

**STRATEGY
RESEARCH
PROJECT**

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**FACTORS AFFECTING ARMY NATIONAL GUARD RETENTION
OF ENLISTED SOLDIERS**

BY

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**Factors Affecting Army National Guard Retention of Enlisted
Soldiers**

by

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ABSTRACT

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The inability to meet retention goals in the Army National Guard (ARNG) has been an issue for many years and has become even more critical with the reduced budgets that have occurred over the last seven years. There have been many suggested reasons why retention is less than desirable and many surveys as to why soldiers choose not to reenlist. The Arizona Army National Guard (AZ ARNG) conducted one such survey in 1998. Statistical analysis was done on selected data from the survey to gain a better understanding of the relationship between training, leadership, personal conflicts and a sense of belonging with soldiers' willingness to reenlist. Results of the analysis revealed that the most important factor to a soldier's willingness to reenlist is their sense of belonging to the organization followed by the quality of training. Leadership and personal conflicts were not found to be significant. This did not hold true for female soldiers. Female soldiers' willingness to reenlist showed a much stronger relationship to whether or not they perceived their Guard duties as interfering with their personal lives. These

findings may help leaders focus their retention efforts in the most beneficial manner.

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FACTORS AFFECTING ARMY NATIONAL GUARD RETENTION OF ENLISTED SOLDIERS

Over the last decade, the United States military has had a significant reduction of active forces and an increasing reliance on reserve forces to be able to accomplish both wartime and peacetime missions. The increased reliance on reserve forces has placed greater emphasis on their readiness. Maintaining a high state of readiness is very dependent upon qualified (trained) personnel. This places a much greater emphasis on leaders being able to retain quality soldiers.

The retention of trained enlisted personnel in the military has been a major issue since the advent of the "All Volunteer Force". Over one-third of all enlistees fail to complete their first term of enlistment and of those that do another one-third choose not to reenlist.¹ The rate of soldiers in the Army continuing past four years is slightly greater than thirty five percent.² Retention of trained soldiers is a problem for both active and reserve forces.

Readiness requirements and the cost of initial entry training are the primary reason why National Guard leadership has placed great emphasis on the retention of qualified soldiers. Resources devoted to initial entry training could be redirected to sustainment training if re-enlistment has increased. The Director, Army National Guard, Major General Roger C. Schultz .

made the following statement concerning attrition of Army National Guard soldiers:

"Attrition is always a concern. It is often a reflection of the nation's economic health, employer and family needs. No soldier is any better than the Guard, that family is composed of his leaders, peers and subordinates, his at home and his community, to include his employer. I want to make this a leader issue because as leaders caring for our troops is job number one."³

Although leaders need to be concerned with all impacts on retention, they must address most of their attention to those factors that they personally can influence. The objective of this research project is to provide state National Guard leaders with information that may help them adjust their operational processes in a way that might increase retention of qualified enlisted soldiers.

This research will not focus on attrition of soldiers during their initial entry training or as a direct result of reserve component pay and national economic factors. Pay and national economics, or even local economics are variables beyond the influence and control of the state National Guards operational levels of leadership. However, evidence has indicated that second income aspects of reserve participation is an important factor and may affect attrition and reenlistment behavior.⁴ Initial entry training attrition is affected primarily by the active component training programs as well as the characteristics of the recruits. National Guard recruits go through the same

initial entry training as active duty recruits. Recruiting of National Guard soldiers is the responsibility of the state National Guards. However, the quality of recruits and the processes relating to attrition during initial entry training are beyond the scope of this research. Both pay and recruit qualities are known to impact retention and deserve additional attention and research.

Considerable research has been conducted on attrition and retention of active military forces but little formal research has been conducted on reserve force retention. Although there are some similarities between retention of active duty forces and reserve forces the variables affecting retention of reserve forces are considerably different. Little empirical data is published concerning reserve force retention.

A study conducted in 1972 entitled Longitudinal Study of Attitudes Toward Continuation in the Reserve Components, by General Research Corporation on behalf of the Department of the Army, is useful for the comparison of the historical aspects of the retention issues in the army reserve component. The primary purpose of the study was to determine what the most cost effective programs of incentives and other measures were necessary to maintain desired strength levels.

Based on the study the authors concluded that economic considerations were the most probable reason for soldiers choosing to reenlist. As a result of the analysis the study

recommended a program that included implementation of reenlistment bonuses, exchange privileges, retirement benefits and Servicemen's Group Life Insurance programs as well as non-economic factors to include domestic actions programs, relaxed grooming standards, greater promotion opportunity and improved skills match. Another conclusion of the study was that, the soldiers that are most likely to reenlist are the less educated older soldiers with lower family incomes.⁵ The study supports that economic factors are definitely an important factor in whether or not a soldier chooses to reenlist, however the inferred recommendation to focus retention efforts on the less educated financially dependent soldier is contrary to current reenlistment objectives. Today's reserve leaders are striving to retain the best qualified, better educated soldiers that decide to remain in the system because of individual and organizational values more than primarily economic rewards. This is not to say that economic rewards are not important and must be considered but the focus of leadership should be on creating an environment that enhances the willingness of soldiers to reenlist on the basis of factors other than monetary rewards. Factors such as the self-realization, quality of training, or the relationships with their leaders and peers are important to an individuals decision as to whether or not to reenlist.

Additional study was conducted by The Rand Corporation on behalf of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of

Defense/Reserve Affairs in 1985 entitled Attrition of Nonprior-service Reservists in the Army National Guard and Army Reserve.

The study produced findings that were contradictory to the General Research Corporation findings and recommendations. The Rand study found that there was a significantly higher rate of attrition of less educated soldiers and that the focus should be on recruiting soldiers that are high school graduates and have scored higher on mental capability tests⁶. Since this study the trend has been to focus on recruiting primarily high school graduates.

In 1997, the Army National Guard recruits consisted of 82.2% High School Diploma graduates and 17.2% General Education Diploma Graduates.⁷ The Army National Guard also met the Army quality goal of no more than 2% Test Category (TC) IV.⁸ Striving to enlist more educated and intelligent soldiers is consistent with the Rand recommendations.

However, the reenlistment rates have not changed appreciably since the beginning of the all-volunteer army in 1973. This would indicate that there are factors other than economic and the quality of the initial entry recruits that significantly affect reenlistment.

APPROACH

This paper utilized published literature and empirical data collected by a 1998 survey conducted by the Arizona Army National Guard (AZ ARNG) to make conclusions and recommendations

concerning retention of Army National Guard and Army Reserve component soldiers. This author statistically analyzed the empirical data to support the recommendations and conclusions contained in this research project.

The focus of the statistical analysis is on AZ ARNG soldiers. The findings and concepts however, should have strong external validity to other Army National Guard personnel throughout the United States. Application of these findings to Army Reserve forces does not have strong external validity because of differences in force structure, geographical dispersion and personnel procedures. Additional research is recommended to determine if these findings are in fact significant to Army Reserve soldiers.

One of the primary differences between the makeup of the Army National Guard and that of the Army Reserves is that the Army National Guard is comprised of primarily combat units and the Army Reserves is made up of primarily combat support and combat service and support units. Because of the nature of the different types of units the Army Guard relies more on training soldiers as members of teams and larger units. The Army Reserve is able to devote more attention to training individual skills essential to the missions. Effective team training is essential to maintaining soldier and unit readiness and is best accomplished with stability within the team. Therefore, the long

term retention of personnel is very important to the effectiveness of the teams and team readiness.

Studies conducted by Paul F. Hogan and Christine M. Villa in 1986 relating to factors affecting reenlistment in the army reserves concluded that because service in the reserves is not a full-time job which is depended upon as a primary source of livelihood, factors other than economics play a larger role in explaining reserve reenlistment behavior.⁹

There are many other factors that may have positive impacts on retention. Most soldiers are looking for more than "just a job." Like employees in the civilian work force they want to make a difference, to make a contribution and be an integral part of the organization.¹⁰ The attitudes of soldiers toward some of the many factors relating to retention must be determined from the soldiers themselves and by understanding how reserve component soldiers differ from active duty soldiers.

Participation in the reserve force has a separate set of institutional characteristics than full-time employment in the active forces. Some important characteristics of reserve forces that differ from active duty forces are:¹¹

- Reserve participation is part-time.
- Reservists lack the geographical mobility of full-time soldiers. Decreasing the availability of specialties and positions available for advancement.

- Reserve forces include both prior-service and non prior-service personnel.
- Reserve enlistment contracts may be a less binding constraint than active duty contracts.
- The reservist's full time civilian career and employer has an influence on retention.

The different characteristics of reserve training as compared to active duty training contribute to the attrition problems. The task of training a part time force to be able to perform at or near the level of a full time force presents many problems specific to the reserve force. Reserve forces primarily train on weekends (Inactive Duty Training) and often lack the time, training facilities and equipment to conduct quality training. This has negative impacts on soldier morale as well as soldier readiness.

Another negative circumstance that confronts many reserve component leaders is that units often lack the opportunity to conduct actual operational training. An example is an armored cavalry unit that relies heavily on the availability of ranges and heavy transportation requirements to conduct crew/team training. Other units, such as transportation or medical, may be able to enhance the quality of their training by coordinating training plans with real world operational missions. Those units that do suffer from poor training, either from poor management or

other circumstances, often suffer from high attrition. This is supported by research that has shown that personnel unqualified for their assigned position are more likely to attrite.¹²

Differences between the active and reserve forces highlight the necessity for research and study independent from that, which has or will be conducted concerning attrition of active forces. However, during the initial entry training process factors impacting reserve component soldier attrition is very closely related to active forces.

To better assess the attitudes of soldiers and determine those issues most important, the AZ ARNG worked with a contractor, Magma Management Consulting, Inc. to conduct a survey of AZ ARNG enlisted soldiers. A portion of the empirical data collected by this survey is being utilized for the purposes of this research.¹³

The Magna survey included a compilation of 1839 individually completed surveys. The survey included 67 questions concerning demographic information as well as responses to questions related to attitudes. They identified pride, time use, educational benefits and the physical fitness requirements as being primary factors affecting attrition. This researcher acknowledges the findings of the Magna research but, it is the opinion of this researcher that the empirical data can be utilized and analyzed in a different manner to identify categorical areas that impact attrition. Because attrition is attributable to many factors,

some of which are beyond the control of leadership, this researcher choose to select attitudinal questions that can be related to the question of whether or not a soldier is willing to reenlist. The theory being that if all soldiers are willing to reenlist than only factors beyond the control of leadership would attribute to attrition.

Both soldier pride and time use are also a focus of this research but education benefits and the physical fitness program are either beyond the control of the leaders dealing directly with the soldier or are regulatory in nature. Both physical fitness and educational benefit programs are important because they can both be very adversely impacted by poor or inappropriate administration. Individual leaders attempting to improve reenlistment within their respective unit can change neither program significantly. Still, there are factors that leaders can address within their own organization that go beyond what would be considered appropriate administration of ongoing programs.

METHODOLOGY

Although Magna used 1839 completed, surveys this author chooses to use data from 200 completed surveys as the sample for this analysis. The sample was generate by an SPSS Version 7.0 random number generator used to select a simple random sample, without replacement, from the sampling frame made up of the complete data set, all 1839 records.¹⁴

The survey was conducted during the months of July, August and September 1998. The surveys and a cover letter were given to the Battalion Command Sergeant Majors (CSMs) to personally hand to their First Sergeants (1SGs). The 1SGs' were instructed to hand the surveys out in formation and get them back the same day. The CSMs were instructed to stress the importance of the survey in our efforts improve the AZ Army National Guard. The cover letter was from the AZ ARNG State Command Sergeant Major thanking the soldiers in advance for participating and explaining the importance of the survey. There were no other instructions because they were trying to keep the reading material to a minimum and to maximize participation.

Based on the survey methodology there is a certain degree of question about the internal validity of the process because soldiers that may have chosen not to respond to the survey for any of many different reasons. They may have already been so disgruntled with the AZ ARNG that they just refused out of spite or they may have been so busy trying to accomplish their assigned duties that they choose not to take the time to fill out the survey. It was not a mandatory requirement to fill out the survey.

Those that responded to the survey were 79% male and 17% female, with 4% not responding to the gender question. This sample has a greater percentage of females (17%) than the female enlisted force (9.4%) of the entire Army National Guard.¹⁵ The

greater number of female respondents will increase the validity of the findings toward the attitudes of female soldiers. While the relatively small decrease in male soldiers should have little impact on the validity of the findings for male soldiers.

Fifty seven percent of all respondents were married and the pay grade structure was 7% in the grades of E-1 to E-3, 66% grades E-4 to E-5, and the remaining 27% were E-6 to E-9 (Table 1).

Grades E-4 to E-5 are those soldiers that are the most likely to be the ones that can be influenced the most concerning their willingness to reenlist. The very junior soldiers are most likely not yet eligible for reenlistment and the senior soldiers have already invested so much into the system that they would lose considerably by not remaining in the Guard until retirement. However, senior soldiers have a great influence on their subordinates and junior soldiers will soon be in the reenlistment window of opportunity. Therefore the attitudes of all soldiers are considered to be just as important to this research.

FACTORS AND FINDINGS

The factors this research addresses are training, leadership communication with soldiers, personal conflicts and a sense of belonging to the organization. Both the statistical research and literature review will be utilized as a basis to make conclusions on the overall research.

For the purposes of this research, sixteen of the questions included in the survey will be statistically analyzed to make conclusions as to attitudes that may effect retention. One of the sixteen questions is whether the soldier was willingness to reenlist. This allows for making correlation of responses to determine if certain attitudes statistically affect the dependent variable of whether or not a soldier is willing to reenlistment. If attitude about a certain activity or situation does statistically correlate to a persons willingness to reenlist, then operational leaders should conclude that they should act to change that attitude. This may mean changing an operation, situation or perception on the part of the soldiers. The conclusions of this research will provide recommendations on how leaders should go about making changes to enhance retention.

The Magma Survey also included questions concerning marital status, gender, and rank. These demographic questions will allow for determining different attitudes of groups and whether or not leaders will have to address issues differently depending upon the demographics. Of the sixteen questions utilized in this project twelve were put in groups of three each (independent variables), three other questions concerned demographics and one was the dependent variable of the respondent's Willingness to reenlist.

The hypothesis of the research is that the more positive the respondents felt about the different factors (independent

variables) the more likely they would be willing to reenlist. The goal was to test the hypothesis and to determine which independent variables have the most influence on the dependent variable.

Groupings of questions are based on this researcher's opinion of which questions related to different soldier attitudes. The attitude groupings include training, personal conflict, leadership communication with soldiers and belonging. Each attitude grouping addresses different areas of influence that leaders may have on the perceptions of individual soldiers. Each area of influence is an independent variable that can be statistically compared to the soldier's willingness to reenlist (dependent variable).

Questions were asked in a manner in which the respondents could answer in any one of five ways. 1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=disagree, and 5=strongly disagree. All responses were recorded so that the response of a number 1 would be the most positive toward reenlistment and the response of number 5 the most negative toward reenlistment.

Frequency distribution analysis of the dependent variable, I would reenlist today, indicated that 62.3% of the respondents felt that they agreed or strongly agreed and that 13.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Twenty four percent (24 %) neither agreed nor disagreed (Table 2).

Analysis consisted of univariate comparisons of Mean and Median as a measure of central tendency for all variables and combined variables (training, personal, leadership and belonging). Crosstabulations between the dependent variable (willingness to reenlist) and non-combined independent variables using counts and percentages was used for bivariate analysis. Both univariate and bivariate analysis will provide an indication of soldier attitudes and the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. Regression analysis was used for predicting which variables will have the greatest affect on the dependent variable. This should identify which independent variable is most effective for estimating and resulting in a change to the dependent variable. This provides the leader a tool for determining where to focus any efforts at change.

Training

Poor quality training is often mentioned as a reason for soldiers unwillingness to reenlist. Poor quality can be the result of a multitude of reasons, such as the lack of proper training resources, unprepared instructors or inappropriate subject matter. The many varying influences on quality training make it difficult to determine one factor that must be improved. Therefor, this research addresses training as a whole by looking at the soldiers generalized perception of training. The questions utilized in this analysis addressed whether a soldier thought

that they are conducting operations related to the job that they were trained for, training received is well planned, executed and a valuable use of time. Regardless of whether the training is Military Occupational Skill (MOS) specific or of a generic nature that applies to all soldiers the questions should lead to a conclusion as to the extent that training affects retention.

The following questions were used for the training portion of this analysis:

I feel I get enough duty MOS training?

Drills are well planned and organized?

My time is wasted at drill?

Whether a soldier feels they are getting enough MOS specific, training should indicate if the type of training being conducted acts as an enhancement or detractor to retention. Training activities are not just formalized training but also activities that relate directly to accomplishing the tasks that relate to an individuals MOS. Practice is training and it is understood by soldiers that performing functions that their specific MOS requires is training. Not getting enough duty MOS training gives soldiers the perception that too much time is spent on administrative duties or training that doesn't relate specifically to the individuals specific war time missions.

To evaluate the conduct of training beyond an individual's own specific MOS, the question is asked whether drills are well planned and organized. This question should indicate the

soldier's attitude toward the value of training activities that are not MOS specific.

Whether or not a soldier feels that time was being wasted is important because it also indicates the value of the type, quality and quantity of training.

Analyzed as a group, the training questions should indicate if the soldier's perception of training affects their willingness to reenlist.

Univariate analysis indicates that the soldier's attitude toward training was just slightly positive with a mean value of 2.7 and a median value of 2.6. The median value reflects that only slightly more than 50% of those soldiers that responded thought training was positive (Table 3).

The crosstabulation (bivariate) analysis of all three training related independent variables strongly support the hypothesis that those soldiers that think the quality of training is good are more likely to be willing to reenlist (Table 7).

Based on a regression analysis using soldiers willingness to reenlist as the dependent variable and training as the independent variable the results are a positive coefficient of .232. Which means that there is strong evidence that as the attitude toward training (independent variable) becomes more positive so will the dependent variable (willingness to reenlist). These findings were found statistically significant at the 5% level (Table 4). Meaning that there is a less than 5%

chance that this positive association happened randomly. Therefore, one can be quite confident that there is a relationship between training and willingness to reenlist. However, when analyzing males and females separately, there was not a significant relationship between training and willingness to reenlist for female soldiers (Tables 5 &6).

Personal Conflict

National Guard service for most soldiers is a part time job that affects their professional careers, family and their personal life. The extent to which the individual involvement with the Guard affects an individuals personal life is different for every soldier. To determine the extent that each soldier was asked questions relating to employer conflicts, time and travel. The assumption is being made that family conflicts would be indicated by the soldiers response to the question concerning time spent at the Guard. The following three questions were utilized to annualize personal conflicts:

Distance to and from drill is a problem for me.

The Guard takes too much of my time.

My employer supports my involvement in the Guard

It is not uncommon for soldiers to travel one, two or more hours one way to their place of IDT weekend duty. This can be perceived as a burden to some soldiers and cause strains on their personal life because of the extra time and cost associated with

travel. The marginal value of time and money differs greatly between individuals, therefore the actual time or travel distance is not as important as the soldier's perception. If soldiers do not think their time is well spent than leadership must take actions to improve the perceived quality of the time spent while actually at the Guard unit.

Time spent at guard takes a soldier away from his family, personal pursuits and other means of employment. The importance of time for personal pursuits varies greatly between individuals, but it is believed to becoming more important to many individuals. If the monetary, social or self-satisfaction rewards of Guard duties are not of greater value than other personal or professional activities, soldiers will most likely perceive the Guard as taking up too much of their time.

Although some employers actively support their employees participation in the Guard there are many who feel that it interferes with their own goals and desires. If a soldier believes that his full time employment is jeopardized in any way by his involvement with the Guard, then his willingness to reenlist will be affected.

Univariate analysis indicates that the soldier's attitude toward Personal conflicts was positive, with a mean value of 2.4 and a median value of 2.3. The median value reflects that more than 50% of those soldiers that responded agreed that the Guard did not interfere with their personal life (Table 3).

The crosstabulation (bivariate) analysis of all three Personal conflict related independent variables strongly support the hypothesis that those soldiers who do not think the Guard interferes with their personal life are more likely to be willing to reenlist (Table 7).

The relationship for distance to and from drills to whether or not a soldier would reenlist is not as strong as the other variables, however this may be attributable to the fact that few soldiers thought that distance was a problem at all (Table 3).

Based on a regression analysis using soldiers willingness to reenlist as the dependent variable and personal conflict as the independent variable the results are a positive coefficient of .111 (Table 4). This means there is evidence that as attitudes toward personal conflicts becomes more positive, so will the willingness to reenlist. These findings however, were not found statistically significant. When males and females were considered separately the results for females was a positive coefficient of .592 (Tables 5) and the results for males was negligible and not significant at a $-.02$ (Table 6). This provides very strong evidence that the greater females felt that their Guard duties did not interfere with their personal lives the more positive they would be toward their willingness to reenlist. These findings were found statistically significant at the 2% level. Meaning that there is less than a 2% chance that this positive association happened randomly. This indicates that males and

females willingness to reenlist, when considered as a function of how they perceive the Guard as interfering with their personal life, is considerably different.

Leadership

Questions relating to communication were utilized To evaluate the affect of leadership on a soldiers. This was based on the theory that soldiers who perceive that their leaders are communicating effectively will also have a positive perception of leadership within their organization.

Unit readiness and other factors may be an indicator of the quality of leadership. The individual perception of leadership however, can not be assessed by the performance of the unit. How the individual perceives communication within their unit, which is a function of leadership, can be evaluated. To evaluate the soldiers perception of communication, and therefore leadership, the following three questions were asked:

Drills are clearly communicated before execution.

Communication within my unit works well.

Career interviews are conducted at my unit.

It is the responsibility of the entire chain of command to communicate the intent of upcoming training in a manner that facilitates proper planning and preparation by all members of the organization. A leader must have a plan and prepared to execute the plan before they are able to communicate the plan

effectively. The perception held by soldiers concerning the effectiveness of leaders communicating drills before execution is therefore indicative of effective leadership.

Again, leadership effectiveness is directly related to the soldier's perception of how well communication within their work unit takes place. This relates to small unit leadership whereas the previous question covers the entire chain of command.

Conducting career interviews has a direct relationship to whether or not leaders are taking care of soldiers. The interest shown by the leaders or the lack of interest will affect an individual's perception as to the quality of leadership. Leaders that take care of their subordinates will make sure that they receive timely and appropriate career counseling.

The theory is that the perception of the soldiers relating to these areas of communication will be indicative of the quality of leadership with the organization.

Univariate analysis indicates that the soldier's attitude toward leadership communication was neither positive nor negative, with a mean value of 3.01 and a median value of 3.0. The median value reflects that, as many respondents were positive as were negative. This indicates that either the study is flawed, in that the research approach does not adequately address leadership or that leadership does not have a strong relationship to whether or not soldiers are willingly to reenlist (Table 3).

The crosstabulation (bivariate) analysis of all three Leadership related independent variables strongly support the hypothesis that those soldiers that think that their leadership communicates effectively are more likely to be willing to reenlist. It is particularly strong in the area of communication within an individuals unit. Indicating that the better the communication within a unit the more likely soldiers are to be willing to reenlist (Table 7).

Based on a regression analysis using soldiers willingness to reenlist as the dependent variable and Leadership communication as the independent variable the results are a positive coefficient of .009 (Table 4). This indicates that there is very little relationship between a soldier's attitude toward Leadership communication and their willingness to reenlist. Analysis of females and males separately failed to indicate any statistically significant findings relating to leadership communications (Tables 5 & 6).

Although the univariate and multivariate analysis does not support a relationship between leadership and reenlistment, the bivariate comparison of means does indicate a relationship. It is very possible that the independent variables utilized in this portion of this analysis were not adequate to evaluate a soldier's perception of leadership. Or that there are other factors that have a much greater affect on whether or not a soldier chooses to reenlist.

Belonging

Belonging relates to persons self worth and whether or not they feel they are an important part of the whole organization. The following questions were utilized to analyze whether soldiers perceive that they are an important part of the organization and that the organization is worth belonging to:

My family is included as a member of the guard family

I feel like I am a valuable and integral part of my unit

I am proud to be a member of the AZ ARNG

Being a member of the National Guard often requires a person to be away from home and family for extended periods, which is less of a burden if families have a personal interest in the organization. Family support groups are one means utilized to accomplish this connection between family and the National Guard. By asking the question about the inclusion of family we are able to evaluate if soldiers believe that their duty goes beyond just having a part time job and reaches out to a family involvement.

Another important aspect of belonging to an organization is whether an individual feels that they are a part of the organization that is required in order for the organization to function properly. This places a value on the individual participation and their sense of belonging.

Military service has long been a symbol of pride for Americans and membership in the Army National Guard is a part of

such service. Service without pride in being (belonging) a part of the organization means that the rewards must be greater in other areas to encourage soldiers to reenlist. Therefore, it is very important to know if soldiers feel that they "belong" in the Army National Guard.

Univariate analysis indicates that the soldier's attitudes toward belonging were much more positive than negative, with a mean value of 2.3 and a median value of 2.3. The median value reflects that many more respondents were positive than were negative about having a sense of belonging. It is particularly strong in the area of the pride an individual feels about being a member of the AZ ARNG, which had the most positive response (1.78 mean) of all the independent variables (Table 3).

The crosstabulation (bivariate) analysis of all three Belonging related independent variables strongly support the hypothesis that those soldiers that think that they "belong" are more likely to be willing to reenlist. Indicating that the greater the sense of belonging the more likely soldiers are to be willing to reenlist (Table 7).

Based on a regression analysis using soldiers willingness to reenlist as the dependent variable and belonging as the independent variable the results are a positive coefficient of .454. This means that there is strong evidence that, as attitudes become more positive toward belonging the more willing they will be to reenlist. These findings were found statistically

significant at the .1% level (Table 4). Meaning that there is less than a .1% chance that this positive association happened randomly. Therefore, we can be very confident that there is a relationship between the belonging and a soldiers willingness to reenlist. This was found to be statistically significant for both males and females when analyzed separately (Tables 5 & 6).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This project used soldier's attitude within the Arizona Army National Guard as a barometer toward how Army Reserve component, and primarily Army National Guard soldiers, feel about their organization and the relationship between their attitudes and reenlistment. The project has revealed some information that may be a little contrary to past finding and conclusions and may be useful to leaders of reserve component soldiers.

It has often been said, "how goes the training so goes the soldier". Meaning that poor training results in poor reenlistment. Other reasons often stated for why soldiers fail to reenlist are that Guard duties interfere with individuals personal lives and that leadership has a significant affect on retention. These are legitimate reasons but they are by no means the whole reason that attrition is so high within the Army reserve component forces.

This project has shown that training, leadership, personal conflicts and a sense of belonging are factors that all have a

relationship to a soldiers willingness to reenlist. However, analysis of the empirical data used in this research reveals that the two most statistically significant factors are a sense of belonging and training. Except for in the case of female soldiers, this appear to be more influenced by Personal conflicts than any other of the factors.

Based on this research leaders should focus their efforts at improving retention toward improving a soldiers perception of being a valuable member of the team and including their family into the Guard family. The increase in re-enlistments from a little improvement in these areas will likely exceed improvements in soldier perceptions of the other factors analyzed. Leaders must also be cognizant of the different needs of male and female soldiers and understand that female soldiers propensity to reenlist is strongly related to how they perceive the Guard to interfere with their personal lives. Issues such as over night drills and inconsistent schedules are most likely more important to female soldiers than male soldiers.

This research can be extended in several ways to improve the usefulness of this analysis. Army Reserve soldiers should be surveyed to determine if the findings of this research have validity toward their willingness to reenlist. Additional analyses of training variables should be conducted to determine which have the most significant impact. Word count 5940

APPENDIX

- TABLE 1 Demographic Frequency Tables
- Gender
 - Marital Status
 - Grade
- TABLE 2 Willingness to Reenlist Frequency Table
- TABLE 3 Frequency Statistics
- Training
 - Personal Attitudes
 - Leadership
 - Belonging
- TABLE 4 Regression Coefficients, Male and Female Soldiers
- TABLE 5 Regression Coefficients, Female Soldiers
- TABLE 6 Regression Coefficients, Male Soldiers
- TABLE 7 Crosstabs, I Would Reenlist-Independent Variables

TABLE 1

DEMOGRAPHIC FREQUENCY TABLES

GENDER

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	male	158	79.0	82.3	82.3
	female	34	17.0	17.7	100.0
	Total	192	96.0	100.0	
Missing	11.00	8	4.0		
Total		200	100.0		

MARITAL STATUS

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	married	114	57.0	59.1	59.1
	divorced	30	15.0	15.5	74.6
	single	48	24.0	24.9	99.5
	4.00	1	.5	.5	100.0
	Total	193	96.5	100.0	
Missing	11.00	7	3.5		
Total		200	100.0		

GRADE

1=E1, 2=E2.....9=E9

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	1	.5	.5	.5
	2.00	3	1.5	1.6	2.1
	3.00	10	5.0	5.2	7.3
	4.00	62	31.0	32.5	39.8
	5.00	64	32.0	33.5	73.3
	6.00	25	12.5	13.1	86.4
	7.00	16	8.0	8.4	94.8
	8.00	7	3.5	3.7	98.4
	9.00	3	1.5	1.6	100.0
	Total	191	95.5	100.0	
Missing	11.00	9	4.5		
Total		200	100.0		

TABLE 2

WILLINGNESS TO REENLIST FREQUENCY TABLE

I WOULD REENLIST TODAY

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly agree	47	23.5	24.0	24.0
	agree	75	37.5	38.3	62.2
	neither agree nor disagree	47	23.5	24.0	86.2
	strongly disagree	15	7.5	7.7	93.9
	strongly disagree	12	6.0	6.1	100.0
	Total	196	98.0	100.0	
Missing	11.00	4	2.0		
Total		200	100.0		

TABLE 3

FREQUENCY STATISTICS

TRAINING

Drills are well planned and organized	I feel I get enough Duty MOS Training	My time is NOT wasted at drills	Combined training related variables
Valid 200	198	196	200
Missing 0	2	4	0
Mean 2.9400	2.8283	2.5459	2.7683
Median 3.0000	3.0000	2.0000	2.6667

PERSONAL ATTITUDES

Distance to and from drill is NOT a problem for me	The Guard DOES NOT take to much of my time	My employer supports my involvement in the guard	Combined personal attitudes
Valid 200	196	193	200
Missing 0	2	7	0
Mean 2.2172	2.5816	2.	2.4225
Median 2.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.3333

LEADERSHIP

Drills are clearly communicated before execution	Communication within my unit works well	Career interviews are conducted at my unit	Combined leadership attitudes
Valid 199	199	198	200
Missing 1	1	2	0
Mean 2.4225	2.8744	3.3384	3.0333
Median 2.3333	3.0000	3.0000	3.0000

BELONGING

My family is included as a member of the Guard family	I feel like I am a valuable and integral part of my unit	I am proud to be a member of the AZ ARNG	Combined belonging attitudes
Valid 200	197	197	200
Missing 0	3	3	0
Mean 2.9550	2.2893	1.7868	2.3500
Median 3.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.3333

TABLE 4**REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS
Male and Female Soldiers**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
Combined training related variables	.23	.117	.166	1.983	.049
Combined personal variables	.11	.109	.067	1.018	.310
Combined leadership variables	9.608E-0	.108	.071	.893	.373
Combined belonging variables	.45	.109	.320	4.156	.000

a Dependent Variable: I would reenlist today

TABLE 5

**REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS
Female Soldiers**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Combined training related variables	.106	.187	.102	.568	.574
Combined personal variables	.592	.236	.353	2.511	.018
Combined leadership variables	.117	.197	.109	.591	.559
Combined belonging variables	.495	.261	.405	1.898	.068

- a Dependent Variable: I would reenlist today
b Selecting only cases for which gender = female

TABLE 6

**REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS
Male Soldiers**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Combined training related variables	.243	.141	.166	1.725	.087
Combined personal variables	-1.556E-02	.125	-.009	-.125	.901
Combined leadership variables	.171	.128	.121	1.333	.184
Combined belonging variables	.456	.119	.318	3.831	.000

a Dependent Variable: I would reenlist today

b Selecting only cases for which gender = male

TABLE 7

CROSSTABS

I would reenlist * Independent Variables

- 7-A Drills are well planned and organized
- 7-B I feel I get enough Duty MOS Training
- 7-C My time is NOT wasted at drills
- 7-D Distance to and from drill is NOT a problem for me
- 7-E The Guard DOES NOT take to much of my time
- 7-F My employer supports my involvement in the guard
- 7-G Drills are clearly communicated before execution
- 7-H Communication within my unit works well
- 7-I Career interviews are conducted at my unit
- 7-J My family is included as a member of the Guard family
- 7-K I feel like I am a valuable and integral part of my unit
- 7-L I am proud to be a member of the AZ ARNG

CROSSTABS TABLE 7-A

		Drills are well planned and organized						
		strongly agree	agree	neither agree or disagree	dis-agree	strongly disagree	Total	
I would reenlist today	strongly agree	Count	9	16	15	6	1	47
			56.3%	29.1%	22.1%	15.0%	5.9%	24.0%
	agree	Count	3	26	22	18	6	75
			18.8%	47.3%	32.4%	45.0%	35.3%	38.3%
	neither agree nor disagree	Count	3	10	19	10	5	47
			18.8%	18.2%	27.9%	25.0%	29.4%	24.0%
	disagree	Count		2	10	3		15
				3.6%	14.7%	7.5%		7.7%
	strongly disagree	Count	1	1	2	3	5	12
			6.3%	1.8%	2.9%	7.5%	29.4%	6.1%
	Total	Count	16	55	68	40	17	196

CROSSTABS TABLE 7-B

		I feel I get enough duty MOS training						
		strongly agree	agree	neither agree or disagree	dis-agree	strongly disagree	Total	
I would reenlist today	strongly agree	Count	13	16	4	8	6	47
			46.4%	23.2%	10.8%	22.2%	23.1%	24.0%
	agree	Count	11	26	15	14	9	75
			39.3%	37.7%	40.5%	38.9%	34.6%	38.3%
	neither agree nor disagree	Count	4	19	12	7	5	47
			14.3%	27.5%	32.4%	19.4%	19.2%	24.0%
	disagree	Count	0	6	3	3	3	15
				8.7%	8.1%	8.3%	11.5%	7.7%
	strongly disagree	Count	0	2	3	4	3	12
				2.9%	8.1%	11.1%	11.5%	6.1%
	Total	Count	28	69	37	36	26	196

CROSSTABS TABLE 7-C

		Distance to and from drill is NOT a problem for me						
		strongly agree	agree	neither agree or disagree	dis-agree	strongly disagree	Total	
I would reenlist today	strongly agree	Count	23	11	11	1	1	47
			36.5%	17.2%	25.0%	6.7%	10.0%	24.0%
	agree	Count	22	26	14	10	3	75
			34.9%	40.6%	31.8%	66.7%	30.0%	38.3%
	neither agree nor disagree	Count	13	15	13	2	4	47
			20.6%	23.4%	29.5%	13.3%	40.0%	6.1%
	disagree	Count	2	8	3	2	0	15
			3.2%	12.5%	6.8%	13.3%		7.7%
	strongly disagree	Count	3	4	3	0	2	12
			4.8%	6.3%	6.8%		20.0%	6.1%
	Total	Count	63	64	44	15	10	196

CROSSTABS TABLE 7-D

		The Guard DOES NOT take to much of my time						
		strongly agree	agree	neither agree or disagree	dis-agree	strongly disagree	Total	
I would reenlist today	strongly agree	Count	9	20	13	1	3	46
			40.9%	26.0%	18.8%	6.7%	25.0%	23.6%
	agree	Count	10	28	24	9	4	75
			45.5%	36.4%	34.8%	60.0%	33.3%	38.5%
	neither agree nor disagree	Count	2	20	22	1	2	47
			9.1%	26.0%	31.9%	6.7%	16.7%	24.1%
	disagree	Count	0	6	8	1	0	15
				7.8%	11.6%	6.7%		7.7%
	strongly disagree	Count	1	3	2	3	3	12
			4.5%	3.9%	2.9%	20.2%	25.0%	6.2%
	Total	Count	22	77	69	15	12	195

CROSSTABS TABLE 7-E

		Drills are well planned and organized						
		strongly agree	agree	neither agree or disagree	dis-agree	strongly disagree	Total	
I would reenlist today	strongly agree	Count	20	10	11	2	1	44
			34.5%	15.2%	23.9%	18.2%	9.1%	22.9%
	agree	Count	16	33	18	4	4	75
			27.6%	50.0%	39.1%	36.4%	36.4%	39.1%
	neither agree nor disagree	Count	14	8	14	5	5	46
			24.1%	12.1%	30.4%	45.5%	45.5%	24.0%
	disagree	Count	3	11	1	0	0	15
			5.2%	16.7%	2.2%			7.8%
	strongly disagree	Count	5	4	2	0	1	12
			8.6%	6.1%	4.3%		9.1%	6.3%
	Total	Count	58	66	46	11	11	192

CROSSTABS TABLE 7-F

		Drills are clearly communicated before drills						
		strongly agree	agree	neither agree or disagree	dis-agree	strongly disagree	Total	
I would reenlist today	strongly agree	Count	4	18	17	6	2	47
			40.0%	25.4%	30.4%	14.3%	12.5%	24.1%
	agree	Count	5	35	17	12	6	75
			50.0%	49.3%	30.4%	28.6%	37.5%	38.5%
	neither agree nor disagree	Count	1	15	15	14	2	47
			10.0%	21.1%	26.8%	33.3%	12.5%	24.1%
	disagree	Count	0	1	5	6	2	14
				1.4%	8.9%	14.3%	12.5%	7.2%
	strongly disagree	Count	0	2	2	4	4	12
				2.8%	3.6%	9.5%	25.0%	6.2%
	Total	Count	10	71	56	42	16	195

CROSSTABS TABLE 7-G

		Communication within my unit works well						
		strongly agree	agree	neither agree or disagree	dis-agree	strongly disagree	Total	
I would reenlist today	strongly agree	Count	6	23	8	5	5	47
			60.0%	32.9%	13.1%	11.9%	38.5%	24.0%
	agree	Count	3	32	17	19	4	75
			30.0%	45.7%	27.9%	45.2%	30.8%	38.3%
	neither agree nor disagree	Count	1	9	25	12	0	47
			10%	12.9%	41.0%	28.6%		24.0%
	disagree	Count	0	4	7	4	0	15
				5.7%	11.5%	9.5%		7.7%
	strongly disagree	Count	0	2	4	2	4	12
				2.9%	6.6%	4.8%	30.8%	6.1%
	Total	Count	10	70	61	42	13	196

CROSSTABS TABLE 7-H

		Drills are well planned and organized						
		strongly agree	agree	neither agree or disagree	disagree	strongly disagree	Total	
I would reenlist today	strongly agree	Count	3	14	15	5	10	47
			100.0%	32.6%	21.1%	11.1%	29.4%	24.0%
	agree	Count	0	19	29	17	6	75
				44.2%	40.8%	37.8%	29.4%	38.3%
	neither agree nor disagree	Count	0	9	19	12	5	47
				20.9%	26.8%	26.7%	20.6%	24.0%
	disagree	Count	0	1	7	5	2	15
				2.3%	9.9%	11.1%	5.9%	7.7%
	strongly disagree	Count	0	0	1	6	5	12
					1.4%	13.3%	14.7%	6.1%
	Total	Count	3	43	71	45	17	196

CROSSTABS TABLE 7-I

		Drills are well planned and organized						
		strongly agree	agree	neither agree or disagree	dis-agree	strongly disagree	Total	
I would reenlist today	strongly agree	Count	11	20	11	3	1	46
			47.8%	24.4%	18.3%	15.0%	10.0%	23.6%
	agree	Count	6	41	23	1	4	75
			26.1%	50.0%	38.3%	5.0%	40.0%	38.5%
	neither agree nor disagree	Count	5	16	19	7	0	47
			21.7%	19.5%	31.7%	35.0%		24.1%
	disagree	Count	1	3	6	3	2	15
			4.3%	3.7%	10.0%	15.0%	20.0%	7.7%
	strongly disagree	Count	0	2	1	6	3	12
				2.4%	1.7%	30.0%	30.0%	6.2%
	Total	Count	23	82	60	20	10	195

CROSSTABS TABLE 7-J

		My family is included as a member of the Guard family						Total
		strongly agree	agree	neither agree or disagree	dis-agree	strongly disagree		
I would reenlist today	strongly agree	Count	11	10	12	8	6	47
			45.8%	26.3%	15.2%	25.0%	26.1%	24.0%
	agree	Count	7	17	31	10	10	75
			29.2%	44.7%	39.2%	31.3%	43.5%	38.3%
	neither agree nor disagree	Count	6	8	23	8	2	47
			25.0%	21.1%	29.1%	25.0%	8.7%	24.0%
	disagree	Count	0	1	9	3	2	15
				2.6%	11.4%	9.4%	8.7%	7.7%
	strongly disagree	Count	0	2	4	3	3	12
				5.3%	5.1%	9.4%	13.0%	6.1%
	Total	Count	24	38	79	32	23	196

CROSSTABS TABLE 7-K

		Drills are well planned and organized						
		strongly agree	agree	neither agree or disagree	dis-agree	strongly disagree	Total	
I would reenlist today	strongly agree	Count	24	20	1	2	0	47
			51.1%	23.5%	2.6%	18.2%		24.0%
	agree	Count	11	38	17	6	3	75
			23.4%	44.7%	43.6%	54.5%	21.4%	38.3%
	neither agree nor disagree	Count	10	19	16	0	2	47
			21.3%	22.4%	41.0%		14.3%	24.0%
	disagree	Count	1	7	3	1	3	15
			2.1%	1.2%	5.1%	18.2%	42.9%	7.7%
	strongly disagree	Count	1	1	2	2	6	12
			2.1%	1.2%	5.1%	18.2%	42.9%	6.1%
	Total	Count	47	85	39	11	14	196

CROSSTABS TABLE 7-L

		I am proud to be a member of the AZ ARNG						
		strongly agree	agree	neither agree or disagree	dis-agree	strongly disagree	Total	
I would reenlist today	strongly agree	Count	35	6	5	1	0	47
			39.8%	8.2%	17.9%	33.3%		24.0%
	agree	Count	34	34	7	0	0	75
			38.6%	46.6%	25.0%			38.3%
	neither agree nor disagree	Count	16	23	7	0	1	47
			18.2%	31.5%	25.0%		25.0%	24.0%
	disagree	Count	1	7	6	1	0	15
			1.1%	9.6%	21.4%	33.3%		7.7%
	strongly disagree	Count	2	3	3	1	3	12
			2.3%	4.1%	10.7%	33.3%	75.0%	6.1%
	Total	Count	88	73	28	3	4	196

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Michael P. Ward and Hong W. Tan, The Retention of High-Quality Personnel in the U.S. Armed Forces (Santa Monica, CA.: Rand, 1985), v.
- ² Sheila Natataj Kirby and Harry J. Thie, Enlisted Personnel Management A Historical Perspective (Santa Monica, CA.: Rand, 1996), 114.
- ³ "A Time of Change." National Guard (August 1998): 16.
- ⁴ General Accounting Office, Factors Related to Personnel Attrition in the Selected Reserve (Washington, D.C.: U.S. General Accounting Office, April 1991), 29.
- ⁵ Department of the Army, Longitudinal Study of Attitudes Toward Continuation in the Reserve Components. (McLean, Virginia: General Research Corporation, October 1973), xi-xv.
- ⁶ David W. Grissmer and Sheila Nataraj Kirby, Attrition of Nonprior-service Reservists in the Army National Guard and Army Reserve (Santa Monica, CA.: Rand, 1985), 44-45.
- ⁷ "Army National Guard", Fiscal Year 1999 Posture Statement (Arlington, Virginia: Army National Guard Office of Policy and Communications, 1998), 13.
- ⁸ Ibid, 14.
- ⁹ Hogan, Paul F. and Christine M. Villa, "Factors Affecting Reenlistment in the Army Reserves: Evidence From the 1986 DoD Survey." in Military Compensation and Personnel Retention Models and Evidence, ed. Curtis L. Gilroy, David K. Horne, and D. Alton Smith (Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 1991), 393.
- ¹⁰ "Special Report on Recruitment & Retention: You've Got to Change TO RETAIN," HR focus (September 1998): S2.
- ¹¹ Hogan, 359.
- ¹² General Accounting Office, 37.
- ¹³ Magna Management Consulting, Inc., Report of Findings Arizona Army National Guard 1998 Soldier Survey, State Overall Draft Summary Report of Findings October 1998. (Phoenix, Arizona: Magma, 1998).

¹⁴ Marketing Department, SPSS Inc., SPSS Base 7.0 for Windows User's Guide (Chicago, IL. SPSS Inc., 1996).

¹⁵ "Army National Guard", 13.

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