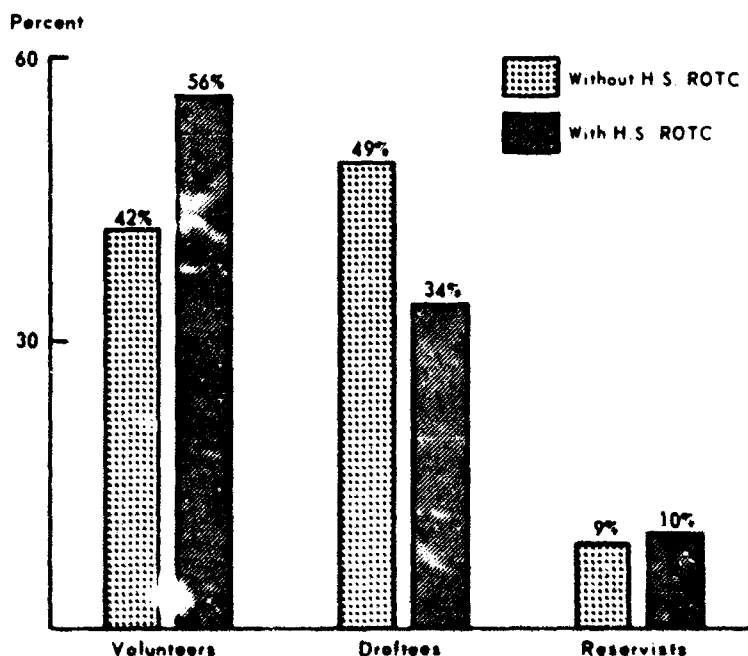


Figure 14

Second, the volunteers who had ROTC in high school were more interested in possible reenlistment; 28% of them, as compared with only 18% of the other volunteers, fell in the category designated as most highly career oriented.

Third and most important, the Junior ROTC group had significantly higher potential for effective performance than other career-oriented volunteers, as indicated both by higher aptitude scores and by greater educational achievement.

In evaluating these results, it must be kept in mind that the large majority of high school students have no opportunity to take part in the Junior ROTC. It is, of course, possible that the higher motivation of the ROTC group reflected the special training they had

received. However, it is equally probable that the high school population of the country includes a more sizable segment than is generally recognized of young men with considerable interest in the kinds of opportunities the Army can offer.

Most important in these findings is the indication that those taking action to seek out participation in these military activities included a larger proportion of men with ability and potential for leadership. As things stand now, it is likely that disproportionate numbers of these men choose one of the other services. There are possible actions the Army can take to adjust the balance.

RECEPTION PROCESSING ACTIVITIES

Relatively little systematic information exists on the effects of the first few days of active duty, which are spent at the Reception Station. Comments on this subject were requested on the questionnaires administered during basic training, and analysis of these comments has been supplemented by informal observation and inquiry. The general conclusion is that this first experience failed to provide the recruit with adequate social support and guidance at the time he most needs them—during the stress of his first introduction to military service. The following brief quotations represent reactions that are by no means universal, but are nonetheless typical of many.

"They have you all confused, yelling at you. You don't even know what you are doing at times."

"The change from civilian life to Army life is a hard one. The Army should take more care and understanding in this, especially in the Reception Center."

"The first week was a long grueling waste of time. Details and dirty work, not learning, were the order of the day, and I was disappointed with the poor organization and bad handling. I think the processing could have been concluded in two to three days."

Comments like these do not reflect on the individuals in charge of the processing, but rather on the transient situation in which this processing is carried out. The responsibility of Reception Station personnel is to get an administrative job done as quickly and thoroughly as possible. They do the job and do it well, but during this period attention is so strongly focused on administrative requirements that the recruit inevitably feels a loss of identity and self-esteem. Reception Station personnel cannot be expected to take much interest in recruits, either as individuals or as potential soldiers, but the result—from the point of view of the recruit—is almost certain to be confusion and general discouragement.

The only real corrective may be to separate responsibility for the administrative activities from responsibility for the soldiers' initial orientation, training, and general welfare. Knowledge that they will have a continuing, though brief, responsibility during BCT does

encourage officers and NCOs of the training company to take an interest in their men. It may be desirable for the training company to have this responsibility from the start.

SUMMARY

The following main points were drawn from the research conducted in 1960-62 and were applicable at that time:

(1) Two separate studies showed that, under conditions existing at the time, men who found the Army most attractive and were most interested in career service were not on the average the men with the highest potential, either for effective performance in technical jobs or for leadership.

(2) The recruit's first experiences in the Army, as a result of large numbers and fluctuating input in a highly transient situation, appeared to him confused and disorganized. Such experiences were likely to give him the feeling that the Army had little interest in him as an individual.

(3) In his Basic Combat Training, the recruit, and especially the recruit with high potential, found a program that—in relation to his hopes and expectations—lacked both physical and intellectual challenge. Largely as a result of the way training achievement was evaluated he found little stimulus to exert himself in learning some of the most important things in his training.

(4) There was evidence that recruit attitudes were particularly sensitive to influence during the early weeks of training. It was shown that such a relatively small matter as the component mix in the training platoon had a significant effect on attitude development.

(5) Recruits with both career interest and high potential were in a relatively small minority, even among the volunteers. No procedures existed to reinforce the favorable motivation of these most promising recruits during the critical time of introduction into the Army.

These are not small problems, and there are no simple solutions to them. Since the focus of research has been on those aspects of recruit training where improvement is possible, the significant positive achievements of the Training Centers as they are now operating have not been presented or discussed in this paper. Each year the Centers receive thousands of recruits, and the job they do in transforming these recruits into basic soldiers within a few short weeks deserves recognition. Within the limits set by available resources and present training requirements, there is not very much the Commander of a Training Center can do to improve the situation further.

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13. ABSTRACT This paper reports a study made during 1960-62 in relation to possible changes in Army induction processing, early orientation, and basic training. The ultimate goal was to determine means of improving motivation, morale, and attitudes of the Army recruit. The major findings—which apply to 1960-62 and have not been updated to reflect changes in the manpower pool, Army training, Army personnel policies, and other important matters since that time—were that (1) men who were most interested in the Army as a career were not the men with the highest potential; (2) early experiences were likely to give the recruit the feeling that the Army had little interest in him as an individual; (3) the recruit experienced a lack of physical or intellectual challenge in the BCT program; (4) recruit attitudes were particularly sensitive to influence during the early weeks of training; and (5) recruits with both career interest and high potential were in a minority, and no procedures existed to reinforce the favorable motivation of these most promising recruits during the critical time of introduction to the Army.		

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