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**Influences on the Military Enlistment
Decision-Making Process**

**Findings from the 1991
Youth Attitude Tracking Study**

Market Research & Analysis Branch

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INFLUENCES ON THE MILITARY ENLISTMENT DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Findings from the 1991 Youth Attitude
Tracking Study

May, 1993

Statement A per telecon
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NWW 6/8/93

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DTIC TAB	<input type="checkbox"/>
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FOREWORD

This report is one in a series focusing on the 1991 Youth Attitude Tracking Study (YATS) of American youth. The Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) prepared the report under contract MDA-903-90-C-0126, Communications and Enlistment Decisions: Topical Survey Reports, under the Joint Market Research Program of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Force Management and Personnel (OASD [FM&P]).

YATS is part of an ongoing research program in support of military manpower and recruiting efforts. A nationally representative sample of American youth 16 to 24 years old was interviewed by telephone to obtain information about their backgrounds, current status and future plans, self-reported likelihood of enlisting in the military, and perceptions concerning a wide variety of relevant issues.

This report examines data from the 1991 YATS survey concerning the various influences that sway young people towards or away from military enlistment. Such influences fall into three broad categories. First are personally-held attitudes and opinions concerning the military in general, life in the military, the various Services, and the benefits and burdens associated with a term of enlistment. A second type of influence comes from other people. This includes those with whom military enlistment was discussed, as well as the respondent knowing others who are currently serving. Finally, there is the influence of policies and programs. This includes evolving policies concerning women and the military drawdown, as well as various types and levels of incentives. These elements were examined in conjunction with demographic and background characteristics to determine if differences existed between subgroups of American youth in their perceptions of the military and military service. Additionally, responses were examined in conjunction with propensity--the self-stated likelihood of enlisting in the next few years. This was done to shed light on the relative importance of different sources of influence on the enlistment decision making process.

The Contracting Officer's Technical Representative was Ms. Candace Fryburger of the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC). The HumRRO Project Director was Dr. Brian Waters. The principal author of the report was Dr. Peter Ramsberger. Dr. Waters, Ms. Janice Laurence, and Ms. Julien Chan provided editorial comment and analytic support. Dr. Wayne S. Sellman, OASD/FM&P Director for Accession Policy, provided policy guidance, and Dr. Jerome Lehnus, Chief, Market Research at DMDC, provided technical direction and guidance.

The opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and do not represent official Department of Defense positions or policies.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines data from the 1991 Youth Attitude Tracking Study (YATS) survey concerning the influence of perceptions, people, and policies on the enlistment decision making process. The data examined include: stated reasons for and against enlisting; perceptions of the military in general, military life, and the individual Services; the impact of current events on stated likelihood of enlisting; the influence of others with whom military service was discussed; knowledge of others currently serving, and; the projected influence of enlistment options and incentives. The goal is to provide a clearer picture of how youth perceive the military, and what factors may influence them towards or away from enlisting.

YATS is an annual survey of approximately 10,000 men and women, aged 16-24. Respondents are identified through random selection of telephone numbers, and computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATIs) are used to collect the information. CATI presents questions on a computer screen to an interviewer to read over the telephone, and interviewers type responses into a database as they are given. This technology eliminates inappropriate questions based on a respondent's earlier answers and identifies inconsistent responses during the interview.

A key measure in YATS is self-reported enlistment propensity. The measure is based on a series of questions asking the likelihood the respondent will join the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps in the next few years. Respondents indicating that they "definitely" or "probably" will be on active duty in one of the Services are said to have positive composite propensity. Others are said to have shown negative propensity. A similar measure is included to assess propensity to enlist in the Reserves or National Guards.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Propensity

As in the past, propensity to enlist in the military was found to be higher among younger (16-17 year old) males (27%), Blacks (28%), those unemployed (29%), and those from the South (19%). Positive propensity has been higher for the Army (7.3%) and the Air Force (8.5%), than for the Navy (5.6%), and Marine Corps (4.6%). Few differences in composite or Service-specific propensity were found between 1990 and 1991.

The Impact of Perceptions

Reasons for Enlisting. Job training (25%) and obtaining money for education (25%) were the most often mentioned reasons for enlisting in the military. Other reasons frequently cited included duty to country (16%), pay (15%), and the ability to

travel (8%). Duty and training were more important to male respondents, with women focusing more on educational benefits. High school seniors were most likely to mention educational benefits, while pay was cited more by those not in school and those in post-secondary institutions. Whereas older respondents were more likely to mention travel as a benefit, high school sophomores and juniors were the most likely to indicate that duty to country was an important reason for enlisting. Among those who expressed positive propensity, training and duty were the most cited reasons. Those expressing negative propensity cited educational benefits with greater frequency.

Reasons for not Enlisting. When asked to give a reason for not enlisting, the largest percentage of respondents indicated that they simply didn't like the military (15%). Other factors included family obligations (13%), alternate career choices (11%), and the possible threat to one's life or well being (9%). Among those who stated that they probably or definitely would be joining the military in the next few years, possible physical harm was the most mentioned drawback. Those with no inclination to enlist were more likely to cite a dislike for the military.

Perceptions of the Military. The military was generally perceived as a place with interesting (or at least non-boring) jobs (83%), where good experience can be obtained (77%). Respondents acknowledged that being in the military can involve risk and danger, although some 20 percent of the males surveyed disagreed with this statement. A notable percentage of respondents agreed at least to some extent that people are treated unfairly in the military (18%), with the most agreement being among Blacks and Hispanics. Women were no more or less likely than men to agree with this statement.

Perceptions of Specific Services. Respondents were asked whether they agreed that the Services were good sources of such benefits as money for education, the opportunity to travel, job and leadership experience, and a physical challenge. Overall there was agreement that each Service provides such opportunities, although none was rated highly in terms of personal freedom and the chance to remain near family and friends. The Army was rated particularly high on equal opportunity for minorities and women, education benefits, and leadership; the Navy and Air Force were both seen as good sources for a high technology workplace and the chance to travel; and the Marine Corps ranked well in terms of leadership skills and a physical challenge.

The Impact of War. Respondents were asked about a number of recent, current, and hypothetical events and their impact on the likelihood they would enlist in the military. Current enlistment intentions were examined in conjunction with responses to a question concerning the likelihood of volunteering if there were a need to go to war. Of those who indicated that they probably or definitely *would* enlist in the next few years, less than four percent said they would *not* volunteer if they felt it were necessary for the country to go to war. By contrast, over one-quarter of youth who indicated that they had little or no intention of joining the military in the near future said they probably or definitely would if the country needed them to serve in battle. Approximately 17 percent

of the respondents indicated that the successful 1991/92 Operation Desert Shield/Storm made them more likely to enlist, while 13 percent said it lessened the chance that they would join. There was less of an impact due to the breakup of the Soviet Union, with seven percent more inclined and 16 percent less inclined to enlist as a result of the reduced threat.

The Influence of Others

Discussions with Others Concerning Military Enlistment. Over a quarter of the respondents indicated that they had discussed enlisting in the military with someone in the recent past, most frequently with friends or parents. Most reported that they received favorable reactions. This was particularly true among males, those unemployed and looking for work, and Blacks. A generally strong association was found between the reactions of others and stated propensity to enlist, with those receiving positive feedback more likely to be inclined to join. Similarly, there were indications that youth are more inclined to enlist in the particular branch of Service that they think their parents would favor.

The Impact of Knowing Military Members. Approximately 81 percent of YATS respondents said they knew someone currently serving in the military. However, a positive relationship was found between having an acquaintance in a *given branch* and being inclined toward enlisting in that branch. There was no overall relationship between knowing someone who is serving and composite propensity.

The Influence of Policies and Programs

Opinions Concerning Military Power and Its Use. A majority of youth agreed that the United States should maintain the world's strongest military (53%). The use of such power to defend America's economic interests received greater support (77%) than did employing military force to defend the rights of other countries (63%).

The Role of Women in National Defense. A higher percentage of respondents were in favor of allowing women to serve in combat (57%) than were supportive of women having to register for the draft (32%).

The Impact of Military Downsizing. A relatively large percentage of YATS respondents indicated that reduced recruiting levels and the incidence of "early-outs" made them less likely to seek a military enlistment (22% and 23%, respectively). The impact of the drawdown upon propensity was stronger than that associated with the Gulf War.

Conclusions

A number of conclusions can be reached based on these results.

- The reasons given by youth for enlisting in the military appear to be related to ones' stage or position in life. Those facing the costs associated with post-secondary education, for instance, were somewhat more likely to focus on obtaining funds for that purpose. Unemployed individuals mentioned pay and training as desired aspects of military service. The relative lack of emphasis on personal growth factors (maturity, discipline, getting out on ones' own), suggests that stressing the more tangible benefits of service may be the more prudent course.
- The major reasons cited for *not* enlisting were, for the most part, factors that are part and parcel of serving in the military: interference with family or other career commitments, the possible threat to one's life or physical well-being, and the length of a tour of duty.
- Young people were generally supportive of maintaining a strong military. Using such power to protect this country's economic interests generally received more backing than did employing the military to defend the rights of other countries.
- A larger proportion of youth supported allowing women to serve in combat roles than were in favor of requiring females to register for the draft. This may reflect the position that, although women should not be drafted, those who volunteer should be allowed to perform in whatever roles they choose.
- In examining the impact of current events on enlistment intentions, a greater negative impact was found concerning the military downsizing than was associated with the Gulf War. News regarding reduced recruiting and forced "early-outs" appears to be lessening the attractiveness of enlistment for a sizeable number of youth.
- The military and the individual Services, were viewed positively by young people in terms of the opportunities to gain valuable experience, perform interesting jobs, and obtain a variety of other benefits (e.g., money for education, self-esteem, leadership skills).
- Relationships were found between the opinions of significant others (e.g., mothers, fathers, friends) and stated likelihood of enlisting. Another influential source in this regard is acquaintances who are currently serving. Knowing someone on active duty in a given Service does appear to be related to wanting to join that branch oneself.

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Section 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

The Youth Attitude Tracking Study (YATS) has been conducted since 1975 to obtain information about the plans and perceptions of American youth concerning military service. The Fall 1991 administration was carried out in October and November, during which time 10,391 men and women between the ages of 16-24 were interviewed. These individuals were selected randomly, and are representative of all 16-24 year-old youth living in households or non-institutionalized group homes with telephones. The only restriction placed on the sample was that persons who had served, were serving at the time, or were accepted to serve in the military (active or Reserves) were excluded. Demographic characteristics of the sample population are shown in Table 1.

Respondents were identified through random selection of telephone numbers, and a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) technique was used to collect information. CATI presented questions on a computer screen to the interviewer to read over the telephone, and interviewers typed responses into a database as the interview was being conducted. This technology eliminated inappropriate questions based on a respondent's earlier answers and identified inconsistent responses during the interview.

The 1991 YATS began with questions regarding the respondents' school and employment status, followed by an exploration of future plans. Propensity, or inclination to enlist in the military, was then assessed through a series of questions concerning the

Table 1
Population Characteristics
(Percent)¹

Gender/Age		Employment Status ¹	
Male 16-21	32.6	Employed	61.4
Male 22-24	15.6	Unemployed, Looking	17.6
Female 16-21	33.7	Unemployed, Not Looking	20.9
Female 22-24	18.1		
Race/Ethnicity		Region	
White	79.7	Northeast	19.0
Black	13.9	North Central	27.5
Hispanic	6.3	South	37.9
		West	15.6
Education Status		Residential Jurisdiction	
High School Dropout	14.3	Large City	17.1
Young HS Student	12.8	Medium City	21.4
High School Senior	13.0	Small City	38.4
High School Graduate (not in school)	30.4	Suburban	11.8
College Student	28.4	Rural	11.3
Graduate Student	1.1		

¹ May not sum to 100% due to rounding.

likelihood the respondent would enlist in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, National Guard, or Reserves in the next few years.

¹ The Bureau of the Census monthly Current Population Survey reports divide the civilian labor force into employed or unemployed categories. Employed are those who did any work for pay or profit in a reference week (minimum of one hour). Unemployed are those with no employment who made special efforts to find a job in the last four weeks. All others are classified as not in the labor force. For this report, the three categories were divided into employed, unemployed (looking); and unemployed, not looking.

Participants were also asked about their awareness of military advertising, slogan recognition, and conversations they may have had with others about enlisting. Information was gathered about contact with recruiters, direct mail received, perceptions of world events and government policies, and acquaintances who were already serving. A variety of personal and work-related attributes such as personal freedom, money for education, travel, and job training were also addressed. Respondents were randomly assigned two active duty Services and asked to what extent they agreed that such goals or benefits could be achieved by enlisting in each. Finally, background information was collected.

Purpose and Organization of this Report

This report examines the factors that influence individuals as they consider military service. Such factors include perceptions of: 1) the military in general; 2) the personal costs and benefits of enlisting; 3) the importance of national defense and serving one's country; and 4) the specific attributes of the various branches. In addition, there are external influences such as friends and family members who may have voiced their opinions about military service. The purpose of this report is to provide a clear picture of the relative importance and influence of these factors in the military enlistment decision-making process.

The data examined here fall into three broad categories:

- *The Influence of Opinions and Perceptions*, including why one would or would not consider enlisting in the military, and perceptions of military life and the individual Services.

- *The Influence of Others*, including with whom, if anyone, the respondent had discussions concerning military service, the opinions of others, and the relative effect of those opinions on the decision-making process.
- *The Influence of Policies*, including those related to the role of women in the military and the impact of military downsizing.

After providing a brief summary of youth propensity for military service in 1991, the influence of perceptions of, and opinions about the military in relation to expressed likelihood of enlisting is examined. Section 3 examines the role that other people play in the enlistment decision-making process. The influence of potential programs and policies is the subject of Section 4; and the final section provides a summary and discussion of the implications of the findings. The exact item wordings for the questions analyzed in this report are presented in the Appendix.

In analyzing the YATS data, Chi Square analyses were conducted to identify significant differences among segments of the youth population. In those cases where overall significance was found (e.g., between individuals with various levels of education), an approximate significance criterion (Thompson & Buchanan, 1979) was applied to determine the exact source of the difference (e.g., high school versus college students). Overall significance is indicated in the tables and figures, whereas the specific differences are cited in the accompanying text.

Propensity

The 1991 YATS covered a wide range of issues relevant to military recruiting and manpower policy. Perhaps of greatest interest were items pertaining to the intentions of youth to enlist in the military in the next few years. For each of the active duty Services as well as the Reserves and National Guard, respondents were asked:

How likely is it that you will be serving (on active duty) in the Service ?
 [Would you say definitely, probably, probably not, or definitely not?]

(Question Q505, Q507, Q510-Q513)

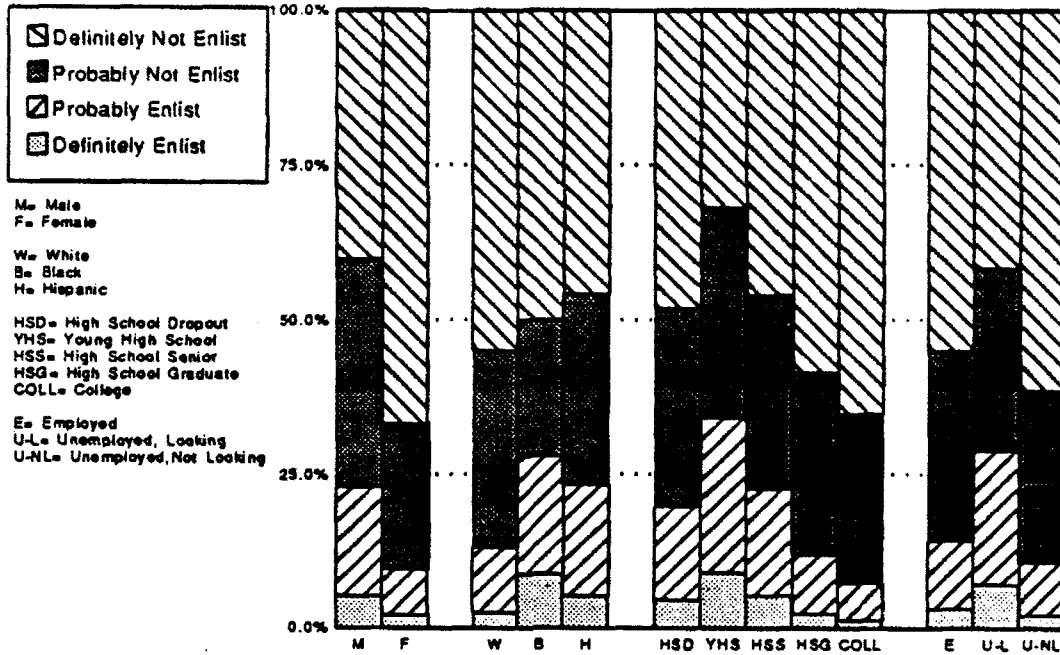
In addition to individual Service propensities, composite active and Reserve/Guard measures were derived by taking the *most positive* response to the individual Service items, as demonstrated in Table 2.

Table 2
 Examples of how Composite Propensity is Derived

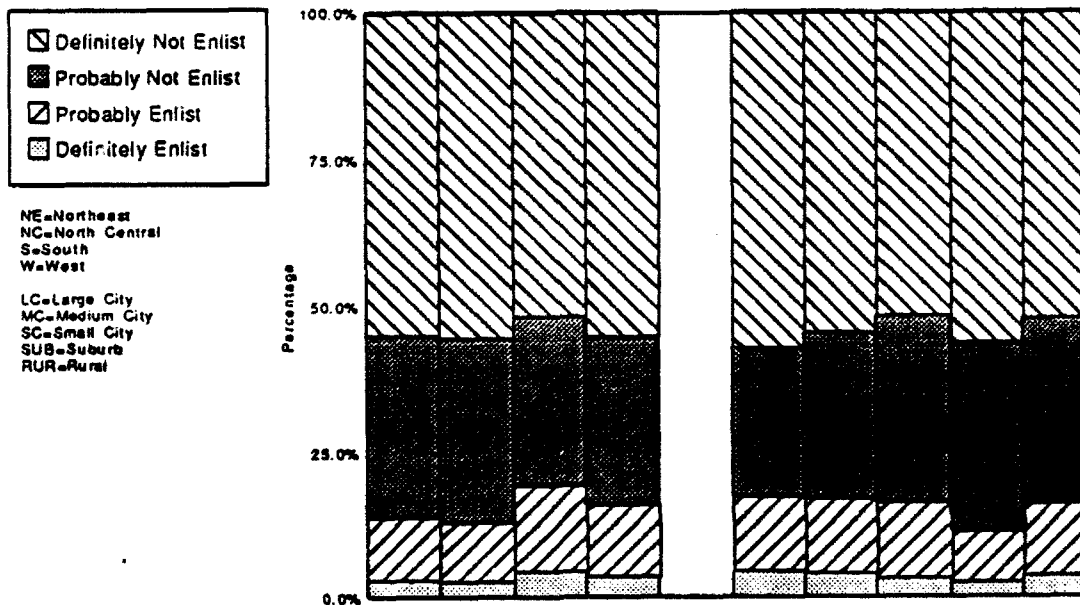
	<u>Service</u>				<u>Composite</u>
	<u>Army</u>	<u>Navy</u>	<u>Marine Corps</u>	<u>Air Force</u>	
Likely to Enlist?-->	Probably Not	Probably Not	Probably Not	Probably Not	Probably Not
Likely to Enlist?-->	Definitely	Definitely Not	Probably Not	Definitely Not	Definitely

Figure 1 shows the composite propensity for various demographic groups. Significant differences were found within each. Positive propensity (definitely/probably will enlist) was higher among Blacks (27.8%) than Hispanics (23.4%), and higher among Hispanics than Whites (13.3%). A higher proportion of young high school students (non-seniors) expressed an inclination to join (34.1%) than did those in other education groups. In regard to employment status, propensity was highest among those who were without a job and looking (28.8%), but it is noteworthy that it was lowest among those not employed who were not looking (10.6%).

Figure 1
Composite Active Propensity 1991
by Demographics



Definitely Not Enlist	40.1	67.0	55.5	49.9	45.7	48.1	31.7	46.0	58.5	65.2	55.0	41.6	61.3
Probably Not Enlist	37.0	23.5	32.2	22.2	30.9	32.1	34.1	31.5	29.5	27.5	30.8	29.5	27.9
Probably Enlist	17.7	7.6	10.8	19.2	18.2	15.3	25.2	17.4	9.7	6.1	11.1	21.6	8.6
Definitely Enlist	5.2	2.0	2.5	9.6	5.2	4.6	8.9	5.2	2.2	1.2	3.1	7.0	2.0
	Gender		Racial/ Ethnic			Education Status				Employment			



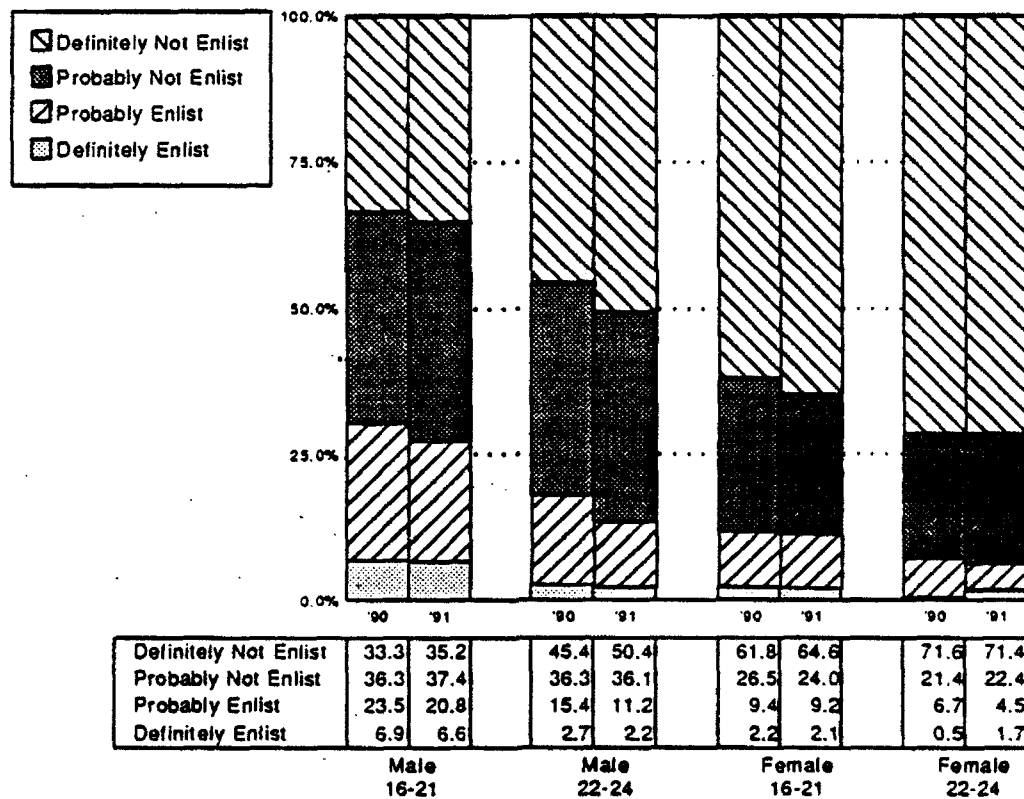
Definitely Not Enlist	55.1	55.5	51.9	55.3	57.3	54.6	51.8	56.4	52.3
Probably Not Enlist	31.2	31.5	28.8	28.7	25.2	28.5	31.9	32.4	31.7
Probably Enlist	10.8	10.3	15.0	12.4	13.0	12.9	13.2	6.7	12.4
Definitely Enlist	3.0	2.7	4.4	3.6	4.4	4.0	3.1	2.5	3.5
	Region				Jurisdiction				

Source: YATS 1991
** Significant difference, p<.01

Propensity in the two northern regions was almost identical, while respondents from the West and South were somewhat more inclined to serve. Finally, the size of the city where respondents lived at the time of the interview appeared unrelated to propensity.

Figure 2 compares 1991 composite propensity levels for four gender/age subgroups with the 1990 results. In 1991, as in the past, 16-21 year old males were the

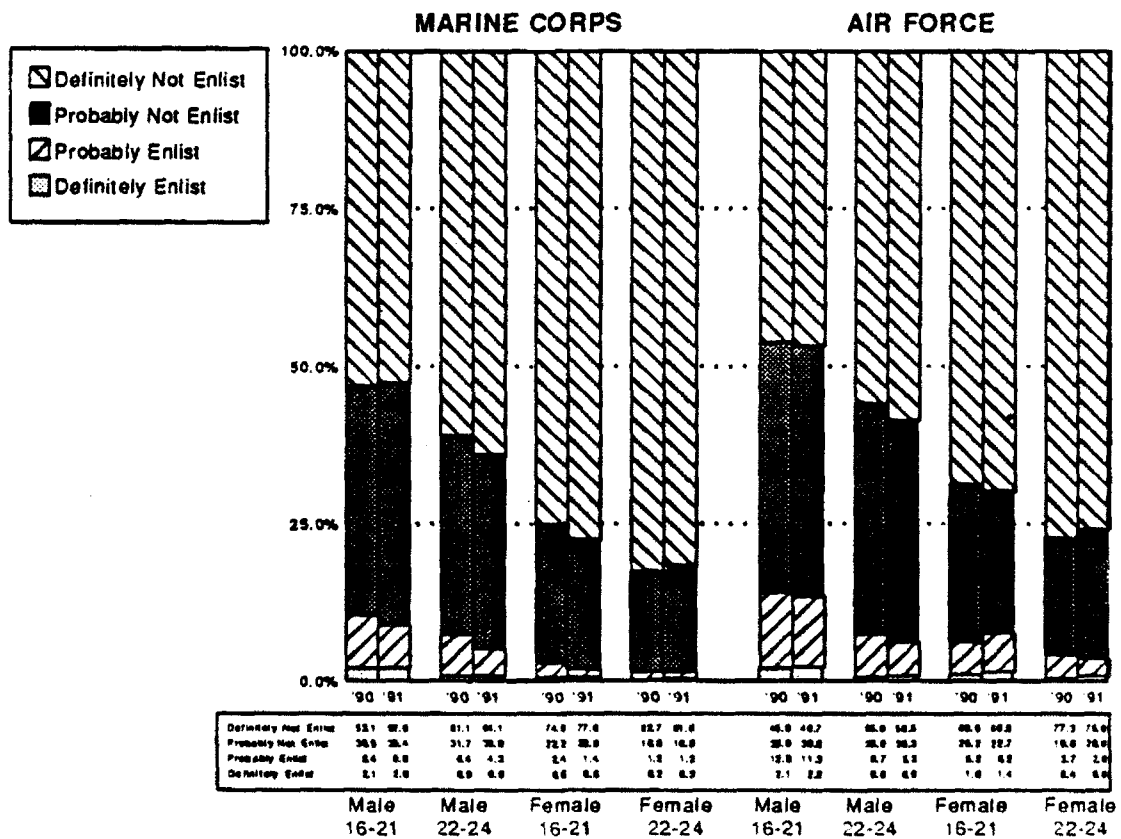
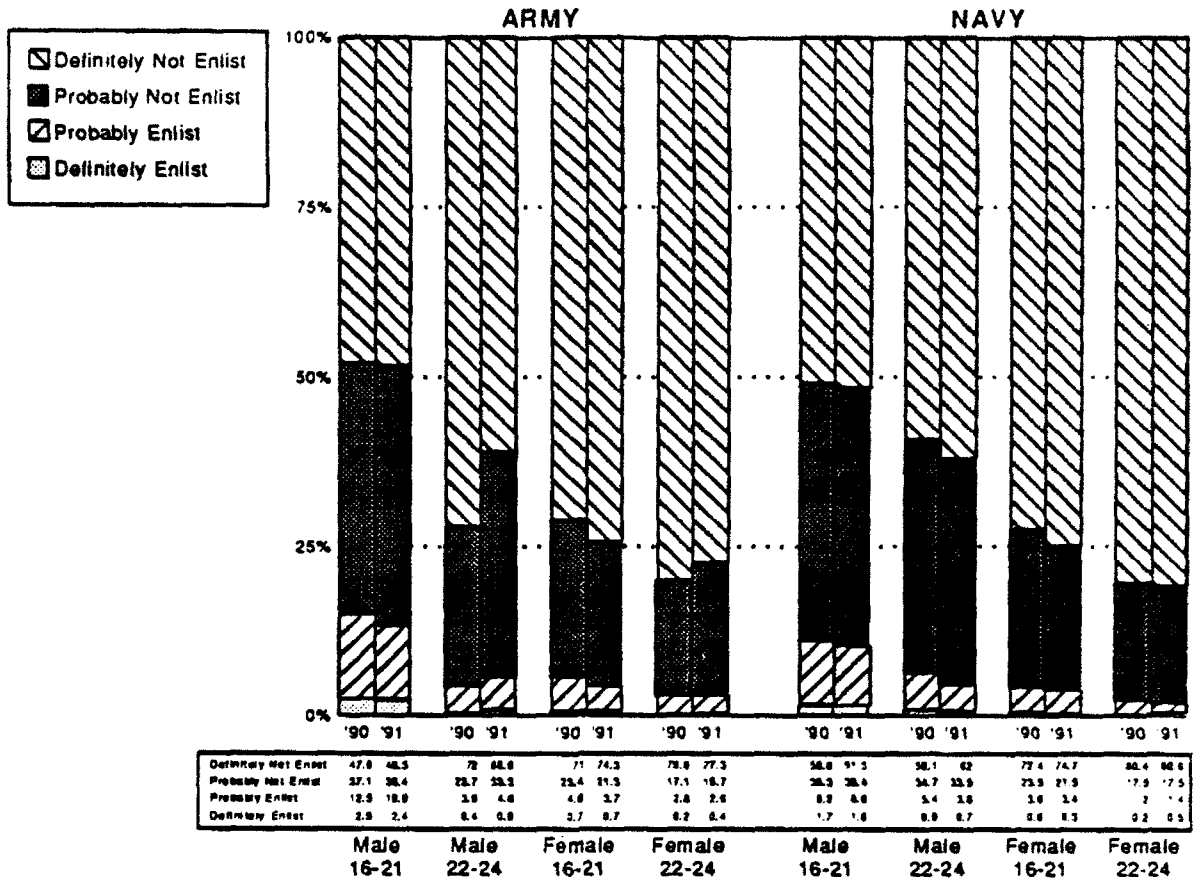
Figure 2
Composite Active Propensity 1990 and 1991
by Gender/Age



most likely to say that they will enlist in the next few years (27.4%). Younger females and older males (22-24 years) were similar in terms of their propensity, the chief difference being that the women were more sure they *wouldn't* be serving (65% versus 50% definitely not). Older females had a very low positive propensity (6.2%). There were only slight shifts in expressed positive propensity levels between 1990 and 1991.

Figure 3 presents *Service-specific* propensity for the four gender/age subgroups in 1990 and 1991. For all four Services, propensity was highest among 16-21 year-old males. Comparing the 1990 and 1991 data across Services, propensity levels dipped slightly or remained about the same within subgroups.

Figure 3
Service-Specific Propensity 1990 and 1991
by Gender/Age



Section 2

THE INFLUENCE OF PERCEPTIONS

Understanding positive and negative youth attitudes toward joining the military is be useful in structuring advertising and enlistment programs. Therefore, respondents were asked to indicate the reasons they might have for considering or not considering military service. These questions were presented in an open-ended response format.

If you were to consider joining the military, what would be the main reasons?
[PROBE: Any other reasons?] [CODE ALL MENTIONS]

Question 526A

What is the main reason you would not consider enlisting in the military service?
[PROBE: What is the main reason?]

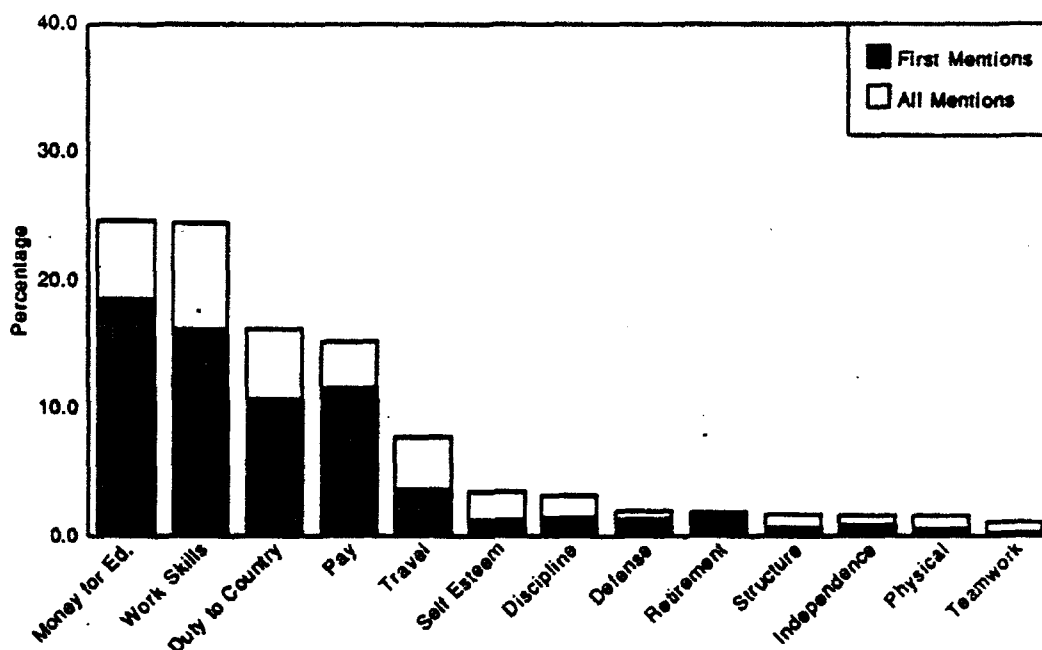
Question 528A

Note that although multiple reasons *for* joining were allowed, only the *main* reason for *not* enlisting was entered into the database. Both pieces of information are important; they can lead to the identification of perceived advantages of military service that can be stressed in advertising, as well as program and policy changes that might make military service a more attractive option for American youth. These data are examined in conjunction with various background and demographic characteristics to determine if there are differences between segments of the youth population in terms of the elements that cause them to lean toward or away from military service.

Reasons for Enlisting

Figure 4 presents the percentage of youth who mentioned a given reason for joining, as well as the proportion who cited each reason as their first response. It should

Figure 4
Reason for Enlisting
First and All Mentions



First Mentions	18.7	16.2	10.7	11.6	3.7	1.3	1.5	1.4	1.8	0.7	0.9	0.6	0.3
All Mentions	24.8	24.6	16.2	15.2	7.8	3.5	3.2	2.0	1.9	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.1

Source: 1981 YATS

be noted that 7.7 percent of the sample indicated that they wouldn't consider enlisting, and therefore could not cite a reason why they might. Receiving job training and obtaining money for education were the motivations to enlist mentioned by the largest proportions of youth (25%). This is consistent with findings from a variety of other studies (see Boesel & Richards, 1982). Money for education was mentioned *first* by the highest percentage of respondents (18.7%), with job training second (16.2%). In both

cases, these are factors that are stressed in military recruiting programs and these data suggest that such efforts are having the desired impact on a large segment of the youth market.

Other motivating factors include fulfilling a duty to country (16.2%) and the pay one receives for serving (15.2%). Each was mentioned first by about 11 percent of the sample. Nearly 8 percent of respondents said that travel was an attractive feature. Likewise, almost 8 percent indicated that they would not consider the military. Relatively few individuals cited retirement benefits as a reason for joining (1.9%). An almost negligible percentage of youth cited "personal growth" factors (e.g., gaining discipline and self-esteem, meeting a physical challenge, getting out on one's own, and learning to work as part of a team). Together they accounted for only about 13 percent of all reasons mentioned, and 5 percent of the first mentions.

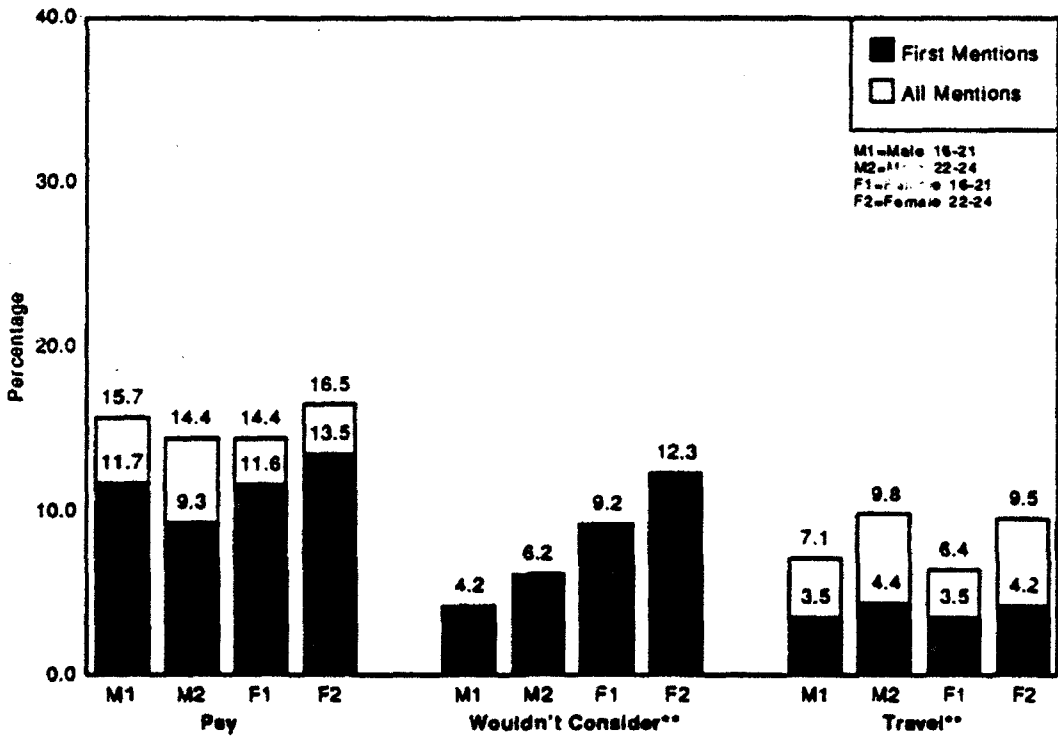
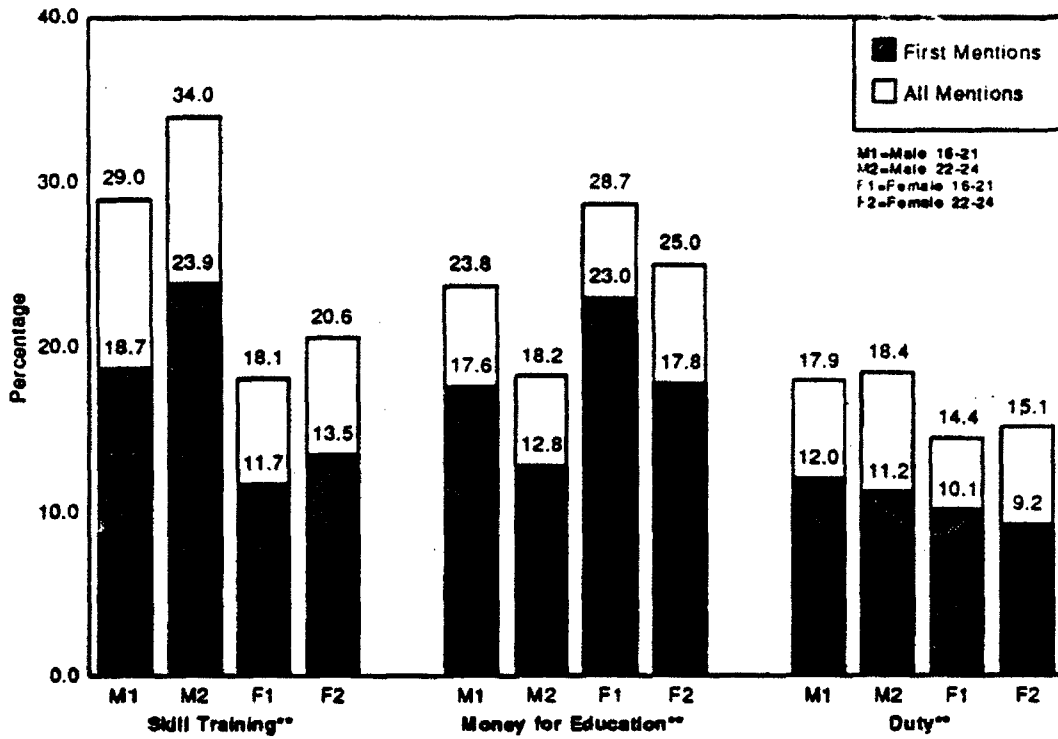
Reasons for Enlisting by Demographic Subgroups

Figure 5 presents a breakdown of the reasons for enlisting in the military by gender/age subgroups. Overall, females were less likely to mention training and duty to country as motivators to join. Rather, females most often cited education benefits. In addition, travel was mentioned as a benefit more often by older respondents.

As shown in Figure 6, there were few racial/ethnic differences in the reasons cited for enlisting. However, Blacks were more likely than Hispanics or Whites to mention pay as an incentive, whereas Whites were more likely to point to duty to country.

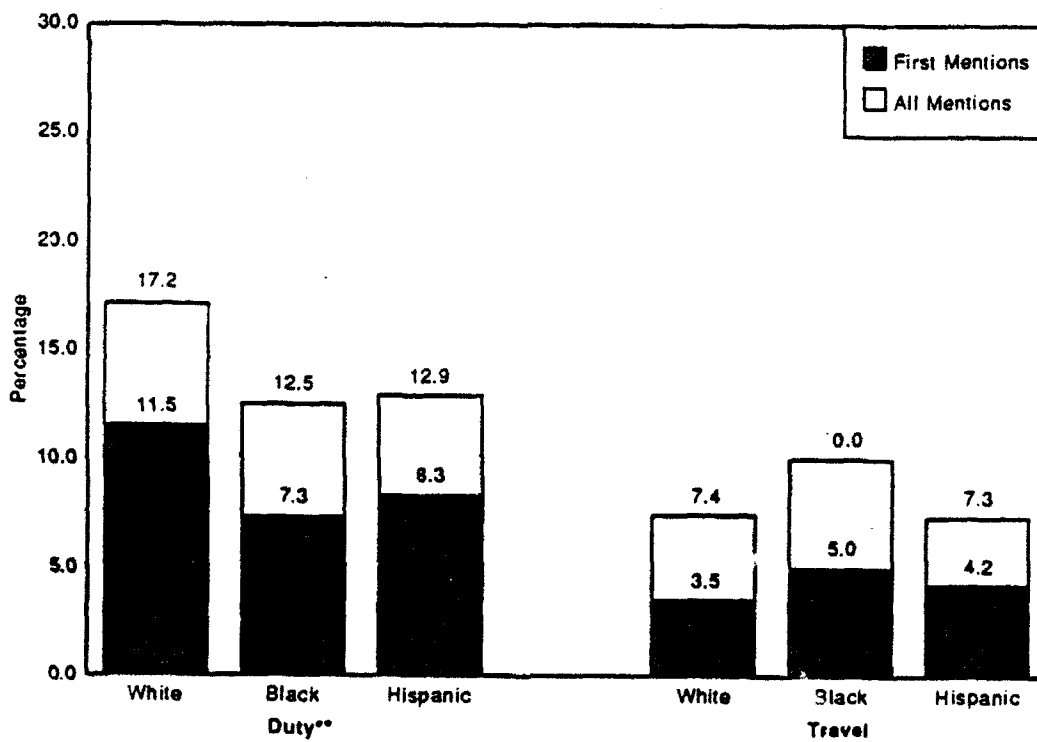
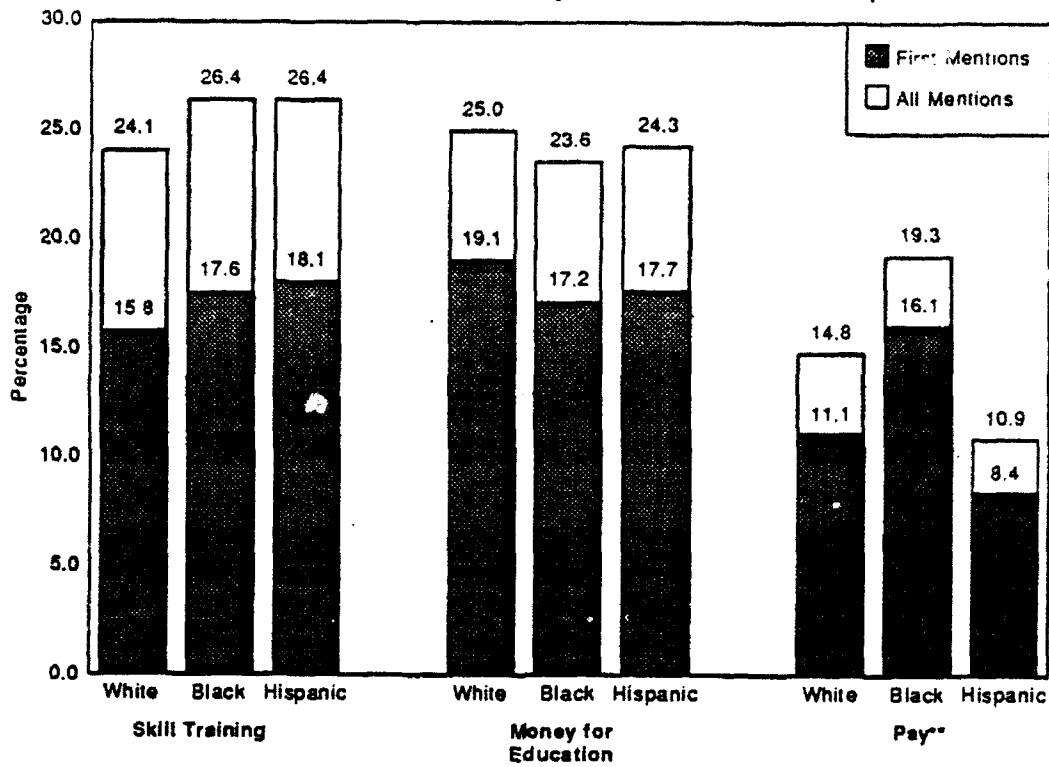
Significant differences were found between groups defined by education status for all the major reasons for enlisting (see Figure 7). Obtaining skill training was mentioned

Figure 5
Reason for Enlisting
First and All Mentions by Gender/Age



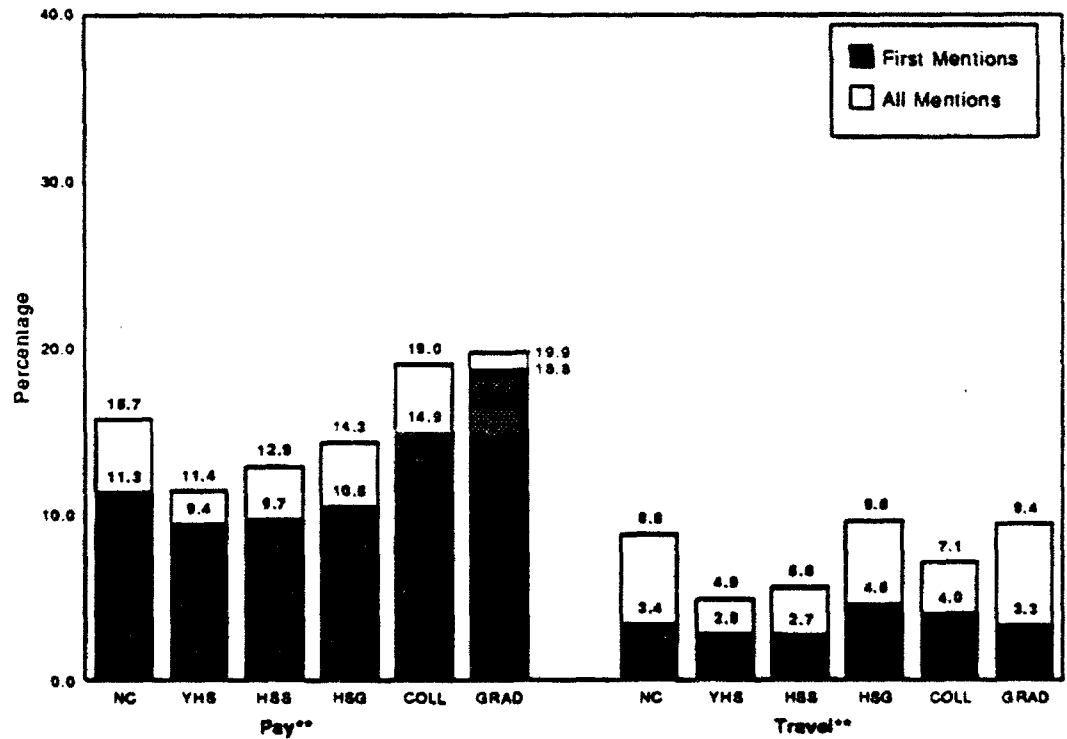
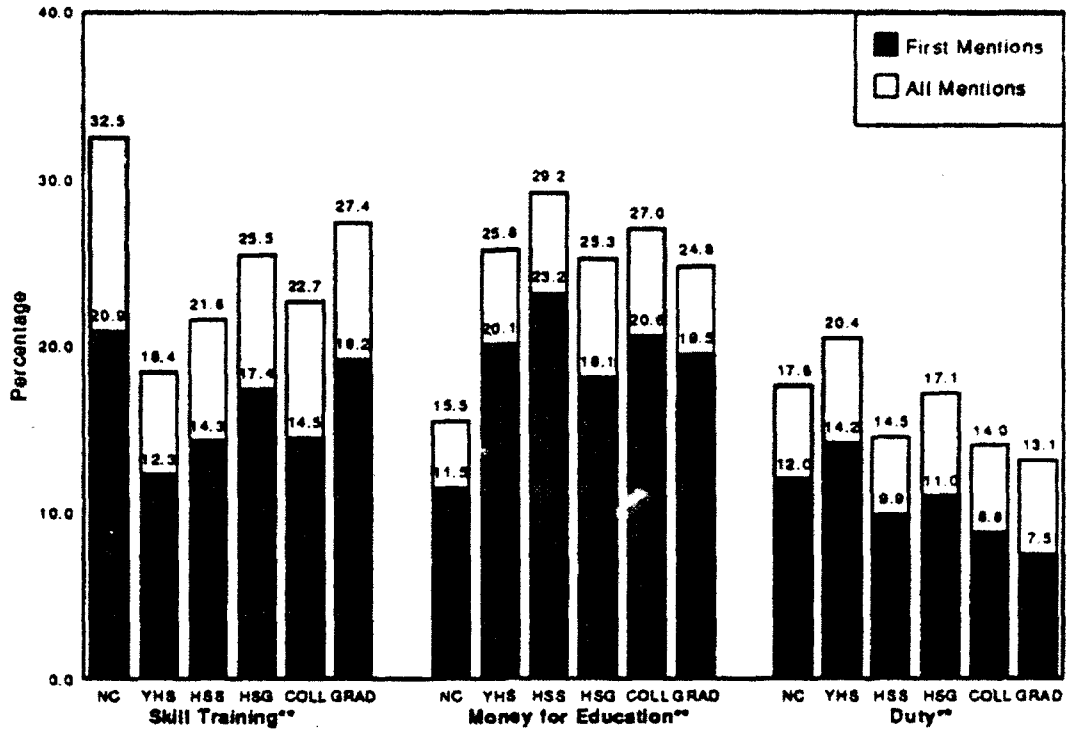
Source: 1991 YATS
 ** Significant Difference, All Mentions, $p < .01$
 Note: Other reasons cited by less than 3 percent of respondents

Figure 6
Reason for Enlisting
First and All Mentions by Racial/Ethnic Group



Source: 1991 YATS
 ** Significant difference $p < .01$
 Note: Other reasons cited by less than 5 percent of respondents

Figure 7
Reason for Enlisting
First and All Mentions by Education Status



Source: 1991 YATS
* Significant Difference, All Mentions, $p < .05$
** Significant Difference, All Mentions, $p < .01$

NC=Non completer, YHS=Young High School Student, HSS=High School Senior, HSG=High School Grad not in School, COLL=College Undergraduate, GRAD=Graduate Student

Note: Other reasons cited by less than 5 percent of respondents

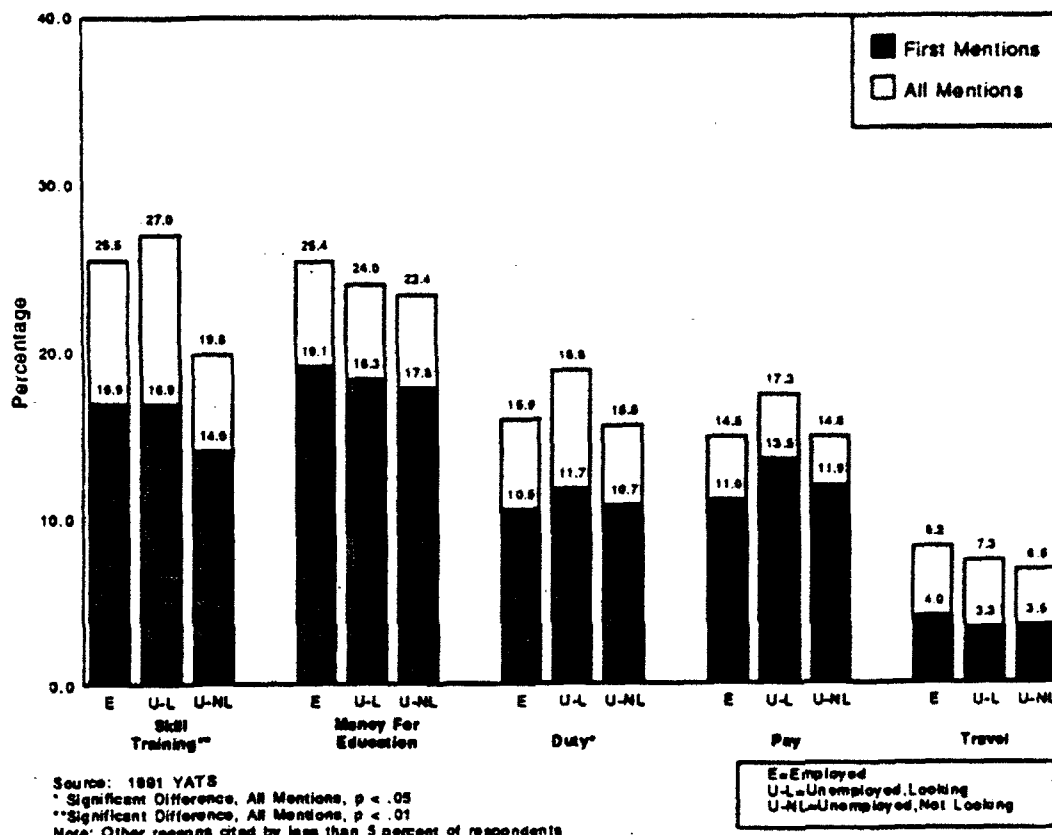
by almost a third of high school dropouts. As might be expected, money for education was the most cited reason among those facing the college financial challenge--high school seniors. The idealism of youth may be reflected in the finding that high school sophomores and juniors mentioned duty to country more frequently than did the other subgroups. Pay was cited most frequently by those groups who were, or were about to become, self-supporting; high school dropouts (15.7%), high school graduates not in school (14.3%), college students (19%), and graduate students (19.9%). Finally, as noted earlier, travel was more of a motivator for older members of the sample, in this case high school graduates, dropouts, and college/graduate students.

As seen in Figure 8, individuals who were unemployed and looking for a job at the time of the survey were more likely to cite skill training as a reason for enlisting. Those who were working were almost as likely to cite skill training. The fact that those who had jobs saw training as an incentive may indicate a lack of satisfaction with their current and/or potential employment possibilities. Those unemployed looking for work were also the most likely to cite duty to country as a reason for joining.

There were few geographic differences in reasons cited for enlisting (see Figure 9), and none when groups from different sized jurisdictions were compared. Those from the North Central region were more likely to mention money for education, while respondents living in the Northeast and South focused on duty to country. Finally, pay was given as a reason more often by those living in the North Central and South.

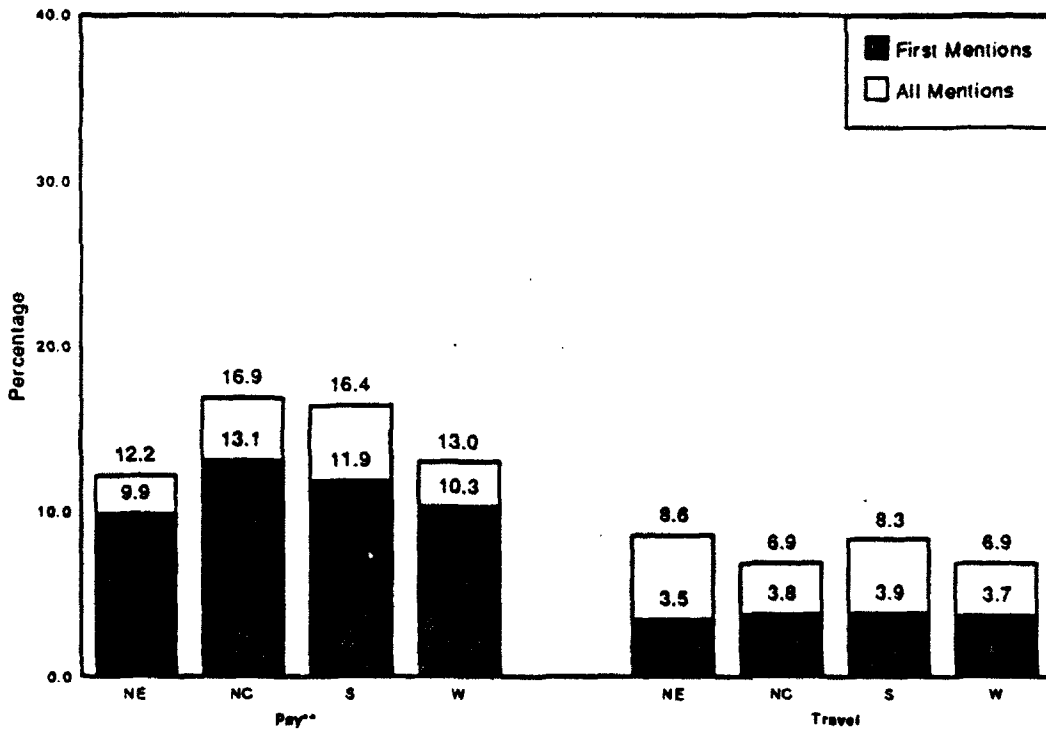
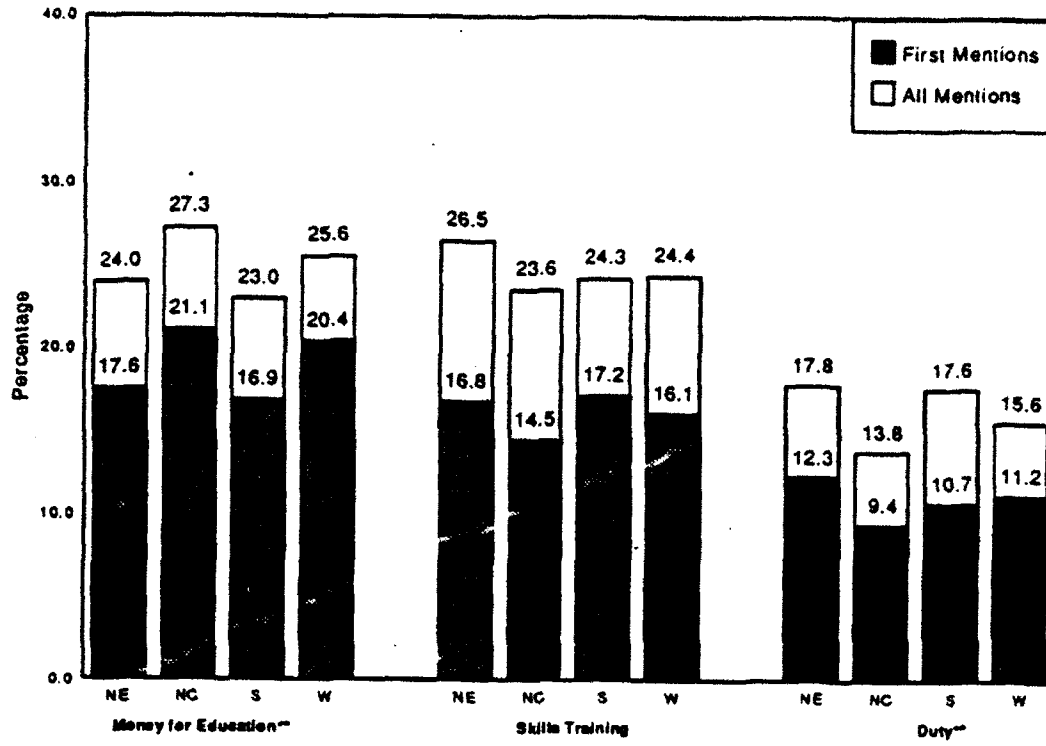
To summarize, the differences between demographic subgroups in regard to the reasons cited for enlisting in the military were expected when examined in light of the

Figure 8
Reason for Enlisting
First and All Mentions by Employment Status



position or stage in life of the respondents. Those looking for work mentioned skill training more often; those on the verge of high school graduation cited money for education; individuals who were out of school and, presumably, self-supporting were concerned with income. To the extent that recruiting efforts are targeted to these various groups, it may be valuable to continue to tap these connections.

Figure 9
Reason for Enlisting
First and All Mentions by Geographic Region

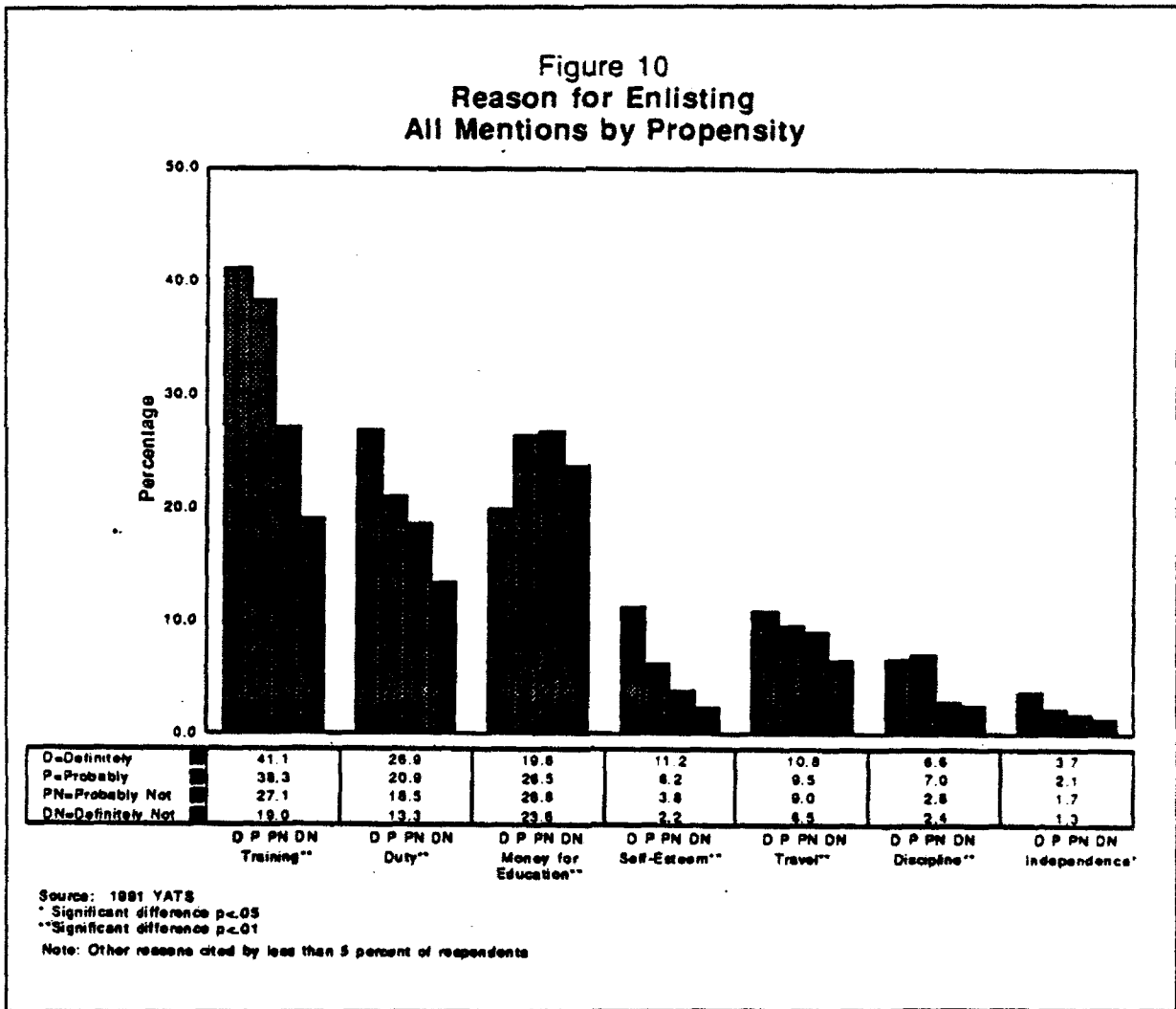


Source: 1981 YATS
 ** Significant Difference, All Mentions, $p < .01$
 Note: Other reasons cited by less than 5 percent of respondents

NE=Northeast, NC=North Central
 S=South, W=West

Reasons for Enlisting and Propensity

For each of the four composite active propensity groups (i.e., definitely, probably, probably not, definitely not enlist) analyses were conducted of the various reasons for entering the military. Figure 10 presents the results that showed statistically significant differences between propensity groups. In most instances the data follow an expected



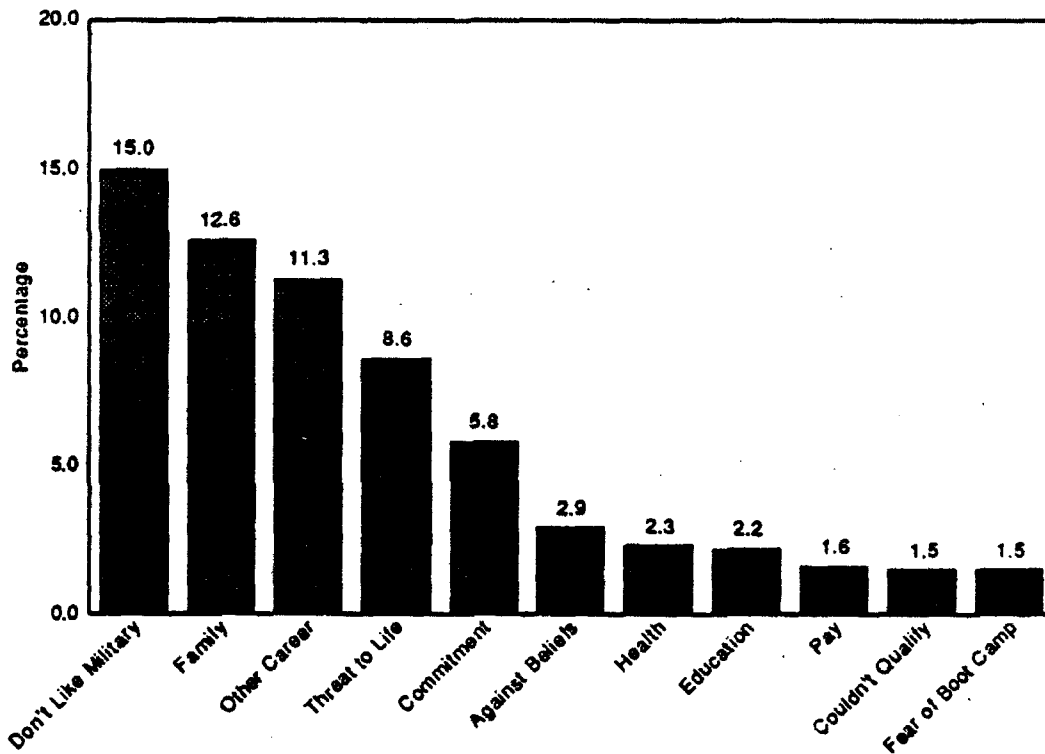
pattern, with higher percentages of those who were inclined to join citing each reason as compared to those who said they were not likely to enlist. In fact, in the case of skill training, duty, self esteem, travel, and getting away from home, this relationship was monotonic; as self-stated commitment to military enlistment decreased, so did the percentage of respondents citing each as a reason to join. The major influences for those who said they definitely will enlist were skill training and duty to country. Those in the middle categories (probably, probably not) also cite training most often, although obtaining money for education was the second most important motivator. Finally, among those who said they definitely will not enlist, education benefits were mentioned most often as a reason to consider military service.

Reasons for Not Enlisting

Figure 11 presents the main reasons cited for *not* enlisting in the military. Overall, these reasons can be divided into three general categories: personal beliefs or characteristics, characteristics of the military, and other options or obligations. Each of these is explained below.

Personal Beliefs or Characteristics. Four reasons for not enlisting are related to beliefs or characteristics of the individual. Simply not liking the military was cited by the largest segment of the sample (15%). The other reasons in this category appeared to have much less influence: military service being against one's beliefs (2.9%), would be impossible due to health concerns (2.3%); or the respondent didn't feel that he/she could qualify (1.5%).

Figure 11
Main Reason for Not Enlisting

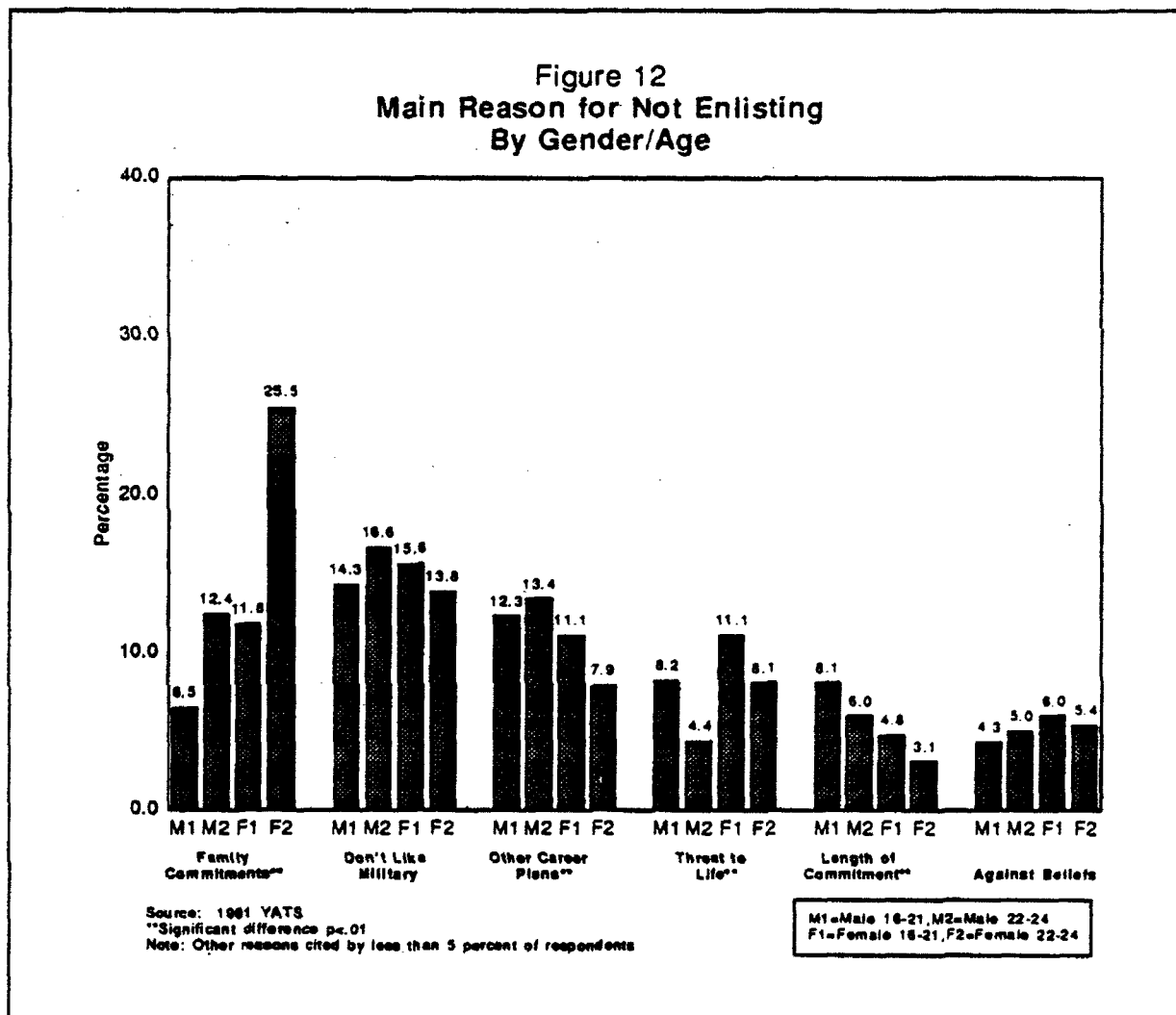


Source: 1991 YATS

Characteristics of the Military. Among the characteristics of military service that were cited as reasons for not enlisting were the possible threat to one's life (8.6%), the long commitment (5.8%), the pay (1.6%), and the demands of boot camp (1.5%). A number of these issues were addressed specifically in the survey (see *Perceptions of Military Life*). Finally, three *other options or obligations* were cited, including family obligations (12.6%), preference for other careers (11.3%), and the desire to pursue further education (2.2%).

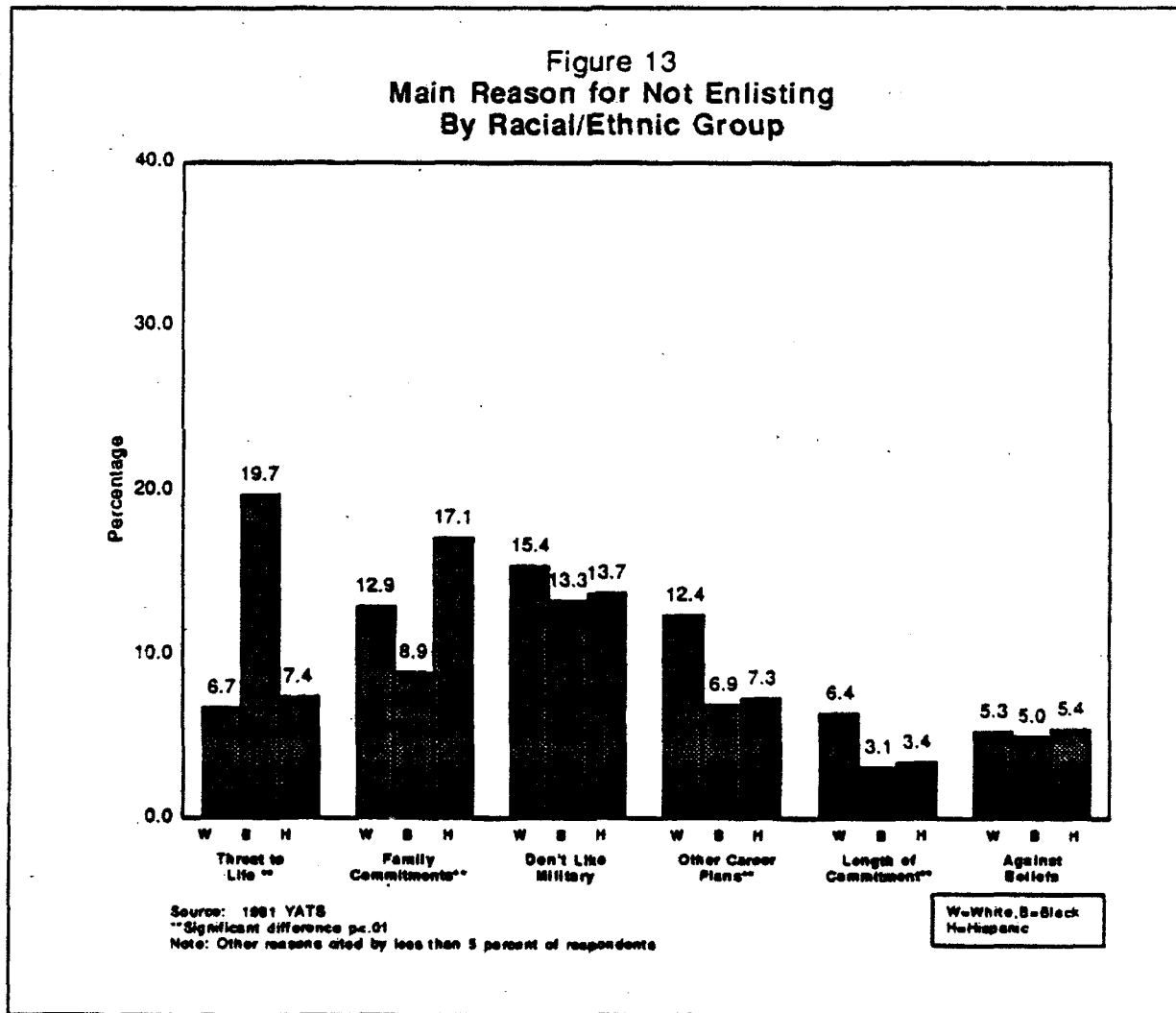
Reasons for Not Enlisting by Demographic Subgroup

Figure 12 shows the percentages citing various reasons for *not* enlisting among gender/age subgroups. For young males and females and older males, a dislike for the military was the most frequently cited disincentive. In contrast, a quarter of the *older females* cited family commitments as standing in the way of their enlisting. Conversely,



22-24 year-old women were *less* likely than the other groups to say that they had other career plans. Young females were most likely to cite the possibility of physical harm as a reason for not enlisting. The same proportions of 22-24 year-old women mentioned this as did 16-21 year-old men.

As shown in Figure 13, Black respondents more often mentioned physical harm as a reason for not joining. The largest percentage of Hispanics mentioned family



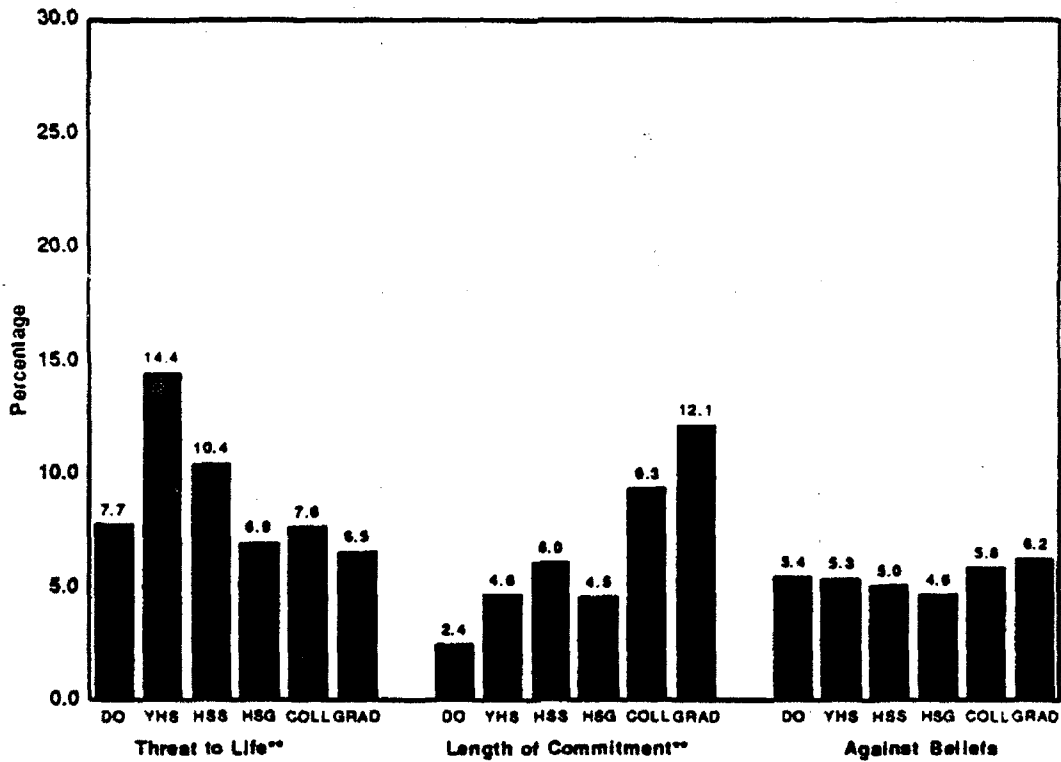
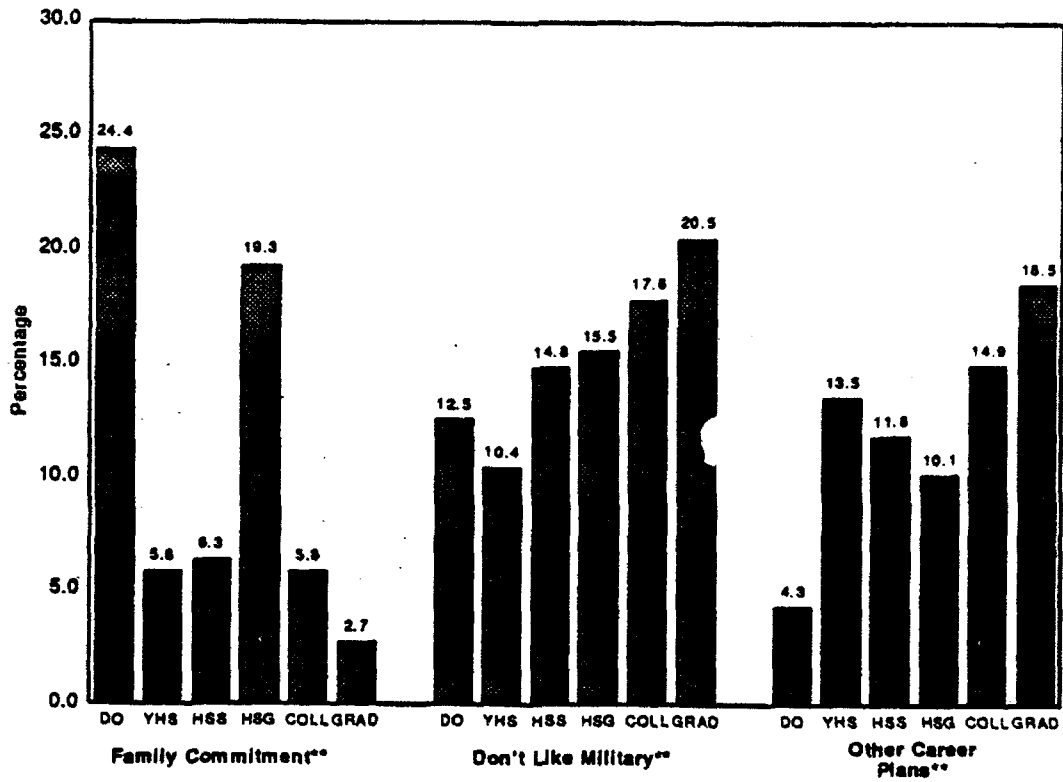
commitments, whereas Whites were more likely to cite disliking the military or other career plans.

There was a range of differences along education lines, with a significantly higher percentage of high school dropouts and graduates not in school citing family commitments as the major reason for not enlisting (see Figure 14). These same two groups had the smallest percentages of respondents who said that other career plans would prevent them from joining. Dislike for the military appears to be related either to level of education or age, as it was mentioned most often by those in graduate school and least often by younger high school students. These high school sophomores and juniors were the most likely to cite the physical threat as a reason for not joining. Finally, length of commitment was mentioned as a disincentive most often by college and graduate students.

Among employment groups, those unemployed and looking for work were less likely to cite a dislike for the military, other career plans, or length of commitment as reasons for not enlisting (see Figure 15). Other differences were not statistically significant.

There was only one significant difference among geographic regions, with a higher percentage of those from the Northeast as compared to the South citing the length of a term of service as a detriment (Figure 16). In terms of size of jurisdiction, however, there were a number of distinctions (Figure 17). Persons from rural areas were more

Figure 14
Main Reason for Not Enlisting
by Education Status



Source: 1991 YATS
**Significant Difference, All Mentions, $p < .01$

DO=Drop Out, YHS=Young High School Student, HSS=High School Senior,
HSG=High School Grad not in School, COLL=College Undergraduate,
GRAD=Graduate Student

Figure 15
Main Reason for Not Enlisting
by Employment Status

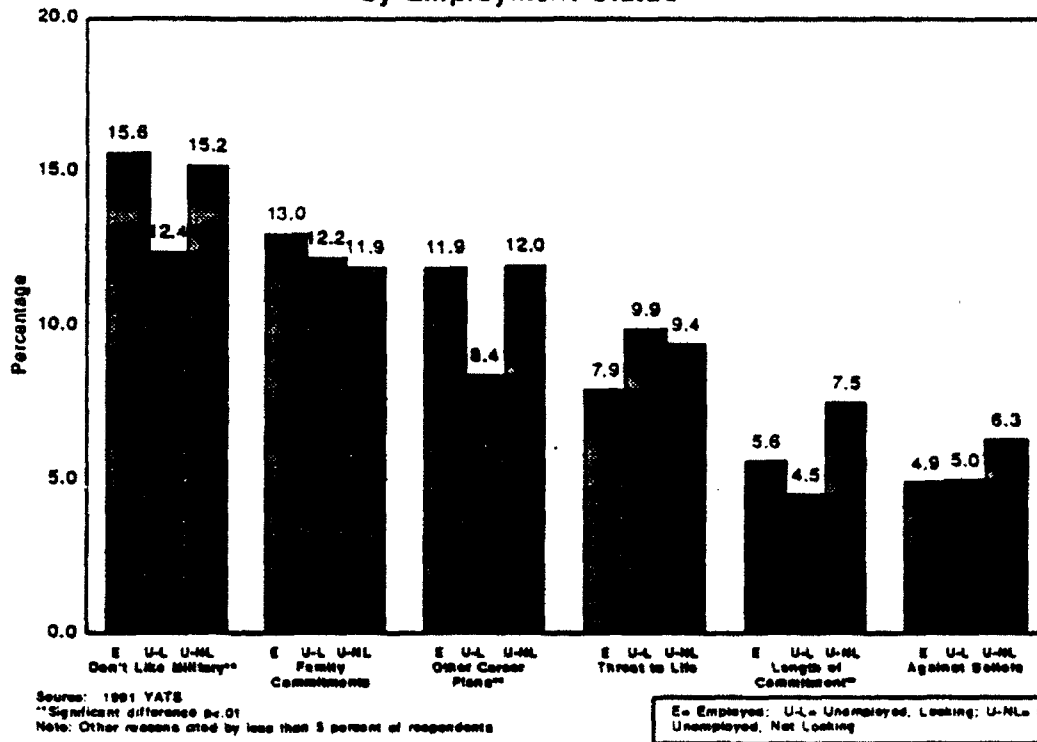


Figure 16
Main Reason for Not Enlisting
By Geographic Region

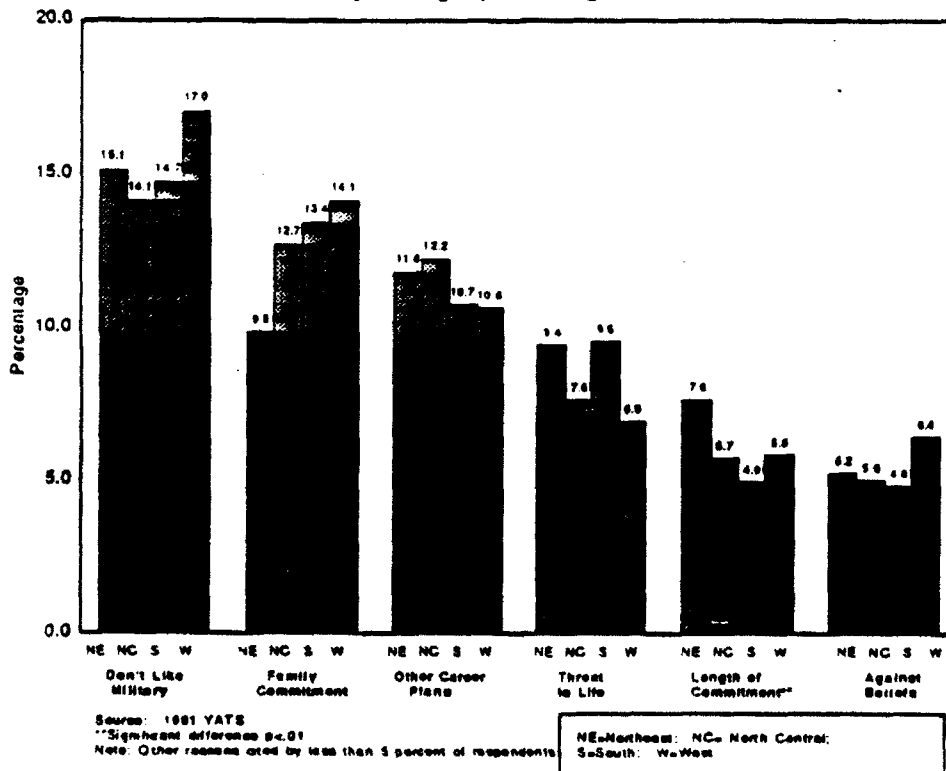
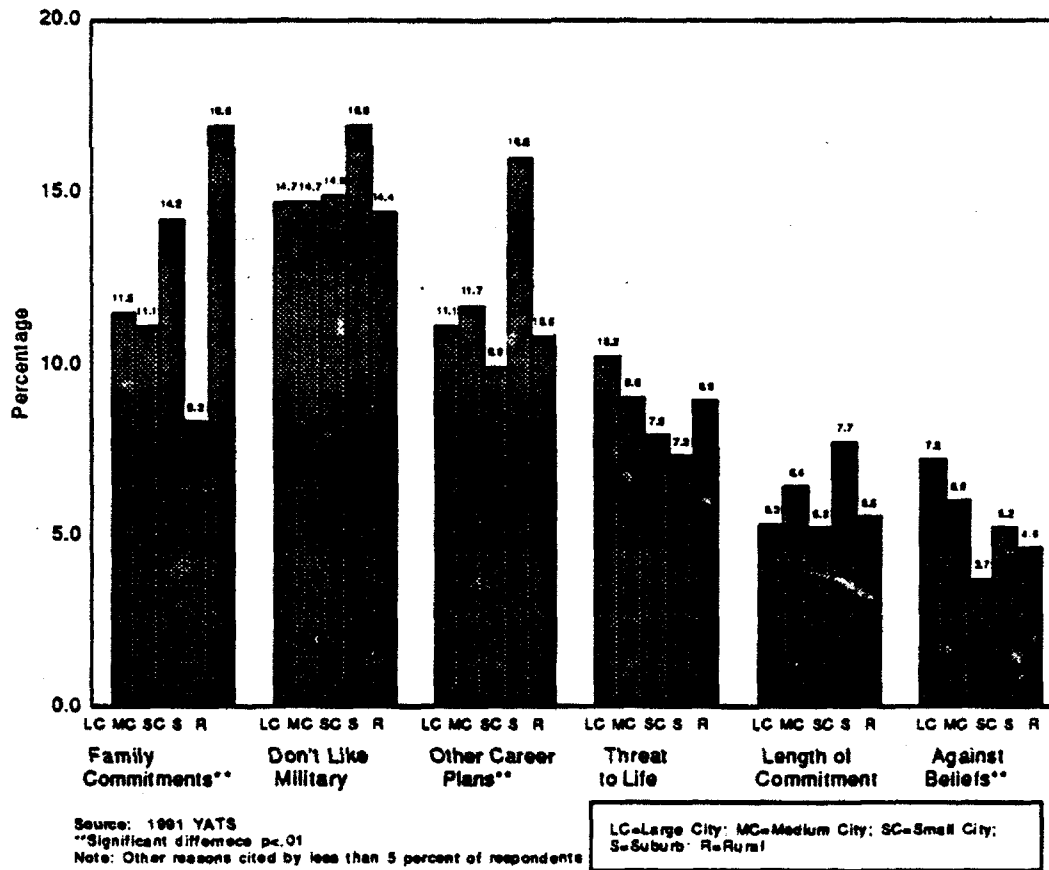


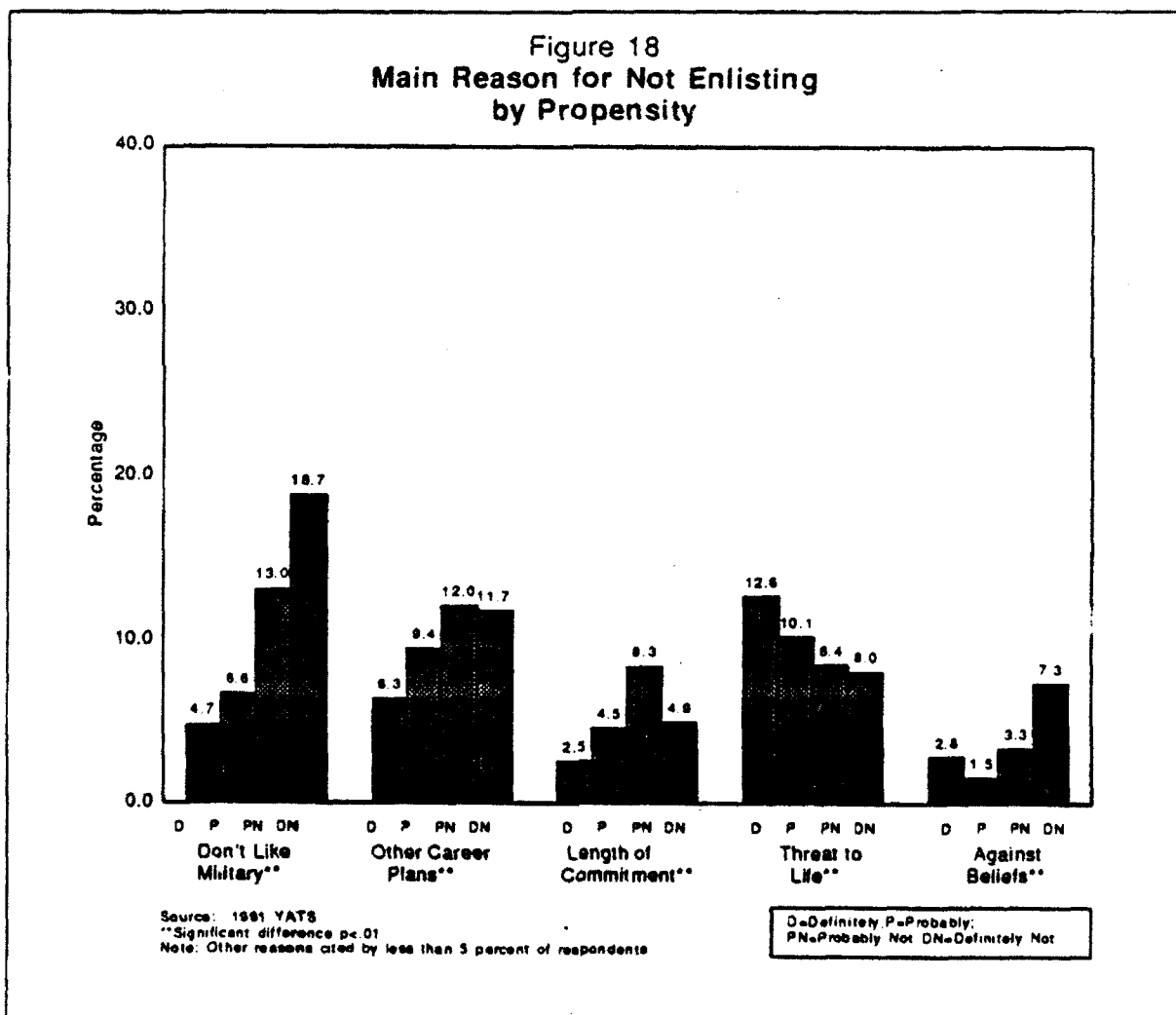
Figure 17
Main Reason for Not Enlisting
By Size of Home Jurisdiction



likely to cite family commitments, while those from the suburbs indicated that they had other career plans. Finally, residents of large cities said that military service was against their beliefs in larger numbers than did other respondents.

Reasons for Not Enlisting and Propensity

The highest percentage of those who said they probably or definitely will *not* enlist in the next few years cited a dislike for the military as the main reason why (Figure 18). Other reasons for not joining mentioned by the negative propensity group included having other career plans, the length of the commitment, and that it would violate one's beliefs to do so. Among those positively inclined to join, the most cited reason against such a move was the potential threat to physical well being.



Perceptions of Military Life

The 1991 YATS included a series of questions aimed at eliciting respondents' perceptions of military life and the opportunities provided by the individual Services. A variety of statements about life in the military were read to respondents, who were then asked to indicate their level of agreement. For instance:

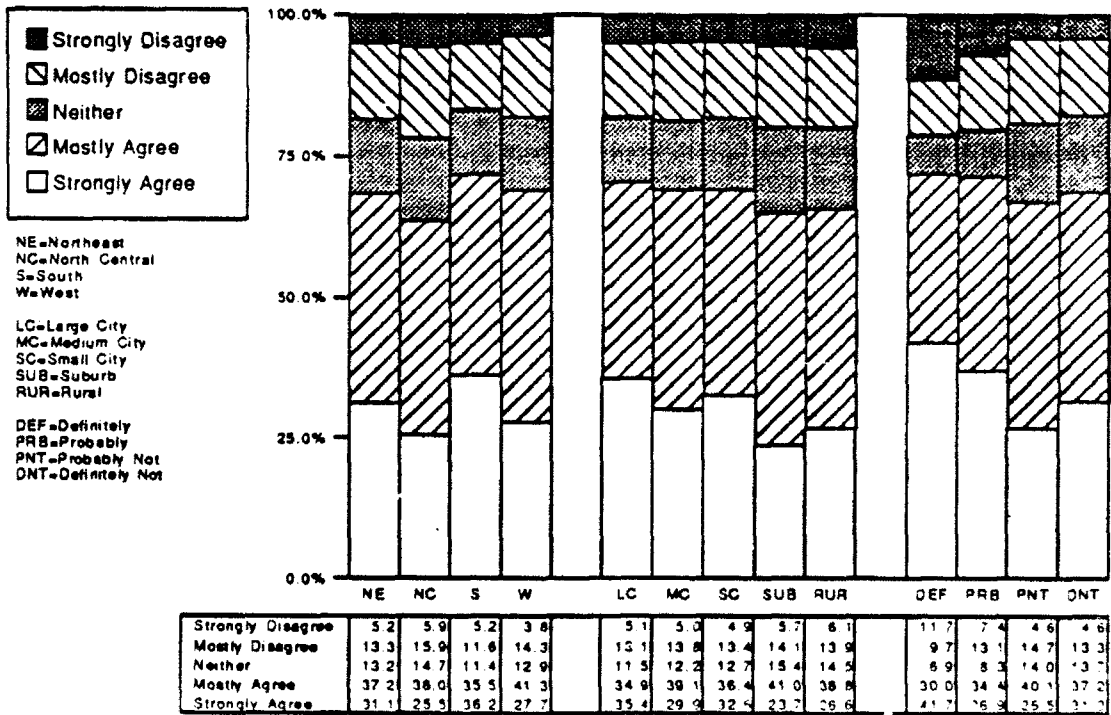
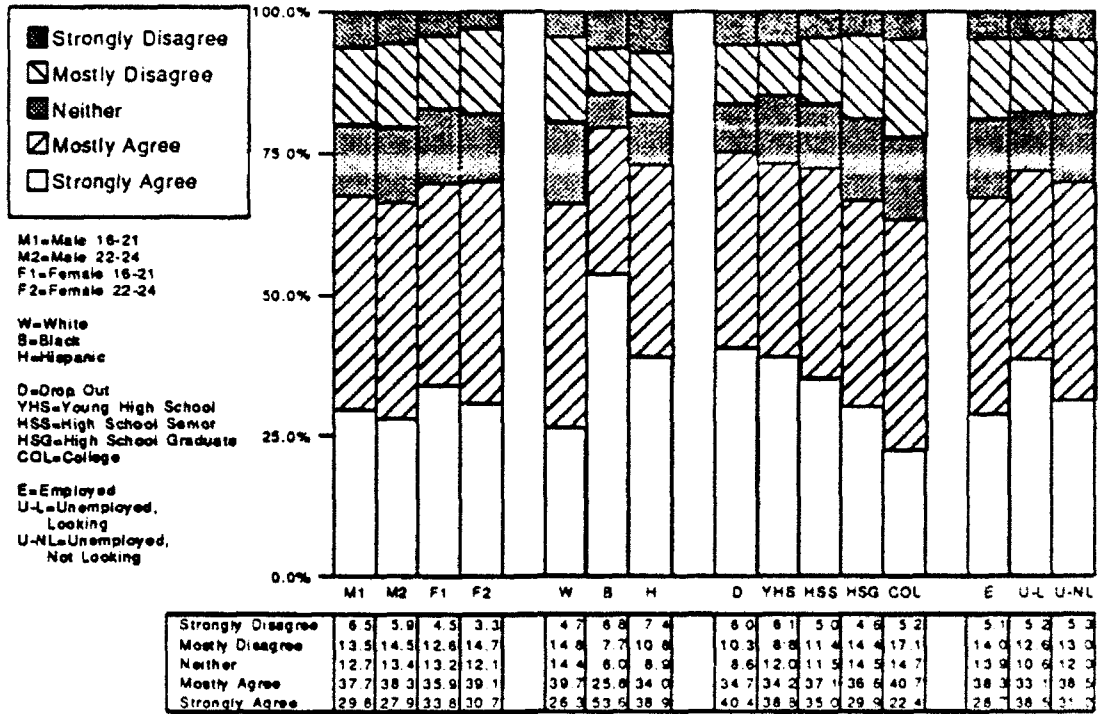
The military is a good place to get the experience necessary to be competitive in the civilian job market.

Strongly agree
Agree somewhat
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree somewhat
Strongly disagree

Question 649F

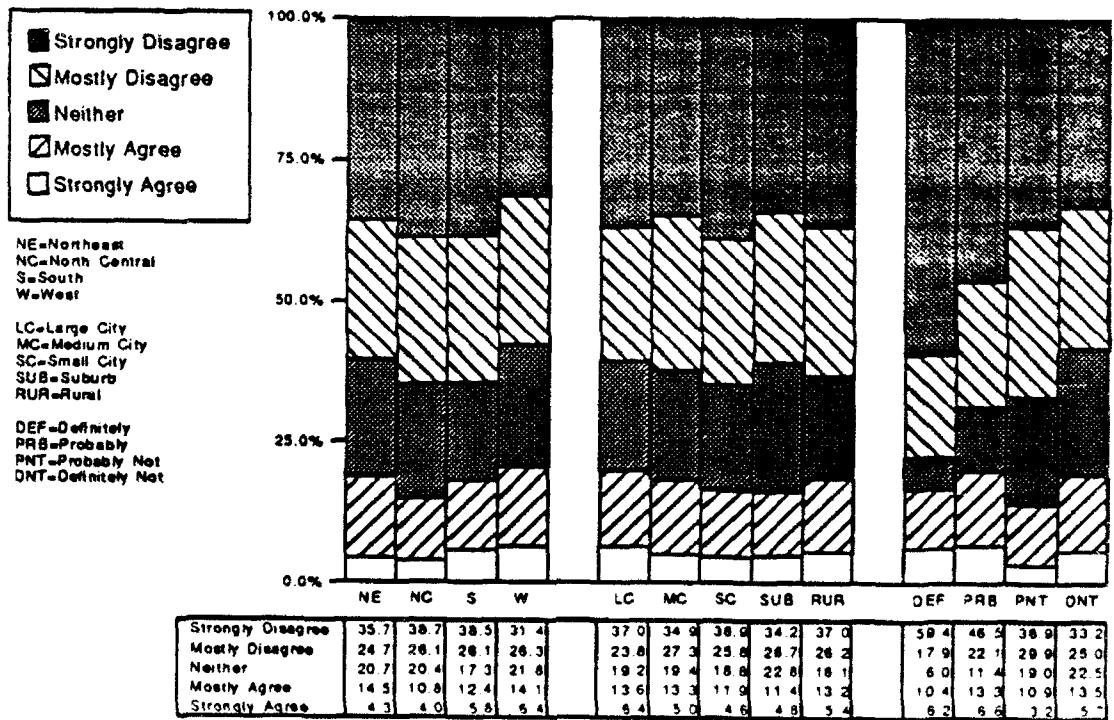
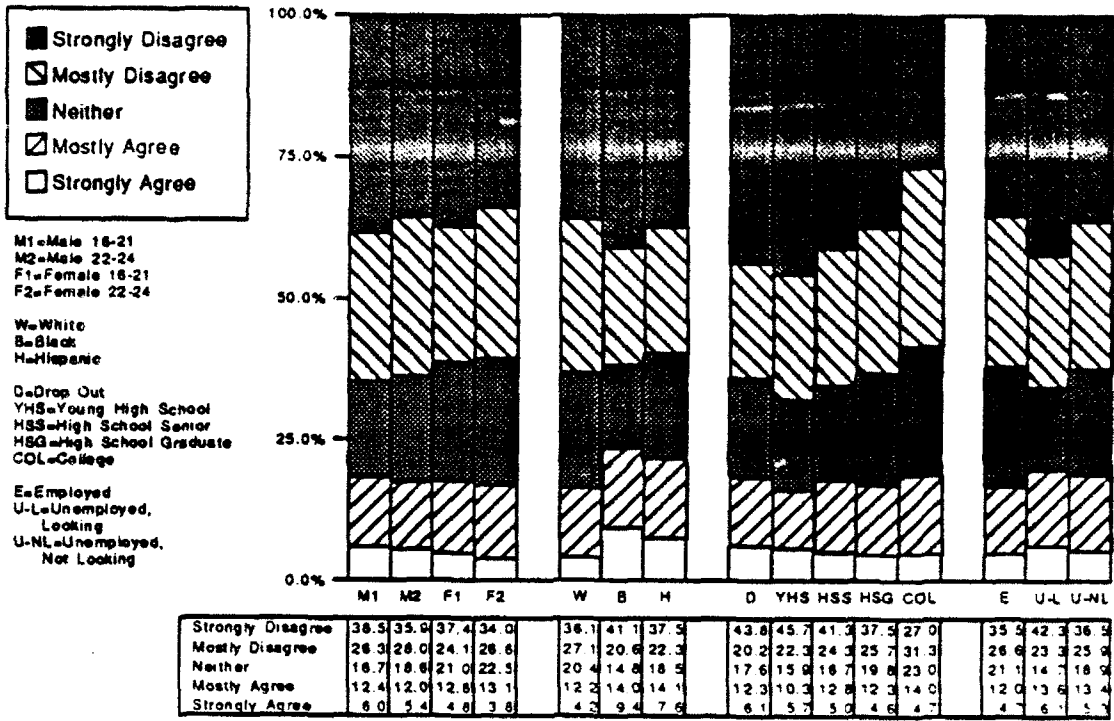
Figures 19 through 22 present data concerning the level of agreement/disagreement with the statements concerning military life within the major demographic subgroups. Although there were many significant differences between segments of the youth population concerning their views of the military, overall there were few clear-cut patterns. Younger women, Blacks, high school dropouts, and those unemployed were somewhat more likely to agree (strongly or mostly) that military life involves personal danger and risk. Higher proportions of Blacks as compared to Whites *both* strongly agreed *and* strongly disagreed that people in the military are treated unfairly. Despite the publicity regarding women's role in the military, these data suggest that nonmilitary women believe people in the military are treated fairly. Overall, there was little agreement that military life involves boring jobs and uninteresting routines. Finally,

Figure 19
 Military Life Involves Great Danger and Risk
 by Demographics and Propensity



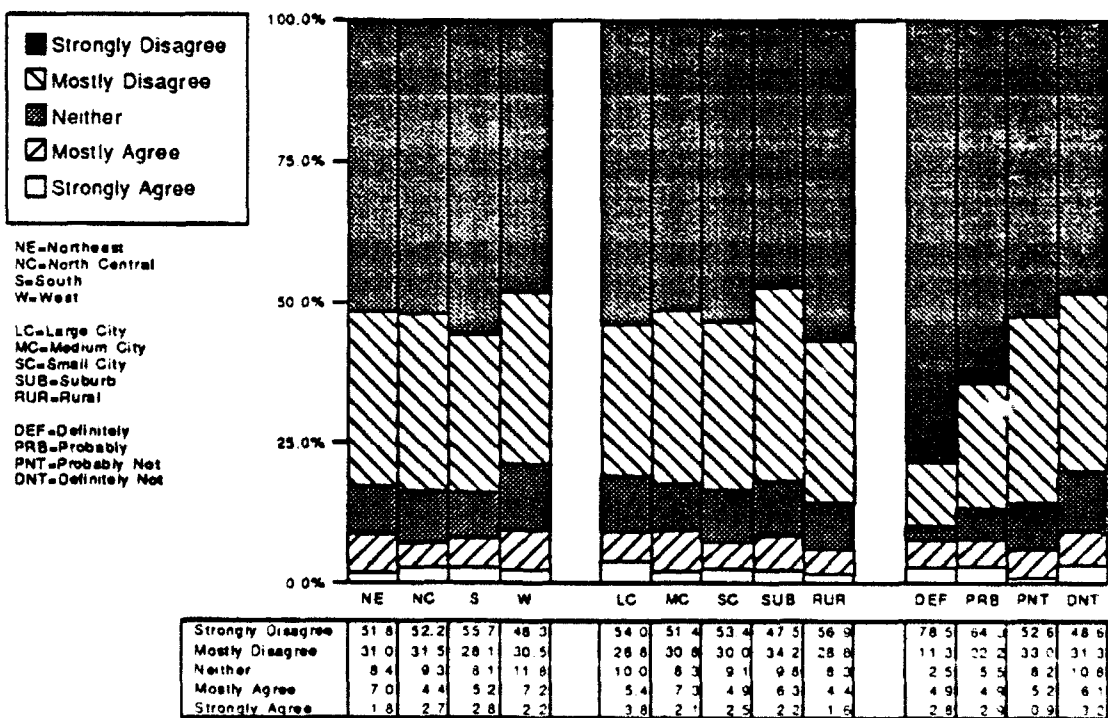
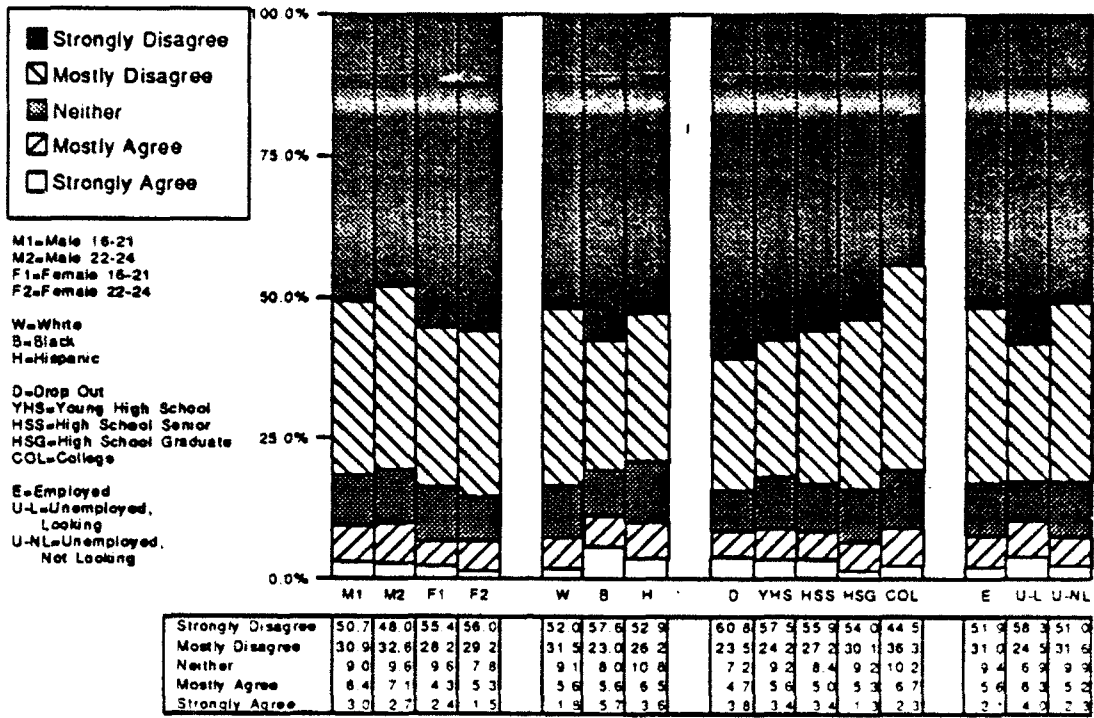
Source: YATS 1991
 ** Significant difference, p < .01

Figure 20
 People in the Military Are Treated Unfairly
 by Demographics and Propensity



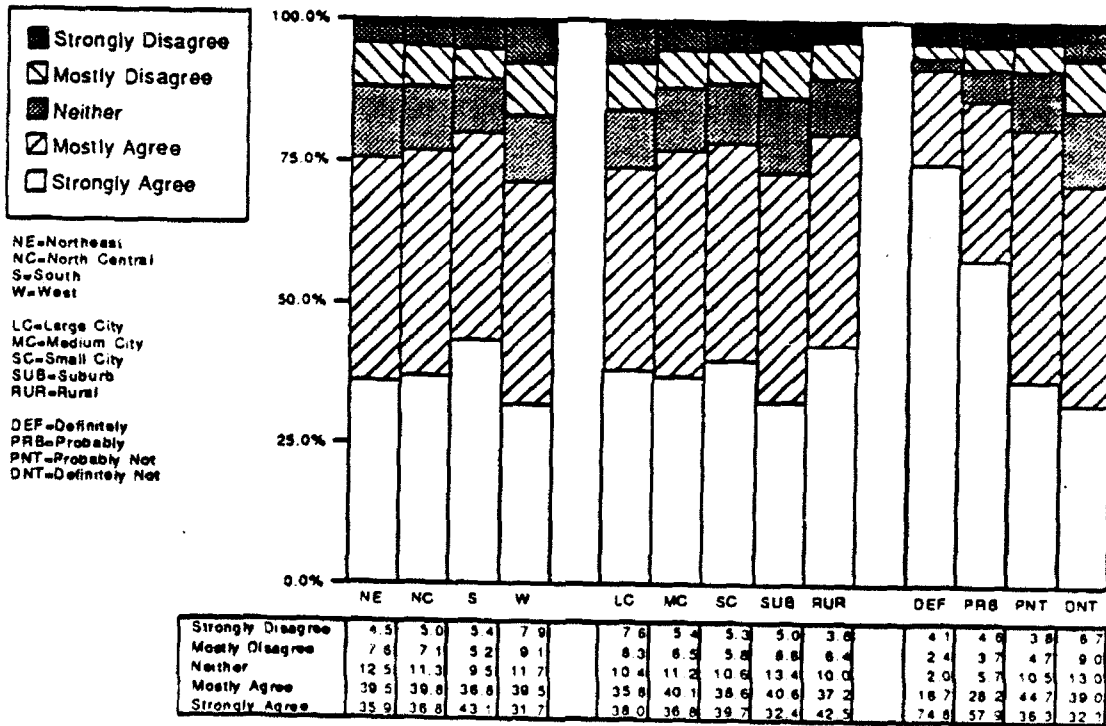
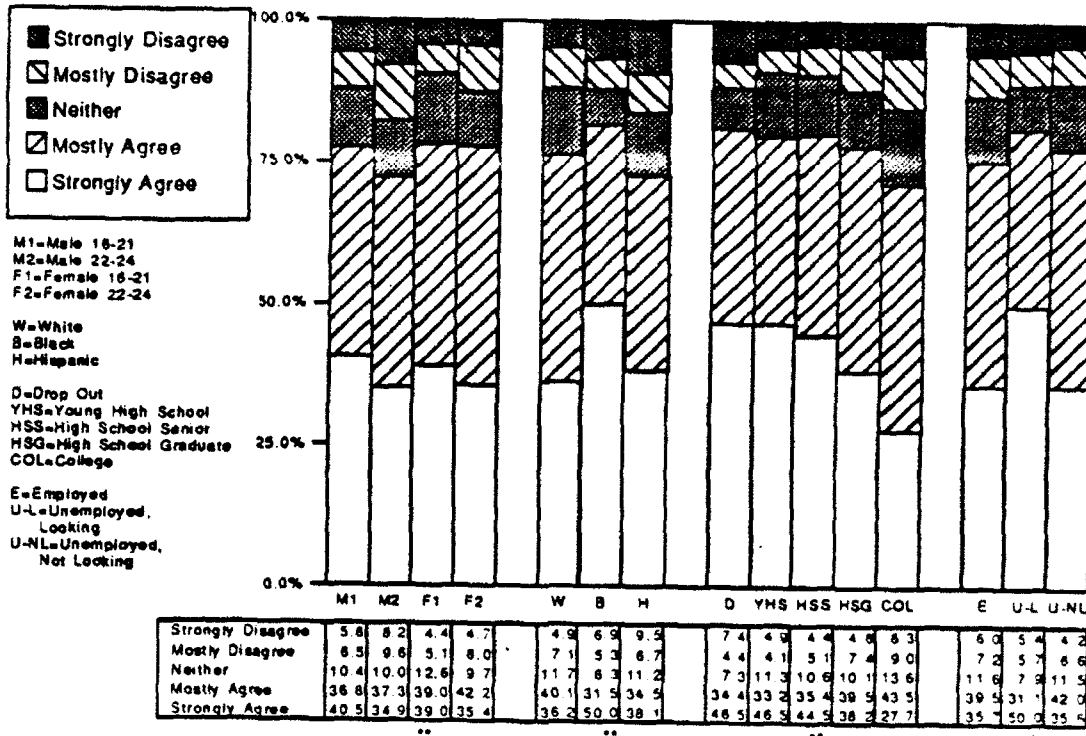
Source: YATS 1991
 ** Significant difference, p < .01

Figure 21
 Military Life Involves Boring Jobs
 by Demographics and Propensity



Source: YATS 1991
 ** Significant difference, p < .01

Figure 22
The Military Provides Good Job Experience
by Demographics and Propensity



Source: YATS 1991
 ** Significant difference, p<.01

there was general agreement that the military does provide good job experience, although the percentages agreeing were smaller among Whites and Hispanics, those with more education, and those who had jobs or were not seeking them.

Table 3 shows the relationship between opinions and expressed propensity to enlist in the military. Overall, there is an inverse relationship between enlistment propensity and the perception that military service involves boring jobs or that people in the military are treated unfairly. Those *most* likely to enlist were *least* likely to agree with these assertions, while those *least* likely to enlist were *most* likely to agree. On the other hand, when asked if the military provides good job experience, those least likely to enlist were most likely to disagree and those expressing the strongest propensity for service were the most likely to perceive the military as a source of valuable job experience.

It appears, then, that those with the greatest inclination to enlist saw the military as a place with interesting (or at least not boring) jobs, where people are treated fairly, and good work experience can be obtained. At the same time, many were cognizant that these benefits cannot be obtained without the possibility of some level of personal risk or danger.

Perceptions of the Services

Respondents to the 1991 YATS were also questioned about their perceptions of the opportunities provided by each Service. Each participant was asked about only two of the active duty branches (selected randomly). A series of statements was read with

Table 3
Relationship Between Attitudes Towards
the Military and Propensity to Enlist

Involves Risk & Danger**	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree
Definitely Enlist	41.7	30.0	6.9	9.7	11.7
Probably Enlist	36.9	34.4	8.3	13.1	7.4
Probably Won't Enlist	26.5	40.1	14.0	14.7	4.6
Definitely Won't Enlist	31.3	37.2	13.7	13.3	4.6
Involves Boring Jobs**	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree
Definitely Enlist	2.8	4.9	2.5	11.3	78.5
Probably Enlist	2.9	4.9	5.5	22.2	64.3
Probably Won't Enlist	0.9	5.2	8.2	33.0	52.6
Definitely Won't Enlist	3.2	6.1	10.8	31.3	48.6
People Treated Unfairly**	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree
Definitely Enlist	6.2	10.4	6.0	17.9	59.4
Probably Enlist	6.6	13.3	11.4	22.1	46.5
Probably Won't Enlist	3.2	10.9	19.0	29.9	36.9
Definitely Won't Enlist	5.7	13.5	22.5	25.0	33.2
Good Job Experience**	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree
Definitely Enlist	74.8	16.7	2.0	2.4	4.1
Probably Enlist	57.9	28.2	5.7	3.7	4.6
Probably Won't Enlist	36.3	44.7	10.5	4.7	3.8
Definitely Won't Enlist	32.3	39.0	13.0	9.0	6.7

** Significant Difference, $P < .01$

one Service and then the other inserted. Again, level of agreement with the statement was obtained. For example:

The [Service 1] offers the opportunity to develop self-confidence and esteem.

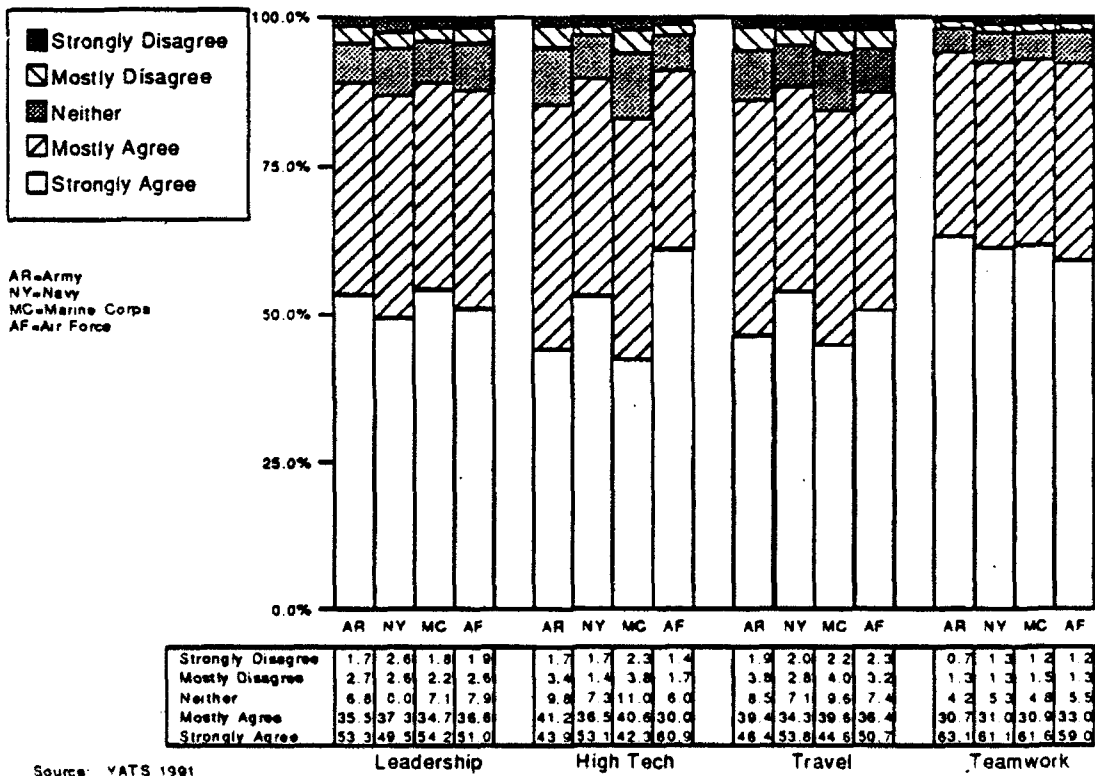
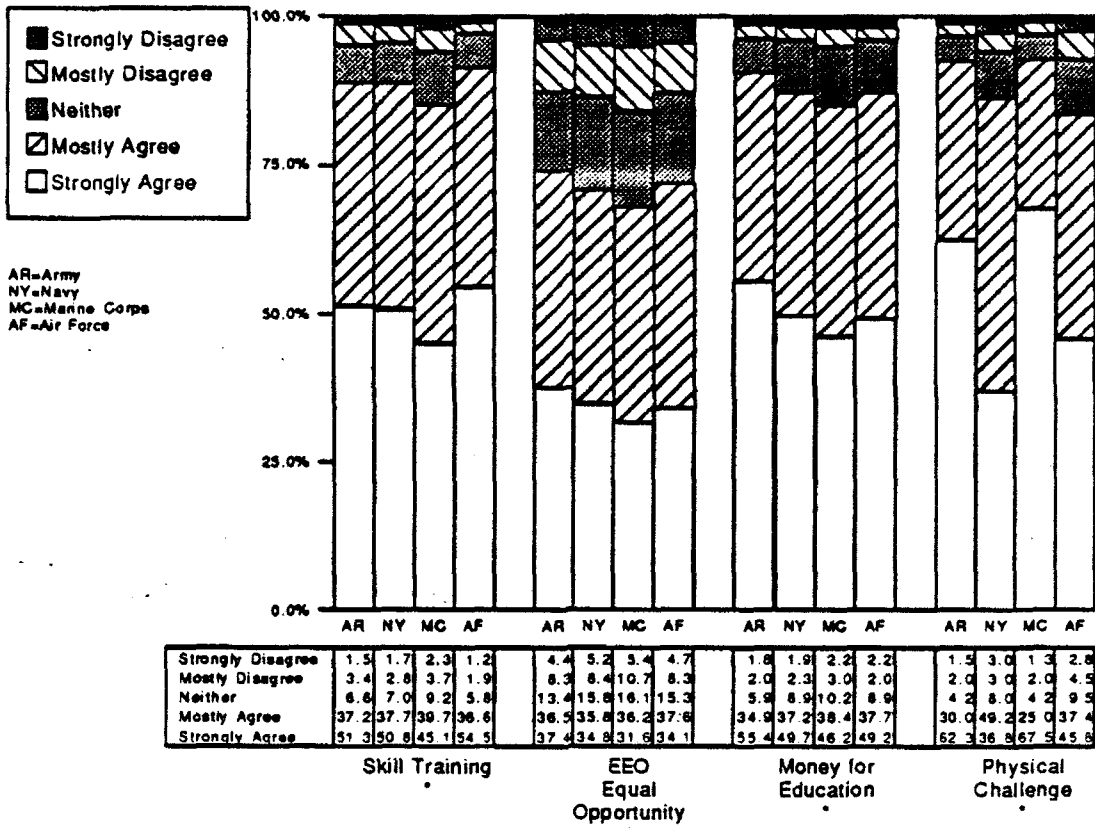
Strongly agree
Mostly agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Mostly disagree
Strongly disagree

Question 529Q1 and 529Q2

Figure 23 shows the degree of respondent agreement that each of the four active duty Services provides the opportunities specified. A number of significant differences are noteworthy:

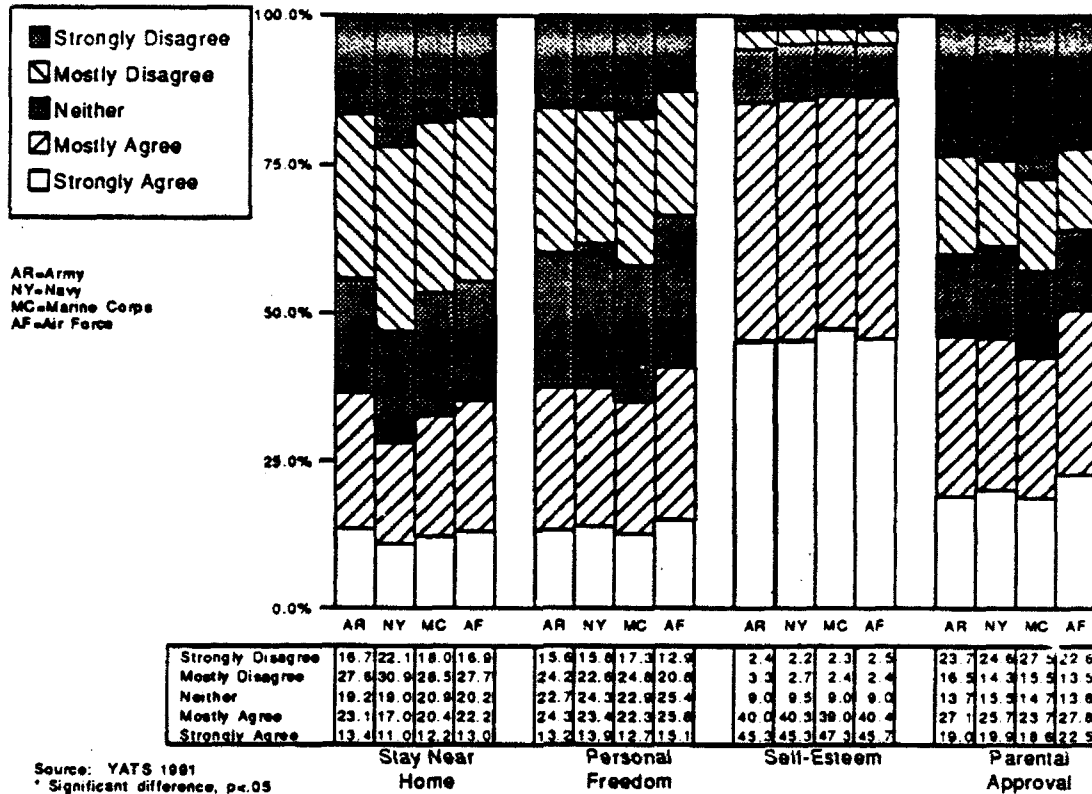
- A smaller percentage of respondents indicated that they strongly agreed that the Marine Corps can provide job skills compared to the other Services. Overall, the Air Force was perceived most favorably in this regard.
- There was stronger agreement that the Army provides equal opportunities for women and minorities as compared to the Marine Corps; however, the Marines received a stronger endorsement as the Service that provides a physical challenge.
- The Army outstripped the other branches in being judged as a place where money for education can be obtained.
- A greater proportion of respondents strongly agreed that the Marine Corps and Army can provide leadership skills than the Navy.
- The Air Force was judged most favorably in regard to high technology; the Navy was second. This order was reversed for opportunity to travel; both were perceived as providing significantly better chances to see the world than the Marine Corps or Army.

Figure 23
 Opportunities Offered by Each Active Duty Service



Source: YATS 1991
 * Significant difference, p < .05

Figure 23 (Continued)
 Opportunities Offered by Each Active Duty Service



Source: YATS 1991
 * Significant difference, $p < .05$

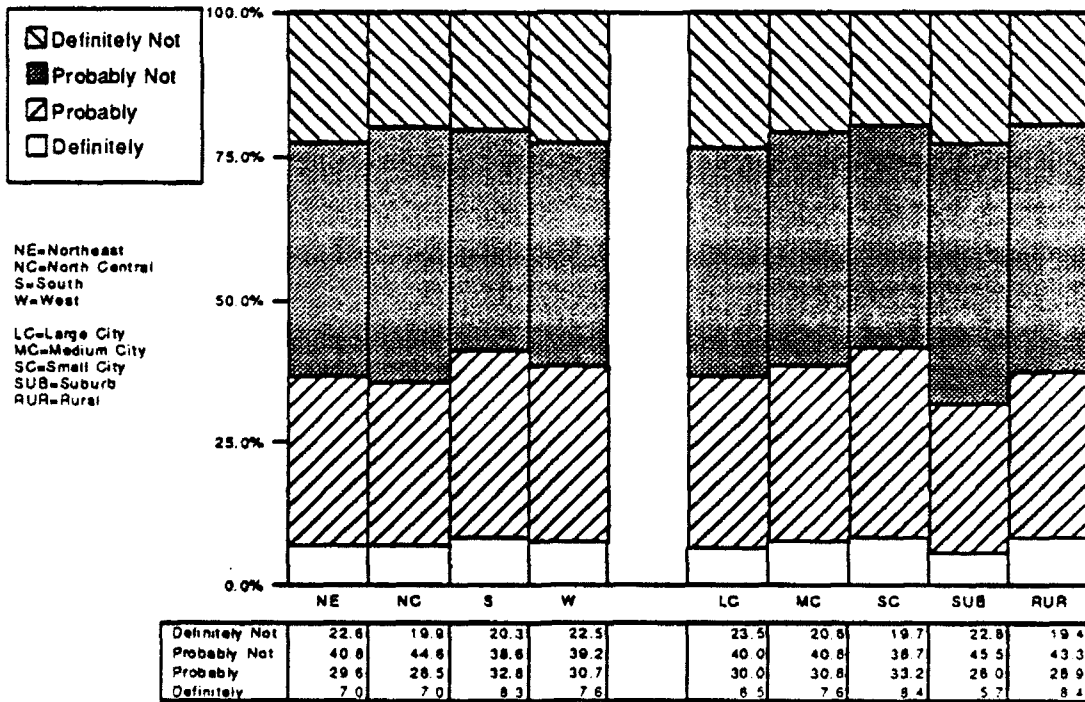
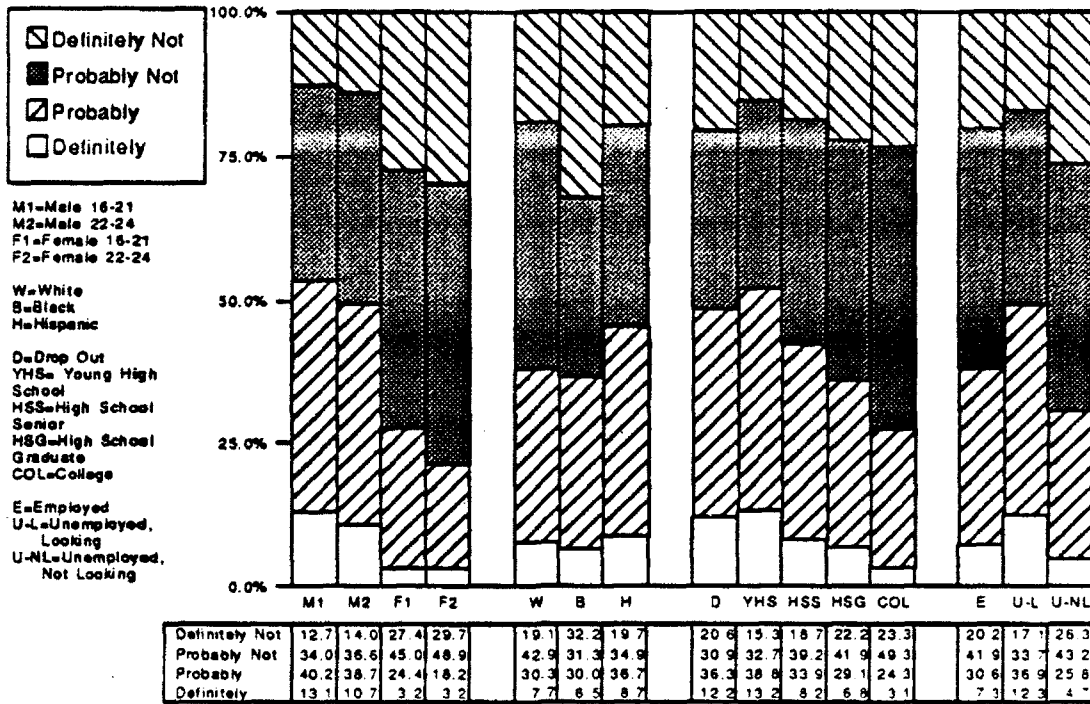
- A smaller percentage of respondents strongly agreed that the Air Force provides avenues to work as part of a team.
- The majority of respondents (70-90%) say most types of opportunities are available in the Services. However, a minority agree that the Services offer the opportunity to stay near home, maintain personal freedom, or obtain parental approval.
- All of the Services were judged equally in regard to their ability to develop one's self esteem.
- When asked if their parents would approve of their entering each Service, the Air Force received the largest endorsement; the Marine Corps the smallest.

The Impact of War

The 1991 YATS included a question which, although hypothetical in nature, sheds some light on the impact of military actions. Respondents were asked, "If you felt it were necessary for the United States to fight in some future war, what would be the likelihood that you would volunteer to serve in the military?" The results indicate that males, unemployed persons looking for work, and those from the South were more likely to say that there was some probability that they would volunteer than were their respective comparison groups (Figure 24). Larger numbers of Hispanics expressed a positive propensity in this regard, with Blacks showing the greatest reluctance. (It should be noted that, when asked about enlisting without the proviso of an ongoing war, Blacks were the most favorably inclined.) Volunteering in the event of war appears to be related to education; the more one has, the less likely one would be to step forward.

Table 4 compares the responses of youth when asked about the likelihood of enlisting in the next few years and whether they would volunteer if the country went to war. The diagonal (shaded cells) of the table shows the percentage of respondents who were consistent in their answers to both questions (39%). A majority (53%) expressed increased likelihood of enlisting during wartime, while only seven percent indicated less likelihood. That is, overall enlistment propensity increases for the majority of respondents when it is stipulated that one is volunteering to actively defend the country's interests.

Figure 24
Likelihood of Volunteering in the Event of War
by Demographics



Source: YATS 1991

** Significant difference, $p < .01$

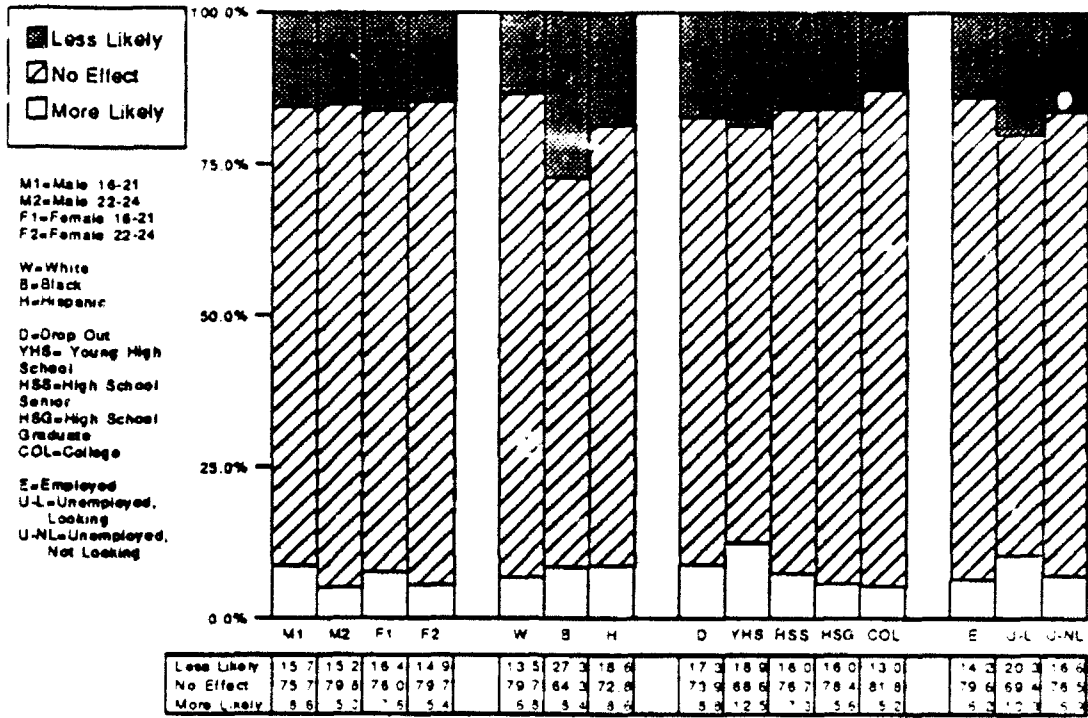
Table 4
Likelihood of Volunteering in the
Event of a War
by Composite Active Propensity
(overall percent)

Composite Active Propensity**	Definitely Volunteer	Probably Volunteer	Probably Wouldn't Volunteer	Definitely Wouldn't Volunteer
Definitely Will Enlist	1.4	1.6	0.3	0.2
Probably Will Enlist	2.7	6.7	2.5	0.5
Probably Won't Enlist	1.9	12.2	13.2	2.1
Definitely Won't Enlist	1.5	10.1	24.3	18.1

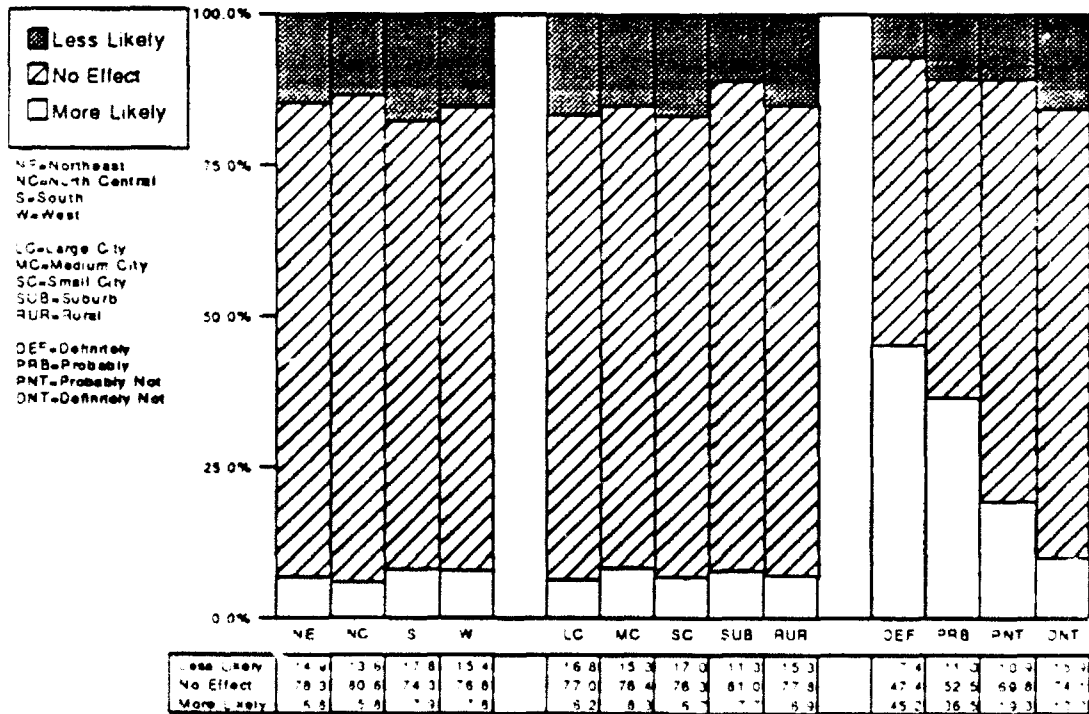
** Significant Difference, $p < .01$
May not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Respondents were asked to assess the impact of the reduced threat from the Soviet Union and Operations Desert Shield/Storm on the likelihood that they would enlist. As Figures 25 and 26 show, when asked about the effects of these events on enlistment intentions large majorities of youth indicate that there were none. In fact, despite what might be seen as conflicting messages concerning the risk involved in military service, the reported impact of the events in Europe and the Persian Gulf was much the same. Substantial proportions of Blacks said that these events made them less likely to enlist, while the opposite was true for young high school students, younger males in general, and those unemployed and looking for work. Perhaps because of the wealth

Figure 25
Impact of Events in Eastern Europe on Enlistment
by Demographics

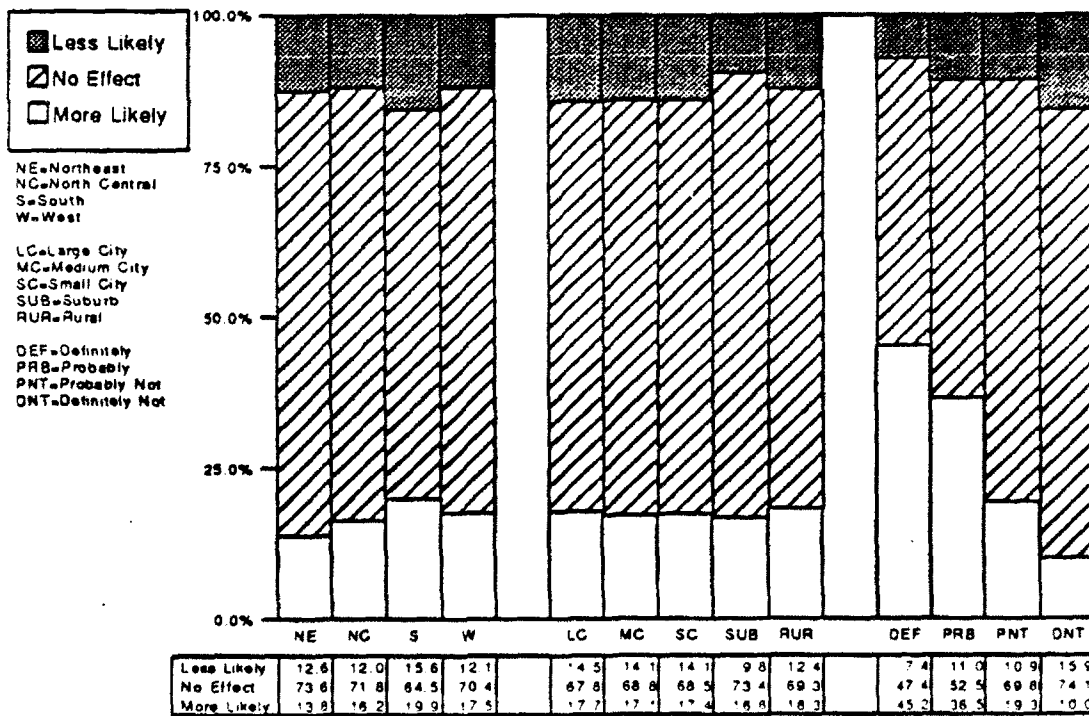
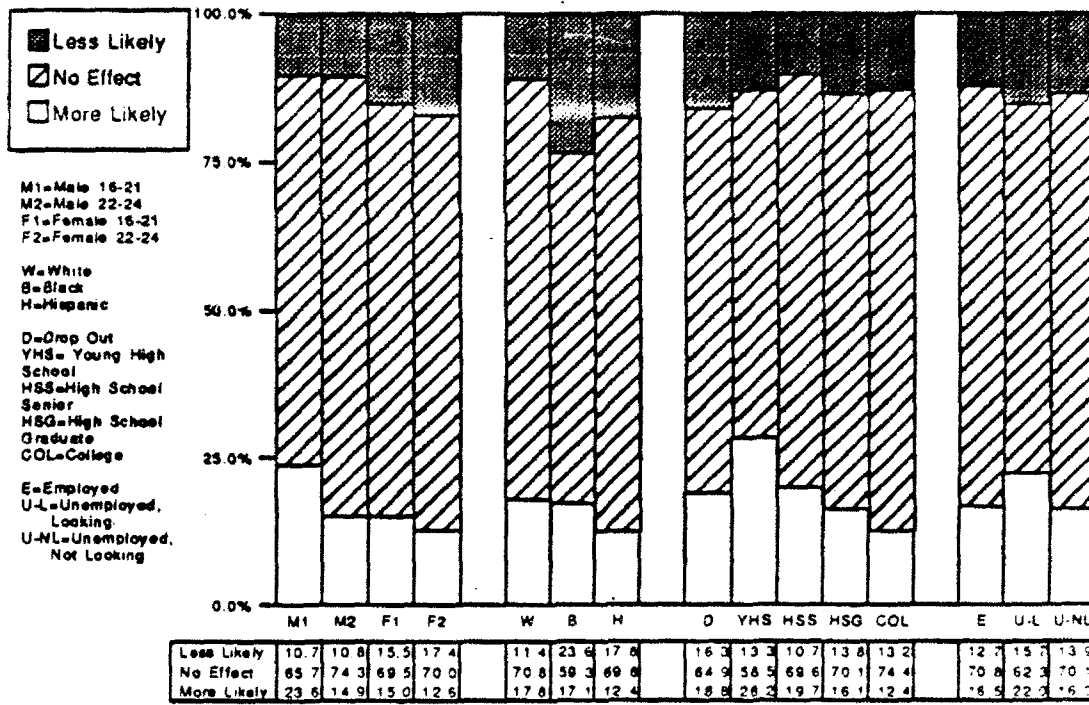


Source: YATS 1991
 ** Significant difference, p < .01



Source: YATS 1991
 ** Significant difference, p < .01

Figure 26
Impact of Desert Shield/Storm on Enlistment
by Demographics and Propensity



Source: YATS 1-91
 ** Significant difference, p < .01

of publicity received by Operations Desert Shield and Storm, the reported effects of these ventures were more pronounced.

Respondents were also asked to assess each active duty Service and the (combined) Reserve/Guard involvement in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm (Not at all Involved, Slightly Involved, Very Involved). As Table 5 shows, 94 percent of respondents thought the Air Force was very involved, while only 61 percent thought this of the Navy. The other Services "ranked" in between (Army 86%, Marine Corps 74%, Reserves/Guard 61%).

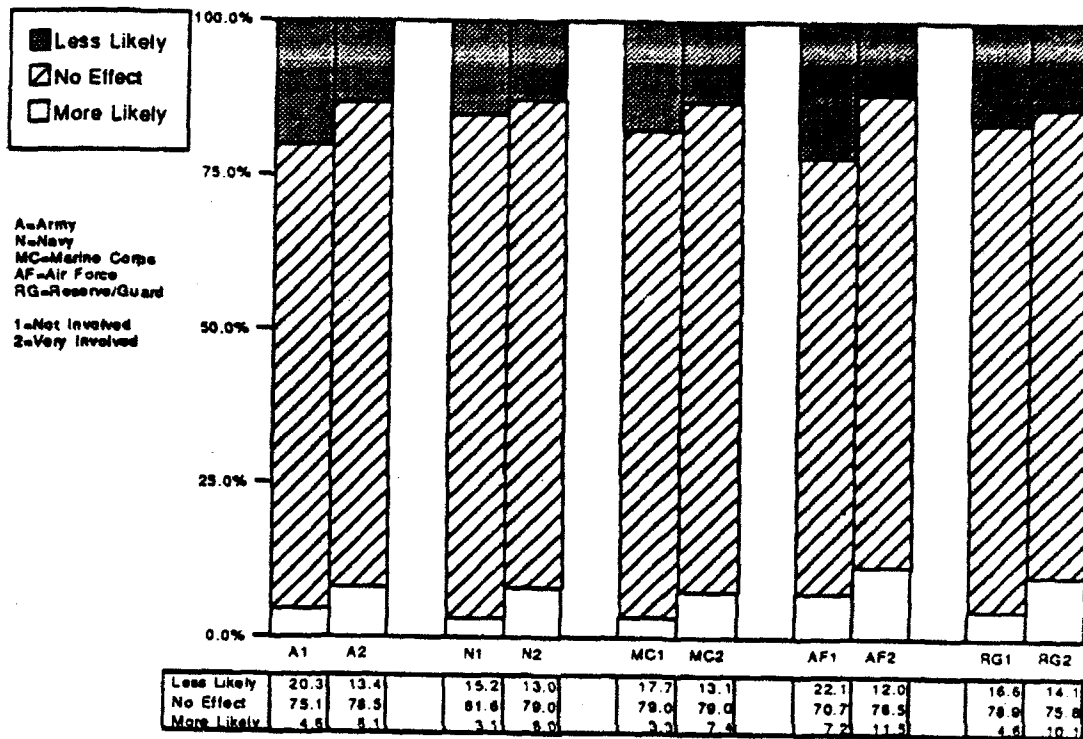
Table 5
Perceptions of Service Involvement in Operations Desert Shield/Storm

	Not at All	Slightly	Very Much
Army	0.6	13.4	85.9
Navv	2.9	35.8	61.3
Marine Corps	2.0	24.2	73.8
Air Force	0.7	5.1	94.2
Reserves/Guard	5.2	34.2	60.6

A follow-up item asked what impact each branch's involvement had on respondents' intentions of enlisting in that Service (More Likely, No Change, Less Likely). Figure 27 presents these results.² Large majorities of respondents said that military involvement in the Gulf had no impact on their enlistment intentions. Of those who said that it had an effect, higher percentages said the impact was negative, although there was a nearly even split for the Air Force (11.5% positive, 12% negative). Across the board, a higher percentage of those who thought a given Service/Component was very involved in the Gulf War indicated that it had a positive impact on their enlistment

² The percentage of respondents indicating that a given Service was not at all involved in the Persian Gulf was uniformly small. Thus, the "not at all" and "slightly involved" categories were collapsed.

Figure 27
Impact of Perceptions of Service Involvement in Desert Shield/Storm
on Service-Specific Enlistment Intentions



Source: YATS 1991

intentions as compared to those who thought the involvement was slight or none. Correspondingly, those who perceived a lack of involvement were more likely to indicate that it had a negative effect.

Thus, three statements can be made about these results:

- According to self-reports, the Gulf War affected the enlistment intentions of only about one-quarter of youth.
- Among those affected, the impact was generally more negative than positive.
- The positive impact was greater among those who perceived a given Service/Component as highly involved in Operations Desert Shield/Storm than among those who thought there was little involvement.

Section 3

THE INFLUENCE OF OTHERS

This section explores the impact that other people have on the enlistment decision-making process. The category "others" includes not only those with whom military service may have been discussed, but also respondents' acquaintances then serving in the military. The analyses explore the relative impact of such influencers. Further, subgroup differences are examined in terms of the degree to which the input of others is sought and attended to.

Participants in the 1991 YATS were asked:

Within the last year or so, have you discussed the possibility of serving in the military with anyone other than a military recruiter?

Question Q644E

and

Who did you discuss this (the possibility of serving in the military) with?
[PROBE: Anyone else?] [CODE ALL MENTIONS] Question Q644G

A follow-up question was asked about each person mentioned:

Please tell me how you think your _____ would feel about your serving in the active duty military. Would you say that your _____ would be very favorable, somewhat favorable, neither favorable or unfavorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable to the idea?

Question Q644G1

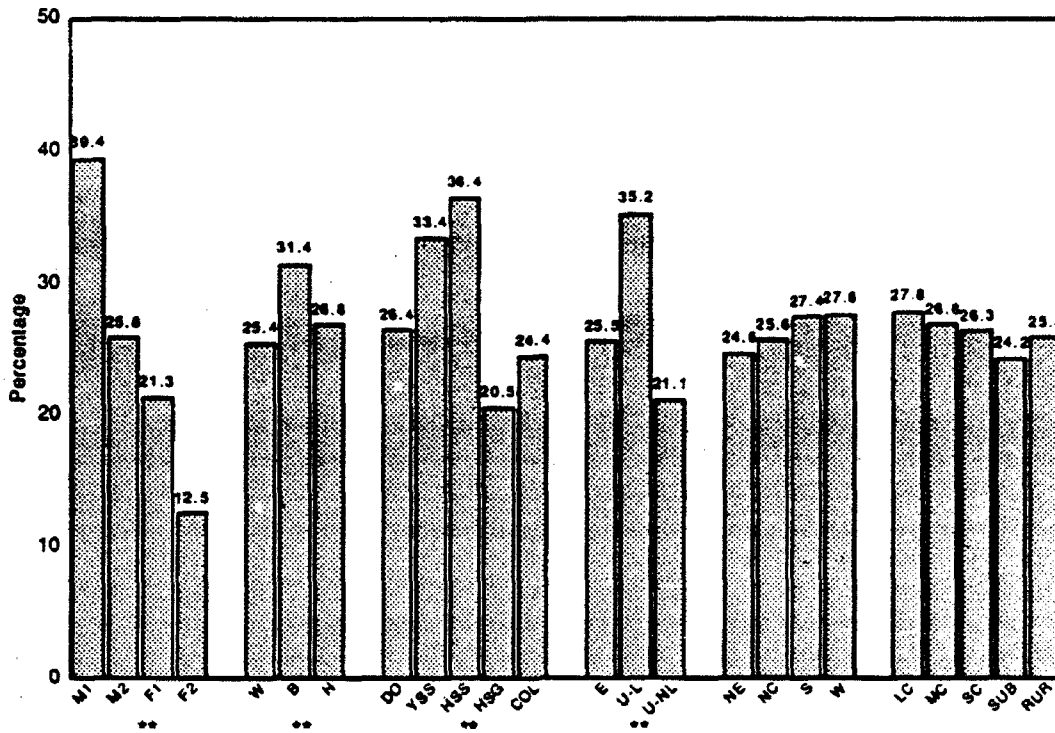
Finally, respondents were asked if they knew anyone serving (at the time of the interview) or who had been accepted to serve in the military, which branch(es), and whether or not they liked it.

Discussions with Others Concerning Military Enlistment

Overall, 26.3 percent of the YATS respondents reported discussing military service with someone within the last year or so. As seen in Figure 28, a larger percentage of young males indicated that they had had such discussions (39.4%), with evidence indicating that these were largely high school students (seniors 36.4%, younger high school students 33.4%). Blacks and individuals unemployed were also more likely to have discussed military enlistment. Women were less likely overall to have talked with anyone about serving, with older (22-24 year-old) females the least likely.

For those who had discussions concerning military enlistment, Table 6 shows the percentage who cited each source (e.g., friend, Mom, Dad) as one with whom they held discussions. Across demographic groups, a higher percentage of respondents reported having discussed this subject with friends, except in the case of younger females, high school students, and those who were unemployed and looking for a job. In these instances, higher percentages reported talking to their mothers. Generally, "Mom" was a more likely discussant than "Dad," although a slightly higher percentage of college

Figure 28
Percent Discussing Military Enlistment
by Demographics



Source: 1991 YATS

** Significant difference, p<.01

M1=Male 16-21, M2=Male 22-24, F1=Female 16-21, F2=Female 22-24; W=White, B=Black, H=Hispanic; DO=Drop Out, YHS=Young High School, HSG=High School Grad, COL=College, E=Employed, U-L=Unemployed, Looking, U-NL=Unemployed, Not Looking; LC=Large City, MC=Medium City, SC=Small City, SUB=Suburban, RUR=Rural

students turned to their fathers for input. As might be expected, higher percentages of younger people reported talking to their parents than did older men and women.

Among the 22-24 year-olds, however, there was a greater tendency to seek the counsel of boy/girlfriends and spouses. Finally, a significantly higher proportion of Blacks sought out relatives other than parents or siblings to discuss serving in the military.

Table 6
 Person with Whom Military Service was Discussed
 as Percent of Those Having Discussions
 by Demographics

	Friend	Mom	Dad	Brother Sister	Other Relative	Partner ¹
Male 16-21	58.2	53.5**	50.4**	11.5	10.8	8.2**
Male 22-24	59.9	32.9	30.9	13.5	10.7	26.8
Female 16-21	49.0	55.5	45.4	11.5	12.5	16.3
Female 22-24	58.4	30.9	28.7	9.9	12.7	25.5
White	56.3	49.1	47.5**	12.6	8.6**	15.5
Black	52.8	50.4	32.8	14.6	23.3	11.2
Hispanic	59.8	42.1	33.9	11.3	14.1	15.0
HS Dropout	48.2**	43.4**	32.9**	15.5	12.1**	27.5**
Young HS	49.3	60.1	59.4	9.7	17.9	3.0
HS Senior	56.6	61.8	53.7	10.5	9.8	8.6
HS Graduate	55.2	39.8	33.7	11.8	12.4	22.8
College+	63.4	44.3	45.1	11.2	7.8	11.6
Employed	57.3	45.5**	42.5*	12.1	10.1	17.2**
Unemployed, Looking	52.6	55.2	43.6	12.4	14.0	12.1
Unemployed, Not Looking	55.6	51.8	50.8	9.4	12.5	9.9
Northeast	56.1	44.9	39.0*	12.7	8.4	16.1
North Central	52.2	50.4	49.3	10.6	13.3	13.4
South	58.0	51.8	43.2	12.4	12.0	14.0
West	54.7	43.8	43.8	10.7	10.0	17.1
Large City	58.3	43.1	36.5*	13.7	13.4	12.1
Medium City	54.5	51.1	43.8	10.5	11.8	16.0
Small City	54.8	49.5	45.1	12.6	10.4	16.2
Suburban	60.1	51.0	50.0	12.1	8.2	11.2
Rural	54.1	48.7	47.5	7.6	12.4	14.2

¹ Includes boyfriend, girlfriend, and spouse.

** Significant difference within demographic subgroup for the column indicated, $p < .05$.

* Significant column difference within demographic subgroup for the column indicated, $p < .01$.

Figures 29 through 32 provide data on the reported opinions of others to the possibility of the respondents enlisting.³ Although there were few significant differences in the reactions received by gender/age groups, males, particularly older males, more frequently report others' opinions favored joining the military. As reported above, respondents indicated that mothers generally had the most negative reaction, especially in regard to older males and younger females enlisting. Blacks reported more favorable reactions overall (see Figure 30), particularly on the part of their mothers. Hispanics reported the highest unfavorable percentages for both parents. Results by education groups showed that college and graduate students received more negative responses from all three sources (Figure 31). Those unemployed and looking for work received more favorable feedback from parents than friends. However, mothers were not more favorable than friends when it came to those who were not looking (Figure 32).

Figures 33 through 35 display the opinion data in conjunction with expressed propensity to join the military in the next few years. Relatively strong relationships were found between the opinion of mothers, fathers, and friends and propensity to enlist. As would be expected, higher proportions of those who said they definitely or probably plan to enlist reported favorable reactions to the idea on the part of those with whom they talked, whereas pluralities of those who said they definitely will not join reported unfavorable responses. There is a high degree of correspondence between the opinion of

³ Data are presented for friends, mothers, and fathers only. The number of cases in the other categories (sibling, other relative, boy/girlfriend/spouse) was too small to afford reliable estimates.

Figure 29
Opinion of Persons with Whom Military Service was Discussed
by Gender/Age

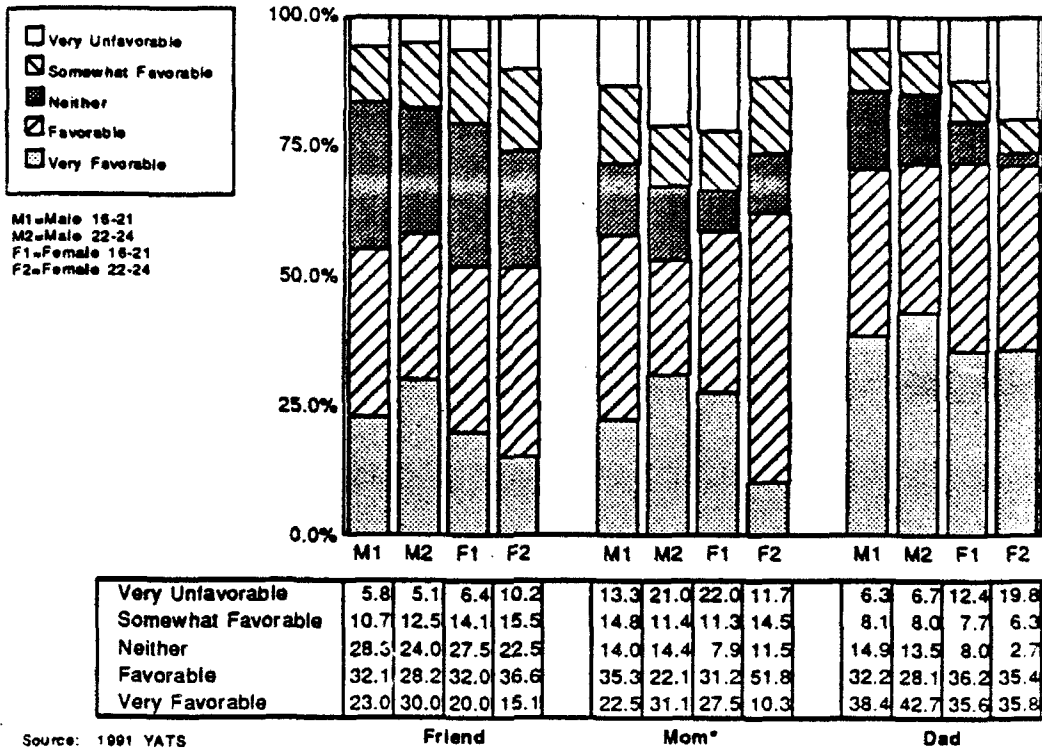


Figure 30
Opinion of Persons with Whom Military Service was Discussed
by Race/Ethnic Group

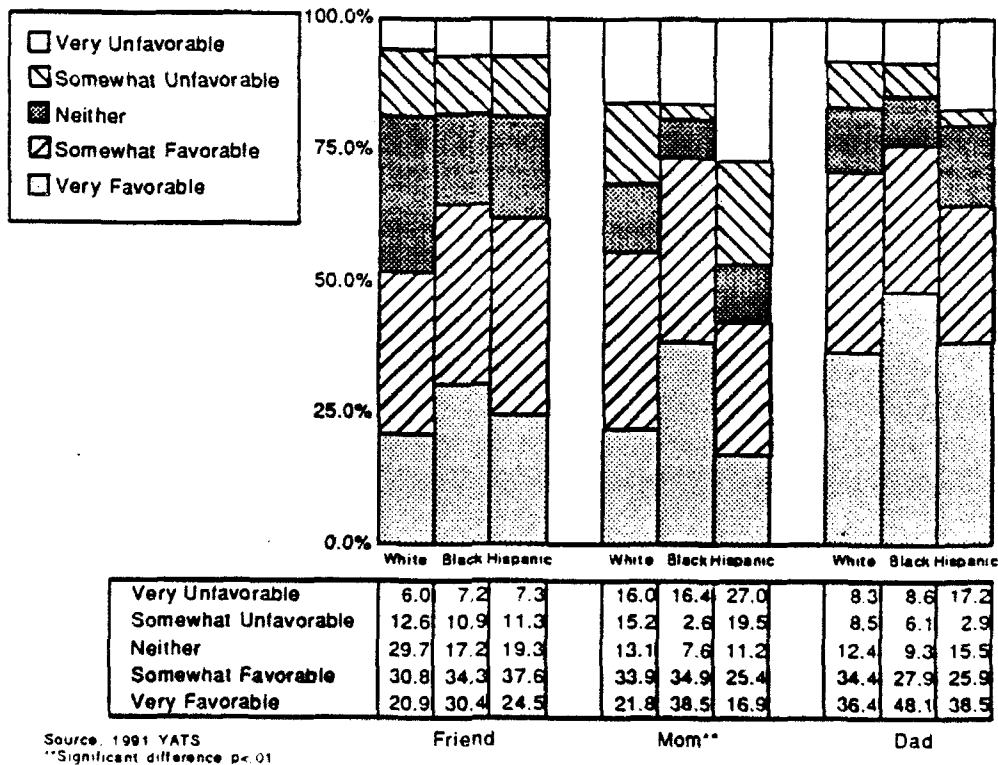


Figure 31
Opinion of Persons with Whom Military Service was Discussed
by Education Status

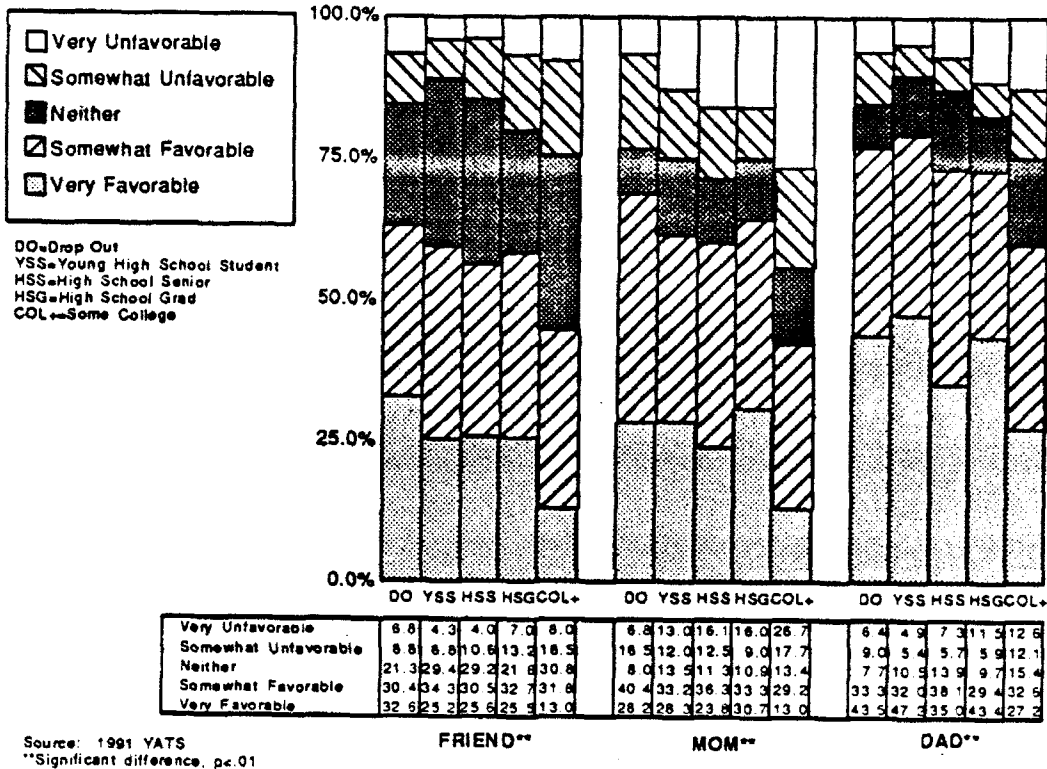
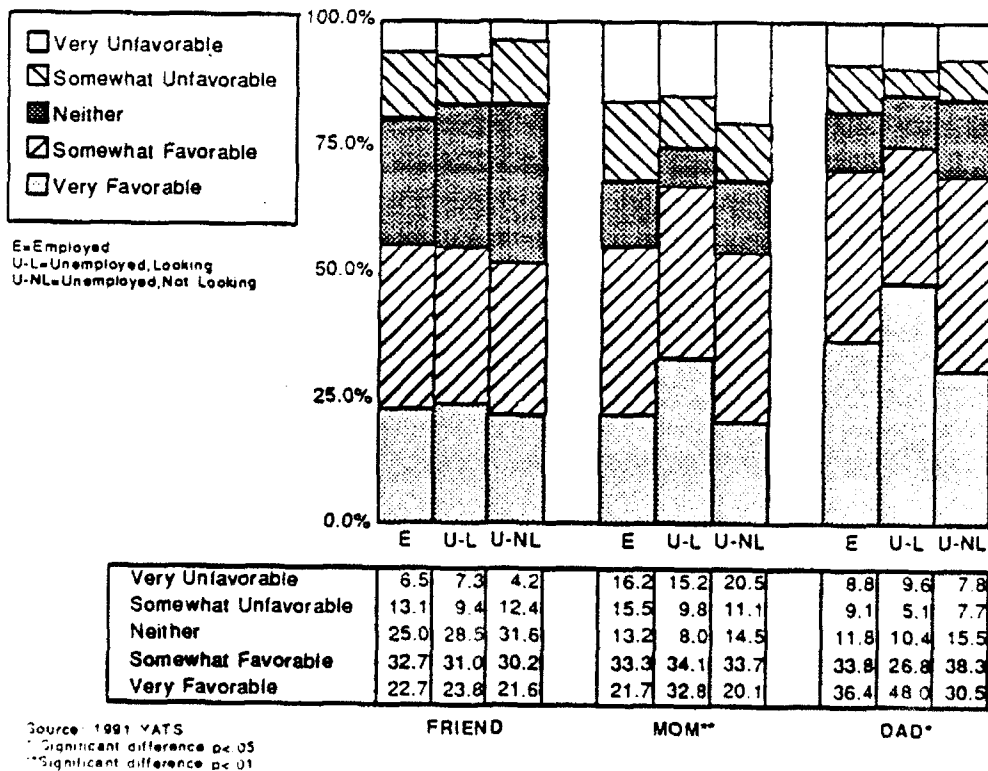
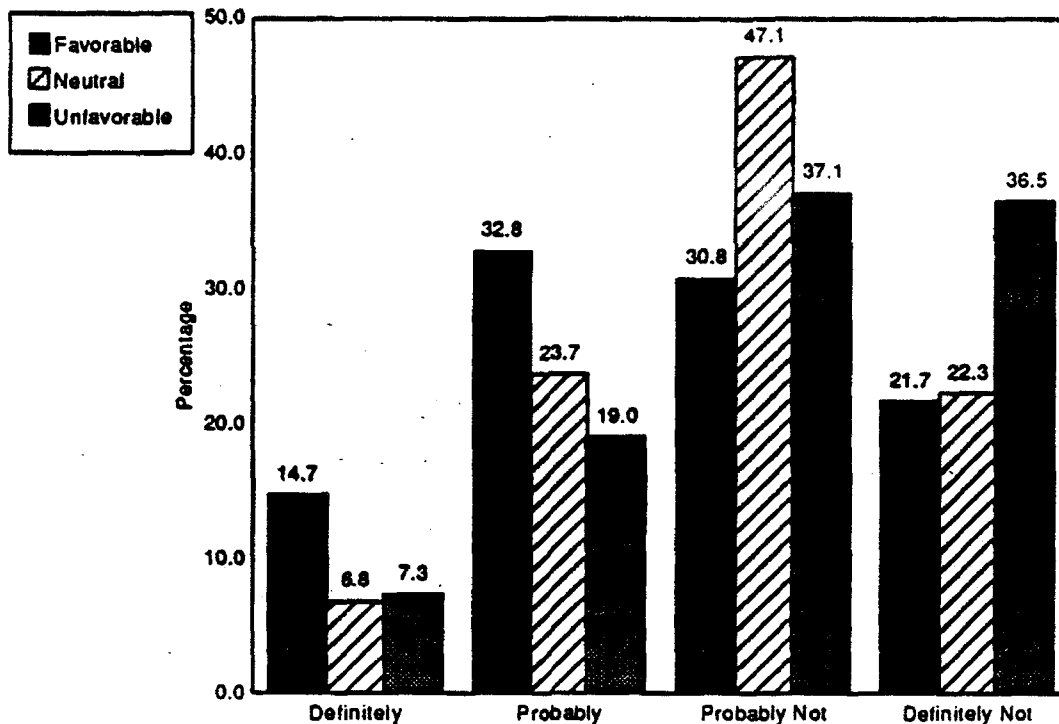


Figure 32
Opinion of Persons with Whom Military Service was Discussed
by Employment Status

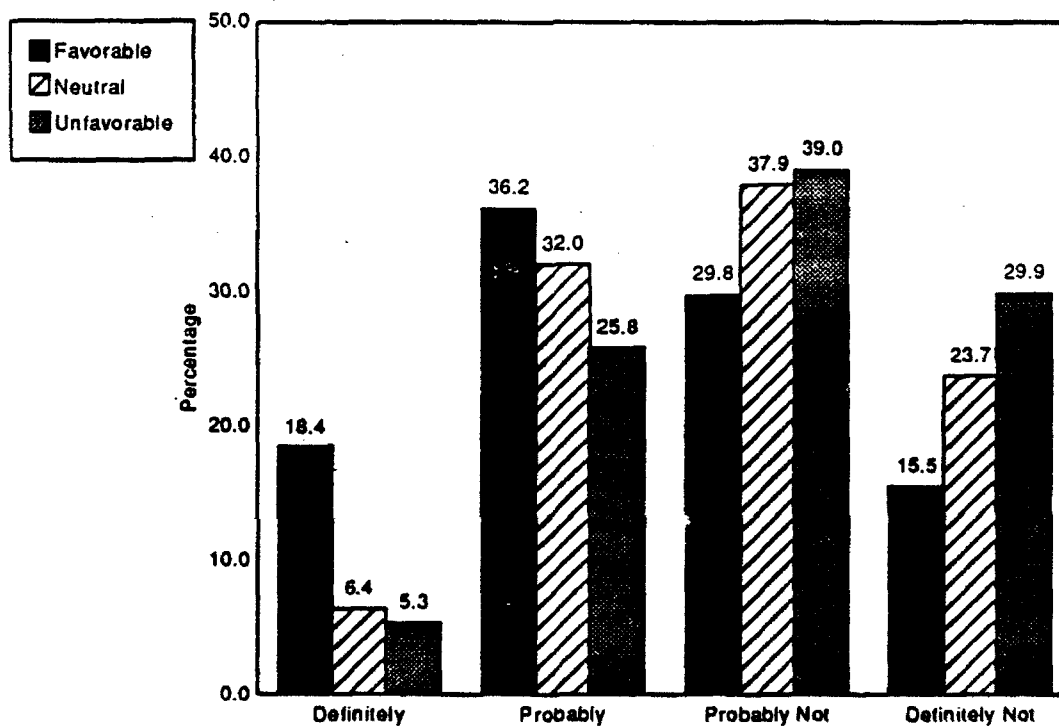


**Figure 33
Propensity for Military Service
and Friend's Opinion Concerning Enlistment**



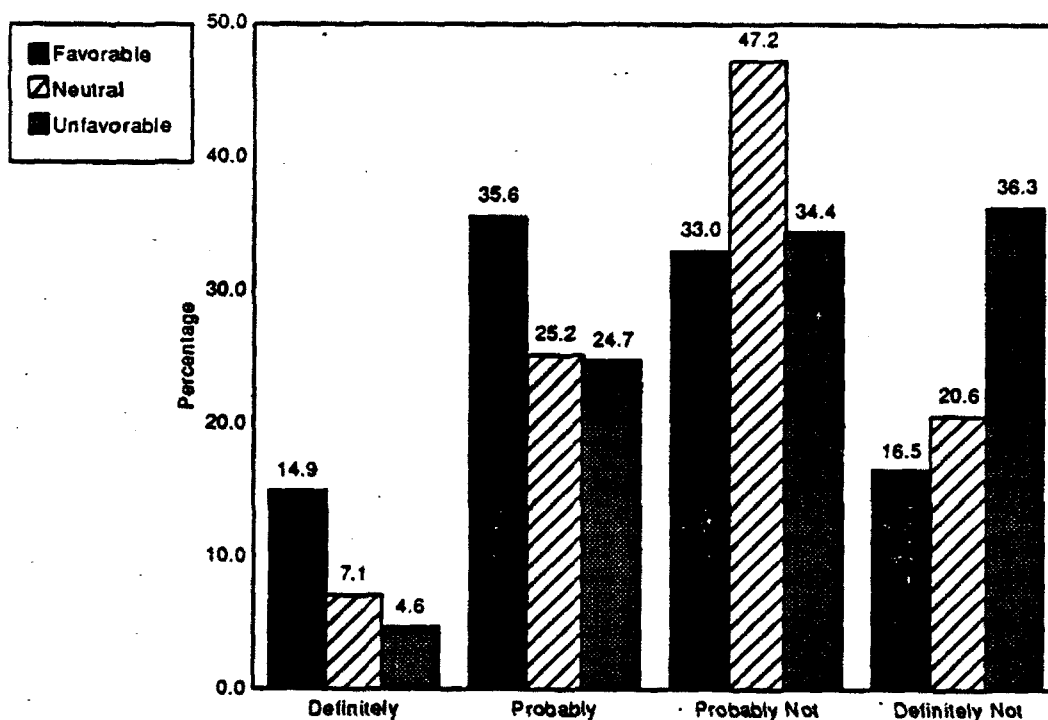
Source: 1991 YATS
Significant differences within each propensity category, $p < .01$

**Figure 34
Propensity for Military Service
and Mother's Opinion Concerning Enlistment**



Source: 1991 YATS
Significant differences within each propensity category, $p < .01$

Figure 35
**Propensity for Military Service
 and Father's Opinion Concerning Enlistment**



Source: 1991 YATS
 Significant differences within each propensity category, $p < .01$

others regarding military service and the stated likelihood that the respondent plans to enlist.

Finally, respondents were asked to indicate which Service or Reserve Component they thought their *parents* would prefer to see them join. Table 7 presents these data in conjunction with youths' own Service-specific propensity. There is a relatively high degree of correspondence between the opinions of youth and the perceptions of their parents' preference. The largest deviations occur between the Reserve/Guard and Active

components, with substantial numbers of youth who preferred the former saying that their parents would prefer they enlist in an Active Duty Service.

Table 7
 Parents' Versus Respondents' Service Preference
 (percent of cases where both had a preference)

PARENTS PREFER

YOUTH PREFER	ARMY	NAVY	MARINES	AIR FORCE	RESERVE /GUARD
ARMY	55.6	6.9	12.7	9.1	7.1
NAVY	4.0	57.3	4.9	6.1	3.8
MARINES	7.7	7.9	58.4	5.3	4.9
AIR FORCE	8.7	8.0	7.5	55.5	9.7
RESERVE/GUARD	24.1	20.0	16.5	24.1	74.5

As stated by respondent

The Impact of Knowing Military Members

Knowing someone serving in the military has the potential for being a strong influence on youth's perceptions of, and feelings about enlisting. Overall, 81 percent of YATS respondents indicated that they were acquainted with someone currently serving, while 31 percent said that they knew someone who had been accepted to serve but had not yet begun their term of enlistment. The largest percentage of respondents who knew a Servicemember indicated that he/she was serving in the Army (55.1%). Corresponding figures for the other Services were: Navy 44.5 percent; Marine Corps 42 percent; Air Force 34.4 percent, and; Reserves/National Guard 24.9 percent.

Table 8 shows the relationship between knowing someone in a given Service and their propensity to enlist in that Service. Although there is no significant relationship between these two factors for composite propensity or the Reserves/Guard, significant differences were found when Service-specific propensity and knowledge of someone in that branch were compared. In each case the differences were largest in the "probably will" and "definitely will not" enlist groups. Those who said they knew someone were more likely to say they will probably enlist; those who had no acquaintances in that branch were more likely to say that they definitely will not be joining. Thus it appears that having an acquaintance or friend in one of the Services influences one's propensity to join that specific Service.

Finally, respondents were asked if the persons they knew who were in the military liked it. As seen in Table 9, significant differences were found when this variable was examined in conjunction with expressed likelihood of enlisting. Whereas 18 percent of those who said that the people they knew in the military liked it expressed a positive propensity (definitely/probably enlist in the next few years), only 7 percent of those who said their friends dislike serving reported such an inclination. Again, although causality is hard to determine, it appears that there is a relationship between the experience of those one knows in the military and one's own inclination to consider joining.

Table 8
Relationship Between Knowing Someone who is Serving and Propensity

Service	Know Someone Serving?	Definitely Enlist	Probably Enlist	Probably Not Enlist	Definitely Not Enlist
Composite	Yes	3.6	12.8	29.8	53.7
	No	3.1	11.0	30.6	55.2
Army**	Yes	1.5	6.8	28.3	63.3
	No	0.9	5.1	28.1	65.9
Navy**	Yes	1.3	7.0	28.1	63.6
	No	0.5	3.2	27.8	68.5
Marines**	Yes	1.4	5.0	28.2	65.5
	No	0.7	2.3	26.4	70.6
Air Force**	Yes	1.8	9.9	30.3	57.9
	No	1.2	6.1	29.3	63.4
Reserves/ Guard	Yes	1.8	12.7	38.2	47.3
	No	1.9	13.3	36.9	47.9

** Significant Difference, $p < .01$

Table 9
Acquaintances' Opinion Regarding Military Service
and Propensity to Enlist

Feeling of Friend(s) Currently Serving**	Definitely will Enlist	Probably will Enlist	Probably won't Enlist	Definitely won't Enlist
Like it	4.1	13.5	30.5	51.9
In-between	1.5	12.2	25.4	60.8
Don't Like it	2.1	4.8	24.9	68.2

** Significance differences, $p < .01$.

Section 4

THE INFLUENCE OF POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Respondents to the 1991 YATS were asked a variety of policy-related questions concerning such issues as: military power and its use; the role of women in the country's defense; and the impact of changes in the military brought about by world events.

Military Power and Its Use

Three questions were included in the survey to ascertain respondents' views on the proper amount of military power and how it should be used.

Now I'm going to ask you for your opinions on government and public affairs. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements. [Strongly Agree, Mostly Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Mostly Disagree, Strongly Disagree]

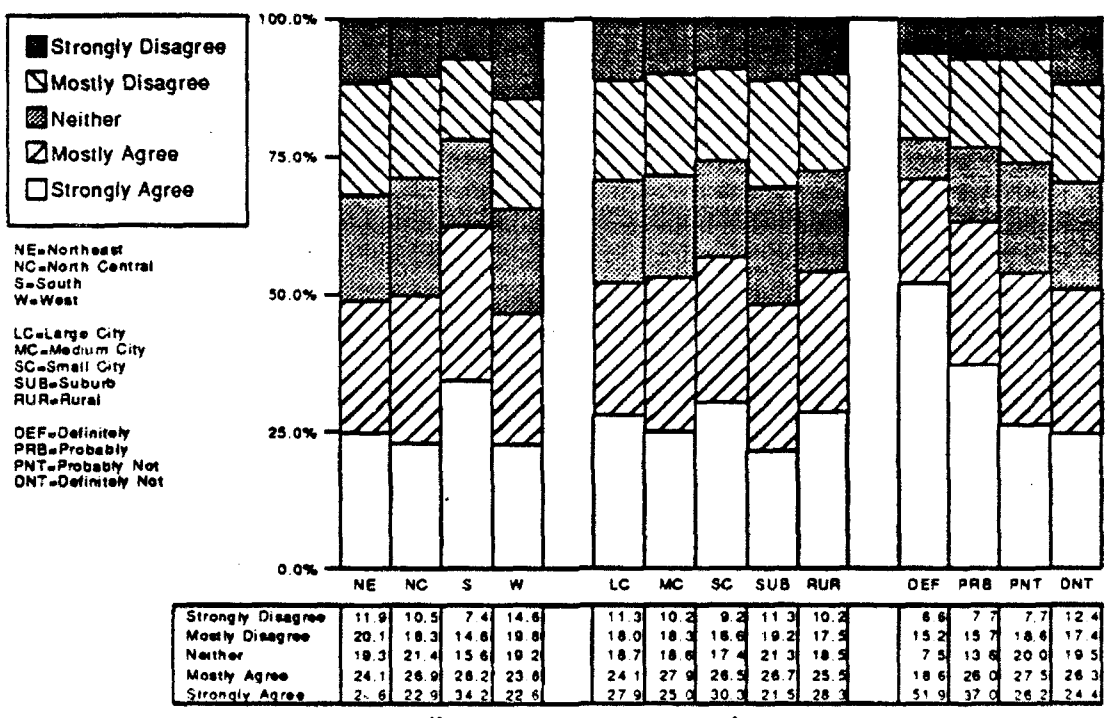
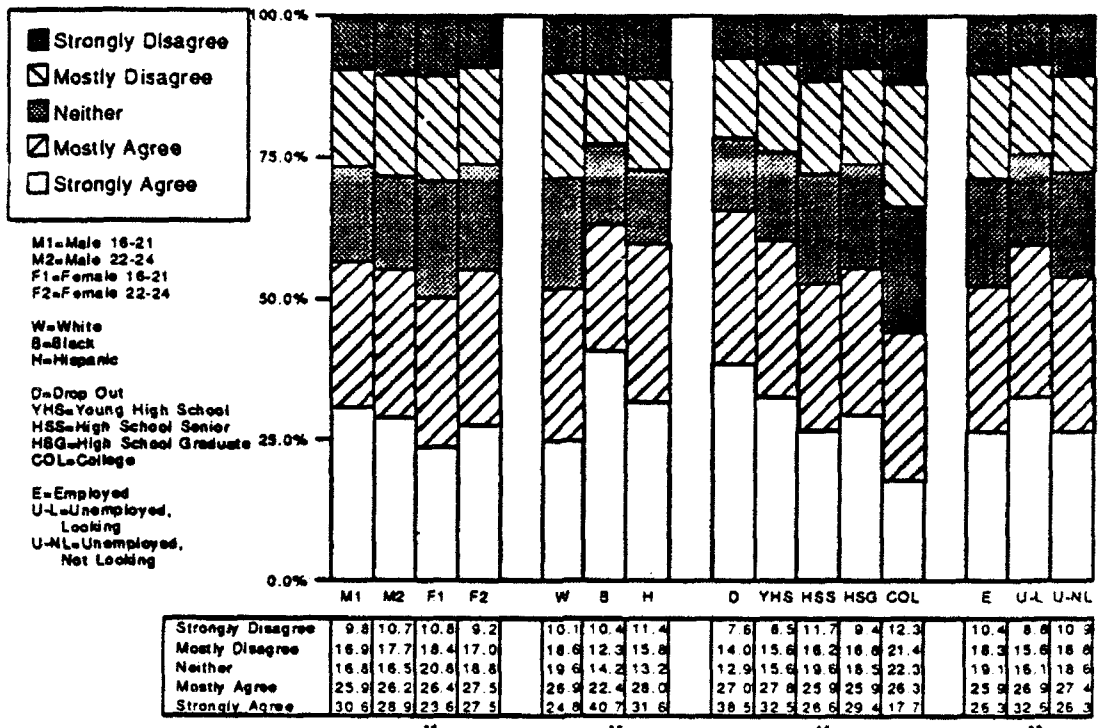
Q527A. First, do you think there are times when the U.S. should go to war to protect the rights of other countries?

Q527B. Do you think the U.S. should go to war to defend its own economic interests?

Q527C. Do you think the U.S. ought to have much more military power than any other nation in the world?

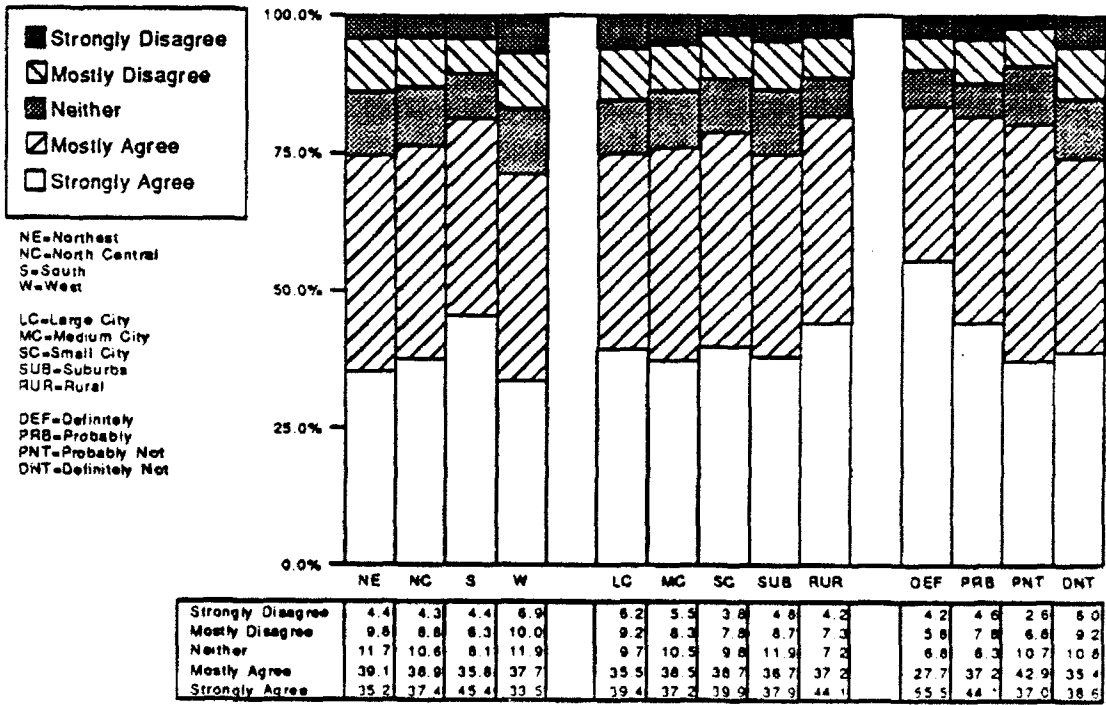
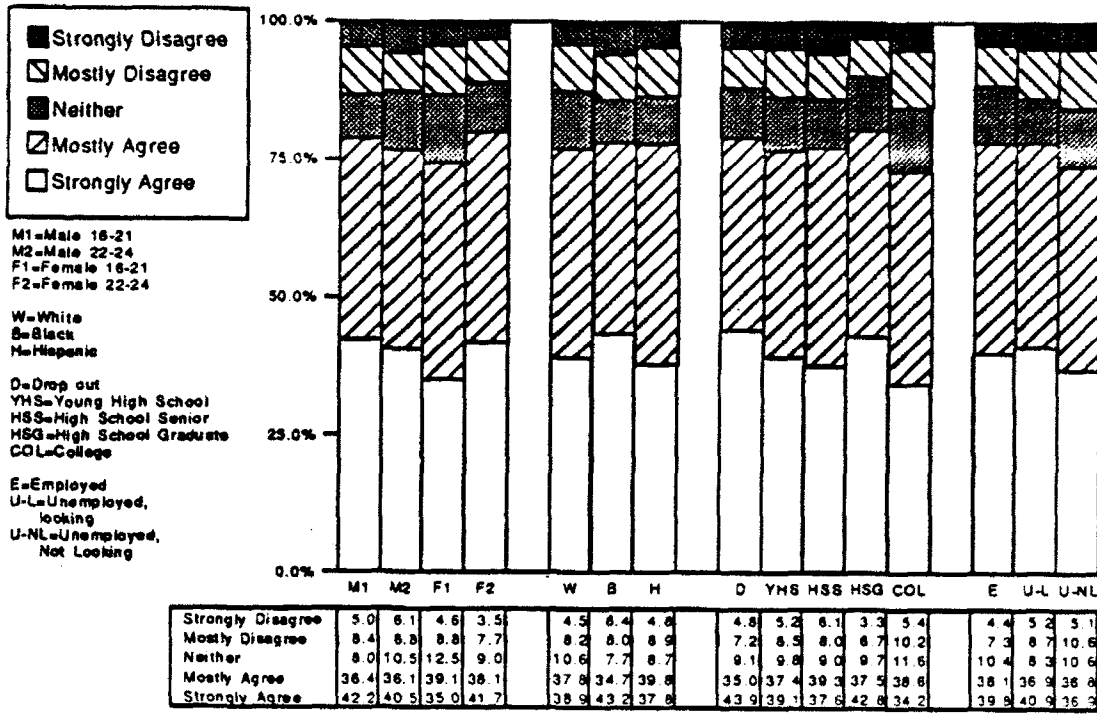
Figures 36 through 38 summarize the responses to these items. In almost every case, there were significant differences between the various demographic subgroups. Overall, the majority of youth believe the U.S. should be the strongest military power in the world, and that it should go to war to protect other countries. A large majority also believe that the use of military power to defend America's economic interests is justified.

Figure 36
U.S. Should Have Much More Military Power Than Other Nations
by Demographics and Propensity



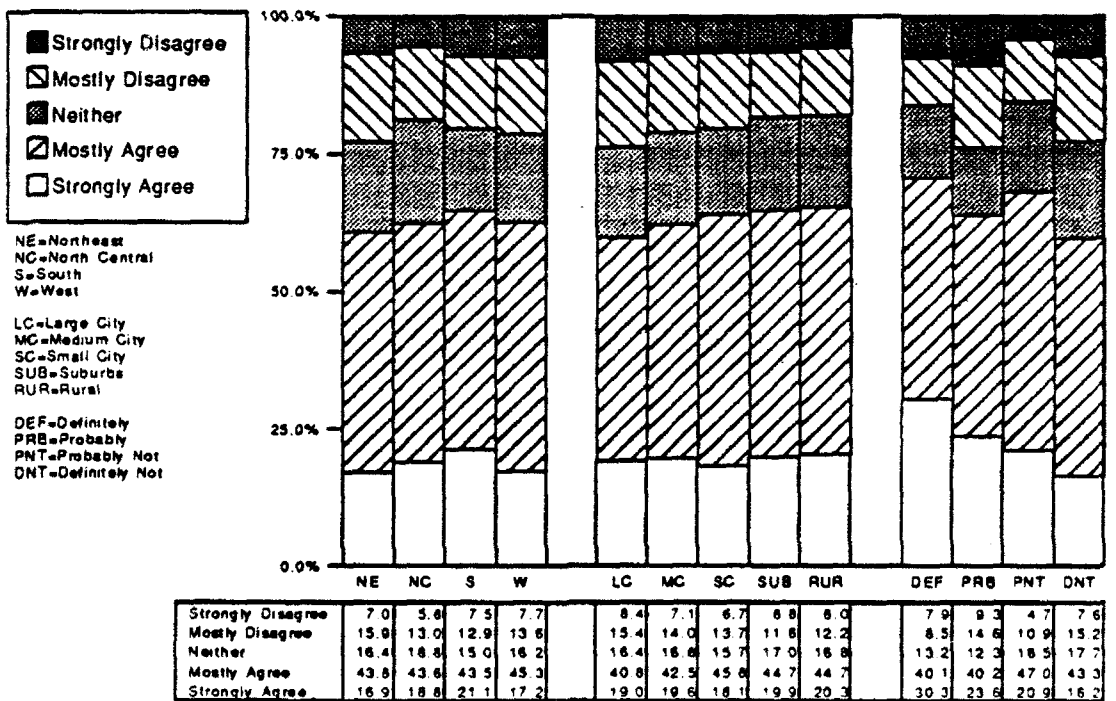
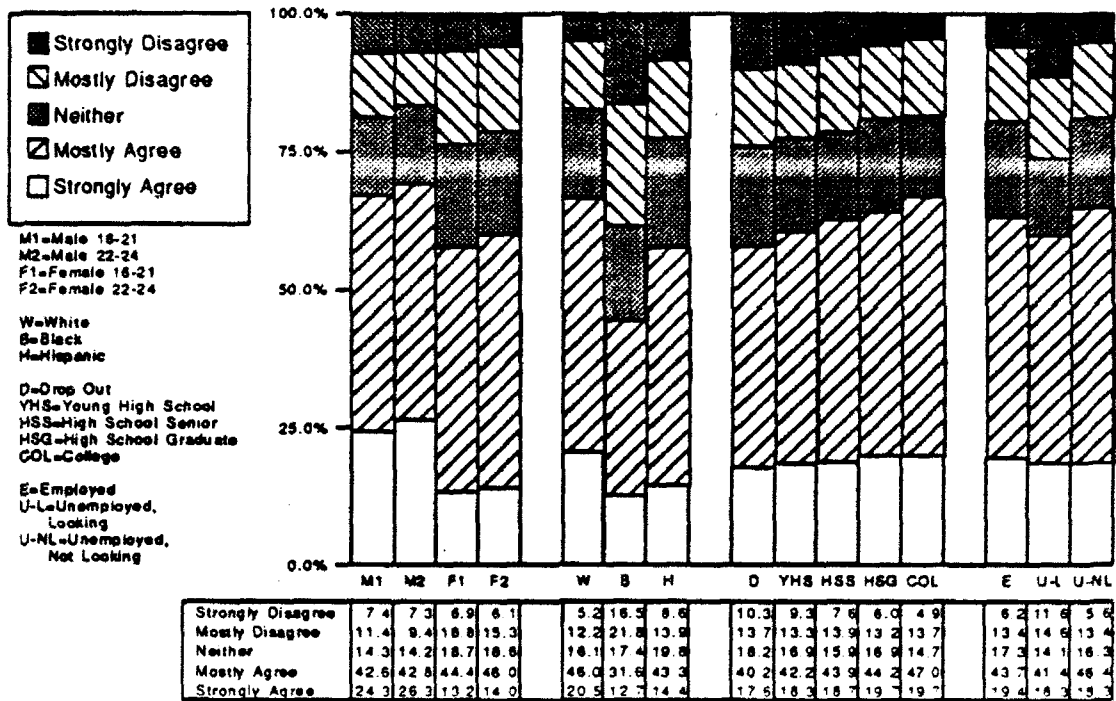
Source: YATS 1991
 * Significant difference, p<.05
 ** Significant difference, p<.01

Figure 37
U.S. Should Go to War to Protect Own Economic Interests
by Demographics and Propensity



Source: YATS 1991
 * Significant difference, p < .05
 ** Significant difference, p < .01

Figure 38
U.S. Should Go to War to Protect Other Countries' Rights
by Demographics and Propensity



Source: YATS 1991
 * Significant difference, p < .05
 ** Significant difference, p < .01

Among gender/age subgroups, young females were least inclined to support the notion that the U.S. should maintain more military superiority or that such force should be used in support of its own economic interests. Females as a whole were more likely to have no opinion or to disagree that military power should be used to protect the rights of others. Blacks and those who were unemployed and looking for work were the most likely to agree that it is appropriate for the U.S. to have the strongest military and to go to war to protect its economic well-being. However, both groups were the least likely to agree with military intervention to protect the rights of other countries. A reversal of this pattern occurred among college and graduate students, who viewed military power and intervention on the basis of domestic economic interests least favorably, while providing the greatest support for the use of military force to protect other countries' freedoms. Those from the South were most likely to agree with all three statements, while there were only minor variations between different types of residential jurisdictions. Finally, as might be expected, those who expressed a positive propensity for military service were more likely to agree that the U.S. should maintain military superiority and be prepared to use it to protect its own economic interests as well as the rights of others.

The Role of Women in National Defense

Two items assessed respondents' opinions concerning the role of women in the military.

Q644. Currently, women are restricted by law from military duties involving combat. What is your opinion about changing the law so that women could be allowed to volunteer for combat assignments? Would you...

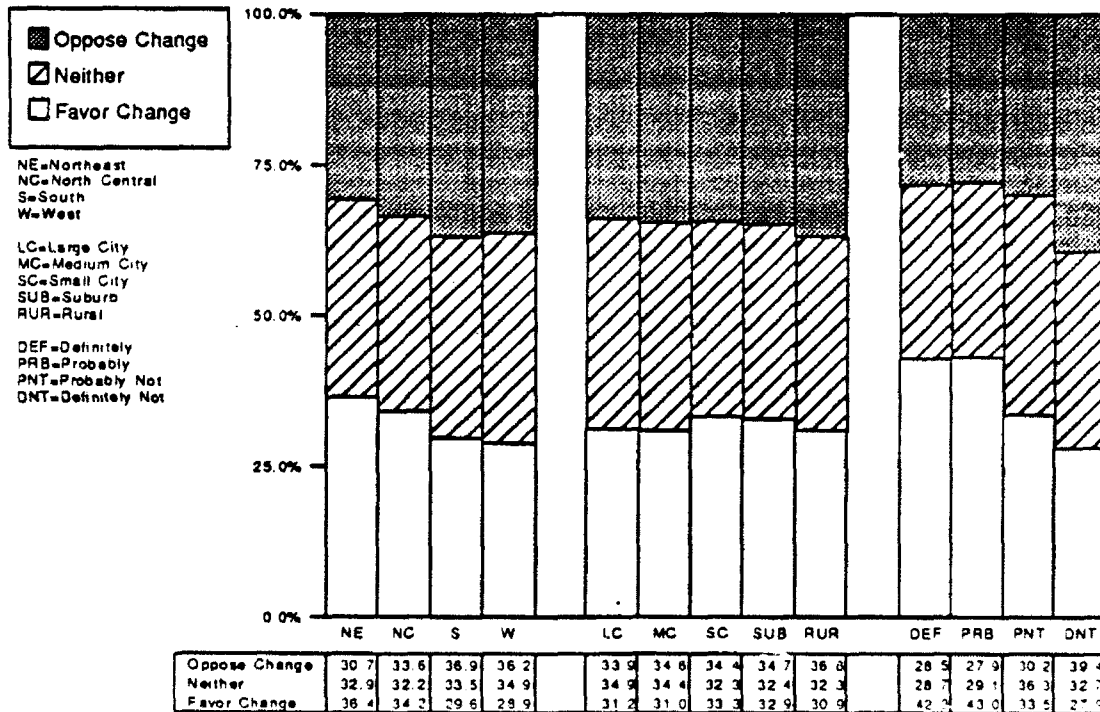
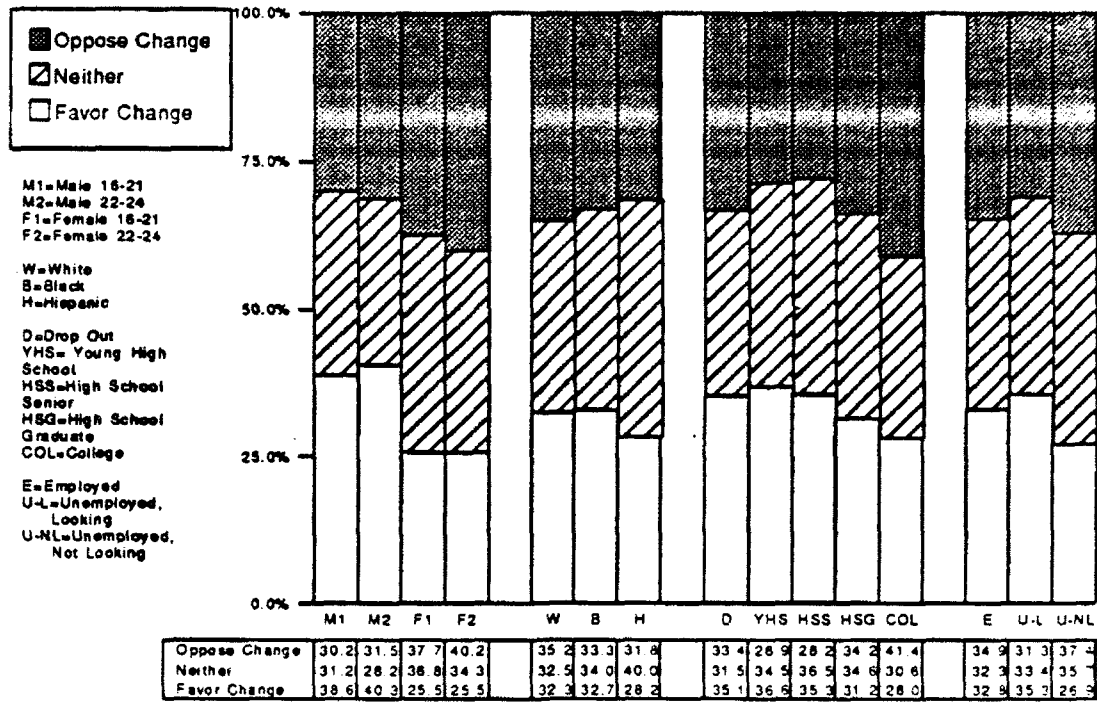
Q665. Under current law, only young men are required to register for the draft. If the draft were reinstated, only young men would be subject to being called. What is your opinion about changing the law so that both women and men would be required to register for the draft and be subject to being called. Would you...

Favor such a change, Neither favor not oppose such a change, or Oppose such a change?

As seen in Figure 39, the split regarding the draft issue was generally even between the three responses. Those groups with higher levels of opposition included women themselves, college and graduate students, and those unemployed and not seeking work.

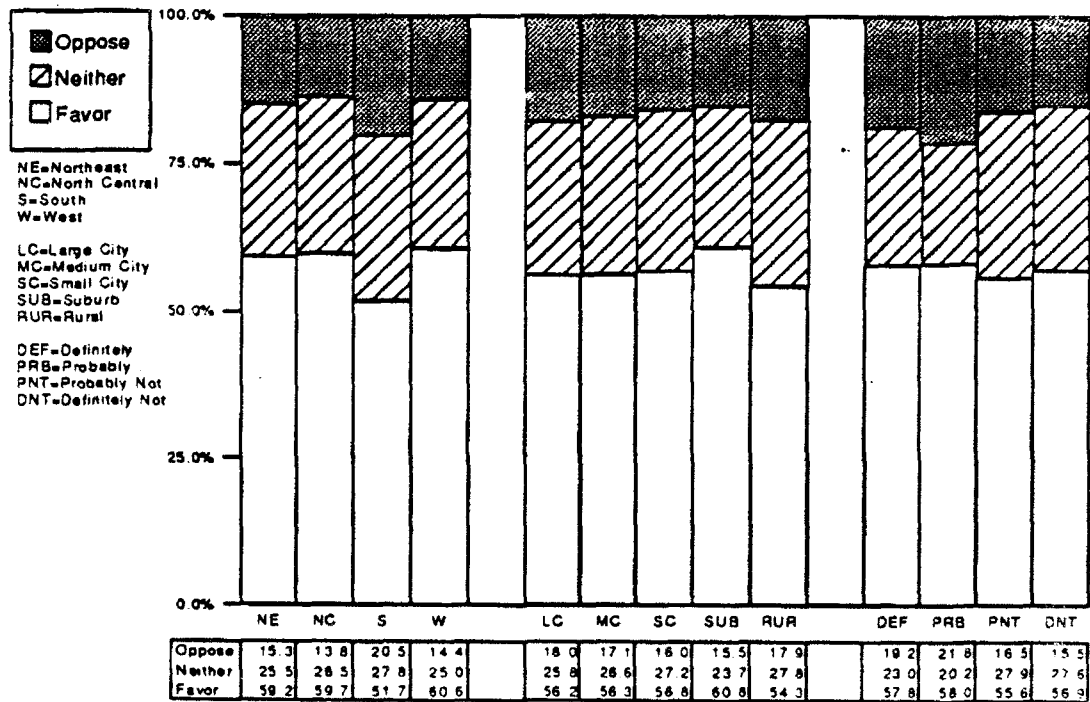
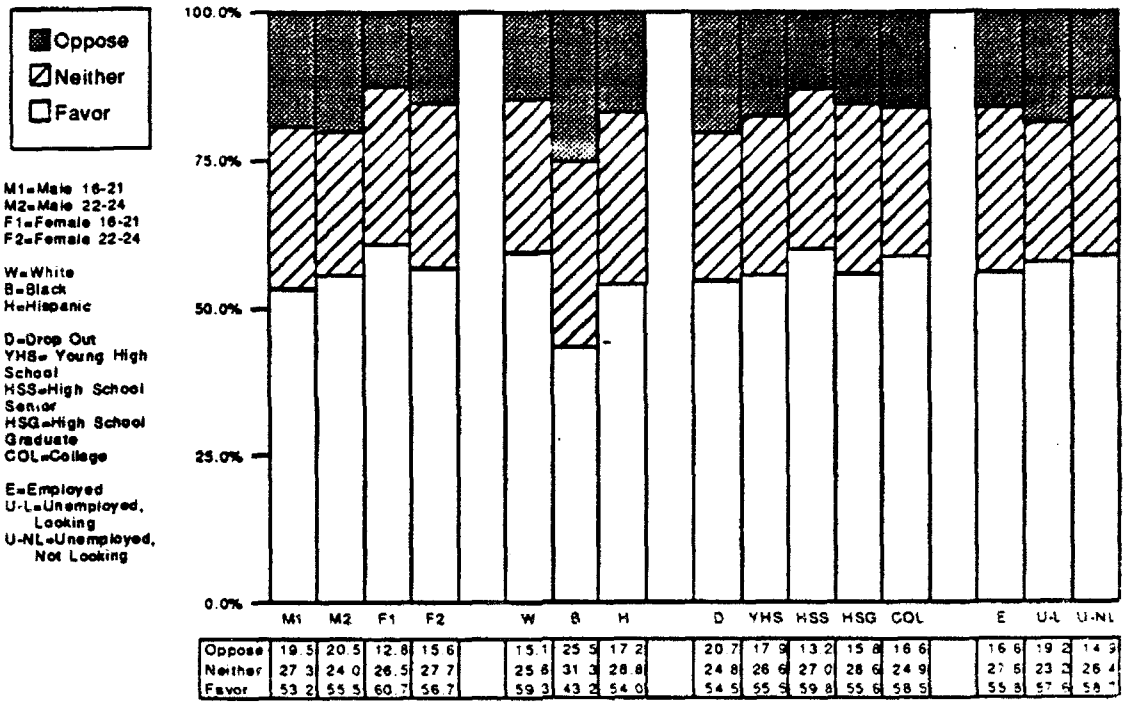
Opposition to women in combat roles is greatest among those groups that typically express a higher propensity to enlist: males, Blacks, high school dropouts, unemployed, and individuals from the South (Figure 40). When examined in conjunction with propensity, however, the results indicate only that individuals with positive propensity, higher percentages both favoring and opposing women in combat. Overall there was stronger opposition to requiring draft registration for women than there was to women serving in combat roles.

Figure 39
Attitude Towards Women Being Subject to the Draft
by Demographics and Propensity



Source: YATS 1991
 * Significant difference, $p < .05$
 ** Significant difference, $p < .01$

Figure 40
Attitude Towards Women Serving in Combat
by Demographics and Propensity



Source: YATS 1991
 * Significant difference, p < .05
 ** Significant difference, p < .01

The Impact of Military Downsizing

The survey also addressed the military drawdown. Specifically, respondents were asked:

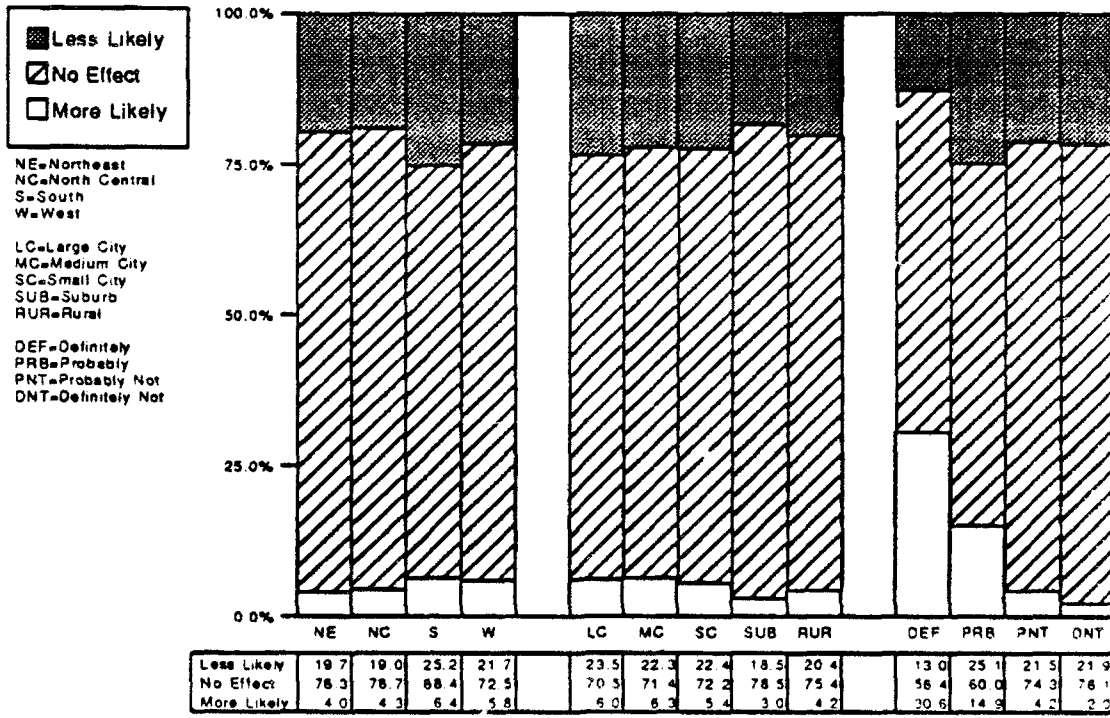
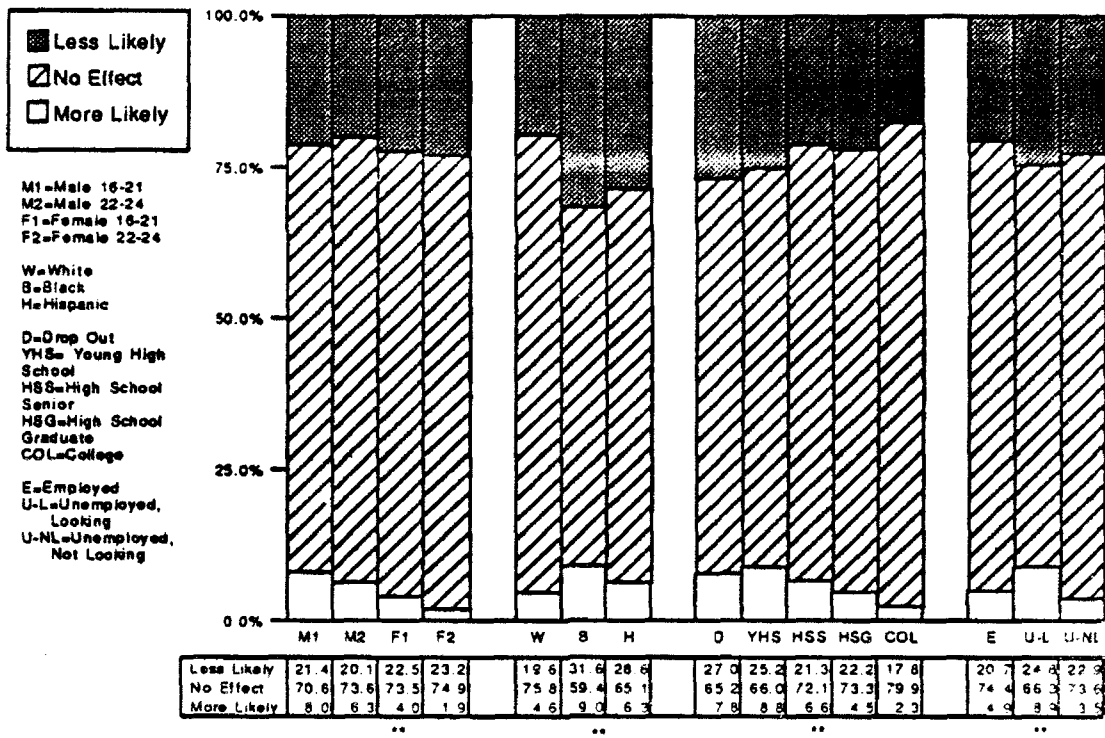
Q527E. With the budget cuts in the Defense Department, the military will probably not recruit as many new people as before. How does this affect your attitude towards enlistment? Are you...

Q527F. The budget cuts also mean that some soldiers will have to leave military service earlier than planned. How does this affect your attitude towards enlistment? Are you...

More likely to enlist, Not changing your attitude, or Less likely to enlist?

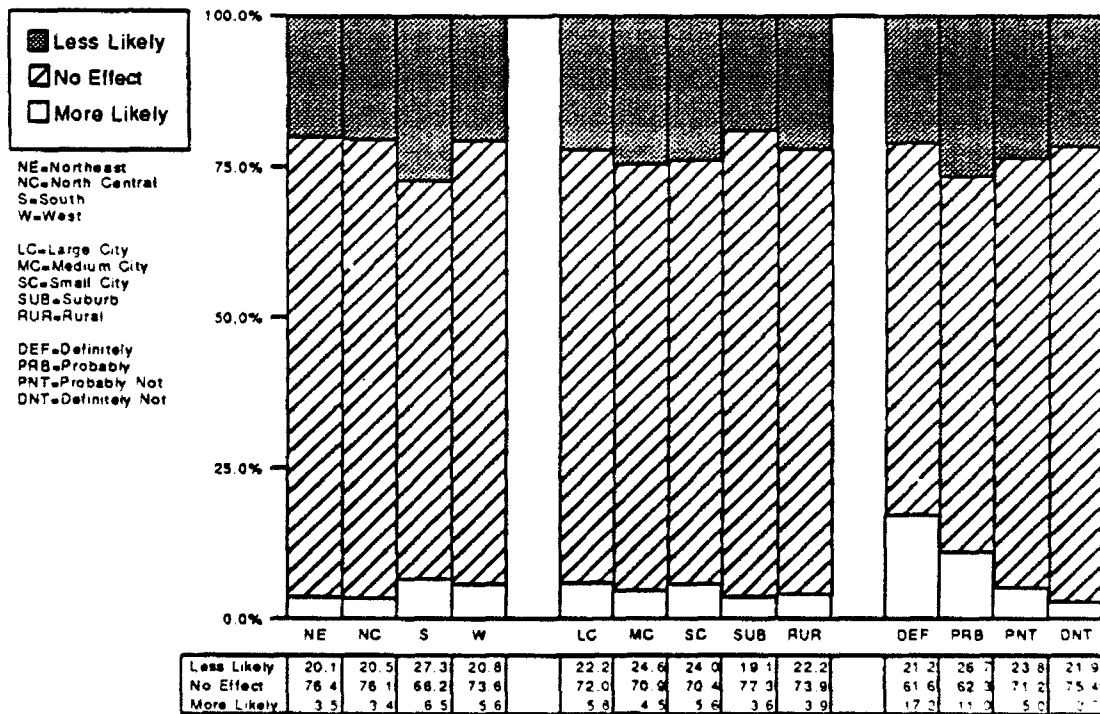
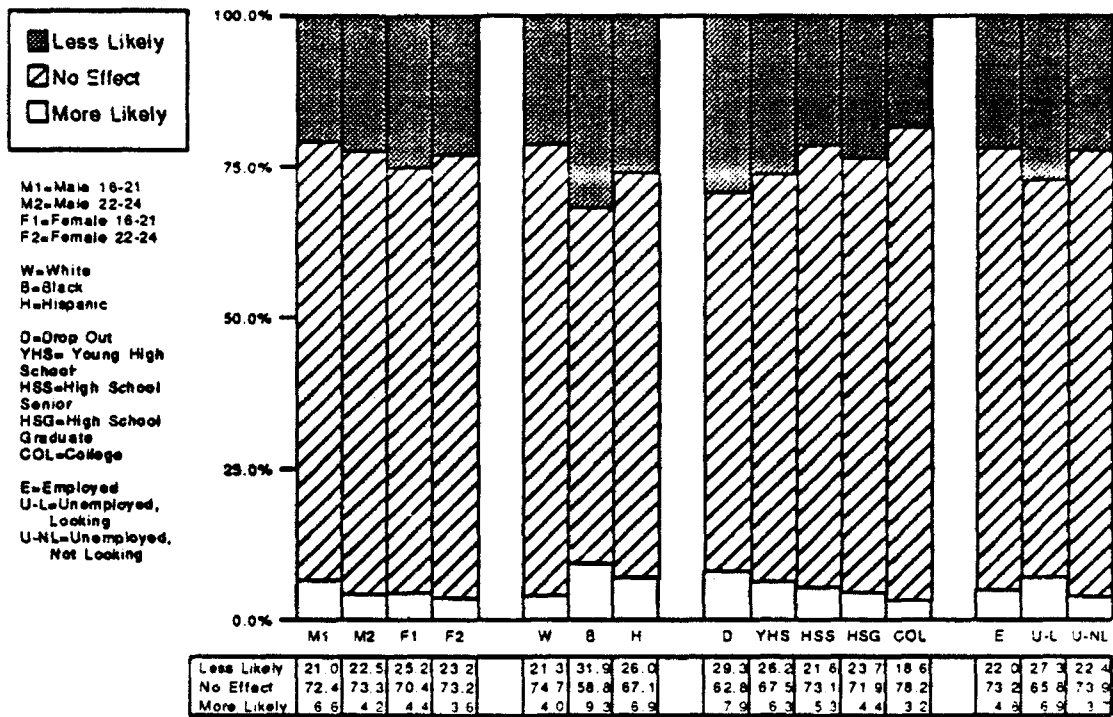
As seen in Figures 41 and 42, the majority of respondents across subgroups reported that these factors had no impact on their enlistment intentions. However, substantial numbers (18-32 percent) indicated that the drawdown made them less inclined to join. Shifts were generally larger in the groups that typically have higher propensity: Blacks, high school students, unemployed persons looking for work, and those from the South. This impact was even felt among those who said they definitely or probably will enlist in the next few years, with substantial numbers indicating that this likelihood is lower because of these events.

Figure 41
Impact of Reduced Recruiting on Enlistment Intentions
by Demographics and Propensity



Source: YATS 1991
** Significant difference, p < .01

Figure 42
Impact of Early Separations on Enlistment Intentions
by Demographics and Propensity



Source: YATS 1991
 ** Significant difference, p < .01

Section 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This report examined data from the 1991 Youth Attitude Tracking Study in an effort to obtain insight into some of the factors that influence young men and women as they consider enlistment in the military. A wide range of data were examined, and a number of significant relationships observed between stated propensity to join the military and attitudes, perceptions, current events, the input of others, and Defense policies.

Reasons given for and against enlisting are interesting because they were unaided. That is, the questions were asked in an open-ended format and respondents were free to say whatever came to mind. When examined along demographic lines, the reasons for enlisting seem to relate to where the person is in his or her life. High school seniors, for instance, were more likely to focus on obtaining money for post-secondary education. Unemployed individuals were more likely to mention training or pay, with pay also mentioned by those not in school or attending college. Training was a primary reason for those who had or were looking for jobs. Students who are not yet in the labor market may not be familiar with the problems often encountered by young people as they attempt to gain meaningful employment without much experience. Therefore, they tend to undervalue opportunities to gain such experience such as those provided by the military. All in all, a continued emphasis on the military's ability to impart specific job skills that are valued by employers seems warranted.

Women, as compared to men, tended to view duty to country and training as less important reasons to enlist in the military, instead citing money for education as a reason to join. Perhaps most surprising was the overall lack of emphasis placed on personal growth factors. Implicit in much of the military's recruiting message is the notion that a term of service will lead to a more responsible and personally competent individual. Whether this message is not getting across, is not believed, or is unimportant to the bulk of young people cannot be discerned from the present data. What does seem clear is that an emphasis on the more tangible benefits of military service (e.g., money for educational, job training) is not misplaced.

The major reasons for not enlisting included a dislike for the military, family obligations, other career plans, the possibility of danger and injury, and the length of the commitment. A number of points are worth noting in this regard. First, it may be of value to provide follow-ups to this item in future YATS so that those who indicate a dislike for the military can be queried further about the nature and source of this view. It would also be interesting to track these data over the next several years as the impact is felt from generally popular actions such as Desert Shield/Storm and humanitarian ventures like that undertaken in Somalia.

The fear of physical harm or danger, mentioned by nearly 9 percent of respondents, is obviously a realistic one. On the other hand, some 20 percent of male respondents indicated that they disagreed that the military involves danger and risk. It is true, of course, that there are military occupations that are less dangerous. And clearly, since the Vietnam conflict, military members have been subject to combat infrequently.

The upshot of this is that danger is a real possibility, and is not something that should be down-played or ignored. So it is with certain of the other objections these young people raised regarding military service. Being a servicemember requires a much higher *level* of commitment than most other walks of life. Thus there will be interference with other career plans and family obligations. Likewise, the *length* of commitment is a real concern, but one that would be difficult to address in any meaningful way. When training time is taken into account, three years is a bare minimum obligation. Overall, it appears that although there are acknowledged advantages to military enlistment that may entice younger people to consider this option, there are negative aspects that will always serve as barriers to some, and about which little can be done.

The views of young people concerning current military issues included a number of points of interest. There was support for the idea that the United States should maintain a stronger military than other countries. However, over a quarter of the sample indicated at least some disagreement with this idea. Perhaps mirroring the sentiments of the population as a whole was the finding that support for using military power to protect this country's economic interests was more acceptable than fighting for the rights of *other* countries. Generally, those who favored a strong military were strongly for the former, but offered relatively weaker support for intervention on behalf of other peoples. The reverse was true for those who were not as staunch in their belief that the U.S. should be a dominant military power. This result may shed light on the overwhelming popularity of Operations Desert Shield/Storm, in that they were characterized as efforts undertaken to both protect vital U.S. economic interests and to defend the rights of Kuwait. The

combination of these goals found a larger degree of support than either would have on their own.

When asked if women should be required to register for the draft (and be drafted if the need arose), the sample split just about in thirds; 32 percent in favor, 33 percent undecided, 34 percent opposed. Support was lowest among college students, Hispanics, and women themselves. A recent Roper poll of 1,500 American adults found an even split between those favoring and opposing current combat restrictions for women (Roper, 1992). Opposition among YATS respondents, on the other hand, is somewhat stronger (57%). Ironically, the same groups that were more likely to oppose the draft registration of females (college students, Hispanics, women themselves) were also more likely to approve a change in the combat restriction provisions. This may reflect the position that, although women should not be drafted, those who volunteer should be allowed to perform combat roles if they choose.

Although positive propensity towards military enlistment remained relatively constant at 16 percent for 1990 and 1991, adding the proviso of war had a strong impact on these intentions. When asked if they would volunteer *if they felt it were necessary to go to war*, nearly 60 percent of the sample responded differently than when asked if they would be enlisting in the next few years. While 53 percent indicated a greater likelihood that they would volunteer if needed to fight, only seven percent said they'd be less likely to join under these conditions. Keeping the hypothetical nature of this question in mind, this result suggests that there is a sizeable group of young people who would be more

likely to give military service consideration if they saw a clear and immediate need to defend the country's interests.

These results also suggest that the Gulf War should have had a noticeable impact on propensity in 1991, inasmuch as the function of the Armed Forces was demonstrated vividly during the early part of that year. When asked if Operations Desert Shield/Storm increased, decreased, or had no effect on their desire to enlist, however, the vast majority indicated that there was no impact. In fact, there were positive shifts among certain demographic groups (e.g., young men). What may be of greater interest is the evidence indicating that the military drawdown has a greater effect on enlistment propensity than the heavily publicized and lauded Operations Desert Shield/Storm. Overall, nearly a quarter of respondents said that forced "early-outs" and reduced recruiting lessened their desire to enlist. This compares to 13 percent whose intentions were negatively effected by the Gulf War. Clearly, efforts must reinforce the Services' need for qualified new recruits as the drawdown process continues. Otherwise, significant numbers of youth may be dissuaded from pursuing the military option based on the prospect of rejection either at the time of application or after entering service.

On a brighter note, these results indicate that youth generally perceived the military as a place with non-boring jobs that provide valuable training and experience. The latter opinion, in particular, seems to be affected by education; those who bring more to an employer in terms of educational background saw military job experience as having less value. The extent of agreement with the idea that individuals are not treated fairly in the military (18%) is somewhat surprising. Also surprising is the fact that,

although DoD has been a leader in implementing nondiscriminatory policies, this perception of unfairness was somewhat stronger among minorities. Further, although the treatment of women in the military has received a great deal of attention in recent times, civilian females were no more likely than males to see the military as an environment where people are treated unfairly.

Generally, the individual Services were viewed in a positive light as sources of benefits such as money for education, job experience, physical challenge, and leadership skills. There were some differences in how each Service was perceived, however. The Army was viewed positively in terms of equal opportunity, educational benefits, and leadership. The Navy was seen as a high technology workplace with an opportunity to travel. The Marine Corps rated high in terms of leadership and a physical challenge. Finally, the Air Force was viewed as a potential source of job skills, high technology, and travel. There were two areas where none of the Services were viewed well: offering a chance to stay near family and friends and maintaining personal freedom. Although these latter factors might be exploited by the National Guard and Reserve Components, the active duty Services are somewhat limited in the flexibility they can provide to those who enlist.

Over a quarter of respondents indicated that they had discussed joining the military with someone in the recent past. Parents and friends were most likely to be consulted, although a relatively high proportion of Blacks indicated that they talked to other relatives. To the extent that there was a trend, younger respondents favored parents, while 22-24 year-olds leaned towards friends, including boy/girlfriends. Overall.

the reactions on the part of those with whom military service was discussed were positive, although mothers were less supportive. Overall, females, Hispanics, and more highly-educated persons received less encouragement to join the military. Although causality cannot be inferred, there was a strong relationship between the attitude of others and expressed likelihood of enlisting.

An overwhelming 80 percent of respondents said that they knew someone currently serving in the military. And there was some indication that having an acquaintance in a particular Service increases the likelihood that one will be inclined to join that Service. This relationship appears to be enhanced when the person is known to like being in the military.

In summary, others appear to have an influence on the enlistment decision-making process. This finding suggests that recruiting strategies with such influencers in mind--particularly parents--may be of value. In addition, it should be noted that current military members seem to influence peers who are of enlistment age. Although it is difficult to determine how to capitalize on this directly, the role of current members as they influence potential members is an important one.

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Appendix A
1991 YATS Items Included in Influences Analyses

Propensity

How likely is it that you will be serving on active duty in

R510. the Army?

Definitely, Probably, Probably not, Definitely not

R511. the Air Force?

R512. the Marine Corps?

R513. the Navy?

R505. How likely is it that you will be serving in the National Guard?

R507. How likely is it that you will be serving in the Reserves?

Reasons for/for not Enlisting

R526A. If you were to consider joining the military, what would be the main reasons?
[PROBE: Any other reasons?] [CODE ALL MENTIONS]

R528A. What is the main reason you would not consider enlisting in the military Service?
[PROBE: What is the main reason?]

Military/Service Perceptions

Now I'd like to get your opinions on what you think life in the active military is like. For each of the four statements I will read, please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement.

Q649D. Life in the military involves great danger and personal risk.

Q649E. The military has nothing but boring jobs and uninteresting routines.

Q649F. The military is a good place to get the experience necessary to be competitive in the civilian job market.

Q649G. People in the military are not treated fairly.

GENERAL DIRECTIONS: 2 of the 4 active duty services will be randomly selected for each respondent. Attributes will have a random starting point and then cycle through. Respondents will rate how strongly they agree or disagree with the statement that the chosen Service offers each attribute.

Please respond to the following items by stating whether you strongly agree, mostly agree, neither agree nor disagree, mostly disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement.

Q529A1. The [Service 1] offers the opportunity to get money for education.

Q529A2. The [Service 2] offers the opportunity to get money for education.

Q529C1/C2. The [Service 1/2] offers a physical challenge.

Q529E1/E2. The [Service 1/2] offers the opportunity to develop leadership skills.

Q529F1/F2. The [Service 1/2] offers the opportunity to work in a high-technology environment.

Q529H1/H2. The [Service 1/2] offers equal opportunity for minorities and women.

Q529J1/J2. The [Service 1/2] offers the opportunity to learn a valuable trade or skill.

Q529M1/M2. The [Service 1/2] offers the opportunity for travel and adventure.

Q529N1/N2. The [Service 1/2] offers the opportunity to work as part of a team.

Q529O1/O2. The [Service 1/2] offers the opportunity to stay in an area near family and friends.

Q529P1/P2. The [Service 1/2] offers personal freedom.

Q529Q1/Q2. The [Service 1/2] offers the opportunity to develop self-confidence and esteem.

Q529U1/U2. Your parents would approve of you joining [Service 1/2].

Current Events

Q527D. If you felt it were necessary for the U.S. to fight in some future war, what would be the likelihood you would volunteer to serve in the military? Would you say that you would...

Definitely Volunteer, Probably Volunteer, Probably not Volunteer, Definitely not Volunteer

Q527L The U.S. is considered to have been successful in Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm. How does this affect your attitude towards enlistment?

Each of the military Services had a different role in the Middle East War. The following questions ask about the involvement of each service and how that involvement affects your attitudes towards enlistment.

Q527Q1. How involved do you think the Army was in Desert Storm? Were they...

Not at all involved, Slightly involved, or Very much involved?

Q527Q2. How does this involvement affect your attitude toward enlistment in the Army? Are you...

More likely to enlist, Not changing your attitude, or Less likely to enlist?

Q527L1 & L2 Air Force
Q527M1 & M2 Marine Corps

Q527N1 & N2 Navy
Q527NA & NB Reserves/Guard

Influences

Q644E. Within the last year or so, have you discussed the possibility of your serving in the military with anyone other than a military recruiter? [Yes/No]

Q644G. Who did you discuss this with? [PROBE: Anyone else?]

Q644G1. For each of the people mentioned in Q644G, please tell me how you think they would feel about your serving in the active military. Would you say that they would be very favorable, somewhat favorable, neither favorable nor unfavorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable to the idea?

Acquaintances in Military Service

Q644A. Do you know anyone currently serving in the military? [Yes/No]

Q644B. Do you know anyone who has been accepted to serve in the military? [Yes/No]

Q644C. In which branch(es) are they serving? [PROBE: Any others?]

Q644D. Do they like serving in the military? [Yes/No/In-between]

Military Policies and Programs

Now I'm going to ask you for your opinions on government and public affairs. Please tell me to what extent you either agree or disagree with the following statements.

Q527A. First, do you think there are times when the U.S. should go to war to protect the rights of other countries? Would you say...

Strongly agree, Mostly agree, Neither agree or disagree, Mostly disagree, Strongly disagree

Q527B. Do you think the U.S. should go to war to defend its own economic interests?

Q527C. Do you think the U.S. ought to have much more military power than any other nation in the world?

Q664. Currently, women are restricted by law from military duties involving combat. What is your opinion about changing the law so that women would be allowed to volunteer for combat assignments? Would you...

Q665. Under current law, only young men are required to register for the draft. If the draft were reinstated, only young men would be subject to being called. What is your opinion about changing the law so that both women and men would be required to register for the draft and be subject to being called. Would you..

Favor such a change, Neither favor nor oppose such a change, or Oppose such a change?

Many events throughout the world have occurred that may affect people's intentions to enlist in the military. I will now ask you about some of these events.

Q527E. With the budget cuts in the Defense Department, the military will probably not recruit as many new people as before. How does this affect your attitude towards enlistment? Are you...

More likely to enlist, Not changing your attitude, or Less likely to enlist?

Q527F. The budget cuts also mean that some soldiers will have to leave military service earlier than planned. How does this affect your attitude towards enlistment?

Q527J. Recently there have been substantial changes in Eastern Europe, such as the removal of the Berlin Wall in Germany and revolution in Yugoslavia. Does this make you...

More likely to enlist, Not changing your attitude, or Less likely to enlist?