

21ST CENTURY RECRUITING CHALLENGES FOR AMERICA'S ARMY

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USAWC CLASS OF 2008

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Report Documentation Page

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.

1. REPORT DATE 15 MAR 2008		2. REPORT TYPE Strategy Research Project		3. DATES COVERED 00-00-2007 to 00-00-2008	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE 21st Century Recruiting Challenges for America's Army				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Jeremy Martin				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College ,122 Forbes Ave.,Carlisle,PA,17013-5220				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT see attached					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Same as Report (SAR)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 26	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Colonel Jeremy M. Martin
TITLE: 21st Century Recruiting Challenges for America's Army
FORMAT: Strategy Research Project
DATE: 18 March 2008 **WORD COUNT:** 5,397 **PAGES:** 26
KEY TERMS: Retention, Recruits, All-Volunteer Force
CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

The current recruiting environment in America is more challenging today than at any other period in the nearly thirty-five year history of the nation's all-volunteer force. The Global War on Terror (GWOT) represents America's longest protracted conflict in the history of the all-volunteer force. The Army is the nation's largest branch of service, and has shouldered a heavy burden in the GWOT. Indicators from senior military and civilian leaders point to persistent conflict for the foreseeable future. Multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan have required significant sacrifice from the men and women in uniform and their families. The current military operational tempo, coupled with policy decisions that impact therein, have had a significant impact on the propensity of young qualified Americans to join the military. This paper will discuss the current recruiting landscape, how the political and media environment has impacted recruiting in the Army. It will conclude with a recruiting campaign recommendation for recruiting the all-volunteer force in a challenging recruiting environment, while maintaining the quality and quantity of personnel to meet the nation's strategic challenges.

21ST CENTURY RECRUITING CHALLENGES FOR AMERICA'S ARMY

We've got enormous challenges when it comes to recruitment of new soldiers. The Army's goal of 80,000 new recruits for this year is at serious risk, and next year may be the toughest recruiting environment ever. These recruiting problems are likely to stretch well into the future.

—Opening statement by CSA Peter J. Schoomaker
before the Senate Armed Services Committee, June 30, 2005.

A looming issue that could have a critically negative strategic impact on the American military, specifically the Army, is the ability to recruit and retain quality volunteer personnel to serve the nation in a time of protracted warfare. Indicators from senior military leaders, as well as respected national and international organizations which focus on security and stability, point to persistent conflict for the foreseeable future. The American military must continue to recruit and retain high quality personnel in today's unpredictable security environment to not only remain the world's preeminent military force, but to also meet America's security challenges domestically and internationally.

The American public became very dissatisfied with the military draft system near the end of the unpopular, protracted Vietnam War. On July 1, 1973, the nation's military draft system was ended, and the all-volunteer force was born.¹ Since that time, the military has been successful in meeting its recruiting and retention goals since the birth of the all-volunteer force. America's Army is currently the world's preeminent land force. The Army is well trained, well led, and a highly professional organization considered by many to be among the most awesome land forces ever fielded.

For over a third of a century America's all-volunteer armed forces have met the security needs of the nation. The all-volunteer force achieved a stunning victory in 1991

in the first Gulf War as part of a coalition that liberated Kuwait after an attack by the Iraqi Army of Saddam Hussein. In the immediate aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorists' attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, America's military responded with a decisive victory against Taliban and Al Qaeda forces in Afghanistan. In the spring of 2003, America's all-volunteer force responded to the orders of the commander in chief and launched a blistering offensive that dismantled the Iraq Army and took down the regime of Saddam Hussein, which was believed to be in possession of weapons of mass destruction.

On May 1, 2003 the Commander-in-Chief landed on the aircraft carrier *USS Abraham Lincoln* as the carrier returned from combat operations in the Persian Gulf. On board the carrier the President gave a speech announcing the end of major combat operations in the Iraq War.² However, Operation Iraqi Freedom, a conflict which the American public believed to be a short duration war similar to Operation Desert Storm, has waged on into its fifth year. As the years mount, so have the casualties, over 30,000 wounded and nearly 4,000 killed in action to date according to Defense Department data.

A constellation of polling data all point to the fact that the American people were not prepared for a protracted war in Iraq (Figure 1). Although Americans overwhelmingly support the troops and their families, the current war in Iraq has not had the majority support of the American people, which is clearly reflected in the current recruiting and retention environment.

CNN/Opinion Research Corporation Poll. Feb. 1-3, 2008. N=1,192 adults nationwide. MoE ± 3.

"Do you favor or oppose the U.S. war in Iraq?"

	Favor %	Oppose %	Unsure %
2/1-3/08	34	64	2
1/14-17/08	34	63	3
1/9-10/08	33	65	3
12/6-9/07	31	68	1
11/2-4/07	31	68	1
10/12-14/07	34	65	2
9/7-9/07	34	63	4
8/6-8/07	33	64	3
6/22-24/07	30	67	3
5/4-6/07	34	65	1

Figure 1:

The military's all-volunteer force has served the nation well in peace time, in war, and other military operations of limited duration. Now, for the first time in the history of the all-volunteer force, the sons and daughters of America are engaged in protracted warfare on multiple fronts in a 24-hour news cycle that brings all the images of war into America's living rooms in near real time.

The strength of America's all-volunteer force is being tested, specifically in the Army, the largest branch of the armed services at over 520,000 personnel according to Defense Department Data. The active Army's recruiting goal for Fiscal Year 2007 was

80,000 enlistees, more than double the goal of the Navy – which had the second highest recruiting goal of all the armed services, at 37,000 (Figure 2).³

DoD Announces Recruiting and Retention Numbers for FY 2007

The Department of Defense announced today its recruiting and retention statistics for the Active and Reserve components for Fiscal Year 2007.

- **Active Duty Recruiting Fiscal Year 2007.** All Services met or exceeded their recruiting goals for FY 2007.

Annual – End of Fiscal Year 2007	Accessions	Goal	Percent
Army	80,407	80,000	101
Navy	37,361	37,000	101
Marine Corps	35,603	35,576	100
Air Force	27,801	27,801	100

- **Active Duty Retention.** Retention remains extremely strong in the active force with all Services having met or exceeded their aggregate year-to-date targets. The Marine Corps surpassed its overall aggregate reenlistment mission (110%) allowing them to exceed their FY07 targeted end strength by a comfortable margin. Air Force final information is pending.

Reserve Forces Accessions Fiscal Year 2007. Four of the six Reserve components met or exceeded their accession goals for FY 2007.

Annual – End of Fiscal Year 2007	Quantity – YTD		
	Accessions	Goal	Percent
Army National Guard	66,652	70,000	95
Army Reserve	35,734	35,505	101
Navy Reserve	10,627	10,602	100
Marine Corps Reserve	7,959	7,256	110
Air National Guard	9,975	10,690	93
Air Force Reserve	7,110	6,834	104

Figure 2:

In Fiscal Year 2007, all the active services again met their yearly recruiting goals, but not without challenges.⁴ In the midst of a protracted war, the Army in particular, has experienced challenges in meeting the standards of total quality that have been the hallmark of the all-volunteer force.

The Army’s recruiting shortfalls were a topic of discussion for General Barry R. McCaffrey (USA, Ret.), during his July 31, 2007 testimony before the House Armed

Services Committee. General McCaffrey stated the following, "Recruiting Standards Are Compromised; Troop Basic Training Standards Are Compromised:

The Army is lowering standards to meet enlistment goals and initial entry training standards in order to make manpower requirements. Recruitment will continue to be challenging as the Army tries to power up to add 65,000 permanent troops.

In 2006, there was almost a 50% increase in waivers of enlistment standards from 2004 -- waivers for moral turpitude, drug use, medical issues and criminal records.

Recruitment from least-skilled category recruits have climbed eight-fold over the past 2 years; the percentage of recruits who are high school graduates dropped 13% from '04 to '06.

We are increasing the age of first-time enlistees -- we are now enlisting 42 year old soldiers. We should only want soldiers in superb health -- from age 18 to about 30 years old. The Army is not push-button warfare -- this is brutal, hard business.

The Promotion rates for officers and NCOs have skyrocketed to replace departing leaders. We are short thousands of officers. We have serious mismatch problems for NCOs."⁵

General McCaffrey's remarks to Congress generally outline the challenge that the Department of Defense and the American people face in continuing to maintain a high quality all-volunteer force. The Army has utilized a variety of incentives to meet its recruiting goals over the past few years. On January 18, 2006, the Army raised its enlistment age from 35 to 40, doubled its cash enlistment bonus up to forty-thousand dollars for the active service, and offers up to fifty thousand dollar incentives to enlistees for educational opportunities.⁶

The Department of Defense aims to have 90 percent of the new enlistees without prior service, possess a high school diploma. The Department also aims to have 60 percent or more new enlistees score above average on the Armed Forces Qualification Test. The Army fell short of both standards, including recruiting only 79 percent of new

enlistees with high school diplomas.⁷ Additionally, 18 percent of new recruits this year required a waiver for misdemeanor offenses, up from 15 percent last year.⁸ Over time, failure to meet recruiting goals and objectives will affect the quality of the force.

Senator Carl Levin, Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, expressed his concern over Army quality standards as it implements a five-year plan to add 65,000 new soldiers to the ranks by 2012. “While quantity is of course important, quality must remain the highest priority,” Levin said at a November 15, 2007, congressional hearing. “The Army must continue to uphold high standards – moral, intellectual, and physical – for new recruits, to ensure that these young men and women are capable of handling the great demands that they will face. We must find a way to both increase the size of the Army and to maintain its standards.”

On January 31, 2008, during testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee’s (SASC) military personnel subcommittee, Major General Thomas Bostick, Commander of United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC), told lawmakers one of the difficulties in meeting recruiting goals is the “incredibly challenging” recruiting environment. “Less than three out of 10 of our nation’s youth are fully qualified for service in the Army due to disqualifying medical conditions, criminal records, lack of education credentials, or low aptitude test scores (Figure 3).”⁹

The good news for the Department of Defense, the Army, and the American people is that Army Recruiters have successfully met recruiting challenges in the past. At the end of Fiscal Year 1991, before the post cold war draw down of military forces, the active Army was manned at over 700,000 personnel, according to Defense

Manpower Data. The Department of Defense and the Army met the recruiting challenges of that period, albeit in a security environment void of protracted conflict.

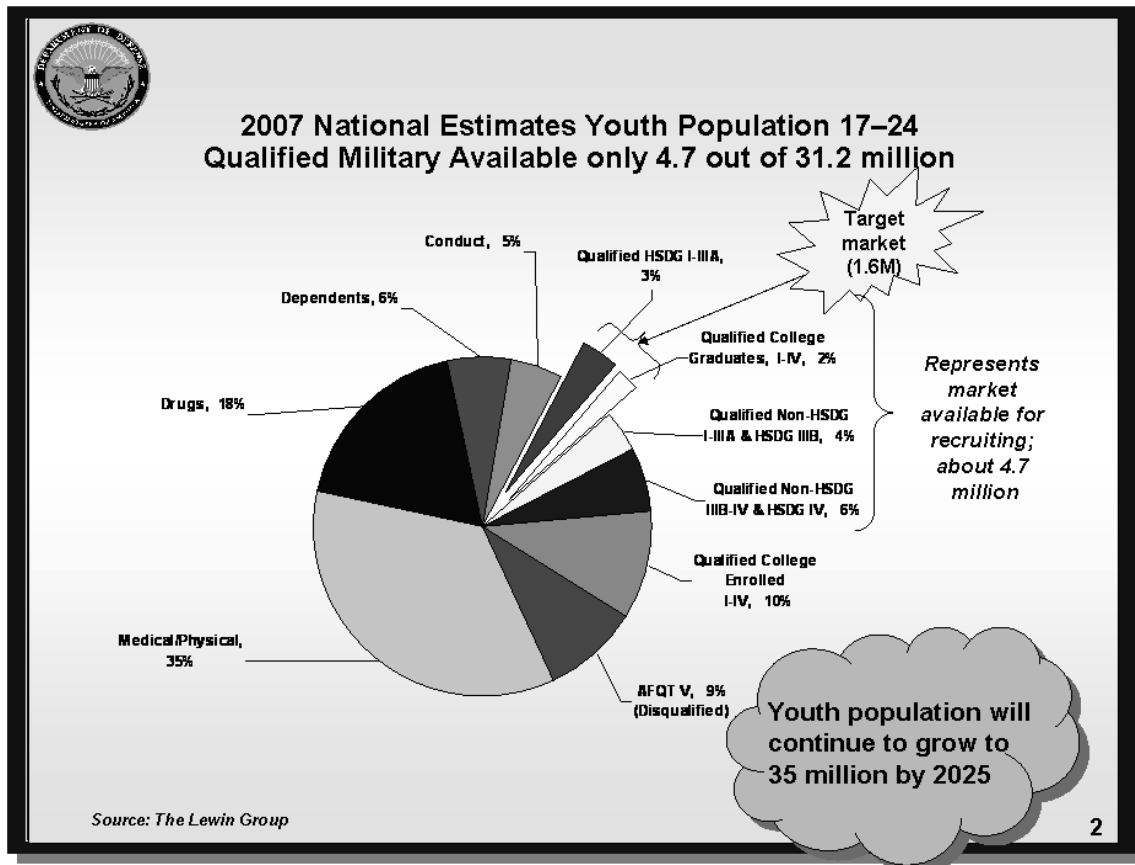


Figure 3: Qualified Military Available, 2007 Estimate

The Department of Defense and the Army have done an admirable job of utilizing the authorizations afforded by the Congress to meet the nation's recruiting challenges during six years of protracted warfare in Afghanistan and Iraq. Despite some predictions, the troops brought on active duty over the past few years with waivers have not resulted in increased punishment rates according to Department of Defense data. In fact, the performance of our nation's troops during this challenging and dynamic period of conflict has been exemplary.

In a January 8, 2008 Pentagon Channel interview focusing on the one-year anniversary of the surge strategy in Iraq, General David Petraeus, commander of Multi-National Force Iraq, cited the bravery and sacrifice of the troops as a catalyst in the improved security environment which is being acknowledged across the media spectrum and in both political parties. “Our troops and leaders are putting it all on the line and it has been very gratifying, actually, to see the results of all this over time.”¹⁰ “All soldiers in our Army are qualified to serve, testified USAREC Commander, Major General Thomas Bostick, on January 31, 2008, before a SASC military personnel subcommittee hearing. Field commanders are very pleased with the men and women now serving in their formations – some of whom are not high school diploma graduates or may have received a waiver to serve in our Army.”¹¹

But even with the monetary incentives and additional recruiters added over the past few years, the fact remains that the Army has accepted an increasing percentage of recruits that would not have been eligible at the beginning of this century. Some observers believe that if this trend continues it could begin to affect the overall quality of the force in the near future. So how does the Army continue to meet its recruiting challenges in the midst of persistent conflict?

First, the polity as a whole must realize this is not just an Army challenge – but an American challenge, which could affect the future of the all-volunteer force. Second, America’s interests at home and around the world must be protected, and for the last 34 years that responsibility has been met by the all-volunteer force. If persistent conflict is the norm for the foreseeable future, can the all-volunteer force be sustained in terms of quality and quantity. Third, if the size and quality of America’s all-volunteer military

force becomes unable to meet the nation's security challenges; the American people may have to engage in the highly contentious debate concerning reinstating the military draft – and will undoubtedly insist upon an equitable draft system, unencumbered by social strata.

Although there are many factors that impact the current recruiting environment, the ongoing war in Iraq and Afghanistan and the daily images beamed into America's living rooms have clearly taken a toll. An examination of some of the factors impacting the current recruiting environment is in a very real sense a testament to the outstanding work being done by military recruiters across the country to meet the nation's all-volunteer force requirements in a time of protracted war.

Iraq War

If support among the American people is a center of gravity in achieving strategic military objectives in Iraq, then recent polls are cause for concern. According to a CNN/Opinion Research Corporation Poll taken February 1-3, 2008, 64% of Americans oppose the U.S. War in Iraq. Clearly the Iraq War is having an adverse affect on the will of the American people. Department of Defense survey data consistently attests to the war's negative impact on recruiting and retention as evidenced by a significant drop in the likelihood of influencers to recommend military service over the course of the Iraq war (Figure 2).

In his seminal work, "On War", the great Prussian Military Strategist, Carl Von Clausewitz, proposed that war is not waged by an independent military, but influenced by three elements – the military, the government, and the will of the people.¹² The American's public's disillusionment with the protracted Vietnam War lends credence to

Clausewitz' argument. Strategic military success in Iraq can best be achieved by the long-term majority support of the American people.

Political Environment

The political environment in Washington is intensely partisan. Many in the Democratic Party, which took over control of the House of Representatives and the United States Senate in the 2006 mid-term elections, believe they have a mandate from the majority of the American people to end the war in Iraq. The President of the United States and many in the Republican Party believe that withdrawing from Iraq prematurely would create greater instability in the region. The political environment has further divided the nation on the war, and is a contributor to a downward trend of support from adult influencers – the parents, teachers, coaches, clergy, etc., who advise potential recruits.

In October of 2006, Massachusetts Senator, John Kerry, misspoke while addressing a group of students during a campaign stop at Pasadena City College in California. “You know, education, if you make the most of it, you study hard, you do your homework and you make an effort to be smart, you can do well. And if you don’t, you get stuck in Iraq.” Senator Kerry, a highly decorated Vietnam veteran, very quickly clarified his comments, but not before his remarks spread like wildfire across the World Wide Web – even eliciting numerous responses from troops in Iraq and Afghanistan via the blogosphere.¹³

In October of 2007, California Congressman, Pete Stark, expressed comments he later apologized for which were detrimental to the troops. “I’m just amazed that the Republicans are worried that we can’t pay for insuring an additional 10 million children.

They sure don't care about finding \$200 billion to fight the illegal war in Iraq. Where are you going to get that money? You are going to tell us lies like you're telling us today? Is that how you're going to fund the war? You don't have money to fund the war or children, but you're going to spend it to blow up innocent people if we can get enough kids to grow old enough for you to send to Iraq to get their heads blown off for the President's amusement."¹⁴

The uproar caused by misspoken remarks from two veteran members of Congress with long distinguished service to the nation, underscores the highly partisan political environment and vehement opposition to the President's policies in Iraq. Even more telling is the fact that some polls revealed that a majority of Americans, at the time, did not believe that Congressman Stark should apologize for his remarks. Statements from influential political leaders in a time of war might contribute to the propensity of influencers to recommend or not recommend military service to qualified young Americans.

Politicians know that a strong military is essential to America maintaining its interests and influence around the world. During the post September 11th period of protracted conflict, many politicians have voiced their support for the troops. Without reservation, politicians should also extol the virtues of volunteering to serve ones country in a time of war.

In this period of persistent conflict, in the midst of an intensely partisan political environment, if a politician or person of influence recommends military service to a young American, does it somehow indirectly equate to support for the Iraq policy? That is where the line is blurred, and the nation would be well served by political leaders with

the moral courage to address this issue with candor and clarity. Doing so effectively will remove an invisible barrier that impedes recruiting opportunities and increases the burden on military recruiters across the country.

Media

The War on Terror is now into its seventh year. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq mark the first protracted military conflicts that America's all-volunteer forces have waged in the age of the embedded media which produces near real-time reporting. The war in Iraq is now into its fifth year, and casualties have continued to mount. Unlike the Vietnam War, in this war the American people have been consistently exposed to the devastating guerilla tactics of an adversary by way of embedded media that reveal the stories in near real-time.

The devastating Improvised Explosive Device, or IED, became a household acronym due to daily reporting on 24-hour news channels, deaths, and grievous injuries suffered by not only brave troops, but also brave members of the press who ventured out to cover the war. The impact of the IED was also echoed by senior civilian and military officials during Congressional hearings broadcast live across the information domain.



Figure 4:

The protracted wars in Iraq and Afghanistan highlight the changing nature of warfare. American forces in today's counterinsurgency environment operate in a 360 degree battlefield. Although casualties in Iraq are low in comparison to WWII, Korean War, and the Vietnam War, IEDs and enemy forces have not only claimed the lives of over 3,700 brave American male troops in Iraq, but nearly 100 gallant female troops have been killed in action in Iraq.¹⁵

The media has reported extensively on the heroic medical care and combat life saving that has been so evident throughout the war. The fact remains that many of those lives, which would have been lost in previous wars, are left with debilitating injuries – loss of limbs, traumatic brain injury, or post traumatic stress syndrome. Never before has the impact of war been so instantly and vividly revealed to the American people. The media has an impact on the decision of not only young men and women who might volunteer for military service, but also on those influencers – parents, teachers, clergy, and coaches who might contribute to their decision.

Military Contractor Opportunity

There is no empirical data available to accurately reflect the total number of troops who have exited the military for employment in the defense contracting industry. In a tough recruiting environment the numbers are significant and will likely continue due to troops and families wearing down from the constant rotations to Iraq and Afghanistan and the unpredictability of the current security environment. The defense contracting industry provides an opportunity for enlisted troops and their families to have quality employment with more predictability. A 2007 *Money Magazine* article lists the following ad which targets lower and mid-level enlisted troops, "Your Security Clearance is the

Golden Ticket to a Job with A Defense Contractor.”¹⁶ Ralph Peters addressed the issue in a recent article for the *New York Post*. “Astonishingly, contractors are free to approach those in uniform, offer them generous salaries to leave their service in wartime, then profit from the skills your tax dollars taught them.” The exit of trained enlisted talent is of concern – has strategic second and third order effects, including a void in mid-level NCO leadership, and will require the recruitment and training of quality replacements in a volatile recruiting environment.

Influencers

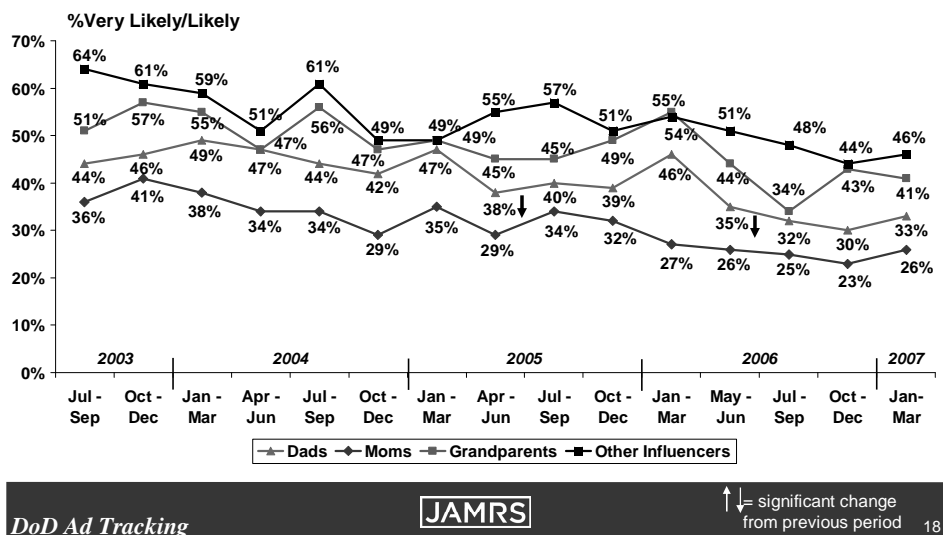
Adult influencers of all youth, such as parents, sports coaches, or mentors, are less likely to recommend military service, according to Pentagon surveys. According to recent polling data, the protracted war in Iraq has contributed to a downward trend in support of military recruiting by influencers. During an October 10, 2007 Defense Department press briefing on Fiscal Year 2007 recruiting, Dr. David Chu, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, addressed the issue of community influencers support toward military service. “I think it’s important for all citizens to support the choices of young people, and this is one of the ironies we’ve seen in this extended conflict - - that the young people are willing to step forward, but the more senior members of our society...are less willing to applaud that choice when they do so.” Figure 5 highlights the downward trend among influencers to recommend military service during the period that encompasses the current war in Iraq.

According to Charles Moskos, a noted sociologist and Northwestern University Professor, himself a former draftee, “because few children of public figures are serving, the armed forces are struggling to recruit well qualified individuals.” Moskos said the

following in a January 17, 2007 interview, “the best thing that could be done right now is to have elite youth serve, like Jenna Bush. If you had Jenna Bush go, and Chelsea Clinton goes too, this would be a terrific boost I think to morale and recruitment. It’s interesting now that Prince William in England is going to Iraq (he ultimately served on the front lines in Afghanistan), and we know that Prince Andrew fought in the Falkland’s War. So if you have nobility of elite youth, the children of elites, you’ll get others to join as well.”¹⁷

Likelihood To Recommend: Military Service

- Likelihood to recommend military service has remained relatively stable among each of the four influencer groups over the past year.



DoD Ad Tracking

JAMRS

↑ ↓ = significant change from previous period 18

1A-C. Suppose your child/your grandchild/a youth came to you for advice about various post-high school options. How likely is it that you would recommend joining a military Service such as the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force or Coast Guard?

Figure 5:

Former Marine field artillery officer, Peter A. Gudmundsson, believes that America needs influencers throughout society to better articulate the realities of war in the 21st century. Gudmundsson, now a business executive, recently traveled with civilian leaders to visit troops preparing for combat deployment. Gudmundsson believes that

many “elites” today simply lack human reference points to war. “The civilian leaders with whom I traveled were clearly surprised by their exposure to young Americans who were seriously and stoically preparing to deploy to a war from which some might not return. A society with veterans represented at all levels of the community is better equipped to interpret accounts of inadvertent civilian casualties, interrogation interpreted as torture, or prisoner abuse. With the abdication of the upper classes from military service, most elites in the media, private sector, and government service don’t have the intimate human context for the realities of war.”¹⁸

Dramatic Decrease in African American Recruits

The largest military recruiting decline among any group is African Americans as depicted in Table 1. The decline in enlistment applications among blacks is by far the fastest of any demographic group. According to Defense Department data, the number of African American enlistees has fallen by more than 50 percent since Fiscal Year 2000. Of all racial groups, African American influencers are the least likely to suggest enlistment in the military, according to surveys. Despite the sharp decline in enlistments, the percentage of blacks in the military is still about equal to that of the general population.

Representative Charles B. Rangel, whose New York City district includes Harlem, was quoted in *Stars and Stripes* newspaper as saying he isn’t too surprised by the Army recruiting data that shows the significant drop in the number of black Army recruits since 2000. “I have not found a black person in support of this war in my district. The fact that every member of the Congressional Black Caucus emotionally, politically, and

vigorously opposes this war is an indication of what black folks think throughout this country.”¹⁹

Aggressive Defense Department and Army efforts to recruit among black youths have not been overly successful to date. Why such a decline? In a May 7, 2007 interview on NPR’s Morning Edition, Curtis Gilroy, the Pentagon’s director of accession policy, said the following, “It has to do in large part with opposition to the war. It began about four years ago.” This is a downward trend that has to be turned around rapidly if the Department of Defense is to return to the more quality rich recruiting environment that it enjoyed just a few years ago.

The Department of Defense and the Army are aggressively working to reverse this downward recruiting trend. The Army actively advertises on Black Entertainment Television (BET), and partners with Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) which targets African Americans for recruitment as officers in the Armed Services. African Americans are prominently featured in Army recruiting commercials that appear on prime time television, African American radio outlets, and the internet.

**AFRICAN-AMERICAN, HISPANIC AND GENDER REPRESENTATION
WITHIN THE MILITARY SERVICES' ENLISTED ACCESSIONS
(2000-2007)**

PURPOSE: To provide information on the representation of African-Americans, Hispanics, and the gender recruited for the Military Services' active duty enlisted force.

- The following displays the representation of African-Americans as a percentage of new enlistments over the period 2000-2007 (table below):

	2000	2001	2002	*2003	2004	2005	2006	**2007
ARMY	23.0%	22.4%	17.1%	15.9%	14.2%	12.0%	12.6%	12.8%
NAVY	20.8%	20.9%	17.8%	19.0%	19.7%	18.8%	17.2%	17.9%
USMC	12.8%	12.2%	10.0%	9.0%	8.3%	7.7%	7.6%	9.1%
USAF		18.2%	15.5%	13.8%		14.4%	14.7%	16.0%

	19.3%				14.6%			
DOD TOTAL	20.0%	19.9%	15.7%	15.0%	14.5%	13.1%	13.0%	13.8%

Note: Data are for non-prior service accessions (prior service accessions account for less than 1/2 of 1 percent of accession).

* In October 1997 OMB published *Statistical Policy Directive No. 15, Race and Ethnic Standards for Federal Statistics and Administrative Reporting*, which revised guidance on how Federal agencies were to report data on race and ethnicity. The Department of Defense implemented their new guidance on January 1, 2003 and, because the change took place after the first quarter, it resulted in two sets of partial data for FY2003. The data used in this report do not include the first quarter of FY2003 (October 1, 2002 – December 31, 2002).

** Data for 2007 are preliminary

- The following displays the representation of Hispanics as a percentage of new enlistments over the period 2000-2007 (table below):

	2000	2001	2002	*2003	2004	2005	2006	**2007
ARMY	10.9%	11.1%	11.6%	10.7%	12.6%	12.2%	11.6%	11.3%
NAVY	12.0%	12.6%	12.4%	13.2%	15.1%	16.1%	16.3%	16.8%
USMC	14.6%	14.6%	13.8%	14.6%	16.1%	16.3%	15.6%	16.3%
USAF	7.4%	6.9%	7.3%	8.1%	9.5%	11.0%	11.2%	11.0%
DOD TOTAL	11.2%	11.3%	11.3%	11.5%	13.2%	13.9%	13.3%	13.6%

Note: Data are for non-prior service accessions (prior service accessions account for less than 1/2 of 1 percent of accession).

* In October 1997 OMB published *Statistical Policy Directive No. 15, Race and Ethnic Standards for Federal Statistics and Administrative Reporting*, which revised guidance on how Federal agencies were to report data on race and ethnicity. The Department of Defense implemented their new guidance on January 1, 2003 and, because the change took place after the first quarter, it resulted in two sets of partial data for FY2003. The data used in this report do not include the first quarter of FY2003 (October 1, 2002 – December 31, 2002).

** Data for 2007 are preliminary

- The following displays the representation of Females as a percentage of new enlistments over the period 2000-2007 (table below):

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	**2007
ARMY	20.9%	20.5%	18.5%	19.0%	17.6%	17.2%	16.7%	16.3%
NAVY	18.4%	18.4%	17.4%	16.5%	16.7%	16.3%	18.9%	19.0%
USMC	7.1%	6.9%	6.8%	7.1%	7.1%	7.1%	7.3%	7.3%
USAF	25.9%	24.3%	24.0%	23.7%	22.4%	22.5%	23.9%	23.4%
DOD TOTAL	18.4%	18.4%	17.3%	17.2%	16.5%	15.5%	16.7%	16.2%

Note: Data are for non-prior service accessions (prior service accessions account for less than 1/2 of 1 percent of accession).

** Data for 2007 are preliminary

Table 1:

Conclusion

Although the Department of Defense and the Army have waged a superb effort to meet the nation's recruiting and retention goals, the protracted war in Iraq is clearly having a negative impact.

No greater is that negative impact felt than among African American enlistees. This is a trend that has to be reversed in order to restore the Department to a more rich and quality recruiting environment. It will not be easy given the ongoing war and the significant opposition to the war in the African American community. According to a June 2007 Pew Research survey, only 15 percent of blacks polled say that invading Iraq was the right decision.

Recruiting America's armed forces is not just a matter of concern for the Department of Defense, but for all Americans. Ultimately, America has to continue to engage and partner with the Department of Defense and the Congress to bring about solutions – the future of the America's all-volunteer force might hang in the balance.

That's not to say that the American people have not greatly sacrificed during the current war. Over thirty thousand of America's sons and daughters of the all-volunteer force have been wounded in the Iraq war. Additionally, it is through the hard earned tax dollars of patriotic Americans and the oversight of the Congress which has ensured our troops have been equipped and sustained during this period of prolonged conflict – lest we forget.

However, the size of our all-volunteer force has to be sufficient to address America's security needs and interests around the world. The fiscal year 2009 budget the President submitted to Congress requests an increase of 65,000 soldiers in the Army by Fiscal Year 2012. In the current recruiting climate it will be a challenge to recruit the quality and quantity of personnel required to meet the nation's strategic security challenges in an era of persistent conflict.

The Department of Defense and the Army are learning organizations which have shown great adaptability in utilizing a broad array of new media techniques, and targeted outreach programs to meet recruiting and retention goals during a period of persistent conflict. In addition to current recruiting campaigns and strategies, I recommend the Department and the Army; consider a legacy campaign targeting the current generation of Americans and their influencers, which highlights the themes of service, patriotism and love of country.

Legacy Campaign. Develop a legacy campaign to link the WWII generation with the present generation. Utilize grandfathers and grandmothers who served in WWII, in a conversation with their grandchildren who are serving or contemplating military service. It's not just about money, it's also about service, patriotism, and love of country. Target the African-American community. On March 29, 2007, President Bush awarded the Tuskegee Airmen the Congressional Gold Medal. In a most humble gesture, the President saluted the Airmen for their service and their sacrifice. With uncommon patriotism and without rehearsal, the Tuskegee Airmen, men in their eighties, rose to their feet in near unison to return the salute of their commander in chief. That is the kind of patriotism and love of country which must be witnessed by the current generation of recruits and their influencers. We should link the heralded Tuskegee Airmen in a recruiting campaign which highlights service opportunities for today's youth, of all ethnic groups. In his campaign for President of the United States, Senator Barack Obama beams with pride as he refers to his grandfather's service in General George S. Patton's Army during WWII. A popular candidate for commander in chief with such universal appeal would convey a powerful image which could be utilized

in a legacy campaign designed to highlight the virtues of service in America's armed forces to a new generation of Americans.

Endnotes

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