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2008 Post-Election Voting Survey of Unit Voting Assistance Officers

Statistical Methodology Report



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**2008 POST-ELECTION VOTING SURVEY OF
UNIT VOTING ASSISTANCE OFFICERS:
STATISTICAL METHODOLOGY REPORT**

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Acknowledgments

Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) is indebted to numerous people for their assistance with the *2008 Post-Election Voting Survey of Unit Voting Assistance Officers (2008 UVAO)*, which was conducted on behalf of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (OUSD[P&R]). The survey program is conducted under the leadership of Timothy Elig, Director, *Human Resources Strategic Assessment Program (HRSAP)*.

Policy officials contributing to the development of this survey include Erin St. Pierre and Scott Wiedmann (Federal Voting Assistance Program).

DMDC's Program Evaluation Branch, under the guidance of Brian Lappin, former Branch Chief, and Kristin Williams, current Branch Chief, is responsible for the development of questionnaires in the survey program. The lead survey design analyst was Robert Tinney.

DMDC's Personnel Survey Branch, under the guidance of David McGrath, Branch Chief, is responsible for HRSAP survey sampling, weighting, database construction, and archiving. The lead operations analyst on this survey was Deepika Batra, SRA International, Inc., supported by Tina Thomas, Consortium Research Fellow. The lead statistician on this survey was Mark Gorsak, supported by Katrina Hsen, Consortium Research Fellow. Susan Reinhold provided programming support for the frame development and sampling tasks.

DMDC's Survey Technology Branch, under the guidance of Frederick Licari, Branch Chief, is responsible for the distribution of datasets outside of DMDC and maintaining records on compliance with the Privacy Act and 32 CFR 219.

2008 POST-ELECTION VOTING SURVEY OF UNIT VOTING ASSISTANCE OFFICERS: STATISTICAL METHODOLOGY REPORT

Executive Summary

The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act of 1986 (UOCAVA), 42 USC 1973ff, permits members of the Uniformed Services and Merchant Marine, and their eligible family members and all citizens residing outside the United States who are absent from the United States and its territories to vote in the general election for federal offices. These groups include:

- Members of the Uniformed Services (including Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard)
- U.S. citizens employed by the Federal Government residing outside the U.S., and
- All other private U.S. citizens residing outside the U.S.

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP), under the guidance of USD(P&R), is charged with implementing the UOCAVA and evaluating the effectiveness of its programs. The FVAP Office asked DMDC to design, administer, and analyze post-election surveys on Uniformed Services voter participation, overseas nonmilitary voter participation, and local election officials. Without such surveys, the Department will not be able to assess and improve voter access. In addition, such surveys fulfill 1988 Executive Order 12642 that names the Secretary of Defense as the “Presidential designee” for administering the UOCAVA and requires surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of the program in presidential election years.

The objectives of the 2008 post-election surveys are: (1) to gauge participation in the electoral process by citizens covered by UOCAVA, (2) to assess the impact of the FVAP’s efforts to simplify and ease the process of voting absentee, (3) to evaluate other progress made to facilitate voting participation, and (4) to identify any remaining obstacles to voting by these citizens. Surveys were done of military members, federal civilian employees overseas, other U.S. citizens overseas, voting assistance personnel, and local election officials in the U.S.

This report focuses on the *2008 Post-Election Voting Survey of Unit Voting Assistance Offices (2008 UVAO)*, which was designed to capture the attitudes and behaviors of Armed Forces Unit Voting Assistance Officers (UVAOs). This report describes the sampling and weighting methodologies used in the *2008 UVAO*. Calculation of response rates is described in the final section.

The population of interest for the *2008 UVAO* consisted of the Unit Voting Assistance Officers (UVAOs) in the Department of Defense, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force, as well as the Coast Guard from the Department of Homeland Security.

A list of UVAOs was not available by the time of the survey administration period. According to Directive 1000.04, Section 5.2.1.4.2, each unit with 25 or more permanently assigned active members would designate a UVAO. A frame containing all units with 25 or more permanently assigned active members was used to capture the population of interest.

The 2008 UVAO was a census of all units with 25 or more permanently assigned active members. The total size was 9,518 units. The survey administration period lasted from November 7, 2008, to February 5, 2009. There were 2,816 usable questionnaires.

After the determination of eligibility for the survey and completion of a survey, analytic weights were created to account for varying response rates among population subgroups. First, the sampling weights (the inverse of the selection probabilities) were computed. Since the 2008 UVAO was a census, the initial weight equals 1.0. Second, the base weights were adjusted to account for survey nonresponse.

Location, completion, and response rates are provided in the final section of this report for both the full sample and for population subgroups. These rates were computed according to the recommendations of the Council of American Survey Research Organizations (1982) and the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR, 2008). The location, completion, and response rates among UVAOs were 79%, 37%, and 30%. Because a UVAO could be responsible for more than one unit, respondents were asked for information on units served. The responses are estimated to represent 38% of all UVAOs.

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2008 POST-ELECTION VOTING SURVEY OF UNIT VOTING ASSISTANCE OFFICERS: STATISTICAL METHODOLOGY REPORT

Introduction

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The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP), under the guidance of USD(P&R), is charged with implementing the UOCAVA and evaluating the effectiveness of its programs. The FVAP Office asked DMDC to design, administer, and analyze post-election surveys on Uniformed Services voter participation, overseas nonmilitary voter participation, and local election officials. Without such surveys, the Department will not be able to assess and improve voter access. In addition, such surveys fulfill 1988 Executive Order 12642 that names the Secretary of Defense as the “Presidential designee” for administering the UOCAVA and requires surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of the program in presidential election years.

The objectives of the 2008 post-election surveys are: (1) to gauge participation in the electoral process by citizens covered by UOCAVA, (2) to assess the impact of the FVAP’s efforts to simplify and ease the process of voting absentee, (3) to evaluate other progress made to facilitate voting participation, and (4) to identify any remaining obstacles to voting by these citizens. Surveys were done of military members, federal civilian employees overseas, other U.S. citizens overseas, voting assistance personnel, and local election officials in the U.S.

This report focuses on the *2008 Post-Election Voting Survey of Unit Voting Assistance Offices (2008 UVAO)* which was designed to capture the attitudes and behaviors of Armed Forces Unit Voting Assistance Officers (UVAOs). This report describes the sampling and weighting methodologies used in the *2008 UVAO*. Calculation of response rates is described in the final section. Tabulated results of the survey are reported by DMDC (2009).

The population of interest for the *2008 UVAO* consisted of the Unit Voting Assistance Officers (UVAOs) in the Department of Defense, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force, as well as the Coast Guard from the Department of Homeland Security.

Sample Design and Selection

Sampling Frame

A list of UVAOs was not available by the time of the survey administration period. According to Directive 1000.04, Section 5.2.1.4.2, each unit with 25 or more permanently assigned active members would designate a UVAO. A frame containing all units with 25 or more permanently assigned active members was used to capture the population of interest.

The sampling frame was built from the July 2008 Active Duty Master Edit File (ADMF). The frame consisted of 1,448,926 personnel records. After excluding members with unknown status, in hospitals or confinement, there were 1,397,180 records resulting in 24,929 unique unit identification codes or UICs. There were 15,411 UICs that had fewer than 25 active duty members; so, the final eligible sample was 9,518 UICs.

The frame development for the *2008 UVAO* survey was similar to the frame development for the *2004 UVAO* survey. The *2004 UVAO* frame removed units with unknown geography whereas the *2008 UVAO* frame included these types of units. By adding units with unknown geography into the *2004 UVAO* frame, there would be nine additional units. Also, the *2004 UVAO* frame included all units with 26 or more permanently assigned active members. By changing the restriction to 25 or more permanently assigned active members, the *2004 UVAO* frame would have included 120 more units. The *2008 UVAO* added 134 units by lowering the restriction from 26 to 25 or more permanently assigned active members.

Sample Design

The *2008 UVAO* was a census of units with 25 or more permanently assigned active members. According to Directive 1000.04, Section 5.2.1.4.2, units with 25 or more permanently assigned active member would designate a person as the UVAO.

Depending upon characteristics like geography of a unit and organizational structure such as a temporary realignment, a UVAO could serve more than one unit. So, the actual number of UVAOs would be less than the number of units. Large units may have assistants to help the UVAO. The Services may or may not distinguish an assistant from the primary UVAO. Since every unit receives one questionnaire, then there will not be multiple submissions of a questionnaire even if there are assistants for the UVAO. The welcome screen reminds the UVAO to separate their information for each unit and to consider all assistants when gathering information.

For future surveys, three population characteristics were identified as possible stratification variables. These characteristics are displayed by an asterisk (*) under the “variable” column in Table 1. The frame is a combination of these dimensions: five categories for Service Branch, three categories for geography, and two categories for UIC size. The combination of all the categories (5 x 3 x 2) would create 30 possible strata. For units outside the continental United States (OCONUS), it is important to delineate between the units in Alaska and Hawaii and overseas since the data is analyzed for units within the entire United States including Alaska and Hawaii separately from overseas. The UIC size variable is set at 100 members because the number of units below and above 100 members is nearly 50% for all the

Services. Other items included on the frame file are shown in Table 1. The number of active duty members is the summation of the number of active duty enlisted members and the number of active duty officers.

Sample Allocation

Since this was a census of all units with 25 or more permanently assigned active members, all units were automatically included in the sample. The total sample size was 9,518 units. The anticipated response rate was estimated to be 30% from all units in the survey. The estimated response rate was based on the 2004 UVAO survey. Please note that the estimated response rate at the UVAO level could be higher than the response rate at the unit level since there may be fewer UVAOs than the number of units. Sample sizes are shown in Table 2 for the levels of the variables used in the weighting process.

Table 1.
Variables on the Frame File

Variable	Categories
Service Branch*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Army • Navy • Marine Corps • Air Force • Coast Guard
Geography*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continental United States (CONUS) & Unknown • Alaska and Hawaii • Overseas
UIC Size*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 100 active duty members • 100 or more active duty members
UIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit Identification Code
Active Duty Enlisted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Active Duty enlisted members in UIC
Active Duty Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Active Duty officers in UIC
Active Duty Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Active Duty Members

Note. * denotes variable used in the weighting process.

Table 2.
Sample Size by Variables Used in Weighting Process

Stratification Variable Geography by Size of Unit		Total	Army	Navy	Marine Corps	Air Force	Coast Guard
Total		9,518	4,531	1,791	486	2,311	399
United States	< 100 members	n/a	2,177	740	110	922	296
	≥ 100 members	n/a	1,791	863		998	
Overseas	< 100 members	n/a	346	106	376	210	103
	≥ 100 members	n/a	217	82		181	

Survey Administration

Fielding of the survey began November 7, 2008 and ended February 5, 2009. On October 15, 2008, pre-notification letters were mailed to sample members (minus original ineligible). This letter to UVAOs announced that the survey would be done after the election and gave a Web site for individuals to provide personal names, corrected postal addresses, and personal e-mail addresses—this was the only source for e-mail addresses for this survey. An announcement letter and e-mail were also sent to sample members on November 6. Table 3 indicates when additional letters and e-mails were sent to sample members in all Services who had not already replied to the survey request. Please see DMDC (In preparation) for further information on survey administration.

Table 3.
Communication Timeline

Messages	Date
Postal Messages	
Pre-notification	10/15/08
Announcement	11/6/08
Reminder 1	11/19/08
Reminder 2	12/10/09
Reminder 3	12/17/09
E-mail Messages	
Announcement	11/6/08
Reminder 1	11/14/08
Reminder 2	12/01/08
Reminder 3	12/12/08
Reminder 4	1/30/09

There were two survey administration issues addressed during the data collection period: (1) Unit Voting Assistant Officers responsible for more than one UIC and (2) low response rate from the Army UVAOs.

Unit Voting Assistant Officers for More than One UIC

During the data collection period, UVAOs responsible for more than one UIC would receive more than one survey. One reason for a UVAO to be responsible for more than one UIC is to centralize the distribution of materials. For example, if the installation is reorganizing its structure, then it may be efficient to have one UVAO. There was an announcement at the beginning of the survey asking the UVAOs to complete only one survey and to incorporate all the units and people under their responsibility in that one survey. Question 10 on the survey asks how many units of 25 active duty members or more the UVAO serves. Question 11 asks how many people were in those units.

Effort To Increase Response Rate

During the data collection period, the response rate from the Army UVAOs lagged behind the UVAOs from the other Services. To increase the response rate, the field period was extended for everyone from January 8 to February 6. For the Army UVAOs, a notice was sent by Brigadier General Reuben Jones urging the UVAOs to take time for the survey. In turn, the UVAOs sent contact information along with their UIC to be processed. The UVAO would receive the ticket number for their respective UIC to complete the survey. The response rate for the Army UVAOs increased about 5% during the extended field period. The final response rate was 19% for the Army UVAOs.

Weighting

Analytical weights for the 2008 UVAO were created to account for varying response rates among population subgroups (see Table 2). First sampling weights were computed to account for selection probability as the inverse of the selection probabilities. Since the 2008 UVAO was a census, the initial weight is 1.0. After determining case dispositions, the base weights are adjusted to account for nonresponse.

Case Dispositions

Case dispositions were assigned for weighting based on eligibility for the survey and completion of the return. Execution of the weighting process and computation of response rates both depend on this classification.

Final case dispositions for weighting were determined using information from personnel records, field operations (the Survey Control System or SCS), and returned surveys. No single source of information is both complete and correct; inconsistencies among these sources were resolved according to the order of precedence shown in Table 4.

Table 4.
Case Disposition Resolution

Case Disposition (Samp_DC)	Information Source	Conditions
4 Eligible, complete response	Item response rate	Item response is at least 50%.
5 Eligible, incomplete response	Item response rate	Survey isn't blank but item response is less than 50%.
8 Active refusal	SCS	Reason refused is any Reason survey is blank is "refused-too long," "refused-inappropriate/intrusive," "refused-other," "ineligible-other," "unreachable at this address," "refused by current resident," "concerned about security/confidentiality."
10 PND	SCS	Postal non-deliverable or original non-locatable.
11 Non-respondent	Remainder	Remainder.

This order is critical to resolving case dispositions. For example, suppose a sample person refused the survey, with the reason that it was too long; in the absence of any other information, the disposition would be "eligible nonrespondent." If a proxy report was also given that the sample person had been hospitalized and was unable to complete the survey, the disposition would be "ineligible."

Final case dispositions for the 2008 UVAO are shown in Table 5.

Table 5.
Sample Size by Case Disposition Categories

Case Disposition Category and (Code Value)	Sample Size
Total	9,518
Record Ineligible (1)	0
Ineligible Response	
Self/Proxy-report (2)	0
Survey Self report (3)	0
Eligible Response	
Complete (4)	2,816
Incomplete (5)	79
Unknown Eligibility Response	
Complete (6)	0
Incomplete (7)	0
Refused/Deployed/Other (8)	43
Blank (9)	0
Postal Non-Delivery (10)	1,983
Non-respondents (11)	4,597

Eligible Completed Cases for Weighting

The total number of eligible cases for weighting is shown in Table 6.

Table 6.
Completed Eligible Cases by Service, Geography, and Size

Stratification Variable Geography by Size of Unit		Total	Army	Navy	Marine Corps	Air Force	Coast Guard
Total		2,816	873	715	176	881	171
United States	< 100 members	n/a	388	259	35	323	122
	≥ 100 members	n/a	387	369		411	
Overseas	< 100 members	n/a	63	48	141	64	49
	≥ 100 members	n/a	35	39		83	

Note. The cells for Marine Corps and Coast Guard were collapsed within the geography variable identifying the United States and Overseas due to insufficient number of completed eligible cases for the size of unit variable.

Nonresponse Adjustments and Final Weight

After the determination of completion of a survey, analytic weights were created to account for varying response rates among population subgroups. The weighting of responses for UVAO is straightforward. As the sample was a census, the base weight for all cases is 1.0. The nonresponse adjustment was computed in weighting classes defined by Service, geography, and UIC size. Final weights by Service, geography, and UIC size are shown in Table 7.

Table 7.
Final Weights by Service, Geography, and Size

Geography by Size of Unit		Army	Navy	Marine Corps	Air Force	Coast Guard
United States	< 100 members	5.61	2.86	3.14	2.85	2.43
	≥ 100 members	4.63	2.34		2.43	
Overseas	< 100 members	5.49	2.21	2.67	3.28	2.10
	≥ 100 members	6.20	2.10		2.18	

Note. The cells for Marine Corps and Coast Guard were collapsed within the geography variable identifying the United States and Overseas due to insufficient number of completed eligible cases for the size of unit variable.

Variance Estimation

Analysis of the 2008 UVAO data requires a variance estimation procedure that accounts for the weighting procedures. The final step of the weighting process was to define strata for variance estimation by Taylor series linearization. The 2008 UVAO variance estimation strata correspond to the geographic regions. The strata for Marines and Coast Guard were collapsed within geography since there were fewer than 25 cases with non-zero final weights in each stratum for the UIC size. Sixteen variance estimation strata were defined for the 2008 UVAO.

Location, Completion, and Response Rates

Location, completion, and response rates were calculated in accordance with guidelines established by The Council of American Survey Research Organizations (CASRO). The procedure is based on recommendations for Sample Type II response rates (Council of American Survey Research Organizations, 1982). This definition corresponds to the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) RR3 (AAPOR, 2008), which estimates the proportion of eligibles among cases of unknown eligibility.

Location, completion, and response rates were computed for 2008 UVAO as follows:

The location rate (LR) is defined as

$$LR = \frac{\text{adjusted located sample}}{\text{adjusted eligible sample}} = \frac{N_L}{N_E}.$$

The completion rate (CR) is defined as

$$CR = \frac{\text{usable responses}}{\text{adjusted located sample}} = \frac{N_R}{N_L}.$$

The response rate (RR) is defined as

$$RR = \frac{\text{usable responses}}{\text{adjusted eligible sample}} = \frac{N_R}{N_E}.$$

where

- N_L = Adjusted located sample
- N_E = Adjusted eligible sample
- N_R = Usable responses.

To identify the cases that contribute to the components of LR, CR, and RR, the disposition codes were grouped as shown in Table 8. Record ineligible were excluded from calculation of the eligibility rate because it was assumed that all ADMF ineligible had been identified.

Table 8.
Disposition Codes for CASRO Response Rates

Case Disposition Category	Code Value
Eligible Sample	4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11
Located Sample	4, 5, 8, 9, 11
Eligible Response	4
No Return	11
Eligibility Determined	2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9
Self Report Ineligible	2, 3

Note. Code values are from Table 5.

Ineligibility Rate

The ineligibility rate (IR) is defined as

$$IR = \frac{\text{self report ineligible cases}}{\text{eligible determined cases}}$$

Estimated Ineligible Postal Non-Deliverable/Not Located Rate

The estimated ineligible postal non-deliverable/not located rate (IPNDR) is defined as

$$IPNDR = (\text{Eligible Sample} - \text{Located Sample}) * IR.$$

Estimated Ineligible Nonresponse

The estimated ineligible nonresponse (EINR) is defined as

$$EINR = (\text{Not returned}) * IR.$$

Adjusted Location Rate

The adjusted location rate (ALR) is defined as

$$ALR = \frac{(\text{Located Sample} - EINR)}{(\text{Eligible Sample} - IPNDR - EINR)}$$

Adjusted Completion Rate

The adjusted completion rate (ACR) is defined as

$$ACR = \frac{(\text{Eligible response})}{(\text{Located Sample} - EINR)}$$

Adjusted Response Rate

The adjusted response rate (ARR) is defined as

$$ARR = \frac{(\text{Eligible response})}{(\text{Eligible Sample} - \text{IPNDR} - \text{EINR})}$$

Unweighted and weighted sample counts used to compute the overall response rates are shown in Table 9.

Table 9.
Comparison of the Final Sample Relative to the Drawn Sample

Case Disposition Categories	Sample Counts		Weighted Estimates of Population	
	Total	%	Total	%
Drawn sample and population	9,518	100	9,518	100
Total: Ineligible	0		0	
Ineligible on master files.....	0		0	
Self-reported ineligible	0		0	
Eligible sample	9,518	100	9,518	100
Total: Not located ^a	1,983	21	1,983	21
Not located (estimated ineligible).....	0		0	
Not located (estimated eligible).....	1,983		1,983	
Located sample	7,535	79	7,535	79
Total Nonresponse.....	4,719	50	4,719	50
Requested removal from survey mailings.....	43		43	
Returned blank.....	0		0	
Skipped key questions.....	79		79	
Did not return a survey (estimated ineligible).....	0		0	
Did not return a survey (estimated eligible).....	4,597		4,597	
Usable responses from sample.....	2,816	30	2,816	30

Note. The observed counts are the same as the weighted count since a census was taken of units with 25 or more permanently assigned active duty members.

^a The categories labeled “Not located ” and “Did not return a survey ” have been broken down into additional subcategories labeled “(estimated ineligible)” and “(estimated eligible)”. The ineligible counts are based on an ineligible rate = Self-report ineligibles / (Eligible Respondents + Unusable responses + Self-reported ineligibles). Unusable responses include sample members who requested removal, returned blank surveys, or skipped key questions. The eligible counts are the complement of the ineligible count.

Weighted location, completion, and response rates for selected 2008 UVAO domains are shown in Table 10.

Table 10.
Weighted Location, Completion, and Response Rates by Service, Geography, and Size of Unit

Domain	Sample Size	Usable Responses	Sum of Weights	Location Rate (%)	Completion Rate (%)	Response Rate (%)
Sample	9,518	2,816	9,518	79.17	37.37	29.59
Service						
Army	4,531	873	4,531	68.88	27.97	19.27
Navy	1,791	715	1,791	89.67	44.52	39.92
Marine Corps	486	176	486	73.25	49.44	36.21
Air Force	2,311	881	2,311	89.74	42.48	38.12
Coast Guard	399	171	399	94.74	45.24	42.86
Geography						
CONUS	7,916	2,367	7,916	78.42	38.13	29.90
Alaska and Hawaii	460	117	460	78.70	32.32	25.43
Overseas	1,142	332	1,142	84.50	34.40	29.07
Size of Unit						
Less than 100 members	5,486	1,534	5,486	78.16	35.77	27.96
100 or more members	4,032	1,282	4,032	80.53	39.48	31.80

Note. For the geography item, the United States was broken down into two sub-items, CONUS and Alaska and Hawaii.

Estimated Number of Unit Voting Assistance Officers

A list of UVAOs was not available by the time of the survey administration period. A UVAO may be responsible for more than one UIC. There are reasons a UVAO would assist more than one unit. For example, an installation may be reorganizing the structure or the location of the UICs may lead to one UVAO for efficiency and consistency purposes.

Question 10 from the survey instrument asks the following:

- 10. As of November 4, 2008, for how many units of 25 active duty members or more were you serving as Unit Voting Assistance Officer (UVAO)?**

From Question 10, an estimated number of UVAOs that are responsible for all units with 25 or more permanently assigned active members could be calculated. There were UVAOs in all the Services that identified themselves as responsible for more than one UIC. If a UVAO reported serving for more than seven UICs, then the UIC level was capped to seven UICs. The estimated number of UVAOs are shown in Table 11, along with an estimated response rate had the target population been only UVAOs.

Table 11.
Estimated Number of UVAOs by Service, Geography, and Size of Unit

Domain	Sample Size	Estimated Number of UVAOs	Usable Responses	Estimated Response Rate (%)
Sample	9,518	7,399	2,816	38.01
Service				
Army	4,531	3,438	873	25.39
Navy	1,791	1,363	715	52.46
Marine Corps	486	416	176	42.31
Air Force	2,311	1,829	881	48.17
Coast Guard	399	353	171	48.44
Geography				
CONUS	7,916	6223	2,367	38.04
Alaska and Hawaii	460	292	117	40.87
Overseas	1,142	884	332	37.56
Size of Unit				
Less than 100 members	5,486	4318	1,534	35.53
100 or more members	4,032	3081	1,282	41.61

Note. For the geography item, the United States was broken down into two sub-items, CONUS and Alaska and Hawaii.

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

*Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188*

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