

Research Report 1229

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**CHARACTERISTICS OF ARMY DESERTERS IN  
THE DOD SPECIAL DISCHARGE  
REVIEW PROGRAM**

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D. Bruce Bell

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The purpose of the report is to describe the characteristics and experiences of Army deserters participating in the Department of Defense Special Discharge Review Program (SDRP) and to draw inference from the data about desertion during the Vietnam era. Participants were divided into two groups: those who lived in foreign lands while absent without leave (AWOL) and those who did not. Those groups, in turn, were compared with other deserters and soldiers of the era. Participants in the SDRP were not typical deserters of the time: 81% of		

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them were exiles, compared to 1% to 5% for the era as a whole. The demographic profile of the exiles in the program was quite different from that of the typical deserters and from soldiers, in general, of the era. For example, compared with soldiers, the exiles were much more likely to be (a) white, (b) highly educated, and (c) higher in mental ability. That finding was anticipated in view of similar findings in a reanalysis of data from the Ford Clemency Program. Exiles were also less likely to have served in Vietnam. Compared with other deserters, they were much more likely to have left the Army for antiwar reasons and to have planned to desert rather than gone AWOL. In contrast, the nonexiled deserters resembled the 'classic' deserter profile of this and previous conflicts.

These findings strongly suggest that the Vietnam era produced more than one type of deserter, which should be kept in mind when describing the era.



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**Research Report 1229**

**CHARACTERISTICS OF ARMY DESERTERS IN  
THE DOD SPECIAL DISCHARGE  
REVIEW PROGRAM**

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**Office, Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel  
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**October 1979**

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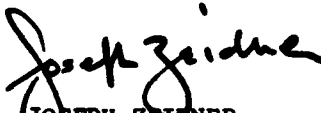
## FOREWORD

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The Army Research Institute (ARI) was asked by two agencies to conduct research on personnel participating in the Department of Defense (DOD) Special Discharge Review Program (SDRP). Mr. John G. Kester, Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, asked for help in determining if the SDRP, while in progress, was attracting the kinds of persons it was intended to. The question was answered in ARI Research Problem Review 78-2, March 1978.

The second request came from the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Department of the Army (ODCSPER,DA), acting for DOD as executive agent to coordinate the SDRP. ODCSPER sought information about the characteristics of unconvicted Army deserters participating in the program. This report is the result of that request. Both reports were done under Project 2Q162717A766, Enlisted Accession and Utilization.

Although ARI is responsible for preparing these reports, we could not have done them without the active support of other DOD and Army agencies. Specifically, we acknowledge the help of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Manpower, Reserve Affairs, and Logistics (Military Personnel Policy); ODCSPER,DA, Military Personnel Management and Human Resources Development Directorates; the DOD Manpower Data Center; the U.S. Army Materials System Analysis Activity; the U.S. Army Enlisted Records and Evaluation Center; and the U.S. Army Medical Department Activity (Hawley Army Hospital), Fort Benjamin Harrison, Ind.

  
JOSEPH ZEIDNER  
Technical Director

CHARACTERISTICS OF ARMY DESERTERS IN THE DOD SPECIAL  
DISCHARGE REVIEW PROGRAM

BRIEF

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Requirement:

To describe the characteristics and experiences of Army deserters participating in the Department of Defense Special Discharge Review Program (SDRP) and to draw inferences from the data about the nature of desertion during the Vietnam era.

Procedure:

Participants were divided into two groups: those who lived in foreign lands and those who did not. Program data came from two sources: official Army records kept by the U.S. Army Deserter Information Point (USADIP) and interview data kept by mental health professionals attached to the medical department activity (MEDDAC) at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Ind. Data to compare participants with other deserters and soldiers of the era came from previously published reports and from the DOD Manpower Data Center.

Data were tabulated as percentages of participants (e.g., 98% of exiles and 73% of nonexiles were white). Differences between the two groups, and between those groups and other known groups, were evaluated by statistical analyses.

Findings:

Participants in the SDRP were not typical deserters of the Vietnam era: 81% of them were exiles, compared with 1% to 5% for the era as a whole. The high participation rate for exiles stems from the greater success of this group at remaining at large and their apparent satisfaction with the provisions of the program.

The demographic profile of the exiles in the program was quite different from that of typical deserters of the era. Therefore, findings from the SDRP should not be interpreted without considering that factor. In contrast to typical deserters, the exile participants were more likely than other soldiers of the era to be (a) white, (b) highly educated, and (c) higher in mental ability. This finding was anticipated in view of similar findings in a reanalysis of data from the Ford Clemency Program.



Exiles were also less likely to have served in Vietnam. Compared with other deserters, they were much more likely to have left the Army for antiwar reasons and to have planned to desert rather than to go AWOL.

In contrast, the nonexiled deserters resembled the "classic" deserter profile of this and previous conflicts.

#### Utilization of Findings:

These findings strongly suggest that the Vietnam era produced more than one type of deserter--a point that should be kept in mind when describing the era.

The findings should be helpful in understanding the nature of desertion, the complexity of desertion as a phenomenon, and the variety of factors that need to be considered in evaluating the behavior of soldiers.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ARMY DESERTERS IN THE DOD SPECIAL  
DISCHARGE REVIEW PROGRAM

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CHARACTERISTICS OF ARMY DESERTERS IN THE DOD  
SPECIAL DISCHARGE REVIEW PROGRAM

This report has two purposes: first, to describe the characteristics and experiences of unconvicted Army deserters participating in the DOD Special Discharge Review Program (SDRP) and, second, to draw from the data inferences about the nature of desertion during the Vietnam era. SDRP, like the Ford Clemency Program (FCP) preceding it, defined the Vietnam era as 4 August 1964 (the date of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution) through 28 March 1973 (the date the last American troops were withdrawn from Vietnam). The official termination date for the era is 7 May 1975.

BACKGROUND

The SDRP (April-September 1977) was the second major federal program to address the problems of Vietnam era deserters. The first, the Ford Clemency Program (September 1974 to March 1975), addressed four groups of offenders: (1) convicted and (2) unconvicted draft evaders and (3) convicted and (4) unconvicted military deserters. Participants in each of these groups had legal charges dropped and were awarded "clemency" discharges in return for performing, or in some cases promising to perform, up to 24 months of alternative service of value to American society.<sup>1</sup>

The SDRP addressed two groups: (1) unconvicted deserters and (2) holders of general discharges (GD) and undesirable discharges (UD)--currently called discharges "under other than honorable conditions." The deserters could receive UD's by returning to military control. Once they had been discharged, the deserters--like the GD and UD holders of the era--could apply for review and upgrading of their discharges under new, more liberal criteria.<sup>2</sup>

The Ford program not only occurred earlier, but it offered different incentives from those of SDRP. From the standpoint of the unconvicted Army deserters, two other features should be noted. The Ford program was larger: It had 4,317 Army participants versus 643 for the

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<sup>1</sup>For additional details about the Ford Clemency Program see: ODCSPER, DA, 1975; Bell & Houston, 1976; Presidential Clemency Board, 1975; and Comptroller General, 1977. The program is also discussed in U.S. Congress, 1977a-1977d; Baskir & Strauss, 1977 and 1978; and Kasinsky, 1976.

<sup>2</sup>For further details on the SDRP and the changes introduced by P.L. 95-126 (October 8, 1977) see: U.S. Congress (1977a-1977d); ODCSPER, DA, 1978; Bell, 1978; Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, Vol. 13, No. 42: October 8, Presidential Statement; and Baskir & Strauss, 1978.

SDRP. Also, the proportion of deserters who had spent all or part of their absence in foreign countries was different. Only 12% of Ford program participants had spent any absent without leave (AWOL) time in foreign countries; the SDRP figure was 81%. Because the reanalysis of the FCP data showed the exiles to be quite different (see Table 1 and Appendix A), and because the percentage of exiles in the two programs was so different, exiles and nonexiles are analyzed separately in this report.

Additional background will set the analyses in context. Specifically, the sections that follow discuss the size of the desertion problem during the era, the number living in exile, and characteristics of deserters and of deserter-exiles.

#### Size of the Desertion Problem

Between 4 August 1964 (Tonkin Gulf Resolution) and 28 March 1973 (withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam), there were more than 507,000 incidents of desertion within the Department of Defense (DOD). When this figure is adjusted for multiple incidents by the same individual, there were about 444,000 individual deserters.<sup>3</sup> The comparable figures for the Army alone are 367,000 incidents and 322,000 individuals. Since the majority of those individuals were lost to the service before completing their first term of service, desertion was indeed a serious problem during the Vietnam era.<sup>4</sup>

#### Number of Deserters Living in Exile

In response to high Congressional and public interest, DOD established a special accounting system for tracking deserter-exiles. Between June 1966 and March 1973, DOD found that 4,404 individuals (2,374 from the Army) had gone or attempted to go to foreign countries. At the end of the period (1973), 2,705 were still at large overseas. Most (71%)

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<sup>3</sup>Source for the number of desertions during the Vietnam era is OASD(M&RA), Department of Defense Incidents of Desertion: Fiscal Years 1959 through 1975, dated 8 October 1975. The method of converting incidents of desertion into estimates of the number of deserters is spelled out in Bell & Bell, 1978.

<sup>4</sup>During the Korean conflict, the number of days of continuous absence without leave defined as desertion was reduced from 90 to 30 days (Osburn et al., 1954). This change is partly responsible for the higher Vietnam era rates which, although higher than those of the last two wars, are not the highest the Army has experienced. For example, the FY 1927-30 rates ranged between 72.4 and 103.6 per thousand (Personnel Division, War Department General Staff, 1930). For a discussion of the costs associated with desertion, see Comptroller General, 1977; and Sublett & Greenfield, 1977.

were in Canada; the remainder were in some 58 countries. However, when interpreting these data, note that 849 (31%) of the at-large deserters in the DOD data were actually foreign nationals residing in their countries of origin.

Several authorities outside DOD have attempted to determine the numbers of draft evaders and deserters living in exile (Baskir & Strauss, 1977 and 1978; Gosfield, 1973; and Kasinsky, 1976). Using Baskir and Strauss's estimate that 40% of the group were deserters, the best non-DOD estimate would be between 8,000 and 24,000. Thus, regardless of the estimate used, the number of deserter-exiles is small: 4,000-24,000 or 1% to 5% of all deserters of the era.<sup>5</sup>

#### Characteristics of Deserters

Table 1 summarizes what is known about deserters during World War II, the Korean conflict, the Vietnam conflict, and the post-Vietnam period (all-volunteer force). The table also shows what is known about deserter-exiles participating in the Ford Clemency Program. At a glance, two features stand out: first, deserters from the last three conflicts fit a general pattern, and second, deserter-exiles from the Vietnam conflict who participated in the FCP also fit a pattern--but that pattern is very different from the other group.

Typical deserters from the last three wars were different from their peers even prior to entry. They tended to be less educated and less intelligent; they were often from broken homes and had histories of pre-service delinquencies. Although most deserters--like most service members--were white, blacks were overrepresented in deserter groups compared to their proportions in the services. The exception to that trend is in the post-Vietnam force where desertion among both races has been about the same.

Typical deserters, as described in studies during and after Vietnam, are lower in rank than their peers. Typical deserters are also disproportionately found in combat specialties.

#### Characteristics of Exiles

Although those patterns hold for typical deserters, they do not describe the exiles. The exiles in the FCP were also volunteers, lower in rank, and in combat jobs, but they were different in all other respects from other deserters and from soldiers in general. They tended

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<sup>5</sup>Although small in number, the deserter-exiles were much more likely to remain at large. In April 1973, only 23,000 or 7% of Army deserters from this era were at large. In June 1973, 72% of the exiles were at large (83% of the noncitizens and 61% of the U.S. citizens).

Table 1

Characteristics of Deserters

Compared to their peers deserters are:	W.W. II	Korea	Vietnam	Post-Vietnam	Exiles in Ford Clemency Program (1974)
Less educated (Source: 1,2,5-7,9-13)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Less intelligent (Source: 4,5,9,10,11,13)	Yes	?	Yes	?	No
From broken homes (Source: 1,2,7)	Yes	Yes	Yes	?	?
Preservice delinquent (Source: 1,2,7,8)	Yes <sup>a</sup>	Yes	Yes	?	?
Less likely to be white (Source: 5,9,10-13)	?	Yes	Yes	No	No
Volunteers (Source: 1,2,5,7,8,10,11,13)	No	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes
Younger at entry (Source: 5,6,10,13)	?	?	Yes	?	No
Currently younger (Source: 1,2,7)	Yes	Yes	No	?	?
Prior service offenders (Source: 5,7,8,11)	?	?	Yes	?	?
In combat MOS (Source: 5,13)	?	?	Yes	?	Yes
Lower in rank (Source: 8,11-13)	?	?	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note. Sources referred to in column 1: (1) Stouffer et al., 1965(a),(b) (2) Osburn et al., 1954 (3) Rashkis, 1945 (4) Fuchs & Chyatte, 1950 (5) Boyd & Jones, 1973 (6) Blackman, 1966 (7) Littlepage & Fox, 1972 (8) Fitt, 1968 (9) Hartnagel, 1974 (10) Fuchs, 1969 (11) Bell & Bell, 1977 (12) DOD MDC, 1978 (13) Appendix A of this report.

<sup>a</sup>Only preservice delinquency asked for was truancy.



to be highly educated, quite intelligent, disproportionately white, and older at entry. Since they were of above-average intelligence in many instances, they were often trained for the more technically demanding jobs (e.g., as craftsmen and medical specialists).

Kasinsky (1976) confirmed the findings from the FCP summarized here and in Appendix A. Her sample of American deserters living in Canada came from the lower ranks, had short military tenures, and were much more educated than typical deserters from this or previous conflicts. In contrast, Baskir and Strauss (1978) reported that deserter-exiles were not different from domestic deserters. Although other studies exist (Williams, 1971; Killmer et al., 1971; Sax, 1972; and Laufer & Slone, 1975), they tend to discuss small samples from which it is difficult to generalize. Thus the literature presented an unclear picture of exactly what, if anything, differentiates the exiles from typical, domestic deserters. This report clarifies the issue.

#### METHODOLOGY

To help answer questions about the characteristics and experiences of deserter-exiles, the data on participants were split into two groups: data on participants who lived in foreign lands and on those who did not. The division was made on the basis of participants' statements about where they lived while AWOL: Those who claimed to have lived most or all of their time in foreign countries are called exiles; those who lived most or all of the time in the United States are called nonexiles.

Two data sources were used: official Army records kept by the U.S. Army Deserter Information Point (USADIP) and interview data kept by the mental health professionals attached to the medical department activity (MEDDAC) at Fort Harrison, Ind.

To make comparisons with other known deserter information, certain cases had to be eliminated: 22 noncitizens, 19 officers, and 58 cases with incomplete data (i.e., 16 with no data and 42 with no data on whereabouts while AWOL). The research sample--544 individuals or 85% of all 643 participants--is thus fairly homogeneous.

The tables in this report present data in the form of percentages of participants (e.g., 98% of exiles and 73% of nonexiles were white). Differences between groups in the percentages of members with given characteristics were evaluated using chi-square and associated correlations. Sometimes the comparison was with a population (e.g., the Army of the Vietnam era); at other times it was with another group (e.g., exile versus nonexile participants). The method of computing chi-squares in those two examples was different. In the first case the population values formed the expected values in a 1 by k analysis. In the second case the table generated the expected values in the 2 by k analysis. In either case, if the percentages in the analysis were

quite different, the result was statistically significant. If they were the same or quite similar, the resulting chi-square was not statistically significant.

However, the presence of a statistically significant result does not always mean that the observed difference has practical utility or policy implications. This difference between statistical and practical differences is particularly true in this report where we are dealing with very large groups of individuals. Therefore, although we display all differences, we discuss only those that are large enough to have practical consequences (i.e., those that explain at least 4% of the variance in the variable being analyzed).

In the analyses to follow, these differences are defined as those associated with correlations of .20 or larger. If a given analysis involved variables that had only two categories (e.g., male and female), the correlation used was a phi ( $\phi$ ). If it involved more than two categories, the correlation was a Cramer's "V" (Hays, 1973).

#### DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS PRIOR TO ENTRY INTO THE ARMY

The four variables in Table 2--race, geographic region of origin, level of civilian education, and mental ability as measured by the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT)--existed prior to the participants' entry into service. For each variable three comparisons of participants are made: Exiles are compared with nonexiles and each participant group, in turn, is compared with other Army enlisted personnel serving during the Vietnam era. For the measures of race and mental ability, the comparison is with census data about those entering the Army during the era, furnished by the DOD Manpower Data Center (MDC). (The DOD MDC figures are for non-prior-service enlistees entering between 1963 and the first half of 1974. Although those figures grossly underestimated the total number of veterans from the era, 99% of the deserters came from the non-prior-service group.) For the measures of geographic region and civilian education, the comparison is with nondeserters who entered the Army in FY 1968 and FY 1969 (Boyd & Jones, 1973).

#### Race

Race was related to location while AWOL.<sup>6</sup> Those who spent their time AWOL in foreign countries were much more likely to be white than those who spent their time AWOL in the United States. Both participant

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<sup>6</sup>Five individuals of other races (e.g., Orientals, American Indians) (about 1% of the participant sample) were excluded from the racial analyses. It should be noted, however, that these other racial groups were not as carefully counted during the Vietnam era as they are at present.

Table 2

## Characteristics of Participants Prior to Entry

Characteristic	Percent of participants		Total (N=544) <sup>a</sup>	Percent in		Exiles vs. Army	Nonexiles Army
	Exiles (N=432)	Nonexiles (N=112)		Exiles vs. nonexiles	Vietnam era		
<b>Race<sup>b</sup></b>							
White	98	73	93	$\chi^2 = 72.25^*$ $\phi = .37$	84 <sup>c</sup> 14	$\chi^2 = 48.34^*$ $\phi = .34$	$\chi^2 = 14.35^*$ $\phi = .36$
Black	2	27	7				
<b>Region of the country</b>							
North East	28	26	28	$\chi^2 = 21.45^*$ V= .20	17 <sup>d</sup> 31	$\chi^2 = 36.39^*$ V= .29	$\chi^2 = 31.15^*$ V= .54
North Central	28	26	27		19		
West	28	14	25		33		
South	16	34	20				
<b>Education</b>							
Nongraduate	17	56	25	$\chi^2 = 89.08^*$ V= .41	28 <sup>d</sup> 48	$\chi^2 = 139.27^*$ V= .57	$\chi^2 = 46.47^*$ V= .65
High school graduate	34	36	34		41		
Beyond high school	49	8	41				
<b>Mental ability (AFQT category)</b>							
I(93-100 percentile)	15	4	13	$\chi^2 = 83.86^*$ V= .40	5 <sup>c</sup> 28	$\chi^2 = 216.79^*$ V= .71	$\chi^2 = 13.49^*$ V= .36
II(65-92 percentile)	48	15	41		42		
III(31-64 percentile)	27	45	31		25		
IV(10-30 percentile)	10	37	15				

<sup>a</sup>The number of cases shown here is that for the sample as a whole. Missing data for given variables will result in fewer cases in some of the subsequent analyses.

<sup>b</sup>Five individuals of other races were excluded from this analysis.

<sup>c</sup>Non-prior-service enlistees entering the Army between 1963 and the first half of 1974 (DOD Manpower Data Center, 1978).

<sup>d</sup>Non-prior-service accessions entering service in FY 1968 who did not desert (Boyd & Jones, 1973).

\*Significant beyond the .01 level.

groups were different from the "typical" soldier of the era: The group of exiles was disproportionately white; the group of nonexiles disproportionately black.

#### Region of the Country

The participants' homes of record at entry into the Army were categorized into the four regions used by the Census Bureau. (Men entering from outside the continental United States were excluded from the analysis.) The exiles differed from the nonexiles on that measure--they were more likely to come from the West than from the South. Participants also differed from soldiers of the era, particularly among the exiles, where both the north central and western regions were overrepresented and the South was underrepresented. The north central region was also overrepresented in the nonexile group. However, in the nonexile group the West, rather than the South, was underrepresented.

#### Level of Education

The exile participants were much better educated than participants who had remained in the United States. For example, 49% of the exiles had some post-high-school education compared to 8% of the domestic group. The exiles were also better educated than the typical soldiers, 24% of whom had some post-high-school education. The domestic participants were mainly (56%) high school dropouts and thus had much less education than the exiles or the typical soldiers.

#### Mental Ability

Scores on the AFQT are reported as percentiles grouped into five broad categories. The exile group scored quite well on that test. They were brighter than the nonexiles, than Vietnam era soldiers as a group, and than the civilian population on which the test was standardized. The nonexile group scored lower than all these groups.

#### Summary

The participant groups were different from one another on all four measures displayed in Table 2. They were also different from the typical Vietnam era soldier on those measures. The domestic group fits the historic pattern for deserters by being mostly high school dropouts, members of groups with lower mental ability, and disproportionately black. The exile group was the mirror opposite.

## DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS AT ENTRY

Table 3 presents analyses of three variables determined at the time of entry into the Army: method of entry, i.e., as volunteer or draftee (one participant, a reservist, was not included in this analysis), year of entry, and age at entry.

### Method of Entry

The two participant groups were not statistically different from one another in the way they entered the Army. Both groups tended to be draftees, while the Army during the Vietnam era was mostly made up of volunteers. Desertion in the past has been higher among volunteers.

### Year of Entry

There was a small difference in their year of entering service between the participant groups: exiles entered later. However, the size of this difference was rather small. The exiles entered the Army later than did soldiers in general. That finding was expected, since this portion of the SDRP was dealing with those still at large. (Those who had entered and deserted earlier were much more likely to have turned themselves in already.) The fact that the exiled group is so highly concentrated in the later years of Army accessions could have been anticipated in light of the problems exiles had in adjusting to living abroad and of the fact that many foreign countries were less hospitable to American deserters during the earlier years of the conflict (Baskir & Strauss, 1978). There was no difference between nonexiles and soldiers in general on this measure.

### Age at Entry

Consistent with their greater education, exiles were found to be older at entry into the Army. For example, 68% of exiles and 48% of nonexiles were over 19 years old when they joined. Exiles were also much older than soldiers in general. In contrast, the nonexile group was much younger than the typical soldier. Military delinquents have more often been younger than their peers (Plag, 1964; Stephenson, 1965; Fox, Sullivan, & McCubbin, 1970; Bell & Holz, 1975).

## DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS AT TIME OF LAST ABSENCE WITHOUT LEAVE

Participants were described at the time of last absence along 14 dimensions: (1) age at absence, (2) marital status, (3) number of previous AWOLs, (4) length of service, (5) completion of individual training, (6) Military Occupational Specialty (MOS), (7) pay grade (rank),

Table 3  
Data Describing Participants at Time of Entry

Characteristic	Percent of participants		Percent in Vietnam era Army		Exiles vs. Army		Nonexiles vs. Army	
	Exiles	Nonexiles	Exiles	Nonexiles	Exiles vs. Army	Nonexiles vs. Army	Exiles vs. Army	Nonexiles vs. Army
Method of entry <sup>a</sup>								
Volunteer (RA)	40	49						
Draftee (US)	<u>60</u>	<u>51</u>	42	58	$\chi^2 = 2.45^b$ $\phi = .07$	45 <sup>c</sup> <u>55</u>	$\chi^2 = 39.86^*$ $\phi = .31$	$\chi^2 = 1.79^b$ $\phi = .13$
Year of entry								
Prior to 1968	25	40	28	28	$\chi^2 = 15.48^*$ $V = .17$	49 <sup>c</sup> 14	$\chi^2 = 252.43^*$ $V = .77$	$\chi^2 = 13.24^b$ $V = .36$
1969	28	23	27	27		13		
1970	31	19	28	28		9		
After 1970	13	11	12	12		15		
Total	<u>4</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>				
Age at entry								
Less than 19	16	25	18	18	$\chi^2 = 26.52^*$ $V = .22$	10 <sup>d</sup> 14	$\chi^2 = 89.56^{**}$ $V = .45$	$\chi^2 = 77.80^*$ $V = .83$
19	16	27	18	18		38		
20	22	16	21	21		17		
21	11	4	10	10		14		
22 or 23	24	10	21	21		8		
24 or over	<u>12</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>13</u>				

\*Significant beyond the .01 level  
<sup>a</sup>Participants from the Reserves and National Guard were deleted from the analysis.  
<sup>b</sup>Not statistically significant.  
<sup>c</sup>Data from DOD MDC, 1978.  
<sup>d</sup>Data from Boyd & Jones, 1973.

(8) service in Vietnam, (9) year of absence, (10) duty status (e.g., in training, with active unit, on leave), (11) location of assigned unit, (12) reason for absence, (13) use of Army resources to help with the problems causing or resulting in AWOL, and (14) evaluation of the usefulness of Army problem-solving agencies. Dimensions 12 through 14 are represented by more than one variable. The 14 dimensions have been grouped into five broad areas for discussion: characteristics of the men at desertion (Dimensions 1-8); characteristics of the situations (Dimensions 9-11); reasons for absence (Dimension 12); attempts to secure help (Dimension 13); and evaluation of the usefulness of Army problem-solving mechanisms (Dimension 14).

Table 4 shows the eight characteristics of the men at the time of desertion. Comparable data for the Army as a whole are not generally available for these measures.

#### Age at Absence

Table 4 shows a moderate relationship between age at absence and deserter's residence (in exile or in United States). In both groups, typical participants were less than 22 years of age at AWOL. That is consistent with the literature showing that desertion is more likely among newer, younger soldiers. However, there was a difference between the groups: The exiles were less likely to be over 24 than were the nonexiles.

#### Marital Status

Marital status in this analysis was simply listed as married or not married (which included single, divorced, legally separated). There were no real differences in this dimension among the participants--most were not married. Although the finding is consistent with FCP data (see Appendix A, and Bell & Houston, 1976), comparison with the enlisted force is not possible because of the wide shifts in the percentages married over those years (Bennett et al., 1974; and Segal et al., 1976).

#### Number of Previous AWOLs

The majority of both SDRP participant groups reported no prior AWOLs. There was no subgroup difference on that measure. The finding for the exiles is consistent with findings for the FCP and the data on Army deserters being tracked by DOD. In the SDRP, FCP, and DOD data, 73%, 69%, and 76%, respectively, had no prior offenses. Although the majority of nonexiles in both the SDRP and FCP had no prior AWOLs, other studies have shown that most deserters had been in trouble previously. Littlepage and Fox (1972) found that 82% of absentees (most of whom were deserters) had received nonjudicial punishment for previous AWOL offenses,

Table 4

## Data Describing Participants at Time of Last Absence

Descriptive category	Percent of participants			Statistical analysis
	In exiles	In U.S.	Total	
Age				$\chi^2 = 29.06^*$
Less than 20	10	14	11	$V = .23$
20	23	22	23	
21	19	16	18	
22	14	6	12	
23	14	8	13	
24	7	2	6	
More than 24	<u>13</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>17</u>	
Marital status				$\chi^2 = 0.31^a$
Not married	80	77	79	$\phi = .02$
Married	<u>20</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>21</u>	
Number of self-reported prior AWOLs				$\chi^2 = 7.01^a$
None	73	62	71	$V = .01$
One	19	23	20	
Two or more	<u>8</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>9</u>	
Length of service				$\chi^2 = 41.06^*$
0-3 months	16	10	15	$V = .28$
4-6	24	11	21	
7-9	19	9	17	
10-12	9	8	9	
13-24	18	23	19	
25 and over	<u>15</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>20</u>	
Completion of training				$\chi^2 = 8.27^*$
Trainee	45	29	42	$\phi = .12$
Nontrainee	<u>55</u>	<u>71</u>	<u>58</u>	
MOS group				$\chi^2 = 5.58^a$
Combat	46	30	42	$\phi = .13$
Noncombat	<u>54</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>58</u>	
Pay grade				$\chi^2 = 21.13^*$
E1	42	32	40	$V = .20$
E2	32	21	30	
E3	11	15	12	
E4	10	22	12	
E5 or above	<u>6</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>7</u>	
Service in Vietnam				$\chi^2 = 68.43^*$
No	93	62	87	$\phi = .36$
Yes	<u>7</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>13</u>	

<sup>a</sup>Not statistically significant.

\*Significant beyond the .01 level.



and 42% had been court-martialed. Fitt (1968) found that 82% of administratively defined deserters had prior military disciplinary records, and 20% had civilian records. The difference between the findings for domestic participants and the deserter literature may be due to methodology. The earlier reports used Army records; SDRP and FCP data rely on self-report. The difference between the exiles and typical deserters seems more reliable, since it is found in both recorded data and self-report.

#### Length of Service

Length of service in Table 4 was computed by subtracting the basic active service date from the date of last AWOL. Previous research has shown that desertion generally occurs within the first 2 years (Bell & Houston, 1976; Fitt, 1968; and Fuchs, 1969), and the participants fit that pattern. However, the domestic group had much longer tenure than the exiles: 40% of domestic deserters and 15% of the exiles had more than 2 years of service. Both participant groups are atypical; previous studies indicate about 50% of deserters have served more than 1 year.

#### Completion of Training

While a new soldier is still undergoing individual training leading to an MOS, he is carried as a "trainee." Consistent with their longer tenures, domestic deserters were less likely to be trainees. But the size of the difference between the groups was quite small ( $\phi = .12$ ). Moreover, the difference for length of service was greater than for completion of training. Probably this was because the exile group had more potential to fill the technical jobs requiring longer training periods.

#### Military Occupational Specialty (MOS)

Participants who completed their individual training were divided according to combat and noncombat MOS specialties. Although more exiles were in combat MOS (46% vs. 30%), the size of the difference was quite small. Compared with nondeserters in the Boyd and Jones (1973) study, the exiles seemed to be overrepresented in the combat jobs. However, there was no such difference in the nonexile group. This finding is difficult to interpret since the percentage of combat soldiers varied from year to year (Bell & Houston, 1976, Table 5).

#### Enlisted Pay Grade

There are nine pay grades in the enlisted force. Prior research has shown that deserters are disproportionately found in the lowest two (Bell & Houston, 1976; DOD MDC, 1978; Fitt, 1968). This kind of finding would be expected in light of the short tenures of deserters in

general and of their tendency to have been reduced in grade previously because of prior offences. Although the majority of both participant groups were E1 or E2, more exiles were in those grades: 74% versus 53%. The percentage of E1/E2 among the exiles is consistent with both the Army exiles in the DOD study and other deserter studies. But the domestic group held atypically high ranks compared to "typical" deserters.

#### Service in Vietnam

Participants were considered to have served in Vietnam if they had been assigned to Vietnam-based units at any time during their careers. Location while AWOL was strongly associated with Vietnam service: 7% of the exiles and 38% of the nonexiles had Vietnam service. Since 37% of the soldiers of the era had been assigned to such units, (OASD, MRA&L (MPP), 1978) the exiles were atypical on this dimension.

#### Situational Factors Associated with Desertion

Table 5 provides data on three situational factors associated with absence: the years that participants left service, the locations from which they left, and the duty status from which they left (e.g., from training, while in transit between locations, from a trained unit).

The exiles deserted earlier in the conflict than did the domestic group: 99% of exiles versus 67% of domestic participants deserted prior to 1971. Year of desertion for both participant groups did not fit the pattern for desertion from the Army during the Vietnam years. As can be seen in Table 6, the exile group was overrepresented in the peak years of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, 1969-70. This pattern suggests that the war per se had something to do with their decision to leave.

The domestic group was underrepresented prior to 1969 and overrepresented after 1969. Since all participants were still at large, it is not surprising they were concentrated in the later years.

Both participant groups came mainly from units based in the United States. There was a small difference in the unit locations of the participants based elsewhere. Those based in Europe had a slightly higher chance of remaining overseas during their absence than did those stationed elsewhere overseas (e.g., Korea, Japan, Vietnam, the Canal Zone).

Table 5 also shows the duty status of participants when they deserted. The majority of both groups were not physically with their units when they deserted (i.e., they were on leave, convalescing, or in transit). The fact that desertion tends to occur in those situations has been well known since the American Civil War (Lonn, 1966; Stouffer et al., 1965a, 1965b; Osburn et al., 1954; Biegel, 1968; and Bell & Houston,

1976). More SDRP participants took advantage of these circumstances to leave the Army than is typically reported among deserter groups. SDRP participants also succeeded in remaining at large longer than any previous group. The two facts may be related.

Table 5

Situational Factors Associated With Desertion, for Participants

Situation factors	Percent of participants			Statistical evaluation
	In exile	In U.S.	Total	
Year of last absence				$\chi^2 = 54.51^*$
Prior to 1968	7	4	6	$V = .42$
1968	17	12	16	
1969	31	21	29	
1970	36	30	35	
1971	7	16	9	
1972 or later	<u>2</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>5</u>	
Location of absentees				$\chi^2 = 12.97^*$
Continental U.S.	93	92	93	$V = .16$
Europe (USAREUR)	5	2	5	
Other <sup>a</sup>	<u>1</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>	
Duty status				$\chi^2 = 14.16^*$
Training (BCT/AIT)	21	11	19	$V = .16$
With trained unit <sup>b</sup>	27	19	25	
Leave/convalence	36	48	39	
Transit	13	21	15	
PCF/stockade	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	

\*Significant beyond the .01 level.

<sup>a</sup>One of the 13 soldiers from units based outside of the United States or Europe was from Vietnam-based unit. It should be noted, however, that deserting from combat made one ineligible for participation in the SDRP.

<sup>b</sup>One of the 139 soldiers with trained units was serving with a Vietnam-based unit.

Table 6  
 Comparison of Year of AWOL of Participants with Era Dropped-from-Roll Statistics

Calendar year	No. dropped from unit rolls (DFR) <sup>a</sup>	% of era DFRs per year	Percent of participants		Statistical evaluation
			In exile	In U.S. Total	
Before 1968					
1968	70,374	19	7	4	
1969	47,921	13	17	12	Exiles vs. DFRs
1970	61,126	17	31	21	$\chi^2 = 218.07^*$
1971	72,335	19	36	30	V = .72
	65,010	18	7	16	
After 1971					
	50,431	14	2	17	Nonexiles vs. DFR
Total	367,197	100	100	100	$\chi^2 = 19.55^*$ V = .44

\*Significant beyond the .01 level.

<sup>a</sup>Army DFR data adapted from: OASD (MRA&L), Department of Defense Incidents of Desertion FY 1959-1975, dated 8 October 1975.

Reasons for Absence

Table 7 presents data suggesting motivations for AWOL. Included are (a) the stated reasons for absence, (b) the degree of satisfaction with Army life, (c) the duration of the reasons for absence, and (d) the planned length of absence.

Table 7

Reasons for Absence

Reason for absence	Percent of participants			Statistical evaluation
	In exile	In U.S.	Total	
Primary reasons for absence				$\chi^2 = 86.01^*$
Related to Vietnam	72	23	62	$V = .41$
Family/marital/financial	10	31	13	
Army adjustment	10	19	11	
Administrative/leadership	7	17	9	
Legal	2	3	2	
Drugs	<.05	7	2	
Satisfaction with Army life				$\chi^2 = 25.95^*$
Satisfied	23	47	28	$V = .22$
Except for some things	15	14	15	
Dissatisfied	62	39	57	
Duration of reason				$\chi^2 = 17.51^*$
Specific event	28	48	32	$V = .18$
Event plus continuing problems	36	24	33	
Continuing problem	37	28	35	
Planned length of absence				$\chi^2 = 119.92^*$
Not planned	3	24	7	$V = .47$
1-10 days	2	11	4	
11-30 days	2	13	4	
Over 30 days	13	14	13	
Forever	80	38	71	

\*Significant beyond the .01 level.

The reasons for the AWOL that were given to the interviewers were grouped into six broad categories: (1) reasons related to Vietnam, (2) family, marital, or financial problems, (3) adjustment to the Army, (4) problems with administration or Army leadership, (5) legal difficulties,

and (6) drug abuse. Details about how often particular reasons were mentioned and whether they were considered primary or secondary are given in Appendix B.

Exiles were more likely to mention reasons related to the Vietnam war. Domestic participants were more likely to mention other reasons. During the Vietnam war, antiwar sentiment was found to be the chief motivation for between 7% and 15% of desertions overall (Bell & Houston, 1976; Hartnagel, 1974; and Presidential Clemency Board, 1975). For most deserters during the era, the major reasons involved personal, family, marital, or financial problems. This finding is consistent with the motivations of deserters in earlier conflicts (Bell & Bell, 1977; Lonm, 1966; and Schils, 1977). On this dimension alone, the exiles seem quite atypical.<sup>7</sup>

Exiles were also much less satisfied with Army life: 62% were dissatisfied compared with 39% of the domestic group. There was a small difference between the groups as to the duration of the difficulties that resulted in AWOL. More (72%) exiles than nonexiles (52%) had longstanding problems in the Army. The exiles were also more likely to have planned from the start never to return: i.e., 80% versus 38% among the nonexiles.

#### Participants' Use of Army Resources to Solve AWOL Problems

Because the Army has established many mechanisms for dealing with the kinds of problems mentioned by some participants, it is appropriate to learn whether the participants sought and received any Army help. Table 8 shows the percentages of participants who asked for help and the kinds of help they sought: chain-of-command (e.g., went to the company commander), non-chain-of-command (e.g., went to the chaplain), or administrative (e.g., hardship discharge).

Most SDRP participants sought some form of Army help for the problems that caused them to go AWOL. In fact, their use was higher than among the FCP participants: 69% versus 58%. Relatively more sought help from the chain of command than from such other sources as

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<sup>7</sup>Although the research on reasons for AWOL generally shows consistent results, there are some exceptions. Baskir and Strauss (1978) report that one antiwar counseling group claimed that 30% of the FCP participants they handled deserted because of opposition to the war. Also, the 1930 Army report cited earlier reaches a different conclusion. In that report, the most frequent causes were: (1) an "unstable or floating and drifting condition," (2) "mental deficiency and weakness of character," (3) the "character of the offenders" or "basically unstable," (4) dissatisfaction with the service, and (5) "to escape punishment." Other, less frequent reasons were "entanglement with women" and "homesickness."

chaplains and mental health workers. However, the most popular form of relief involved some administrative action (e.g., hardship discharge or emergency leave). There was no difference between exiles and nonexiles in use of these mechanisms.

Table 8  
Participants' Use of Army Resources to Solve AWOL Problems

	<u>Percent of participants</u>			Statistical analysis
	In exile	In U.S.	Total	
Sought help	69	68	69	$\chi^2 = 0.00^a$
Did not seek help	<u>31</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>31</u>	V = .00
Used chain-of-command				
Yes	48	53	49	$\chi^2 = 0.64^a$
No	<u>52</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>51</u>	V = .03
Used non-chain-of-command help				
Yes	46	33	43	$\chi^2 = 26.28^*$
No	<u>54</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>57</u>	V = .10
Sought administrative help				
Yes	57	57	57	$\chi^2 = 0.00^a$
No	<u>43</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>43</u>	V = .00

\*Significant beyond the .01 level.

<sup>a</sup>Not statistically significant.

#### Evaluation of Use and Usefulness of Army Problem-Solving Agencies

Table 9 presents three measures of the use and usefulness of Army problem-solving mechanisms: (1) what the participants felt the Army could have done to prevent their AWOL, (2) whether, in the interviewers' judgment, the participants' use of agencies was appropriate, and (3) whether, in the interviewers' judgment, the AWOL was preventable. Although the last two items are somewhat speculative, they may cast some light on why the Army did not prevent these AWOLs.

Participants suggested a variety of actions to prevent their going AWOL--a discharge was popular in both groups. But the majority seem to have been willing to continue to "soldier" under certain circumstances. Nondischarge remedies suggested by program participants included elimination of overseas tours (including Vietnam), better treatment of

individuals, and correction of administrative problems. There was no statistical difference between what exiles and nonexiles wanted the Army to do.

Table 9

Evaluation of Use and Usefulness of Army Problem-Solving Agencies

Descriptive	Percent of participants			Statistical evaluation
	In exile	In U.S.	Total	
<b>Army action participant wanted, to prevent AWOL</b>				
Discharge the soldier	30	36	31	$\chi^2 = 10.44^a$ $V = .14$
No overseas assignments	19	20	19	
Treat individuals better	13	5	12	
Correct adm. problem	9	11	10	
Help individual adjust	8	10	8	
Grant or extend leave	4	4	4	
Assign to another unit	4	1	3	
Allow change in MOS	3	4	3	
Other	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>9</u>	
<b>Was participants' use of Army channels appropriate?</b>				
Yes, no action required	1	12	3	$\chi^2 = 38.35^*$ $V = .27$
Yes, approached "right" channels	39	26	36	
No, insufficient follow-up	16	15	16	
No, made no attempt	18	24	19	
No, didn't want "Army" solution	23	21	22	
Insufficient data	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	
<b>Was AWOL preventable?</b>				
Yes, but channels failed	11	34	16	$\chi^2 = 40.36^*$ $V = .29$
Yes, with some follow-through	16	22	17	
Maybe, insufficient data	27	11	24	
No, individual didn't make his situation clear	10	12	10	
No, didn't want "Army" solution	<u>35</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>32</u>	

\*Significant beyond the .01 level.

<sup>a</sup>Not statistically significant.



Most participants--57% of exiles and 60% of nonexiles--were judged to have made improper use of Army mechanisms to redress their problems. Many did not want an Army solution. However, a more common problem was failure to try to work through official channels or to follow up their requests. The reasons for lack of follow-up are not entirely clear. Previous research has shown that deserters do not always view Army problem-solving mechanisms favorably; many doubt the agencies will be of any help (Bell & Houston, 1976; Littlepage & Fox, 1972; and Osburn et al., 1954).

What is puzzling here is that so many men eventually went AWOL after making valid attempts to use official channels: 39% of exiles and 26% of nonexiles were so rated. The two groups differed in their use of channels. Exiles were more likely to seek help and to have problems that required action.

Were the AWOLs preventable? The answer would probably be different for the different groups. The exiles were judged to have been less salvageable (primarily because they were less likely to have desired a solution that the Army could give). The exiles were also less likely to have presented the Army with a situation that Army officials mishandled. Third, the situations the exiles presented were more difficult to evaluate.

#### Summary

Taken together, these analyses of motivations and remedies indicate that desertion is a complex phenomenon--and variously motivated. Antiwar deserters do not always want to deprive the Army of their services (Kasinsky, 1976; and Kelmen, 1975); exiles are not always antiwar; and deserters do not always want to get out of the service (Hartnagel, 1974).

#### DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS AFTER DESERTION

Participants' characteristics after desertion are described along 11 dimensions. The first four cover the time between last absence and entry into the SDRP: (1) length of last absence, (2) primary location since absence, (3) AWOL activities (i.e., employment, attempts to hide identity), and (4) AWOL-caused problems. The next three describe the participants as they entered the SDRP: (5) current address, (6) age, and (7) marital status. The final four cover participation in the program: (8) why they entered the SDRP, (9) how they entered, (10) date of discharge, and (11) postdischarge plans.

#### Description of Participants During Absence

The four dimensions describing characteristics of participants during absence are measured by 6 variables in Table 10.

Table 10

## Data Describing Participants During Absence

	<u>Percent of participants</u>			Statistical evaluation
	In exile	In U.S.	Total	
Length of absence				$\chi^2 = 48.92^*$
Less than 6 years	2	17	5	$V = .31$
6 years	7	16	9	
7 years	36	30	35	
8 years	31	21	29	
9 years	17	12	16	
More than 9 years	<u>7</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>	
Location while absent				N.A.
Inside U.S.	0	91	19	
Outside U.S.	85	0	67	
Both in and out	<u>15</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>14</u>	
Principal locations while AWOL				N.A.
USA	0	100	21	
Canada	87	0	69	
Europe	8	0	6	
Other	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>	
Hid from authorities				$\chi^2 = 100.20^*$
Yes	77	22	66	$V = .46$
No	<u>23</u>	<u>78</u>	<u>34</u>	
Type of employment <sup>a</sup>				$\chi^2 = 21.23^*$
Steady work	86	68	82	$V = .21$
Irregular work	13	24	15	
Unemployed	<u>2</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>3</u>	
AWOL caused participant problems				$\chi^2 = 9.91^*$
Yes	50	63	52	$V = .11$
No	<u>50</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>47</u>	

\*Statistically significant beyond the .01 level.

<sup>a</sup>Fifty-two exiles and three nonexiles were in school, in jail, or otherwise out of the labor force during their absence. These individuals were not included in the analysis.

Earlier desertions among the exile group (see Tables 5 and 6) meant that they had been absent longer. The median lengths of absence for the two groups were 8.2 and 7.6 years for the exiles and nonexiles, respectively. Probably the difference occurred because exiles were less likely to be arrested for AWOL while in foreign lands than were domestic deserters (U.S. Congress, 1969). (As noted in footnote 5, a much higher percentage of both U.S. citizens and aliens who were living abroad had managed to remain at large.)

AWOL locations and current homes of record attest to the mobility of the groups. Fifteen percent of exiles lived in the United States at some time while they were AWOL; 9% of the domestic group lived at one time or another abroad.

Among participants who lived mostly in exile, 87% lived in Canada. That figure is at variance with the 71% figure for DOD cited earlier and the 75% figure used by Baskir and Strauss (1978). Since no one knows how many deserters were living abroad when the SDRP began, much less which country they were in, it is impossible to say why these estimates differ from one another. The reason for the higher proportion of "Canadians" in the SDRP may simply be physical proximity of Canada.

Most participants said they had problems being federal fugitives. The most frequently mentioned problems included: (a) strained relations with family and wives, (b) fear of apprehension by authorities, and (c) problems gaining and retaining employment. Since the domestic group had fewer skills and greater probability of being apprehended, it was expected that they would report more problems. While the data bore this out, the size of the difference between the two groups was quite small.

Attempts to hide deserter status were directly related to locations while absent. Most (77%) exiles hid their identities; most (78%) non-exiles did not. The most likely explanation for this difference was that the exiles came into contact with authorities while crossing international borders. The domestic group did not.

The exile group was more successful at gaining and holding steady work. They were also more likely to be out of the labor force (e.g., going to school). This finding was expected in light of the higher level of education in that group.

#### Description of Participants When the SDRP Began

Table 11 shows three characteristics of the participants at the time they entered the SDRP: (1) current home address, (2) current marital status, and (3) current age.

Table 11

## Data Describing Participants When the Program Began

Descriptive category (as of 1977)	Percent of participants			Statistical evaluation
	In exile	In U.S.	Total	
Current home				
Outside U.S.	90	10	73	$\chi^2 = 293.07^*$
Inside U.S.	<u>10</u>	<u>90</u>	<u>27</u>	V = .73
Current marital status				
Married	57	51	56	$\chi^2 = 1.07^a$
Not married	<u>43</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>44</u>	V = .04
Current age				
Less than 27	5	13	7	$\chi^2 = 20.07^*$
27	8	13	9	V = .19
28	13	14	13	
29	19	14	18	
30	19	15	18	
31-32	24	13	22	
Over 32	<u>12</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>13</u>	

\*Significant beyond the .01 level.

<sup>a</sup>Not statistically significant.

As expected there was a great deal of difference in where the participants were living when they entered the program: 90% of the exiles were living abroad and 90% of the nonexiles were living in the United States. The listing of the countries participants lived in can be seen in the DOD After-Action Report (ODCSPER, DA, 1978).

There was no real difference in the two SDRP participant groups as to their marital status. Although the majority of the participants had not been married when they went AWOL (see Table 4), over half were married (in 1977). There was a difference in marital status between SDRP participants and those in the FCP. SDRP participants were less likely to be married when they went AWOL and less likely to be married when they entered the SDRP despite their longer absence from the service. The reasons for this difference are not entirely clear.

Consistent with their age at entry and length of absence, the exile group is somewhat older now. Both groups, in turn, are much older than the typical returning deserter.

Participation in the Program

The four measures of participation in the SDRP--reason for participation, method of entering the SDRP, date of discharge, and postdischarge plans--are given in Table 12.

Table 12

Program Participation

Descriptive category	<u>Percent of participants</u>			Statistical evaluation
	In exile	In U.S.	Total	
<b>Reason for participating</b>				$\chi^2 = 58.01^*$
Liked program provisions	69	37	62	$V = .33$
Family pressure	10	11	10	
Police pressure	5	24	9	
Tired of "running"	5	11	6	
Unaware of Ford program	3	7	4	
Other	<u>8</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>9</u>	
<b>Initial SDRP contact</b>				$\chi^2 = 35.01^*$
Participant called	74	63	72	$V = .26$
Family called	9	6	9	
Letter of inquiry	10	6	9	
Other	<u>6</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>10</u>	
<b>Date of discharge</b>				$\chi^2 = 16.05^a$
April 1977	4	7	4	$V = .17$
May	22	16	21	
June	16	19	17	
July	19	10	17	
August	16	20	17	
September	15	11	14	
October	<u>8</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>10</u>	
<b>Postdischarge plans</b>				$\chi^2 = 30.02^*$
Continue job	72	63	70	$V = .23$
Undecided	11	7	10	
Return to U.S.	10	5	9	
More education	3	12	4	
Other	<u>5</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>7</u>	

\*Significant beyond the .01 level.

<sup>a</sup>Not statistically significant.

Reasons for participation were different for the two subgroups. Exiles were much more likely to be entering because they were attracted to the program by its special provisions: 69% of the exiles gave this reason as compared with 37% of the nonexiles. Similarly, the nonexiles were much more likely to be entering because they were pressured by police or tired of running from the law.

The method of entry was also different: exiles were more likely to have called in and were less likely to have entered as walk-ins, in the custody of the police, or in some other "unannounced" way.

The dates of entry into the program, and hence the dates of discharge, were essentially the same for the two groups overall, though numbers varied in some months.

Postdischarge plans, however, were different. More exiles returned to continue in their present jobs; most were not planning to return to live in the United States. This finding is consistent with other descriptions of the exile community (Baskir & Strauss, 1978; Kasinsky, 1976). However, as many as 26% may be planning to return (e.g., 10% plan to return, 11% are undecided, and 5% have "other" plans that may include returning).

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Army deserters participating in the SDRP were not typical deserters from the Vietnam era. Most--81% of them--spent all or most of their AWOL time in foreign countries, compared with 1% to 5% of deserters during the Vietnam era. Exiles were, of course, much more likely to be still at large and thus eligible for the program (see footnote 5). But many seemed to have liked the provisions of the SDRP and thus to have chosen that opportunity to end their status as federal fugitives.

The high concentration of exiles in the program produced quite different demographic "profiles" than are typically reported in the literature on deserters. Whereas most deserters are reported to be poorly educated, lower in mental ability, and disproportionately black, participants in this program--most of whom were exiles--were the mirror opposite. The findings were not unexpected in light of the differences between exile and nonexiled deserters in the Ford Clemency Program (see Table 1 and Appendix A). Thus, it makes little sense to discuss participants in the SDRP without considering the fact that they were mostly exiles.

#### Exile Participants

The principal differences between exile participants and other soldiers of the Vietnam era were that the exiles were more likely to be white and better educated, and have higher mental ability. The same differences were found in the exile participants from the FCP and among

veterans belonging to the protest group, Vietnam Veterans Against the War. Thus, it is not surprising to learn that exiles in SDRP and the Ford program were quite likely to have stated that their reasons for leaving the Army had something to do with the Vietnam war (72% and 46%, respectively, of the SDRP and FCP exiles gave this reason, in contrast with 7% to 15% of era deserters, in general). Exiles were also much less likely to have served in Vietnam than other era soldiers and much more likely to have left the Army during the peak years of the conflict (1969-70) than most deserters.

The exiled participants were also different from the nonexiles on the same dimensions. That is, they were better educated, more intelligent, more likely to be white, more likely to have left for antiwar reasons and to have had no Vietnam service. In addition, they were more likely to have planned to desert (rather than go AWOL temporarily), to have hidden their identities from authorities, to be participating because they liked the program, and to be still living overseas.

#### Nonexile Participants

The nonexile participants were also different from other soldiers of the era. They fit the classic deserter pattern: most were high school dropouts, lower in mental categories, and disproportionately black. They were also more likely than the typical deserter to be from the peak years. However, they were as likely as other soldiers to have seen service in Vietnam. With minor exceptions, this is the same pattern as was present among the nonexiled group in the Ford program.

#### Conclusion

Clearly, there is more than one type of Vietnam deserter. A large group left the Army for personal, family, or financial reasons--as did other deserters in this, and earlier, conflicts. A smaller group of exiles and antiwar deserters shared a quite different pattern that sets them apart from other deserters and from other soldiers of the Vietnam era. Since all the data from these programs came from a self-selected group, it is impossible to say with certainty that the common pattern describes all deserters of the era. However, the consistency of findings from the "clemency" programs and a careful reading of available literature on deserters strongly suggest that this is the case.

Deserters who left the Army for antiwar reasons and the overlapping group of those who lived in foreign countries may be small in number, but they greatly influenced the public perception of what desertion was about. The fact that those groups existed and that they were so different from the larger, more classic group should be remembered when describing the Vietnam era.

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## APPENDIX A

### EXILED AND NONEXILED DESERTERS IN THE FORD CLEMENCY PROGRAM

Exiled deserters had quite different characteristics and experiences compared with those who spent their time in the United States. The purpose of this appendix is to compare the characteristics across participants in the Ford Clemency Program (FCP) and the SDRP program. Data from the FCP have been divided into the same two groups, exiles and nonexiles, and analyzed. Since the format for gathering the data in the two programs was essentially the same, the analyses are comparable.

#### Characteristics of FCP Participants at Entry into the Army

Table A-1 contains seven measures of the characteristics of FCP participants at the time they entered the Army. They are: (1) race, (2) region of the country from which they joined, (3) level of civilian education, (4) mental category on the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT), (5) method of entry (volunteer or draftee), (6) year of entry, and (7) age at entry.

Exiles who participated in the FCP were different from nonexiles on two measures: education and mental ability. In both cases the differences were in the same direction seen in the SDRP (i.e., the exiles were much more intelligent and better educated than the nonexiles). Exiles were also more likely to be white, but the size of the difference was smaller than seen in the SDRP (Table 2).

#### Descriptions of FCP Participants at Time of Last Absence

A description of the characteristics of Ford program participants at the time they went AWOL appears in Table A-2. These include: (1) age at AWOL, (2) marital status, (3) number of self-reported incidents of prior AWOL, (4) length of service, (5) completion of training, (6) type of military occupation (i.e., combat versus noncombat jobs), (7) grade (or rank), and (8) whether or not they served in Vietnam. Although there was no striking difference between the two groups on any of these measures, they were different from soldiers, in general, on two of the measures. They were more heavily from the combat specialties (see Table 5, Bell & Houston, 1976), and they were less likely to have served in Vietnam compared to 37% of Army personnel, in general. Both of these differences between participants and soldiers of the Vietnam era were also noted in the SDRP.

Table A-1

Differences in Entry Characteristics of Ford Program Participants  
Living in USA and Overseas

Characteristic	Percent of participants			Statistical evaluation
	In exile	In U.S.	Total	
<b>Race<sup>a</sup></b>				
White	97	77	80	$\chi^2 = 71.62^*$
Black	3	23	20	$\phi = .15$
<b>Region of the country<sup>b</sup></b>				
North East	24	23	23	$\chi^2 = 69.77^*$
North Central	28	24	25	$V = .15$
West	27	14	15	
South	21	40	38	
<b>Education</b>				
Nongraduate	27	68	64	$\chi^2 = 552.40^*$
High school graduate	38	28	29	$V = .41$
Beyond high school	35	4	7	
<b>AFQT mental category</b>				
I (93-100 percentile)	12	1	2	$\chi^2 = 322.37^*$
II (65-92 percentile)	37	14	16	$V = .32$
III (31-64 percentile)	37	43	43	
IV-V (0-30 percentile)	13	42	39	
<b>Method of entry<sup>c</sup></b>				
Volunteer	59	56	56	$\chi^2 = 1.25^d$
Draftee	41	44	44	$\phi = .02$

\*Significant beyond the .01 level.

<sup>a</sup>Twenty-six individuals (24 nonexiles and two exiles) of other races were eliminated from this analysis.

<sup>b</sup>Thirty individuals who had homes of record outside of the 50 United States were eliminated from this analysis.

<sup>c</sup>Sixty-two individuals from the reserve components were eliminated from this analysis.

<sup>d</sup>Not statistically significant.

Table A-2

## Data Describing Ford Program Participants at Time of Last Absence

Descriptive category	Percent of participants			Statistical evaluation
	In exile	In U.S.	Total	
<b>Age</b>				$\chi^2 = 139.37^*$
Less than 20	17	23	22	$\phi = .11$
20	21	27	26	
21	17	20	20	
22	12	11	11	
23	11	6	6	
24	7	4	5	
More than 24	15	9	9	
<b>Marital status</b>				$\chi^2 = 9.33^*$
Not married	69	61	62	$\phi = .05$
Married	31	39	38	
<b>Number of self-reported prior AWOLs</b>				$\chi^2 = 14.34^*$
None	69	54	56	$V = .07$
One	16	27	26	
Two or more	16	19	19	
<b>Length of service</b>				$\chi^2 = 21.93^*$
0-3 months	16	11	11	$V = .08$
4-6 months	22	18	18	
7-9 months	13	11	11	
10-12	8	9	9	
13-24	18	26	25	
25 and over	24	26	26	
<b>Completion of training</b>				$\chi^2 = 0.58^a$
Trainee	27	25	25	$\phi = .01$
Nontrainee	73	75	75	
<b>MOS group</b>				$\chi^2 = 12.05^*$
Combat	27	32	31	$\phi = .03$
Noncombat	73	68	69	
<b>Grade</b>				$\chi^2 = 1.84^a$
E1	37	40	40	$V = .02$
E2	29	27	27	
E3	15	15	15	
E4	13	12	12	
E5 or above	6	5	5	
<b>Service in Vietnam</b>				$\chi^2 = 21.10^*$
No	90	80	81	$V = .08$
Yes	10	20	19	

\*Significant beyond the .01 level.

<sup>a</sup>Not statistically significant.

Situational Factors Associated with FCP Participants' Absences

Table A-3 contains three measures of the situations in which the FCP participants found themselves when they went AWOL: (1) year of last AWOL, (2) location of absentees' units, and (3) type of duty (e.g., in training, in transit, in a stockade). One of these three, year of AWOL, differentiated exiles from nonexiles in the SDRP (table 5). None of them did so here.

Table A-3

Situational Factors Associated with Desertion for  
Ford Program Participants

Situational factor	Percent of participants			Statistical evaluation
	In exile	In U.S.	Total	
Year of last AWOL				$\chi^2 = 57.70^*$
Prior to 1968	5	7	7	$V = .13$
1968	13	11	11	
1969	35	22	23	
1970	28	24	24	
1971	11	25	23	
1972 or later	8	11	11	
Location of absentee's unit				$\chi^2 = 30.67^*$
Continental U.S.	81	89	88	$V = .10$
Europe (USAEUR)	10	4	4	
Other	9	8	8	
Duty status				$\chi^2 = 8.21^a$
Training (BCT/AIT)	28	23	23	$V = .05$
With trained unit	35	32	33	
Transit	34	39	38	
PCF/stockade	3	6	6	

\*Significant beyond the .01 level.

<sup>a</sup>Not statistically significant.

Both exiles and nonexiles in the FCP deserted later in the conflict than did most deserters (table A-4). This tendency to be from the latter years was even more true of the nonexiles than the exile group. For example, 19% of desertions occurred prior to 1968, yet only 5% of the exiles and 7% of the nonexiles came from these years. The exiles were also overrepresented during the peak years. The same pattern was seen in the SDRP (table 6).

Table A-4  
 Comparison of Year of AWOL of FCP Participants  
 with DFR Statistics

Calendar year	Number in U.S. Army	DFR <sup>a</sup>	Percent of era DFRs per year	Percent of participants			Statistical evaluation
				In exile	In U.S.	Total	
Before 1968	70,374		19	5	7	7	Exiles vs. DFR $\chi^2 = 139.11^*$
1968	47,921		13	13	11	11	
1969	61,126		17	35	22	23	V = .62
1970	72,325		19	28	24	24	
1971	65,010		18	11	25	23	Nonexiles vs. DFR $\chi^2 = 426.89^*$
After 1971	50,431		14	8	11	11	
							V = .38
Total	367,197		100	100	100	99	

<sup>a</sup>Army DFR data adapted from: OASD (MRA&L), Department of Defense Incidents of Desertion FY 1959-1975, Dated 8 October 1975.

\*Significant beyond the .01 level.

Reasons for Absence Given by FCP Participants

Participants in the Ford program were given two opportunities to tell why they deserted. They were interviewed by social workers, and they made statements to the Joint Alternative Service Board. (For more detail, see Appendix B, Bell & Houston 1976.)

The reasons given in both cases fit the general pattern seen in the SDRP: the exiles were more motivated by antiwar reasons. It should be noted, however, that both the exile and nonexile groups in the FCP were less motivated by antiwar sentiment than in the SDRP. The reason for this difference between programs is not immediately clear.

FCP Participants' Use of Army Problem-Solving Mechanisms

Table A-6 shows that the exile and nonexile groups in the FCP were essentially equal in their use of Army mechanisms to solve AWOL problems.



Table A-5

## Reason for Absence Given by Ford Program Participants

Reason	Percent of participants			Statistical evaluation
	In exile	In U.S.	Total	
<b>Primary reason (interview)</b>				
Related to Vietnam	46	12	16	$\chi^2 = 309.35^*$
Family/marital/financial	13	42	39	$V = .31$
Army adjustment	19	26	26	
Administrative/leadership	18	16	16	
Legal	1	1	1	
Drug	2	2	2	
<b>Reason (given Board)</b>				
Related to Vietnam	34	10	12	$\chi^2 = 172.49^*$
Personal/family/financial	26	50	48	$V = .24$
Army adjustment	25	28	28	
Army mismanagement	12	9	9	
Other	3	3	3	

\*Significant beyond the .01 level.

Table A-6

## FCP Participants' Use of Army Resources to Solve AWOL Problems

Army Resource	Percent of participants			Statistical evaluation
	In exile	In U.S.	Total	
Sought help	82	87	86	$\chi^2 = 5.64^a$
Did not seek help	<u>18</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	$\phi = .04$
<b>Chain-of-command resource</b>				
Didn't use	54	53	53	$\chi^2 = 0.09^a$
Used	<u>46</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>47</u>	$\phi = .02$
<b>Non-chain-of-command resources</b>				
Didn't use	66	69	69	$\chi^2 = 1.48^a$
Used	<u>34</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>31</u>	$\phi = .02$
<b>Administrative resources</b>				
Didn't use	65	67	67	$\chi^2 = 0.25^a$
Used	<u>35</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>33</u>	$\phi = .01$

<sup>a</sup>Not statistically significant.

There does, however, appear to be a difference across programs, the FCP participants being more likely to try the system. In particular, they seemed to have made greater use of administrative and non-chain-of-command mechanisms. It would be interesting to know whether these attempts were followed up any more vigorously by these deserters. (That line of inquiry was not pursued in the FCP interviews.)

#### Status of FCP Participants During AWOL

Five characteristics of the situations encountered by FCP participants during their absence from service are displayed in Table A-7. They are: (1) length of absence, (2) location while absent, (3) functional problems, caused by being AWOL, (4) attempts to hide AWOL status from authorities, and (5) ability to find and hold employment.

Exiles and nonexiles in the FCP were essentially the same in terms of (1) length of AWOL, (2) tendency to hide their identities, (3) ability to hold steady employment, and (4) experience of AWOL-caused problems. In contrast, there was a tendency in the SDRP for exiles to be absent longer, hide their identities more, and find steady work more readily. The data on length of absence in the two programs is also supported by data on the dates these absences took place (see Tables 5 and A-3).

Although no formal analyses were conducted, it seems obvious from inspection of the data in Tables A-7 and 10 that the locations where these individuals lived while AWOL was fairly different. Most FCP participants lived within the United States: Most SDRP participants lived overseas. Even among those living in the United States, the FCP participants are less likely to have spent any time abroad. The FCP had relatively fewer exiles living in Canada and more living in Europe and other lands than did the SDRP.

Table A-7

## Data Describing FCP Participants During Absence

Characteristic	Percent of participants			Statistical evaluation
	In exile	In U.S.	Total	
Length of absence				
Less than 6 years	85	85	85	$\chi^2 = 4.26^a$
6 years	11	9	9	$V = .04$
7 years	3	4	4	
More than 7 years	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	
Location while AWOL				
Inside U.S.	0	99	88	N.A.
Outside U.S.	83	0	9	
Both in and Out	<u>17</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	
Principal location while AWOL				
U.S.	0	100	89	N.A.
Canada	69	0	7	
Europe	17	0	2	
Other	<u>14</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	
Hid from authorities				
Yes	29	11	13	$\chi^2 = 70.90^*$
No	<u>71</u>	<u>89</u>	<u>87</u>	$V = .16$
Type of employment <sup>b</sup>				
Steady work	88	85	86	$\chi^2 = 3.03^a$
Irregular work	10	11	11	$V = .16$
Unemployed	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	
AWOL caused participants problems				
Yes	42	36	37	$\chi^2 = 3.38^a$
No	<u>58</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>63</u>	$V = .04$

\*Significant beyond the .01 level.

<sup>a</sup>Not statistically significant.

<sup>b</sup>Thirty-five of the participants (8 exiles and 27 nonexiles) were in school, jail, or otherwise out of the labor force. They do not appear in this analysis.

## APPENDIX B

### REASONS FOR ABSENCE

Appendix B provides additional detail on the reasons for absence that appear in Table 7. Specifically, it deals with how these reasons were gathered, categorized, and analyzed.

Reasons for AWOL were determined in interviews with all participants, which were conducted by military or civilian social workers as a part of the medical outprocessing leading to discharge. The responses given by the participants were recorded verbatim and then categorized into the nine reasons used in the FCP (Bell & Houston, 1976, Appendix C). These were: (1) problems adjusting to the Army, (2) family problems, (3) marital problems, (4) administrative mixups, (5) reasons related to the Vietnam conflict, (6) financial problems, (7) legal difficulties, (8) drug-related problems, and (9) faulty Army leadership. If more than one reason was given, it was further categorized into either a "primary" or a "secondary" reason. The frequencies with which the participants' reasons fell into each of these nine categories appear in Tables B-1, B-2, and B-3 for the exile, nonexile, and total sample, respectively. In each table, primary reasons are listed in the columns and secondary reasons in the rows.<sup>1</sup>

In all three tables, the most frequent single primary and secondary reason given is Category 5 (Vietnam-related reasons). Vietnam was particularly salient for the exile group: 72% of them gave it as their primary reason, 55% as a secondary reason. In contrast, only 23% and 21% of the nonexiles listed Vietnam reasons as their primary or secondary impetus for leaving.

Although analyzing the nine categories separately can provide useful information, grouping these into the larger categories usually seen in the deserter literature is even more useful. For example, during the FCP, Categories 2, 3, and 6 were collapsed into a single category called family/marital/financial problems. Also Categories 4 and 9 were collapsed into a category called administrative/leadership. The remaining categories were left unchanged. Following this system, it becomes clear that the domestic group deserted for more personal kinds of reasons, while more exiles left because of the war. Since this kind of grouping is easier to interpret, it was adapted for the FCP and for the analyses in Table 7.

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<sup>1</sup>Twenty-six of the exiles and 12 of the nonexiles gave no reason for their absence. These individuals do not appear in the tables of Appendix B.

Table B-1

Frequency of Primary and Secondary Reasons for AWOL  
Given by Exiled SDRP Participants

Secondary reason	Primary reason (category number)									Total
Category name & number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
1. Army adjustment	<u>6</u>	1	1	2	56	1	0	0	2	69
2. Family problems	3	<u>3</u>	3	3	19	0	1	0	1	33
3. Marital problems	2	1	<u>4</u>	0	6	0	0	0	1	14
4. Administrative	2	2	0	<u>5</u>	18	0	2	0	0	29
5. Vietnam	23	5	10	8	<u>172</u>	0	2	0	2	222
6. Financial problems	0	1	1	1	2	<u>0</u>	1	1	0	7
7. Legal difficulties	0	0	0	0	2	0	<u>2</u>	0	0	4
8. Drug problems	0	0	1	0	4	0	0	<u>1</u>	0	6
9. Leadership	3	1	1	4	12	0	0	0	<u>1</u>	22
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>406</b>

Table B-2

Frequency of Primary and Secondary Reasons for AWOL  
Given by Nonexiled SDRP Participants

Secondary reason	Primary reason (category number)									
Category name & number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
1. Army adjustment	<u>6</u>	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	13
2. Family problems	1	<u>3</u>	3	0	5	2	0	2	0	16
3. Marital problems	1	1	<u>3</u>	0	1	1	0	0	1	8
4. Administrative	2	4	0	<u>8</u>	1	0	0	0	0	15
5. Vietnam	4	3	0	1	<u>13</u>	0	0	0	0	21
6. Financial problems	0	2	1	1	0	<u>0</u>	1	0	0	5
7. Legal difficulties	1	0	0	1	0	0	<u>2</u>	1	0	5
8. Drug problems	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	<u>4</u>	0	5
9. Leadership	4	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	12
<b>TOTAL</b>	19	19	9	13	23	3	3	7	4	100

Table B-3

Frequency of Primary and Secondary Reasons for AWOL  
Given by SDRP Participants

Secondary reason	Primary reason (category number)									
Category name & number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
1. Army adjustment	<u>12</u>	3	3	2	58	1	0	0	3	82
2. Family problems	4	<u>6</u>	6	3	24	2	1	2	1	49
3. Marital problems	3	2	<u>7</u>	0	7	1	0	0	2	22
4. Administrative	4	6	0	<u>13</u>	19	0	2	0	0	44
5. Vietnam	27	8	10	9	<u>185</u>	0	2	0	2	243
6. Financial problems	0	3	2	2	2	<u>0</u>	2	1	0	12
7. Legal difficulties	1	0	0	1	2	0	<u>4</u>	1	0	9
8. Drug problems	0	0	1	0	5	0	0	<u>5</u>	0	11
9. Leadership	7	5	1	6	12	0	0	0	<u>3</u>	34
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>506</b>

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