RESEARCH PROBLEM REVIEW 76-6

THE VIETNAM ERA DESERTER:

LEVEL II

Characteristics of Unconvicted Army Deserters Participating in the Presidential Clemency Program

by D. Bruce Bell & Thomas J. Houston

July 1976

U. S. ARMY RESEARCH INSTITUTE
for the
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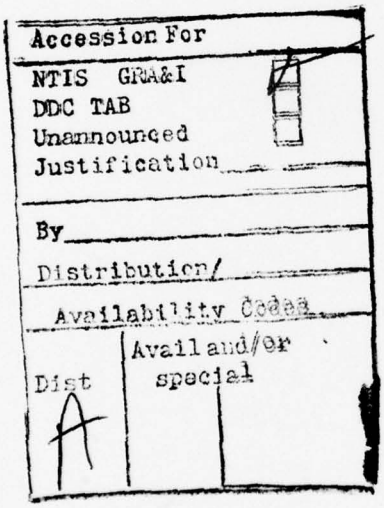

NOTICES

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THE VIETNAM ERA DESERTER: CHARACTERISTICS OF UNCONVICTED ARMY DESERTERS PARTICIPATING IN THE PRESIDENTIAL CLEMENCY PROGRAM

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FOREWORD

The Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI), because of its research experience with military delinquency, was requested by the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, U.S. Army (DCSPER) to prepare a report describing the Army participants in the Presidential Clemency Program. The Department of Defense was responsible for implementing the President's Program for individuals subject to military jurisdiction who, because of extended unauthorized absence, were administratively classified as deserters; DCSPER served as the executive agent. This report describes the men who participated in the Army portion of the Program, comparing them with deserters in general and eligible non-participants in particular. The research was designed to provide basic information about enlisted Army deserters which could be used in future policy-making decisions. The work was accomplished under Army Project No. 2Q763731A769, and is responsive to requirements of the Human Resources Directorate of DCSPER, Leadership and Motivation Division.

J. E. UHLANER,
Technical Director

THE VIETNAM ERA DESERTER: CHARACTERISTICS OF UNCONVICTED ARMY DESERTERS PARTICIPATING IN THE PRESIDENTIAL CLEMENCY PROGRAM

BRIEF

Requirement:

To describe the typical Army participant in order to learn more about Army deserters and the nature of desertion during the Vietnam period, using the records of the enlisted Army participants in the Presidential Clemency Program.

Procedure:

The characteristics and experiences of those who participated in the Program were compared with other relevant groups. The sources of data included the Enlisted Record Center pre-desertion records, Program records, and interviews with the men by Army mental health staff. Tables present the percentages of that part of the participant sample with a given characteristic (e.g., percentage of participants entering the Army at age 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 or 23, or 24 and older) for a variety of descriptive categories at the time the men entered the service, the time of last absence, during absence, and during the Program. A distinction is made between participants who had been apprehended and those who entered the program voluntarily, for better comparison with previous research on deserters. Participant data were also contrasted with available data on known deserters who did not participate in the Program and on several small samples of anti-war protesters.

Findings:

Demographic characteristics of the enlisted men who participated in the Presidential Program resembled those of other deserters. Compared to their contemporaries, they were less educated, scored lower on the AFQT, and they were less likely to be white or from the North Central region of the country. They were more likely to be volunteers and under 20 when enlisted.

Their service careers tended to be short; most (75%) served two years or less, few (19%) saw service in Vietnam, and fewer yet (1%) deserted from combat. Many (44%) had been previously AWOL. Occupational shifts and reduced rank also pointed to histories of trouble in the service among these men.

Their reasons for leaving were generally unassociated with the war. Most (50%) stated that they had left because of personal/family/or financial problems (the same reason given by most deserters during the last two wars as well). Only 14% of the men mentioned Vietnam as in any way responsible for their decision to leave the Army.

Most (88%) of the participants remained in the United States throughout their absence. Those who remained in the United States were much less likely to have left the Army because of anti-war reasons (9% versus 36%).

A comparison was also made between those who participated and those who did not. The groups were remarkably similar. Those differences which were detected could most easily be explained by assuming that non-participation was mainly a function of not having heard about the Program. This interpretation is also supported by a Gallup Poll in August of 1975 which showed that only 72% of the public had ever heard of the Program despite the extensive publicity it received. Furthermore, among those who had heard of the Program, only 17% realized that fugitives living in this country (the bulk of the men) were eligible for the Program.

Utilization of Findings:

The finding that 25% of the participants were not in the deserter apprehension system has led to changes in the system. Data from the report were also used in DOD preparations for defense against suits challenging the manner of processing men through the DOD portion of the Program. Suggestions for reducing desertion arising from this research are being considered. An abstract of this report was incorporated into the DOD After Action Report on the Program.

THE VIETNAM ERA DESERTER: CHARACTERISTICS OF UNCONVICTED ARMY DESERTERS PARTICIPATING IN THE PRESIDENTIAL CLEMENCY PROGRAM

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INTRODUCTION

President Gerald Ford, exercising his executive authority through *Article II, Section 1-3 of the Constitution* and following the precedent of previous Commanders in Chief (Table 1), established the Presidential Clemency Program on 16 September 1974 through Proclamation 4313. His Program offered Vietnam era draft evaders and military deserters the opportunity to return to American society without criminal prosecution under certain conditions.

The overall Program was designed for four specific groups: those (1) against whom charges could properly lie or (2) who had been convicted of violating provisions of the Military Selective Service Act (hereafter called draft evaders), and those (3) against whom charges could properly lie or (4) who had been convicted or charged with desertion, absence without leave (AWOL), missing movement, or similar offenses (hereafter called military deserters).[1] Convicted draft evaders and military deserters were referred to a specially created 18-member Presidential Clemency Board established in the Executive Office of the President (Presidential Clemency Board, 1975). Unconvicted draft evaders were referred to the Department of Justice. Unconvicted military deserters were referred to the Department of Defense or the Department of Transportation (*Coast Guard deserters only*). Each case was judged separately on its merits.

To be eligible for the Presidential Program, men had to meet two requirements: Their offenses must have occurred between 4 August 1964 (the Tonkin Gulf Resolution) and 28 March 1973 (the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam), and applicants must have had no other military charges pending against them (unless the additional charges were waived or properly adjudicated). All participants were required to reaffirm allegiance to the United States and pledge to perform periods of alternate service under Selective Service auspices in jobs promoting the national interest.

The Department of Defense established the Joint Alternate Service Board (JASB) for unconvicted military deserters; it consisted of a senior officer (Colonel or Navy Captain) from each of the four services--Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps. This report focuses on the Army's participation in the Presidential Program. A more complete description

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[1] See Appendix A for the official definition of desertion.

Table 1

PRESIDENTIAL AMNESTIES FOR MILITARILY CONNECTED CRIMES

Offense	Number Benefited	Form	Conditions & Limitations	Cite	Case	Date
1. Treason & other indictable offenses against U. S.		Blanket pardon of individuals elsewhere identified by name	Limited to those who gave (apparently in writing before date of proclamation) assurances they would not obstruct revenue Laws.	1 Richardson, Messages and Papers of the Presidents (Washington, 1896) 181	Whiskey Rebellion	Acts around 17 July 1794 Proclamation: 10 July 1795
2. Treason & other crimes against U. S.	Over 100	Blanket pardon	Excluded those indicted or convicted (they were later pardoned separately)	1 id. 303	Fries' Rebellion	Acts up to 12 March 1799 Proclamation: 21 May 1800
3. Desertion 4. 5. 6.		Blanket pardon	Must return to ranks within 4 months (all proclamations almost identical)	1 id. 425, 512, 514, 543	War of 1812 deserters; earlier deserters	Desertions up to dates of proclamations 15 Oct 1807 7 Feb 1812 8 Oct 1812 17 Jun 1814
7. Piracy, offenses against revenue laws	ca. 1000	Blanket pardon	Individual must prove he aided in defense of New Orleans	1 id. 558	Madison's amnesty for Lafitte's pirates	Acts up to 8 Jan 1815 Proclamation: 6 Feb 1815
8. Desertion		Blanket pardon in form of War Dept. Order reciting "order" of President	Those under arrest to return to duty, unless under sentence of death; if so, to be discharged and never reenter the Army. Those at large to be discharged and never reenter the Army.	2 id. 499	To give full effect to legislative abolition of death penalty for peacetime desertion	12 June 1830
Desertion		Blanket pardon	Return to duty by 1 Apr 1863	6 id. 163	Lincoln, in conjunction w/ command to AWOLs to return to unit	10 March 1863

Table 1 (Continued)

Offense	Number Benefited	Form	Conditions & Limitations	Cite	Case	Date
10. Rebellion		Blanket pardon with group exclusions: CSA civil & military officers (COL & above); former USA military, judicial, & Leg. officers; those who mistreated POWS. The 1864 supplementary proclamation excluded men in confinement from eligibility.	Take and keep loyalty oath	6 id. 213-16 6 id. 218	Lincoln's first Confederate amnesty, issued during war to undermine Confederate resistance	8 Dec 1863, retrospective and prospective in operation. Qualified 26 March 1864
11. Desertion		Blanket pardon	Return to duty by 10 May 1865 and serve out enlistment	6 id. 278	Lincoln, giving deserters chance to avoid increased legislative penalties for desertion passed in March 1865.	11 March 1865
12. Rebellion		Blanket pardon	Loyalty oath with same exclusions as #10 plus all CSA officers educated at U. S. Military or Naval Academy; all who left U. S. to aid rebellion; all privateers, and everyone worth $20,000 or more	6 id. 310	Johnson's first Confederate amnesty, issued immediately after war after Atty. Gen. opinion that #10 was solely a wartime measure.	29 May 1865
13. Desertion from regular Army		Blanket War Dept. Order issued at direction of President	Return to duty before 15 Aug 66; make good time lost by desertion	20 Op, Atty Gen, 330, 345 (1892)	No background information	3 July 1866
14. Rebellion	All but ca. 300 Confederates	Blanket pardon excluding only (1) CSA President, VP, cabinet, officers over BG, CSA state govenors (2) those who mistreated POWs (3) those in confinement	Loyalty Oath	6 Richardson 547	Johnson's second Confederate amnesty with fewer exclusions than first	7 Sep 1867

Table 1 (Continued)

Offense	Number Benefited	Form	Conditions & Limitations	Cite	Case	Date
15. Treason	ca. 290	Blanket pardon excepting those under indictment for treason (e.g. Jefferson Davis)	None (no oath required)	6 id 655	Johnson's third Confederate amnesty	4 July 1868
16. Treason	ca. 10	Blanket pardon	None	6 id. 708	Johnson's fourth Confederate amnesty	25 December 1868
17. Insurrection		Blanket pardon except for murder, rape, arson, robbery	Loyalty oath	14 id. 6690-92 (cite not verified)	Teddy Roosevelt's pardon for Philippine insurrectionists following Aguinaldo	Acts up to 1 May 1902 Proclamation: 4 July 1902
18. Desertion after close of hostilities	ca. 100	Blanket pardon retrospective, and prospective, applying to those convicted	Applied only to citizenship portion of penalty.	Not found	Coolidge's partial relief for post-Armistice deserters	5 March 1924
19. Draft and espionage in World War I	500-600 or ca. 1500 (conflicting estimates)	Blanket pardon for those convicted	Compliance with sentence imposed when convicted	2 FDR Public Papers & Addresses (New York 1938) 539	Franklin D. Roosevelt's restoration of civil rights to WWI law violators	23 December 1933
20. Various U.S. crimes		Blanket pardon	Served year or more AD in U.S. forces; honorable separation	10 Fed. Reg. 15409 (Dec. 24, 1945)	Truman rewarding convicts who served in armed forces in WWII	24 December 1945
21. Violation of WWII Selective Service Act		Pardon of named convicted individuals	Only if recommended by 3-man screening board	12 Fed. Reg. 8731 (Dec. 23, 1945)	Pardon of selected WWII draft law violators	23 December 1947

Table 1 (Continued)

Offense	Number Benefited	Form	Conditions & Limitations	Cite	Case	Date
22. Various U. S. crimes		Blanket pardon	Served year or more AD in U. S. armed forces; honorable separation	17 Fed. Reg. 11833 (Dec 24, 1952)	Truman rewarding convicts who served in armed forces in Korea	24 December 1952
23. Desertion after close of WWII hostilities, before Korea		Blanket pardon applying to those convicted	Applied only to citizenship portion of penalty.	Id.	Truman's partial relief for post-war deserters	24 December 1952

Note. Source: Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower and Reserve Affairs).

of the Program, including data from other services, can be found in the DOD After Action Report (Department of the Army, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, 1975).

The JASB was located at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, convenient to the Army Enlisted Records Center (ERC), which was charged with initial determination of eligibility and with processing unconvicted Army deserters who applied to the Program. The commander of Fort Harrison was granted General Courts Martial authority over men applying for the Program who were excluded by their other military offenses; if the commander decided to waive the other charges, a man was permitted to enter the Program.

A man found eligible for the Program was not required to participate; his case could be taken through normal military channels. Some Army enlisted personnel were permitted to apply for reenstatement to active duty.[2] Men who chose either of these options or chose to remain at large were not listed as participants in the President's Program.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS

This section describes Army participants and compares them with other deserter groups[3] and men who did not desert. Three questions are considered: What were the participants like when they entered the service? What were their characteristics when they deserted? What happened to them after they left?

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Data for the participant sample came from ERC and interviews conducted by the mental health personnel at the medical department activity or MEDDAC (i.e., Hawley Army Hospital, Fort Harrison). These two sources were merged into a single data file in which personnel identifiers were replaced by a code number after the merging. ERC data came from existing Army records, JASB records, and records generated by the Joint Clemency Processing Center (JCPC) at Fort Harrison.

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[2] Although these options were available, few took advantage of them. As of 14 March 1975, only 765 eligible men had decided to take their cases through normal military channels, and only one individual has applied for and been granted reenstatement.

[3] Appendix B provides a selected bibliography on AWOL and desertion.

Of the 4,456 men who participated in the Army program,[4] 3,879 men provided data for the report as a whole; however, the number of persons in some analyses is less when data are missing.

Because most previous studies deal with "captive" populations, the participant data were divided into that from apprehended participants, who were under military control,[5] and that from non-apprehended participants. Most of the men participating before 1 January 1975 had been apprehended. One of the questions was whether systematic differences existed between the apprehended men and those who responded to Program publicity.[6]

The tables in this report present data in percentages (i.e., the percentage of a given subsample with a given characteristic) to simplify presentation. The statistic chi square is used to analyze differences between groups. In light of the large sample sizes, the level of statistical significance required is .01. Strength of association measures--phi and Cramer's V (Hays, 1963)--were also computed, because a chi square can be statistically significant in large samples (such as the subgroups in this report) even when the actual difference between groups is trivial (Winch and Campbell, 1969).

Participants were also compared with other groups of soldiers. In most cases data from other studies were used; data on race, mental ability, method of entry, and year of entry were obtained from the Department of Defense for all enlisted men for 1963-73 and were used as expected values in chi square analyses of these variables.

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[4] 4,406 Army personnel reported to the JCPC prior to 31 March 1975. Of these, 4,256 were given undesirable discharges with or without alternate service. Of the remaining, 87 were found to be ineligible, 56 were discharged outside the Program (as defined here), 4 went AWOL, 2 were restored to duty and 1 was still being processed as of 15 April 1975.

[5] Although the term apprehended is used to describe the group as a whole, many men undoubtedly returned to military control voluntarily. 49.7% of the absentee group studied by Littlepage and Fox (1972) returned voluntarily, and 37% of administratively defined deserters who returned to military control in Biegel's (1968) study surrendered voluntarily.

[6] In addition to the widespread publicity given the Program by the press, the military departments sent letters to the men's next of kin (usually their parents or for married men, their wives), advising them of the existence of the Program and asking them to participate. In support of the DOD portion of the Program, some 7,000 letters were sent, but over 2,000 of those were returned undelivered.

DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS PRIOR TO ENTRY INTO THE ARMY

The four variables in Table 2--race, geographic region of origin, level of civilian education, and mental ability as measured by the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT)--existed prior to entry into service. Table 2 compares the apprehended and non-apprehended subgroups and also compares the participants as a whole with other Army groups in this period. For the measures of race and mental ability, the comparison is with census data for the entire Army, furnished by the Manpower Research Data Analysis Center (MARDAC). For the measures of geographic region and civilian education, the comparison is with non-deserters who entered the service in FY 1968 or 1969 (Boyd and Jones, 1973).

Race. Most men who entered the President's Program, as well as most soldiers, were white. Race was not related to whether a man had been apprehended or not; however, a disproportionately high percentage of those in the Program were black (20% vs. 14%[7] of the Army). Race has been found by others to be related to desertion in the Vietnam period (Boyd and Jones, 1973; Fuchs, 1969; Hartnagel, 1974; Littlepage and Fox, 1972) and during the Korean conflict (Osburn et al., 1954).

Region of the country. The men's homes of record as they entered the service were categorized into the four regions used by the Census Bureau. (Men who entered from outside the continental U.S. were excluded from this analysis.) There was no statistically significant difference among participants geographically, but there was a difference between participants and non-deserters serving during the Vietnam period. Participants were more likely to be from the Northeast and less likely to be from the North Central region.

Level of education. Men who entered the Program after being apprehended had slightly less education than those who entered voluntarily. The difference between participants and non-deserters was much greater: 64% of the participants were high school dropouts, vs. 28% of the non-deserters. In other studies, 68% to 79% of AWOL soldiers were high school dropouts (Boyd and Jones, 1973; Fuchs, 1969; Hartnagel, 1974; Littlepage and Fox, 1972; McCubbin et al., 1971).

Mental ability. Scores on the AFQT are reported as percentiles grouped into five broad categories. There was a small difference ($V = .08$) between apprehended and non-apprehended participants; the apprehended were less intelligent. There was a greater difference between participants and enlisted men in general--39% and 24%, respectively, were in the lowest two categories of mental ability.

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[7] Director of Army Equal Opportunity Program, DCSPER, figure for this period is 12.3% black.

Table 2

CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS PRIOR TO ENTRY

Characteristic	Percent of Participants			Percent of Group		
	Apprehended	Non-Apprehended	Statistical Evaluations	Total Participants	Vietnam Era Army	Statistical Evaluation
Race[a]	N = 1137	N = 2632	χ^2 = .07[b]	N = 3769	N = 3,486,675[c]	χ^2 = 123.78[d]
White	79	80	Φ = .00	80	86	
Black	21	20		20	14	
Region of Country[e]	N = 1123	N = 2640	χ^2 = 1.83[b]	N = 3763	N = approx 160,000[f]	χ^2 = 204.93[d]
South	37	37	V = .02	37	33	
North Central	23	25		25	32	
Northeast	24	23		23	17	
West	16	15		15	19	
Education	N = 1141	N = 2651	χ^2 = 20.86[d]	N = 3792	N = approx 160,000[f]	χ^2 = 2558.24[d]
Non-Graduate	68	62	V = .07	64	28	
High School Graduate	27	30		29	48	
Beyond High School	4	8		7	25	
Mental Ability (AFQT Category)	N = 1102	N = 2550	χ^2 = 22.62[d]	N = 3652	N = 3,459,675[c]	χ^2 = 550.24[d]
I (93-100 percentile)	2	3	V = .08	2	5	
II (65-92 percentile)	12	18		16	28	
III (31-64 percentile)	44	42		43	42	
IV & V (0-30 percentile)	42	38		39	24	

[a] 66 individuals of other races (e.g., Orientals, American Indians) made up about 2% of the participant sample and were excluded from the analysis.

[b] Not statistically significant.

[c] Non-prior-service enlistees entering the Army between 1963 and the first half of 1974. Source: Manpower Research Data Analysis Center, Department of Defense.

[d] $p < .001$

[e] The 33 participants living outside the continental United States were not included in this analysis.

[f] Non-prior-service accessions entering service in FY 1968 who did not desert (Boyd and Jones, 1973).

Others confirm that deserters tend to be less intelligent in the Vietnam period (Boyd and Jones, 1973; Fitt, 1968; Fuchs, 1969; Hartnagel, 1974), the Korean conflict (Osburn et al., 1954), and World War II (Clark, 1948b; Fuchs and Chyatte, 1950).

Summary. Participants, before entering the service, exhibited demographic characteristics common among Vietnam era deserters and deserters from earlier wars as well.

DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS AT ENTRY

Table 3 presents analyses of three variables determined at the time men enter the Army: method of entry (i.e., volunteer, draftee, or reservist), year of entry, and age at entry.

Method of entry. Most participants had been volunteers, and the two subgroups did not differ on this measure. The percentage of volunteers among the participants (56%) was significantly higher than among enlisted men in general (45%). (Since the MARDAC figures did not include reservists, reservists were eliminated from the participants for this comparison.) Volunteers have contributed disproportionately to military delinquency (Bell and Holz, 1975), unauthorized absence in general (Hartnagel, 1974; Littlepage and Fox, 1972) and desertion (Boyd and Jones, 1973; Fitt, 1968). Therefore, although conscription may have added to national tensions and even induced men to volunteer, the volunteer was the problem soldier, not the draftee.

Year of entry. There was a small (V = .07) but statistically significant tendency for the apprehended to have joined the Army earlier than the non-apprehended (i.e., before 1969). Participants in general entered service later than most soldiers--71% entered after 1968 vs. 51% of enlisted men as a whole.

Age at entry. Apprehended participants were more likely than non-apprehended to have joined the Army before age 18. There was also a relationship between age at entry and desertion. Bell, Bolin, and Houston (1974), Boyd and Jones (1973), and Fuchs (1969) have demonstrated that the 17-year-old is a poor risk for desertion.

Summary. Volunteers and younger men are most likely to desert; there was little difference between subgroups. The relatively late service-entry dates of participants may be an artifact of the requirement that participants had to be unconvicted deserters.

DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS AT ABSENCE

Participants were described at the time of last absence along 13 dimensions: (1) year of absence, (2) age at absence, (3) marital status, (4) number of previous AWOLs, (5) length of service, (6) completion of individual training, (7) pay grade (rank), (8) duty status (e.g., training, garrison, combat, leave), (9) location of assigned

Table 3

DATA DESCRIBING PARTICIPANTS AT TIME OF ENTRY

Descriptive Category	Percent of Participants			Percent of Group		
	Apprehended	Non-Apprehended	Statistical Evaluations	Total Participants	Vietnam Era Army	Statistical Evaluation
Method of Entry	N = 1140	N = 2654	χ^2 = .37[a]	N = 3794	N = 3,486,675[b]	χ^2 = 182.45[c]
Volunteer (RA)	56	55	V = .01	55	45	
Draftee (US)	43	43		43	55	
Reserve (NG and ER)	2	2		2		
Year of Entry	N = 1118	N = 2640	χ^2 = 20.38[d]	N = 3758	N = 3,486,675[b]	χ^2 = 1310.60[a]
Prior to 1966	8	8	V = .07	8	22	
1966	9	8		9	16	
1967	15	12		12	11	
1968	21	20		20	14	
1969	22	25		25	13	
1970	12	16		15	9	
1971	9	10		9	7	
1972 or later	4	2		3	8	
Age at Entry	N = 1138	N = 2654	χ^2 = 16.36[c]	N = 3792	N = approx 160,000[e]	χ^2 = 3290.06[c]
17	16	13	V = .07	14	3	
18	14	15		15	7	
19	28	31		30	14	
20	19	20		19	38	
21	4	5		5	17	
22 or 23	15	15		15	14	
24 or older	4	2		3	8	

[a] Not statistically significant.

[b] Source: MARDAC

[c] Significant beyond the .001 level

[d] $p < .01$

[e] Source: Non-deserters from the Boyd and Jones (1973) research.

unit, (10) service in Vietnam, (11) military occupational specialty (MOS), (12) reason for absence, and (13) use of Army resources to help with the problems associated with AWOL. Dimensions 12 and 13 are represented by more than one variable. The 13 dimensions can be grouped into four broad areas for discussion: Characteristics of the men at desertion (dimensions 2-7, 10, 11); characteristics of the situations (dimensions 1, 8, 9); reasons for absence (dimension 12); and attempts to secure help (dimension 13).

Table 4 shows the eight characteristics of the men when they left the Army. Comparable data for the Army as a whole are not generally available.

Table 4

DATA DESCRIBING PARTICIPANTS AT TIME OF LAST ABSENCE

Descriptive Category	Percent of Participants: Apprehended	Non-Apprehended	Total	Statistical Evaluations
Age	N = 1142	N = 2656	N = 3798	$\chi^2 = 35.75$ [a]
17 years	3	2	2	V = .10
18	8	6	7	
19	12	14	13	
20	22	28	26	
21	21	19	20	
22	12	11	11	
23	8	6	7	
24	3	5	5	
25 and over	10	8	8	
Marital Status	N = 1142	N = 2656	N = 3798	$\chi^2 = 15.67$ [a]
Not Married	57	63	61	Φ = .06
Married	44	37	39	
Number of Self-Reported Prior AWOLs	N = 811	N = 2371	N = 3182	$\chi^2 = 41.87$ [a]
None	66	53	56	V = .11
One	19	27	25	
Two	9	12	11	
Three or more	6	8	8	
Length of Service	N = 1111	N = 2634	N = 3745	$\chi^2 = 18.74$ [b]
0-3 Months	11	12	12	V = .07
4-6	15	19	18	
7-9	11	11	11	
10-12	9	9	9	

Table 4 (Continued)

Descriptive Category	Percent of Participants: Apprehended	Non-Apprehended	Total	Statistical Evaluations
Length of Service				
13-24	28	24	25	
25-36	14	11	12	
More than 36	13	13	13	
Completion of Training	N = 1062	N = 2435	N = 3497	$\chi^2 = 19.62$ [a]
Trainee	21	29	26	$\Phi = .08$
Non-Trainee	79	71	74	
Pay Grade	N = 1142	N = 2657	N = 3799	$\chi^2 = 24.94$ [a]
E1	45	38	40	$V = .08$
E2	24	28	27	
E3	16	15	15	
E4	10	13	12	
E5-E6	4	6	5	
Service in Vietnam	N = 1140	N = 2653	N = 3793	$\chi^2 = 2.92$ [c]
No	83	80	81	$\Phi = .03$
Yes	18	20	19	
MOS Group [d]	N = 835	N = 1738	N = 2573	$\chi^2 = 67.36$ [a]
Combat	28	37	32	$V = .16$
Electronics	7	7	7	
Communications	3	4	4	
Medical	2	4	4	
Technical	0	1	1	
Administration	11	13	12	
Repair	11	11	11	
Craftsmen	26	14	18	
Supply	13	12	13	

[a] $p < .001$

[b] $p < .01$

[c] Not statistically significant.

[d] Occupational grouping used by Department of Defense for Non-Trainees, from Department of Defense Occupational Conversion Table: Enlisted. March 1965.

Age at absence. Table 4 shows a small but statistically significant difference between subgroups; apprehended participants were slightly older. Note that age may be related to marital status, discussed below. Most participants (69%) were under 22 years of age when they deserted. Previous research shows disparity on this point.

Marital status. This is categorized in Table 4 as married or not married (i.e., single, divorced, legally separated). At the time they deserted 39% of the participants--and 44% of the apprehended--were married. Participants cannot be compared with the enlisted force as a whole because the percentage of married men varied widely from year to year (Bennett et al., 1974).

Number of previous AWOLs. The Army is particularly concerned with identifying men who are likely to be repeatedly absent without leave (Bogard, McCubbin, and Connelly, 1969; Clark, 1948a, 1953; Hartnagel, 1974; Kurke, Marlowe, and Shelhase, 1963). Table 4 shows the number of self-reported previous offenses among participants: 44% were repeat offenders, while 56% had not been AWOL before. In contrast, more than 95% of soldiers are never AWOL (Fitt, 1968). Number of previous AWOL offenses is slightly related ($V = .11$) to method of entry to the Program; the apprehended were somewhat less likely to be repeat offenders, in spite of the fact that repeaters are more likely ($\Phi = .13$) to be in the USADIP system.[8] Littlepage and Fox (1972) found that 52% of absentees had received non-judicial punishment for previous AWOL offenses, and 42% had been court-martialed. Fitt (1968) found 82% of administratively defined deserters had prior military disciplinary records and 20% had civilian records. Apparently deserters often "signal" their intentions.

Length of service. The Army computes length of service in two ways--the elapsed time between service entry and the present (or date of unauthorized absence), or the amount of time served minus time in confinement or on unauthorized leave. Table 4 uses the first method.

The apprehended group had slightly longer tenure than the non-apprehended. Longer service may have aided apprehension or increased the men's willingness to "face the music." Most participants (75%) had served two years or less. Others have also found that desertion tends to occur in the first tour of duty (Fitt, 1968; Fuchs, 1969).

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[8] The United States Army Deserter Information Point (USADIP) is part of the United States Army Military Personnel Records Center (MILPERCEN). It was established in August 1971 as a central agency handling Army deserters at Fort Harrison.

Completion of training. Trainees can be identified in the records by code 09B if they have not completed individual training or qualified for their MOS. The apprehended group contained significantly fewer trainees; apparently those who desert in the first few months are less likely to be caught. Most participants (74%) had completed training and gained an MOS prior to their last absence. Littlepage and Fox (1972) found 77% of absentees had their MOS. This is consistent with length-of-service data, as individual training is generally completed in the first 6 months.

Enlisted pay grade. The nine enlisted pay grades are comparable to the enlisted ranks and are used as a convenient indication of rank in the enlisted force. Grades of the apprehended group were somewhat lower (V = .08) than for the non-apprehended, a difference not explained by previous AWOLs or length of service, since the apprehended had fewer repeat offenders and less time in service. When they deserted, 67% of the participants were in the lowest two grades (E1 or E2). Time in service, previous offenses, and the fact that 47% of the participants claimed to have held grades above E2 suggest that many of these men had been reduced in grade for previous misconduct. Fitt (1968) found 80% of deserters were E1 or E2, 64% were E1.

Service in Vietnam. Participants were considered to have served in Vietnam if they had arrived in Vietnam and been attached to units there. The subgroups did not differ on this measure (Table 4). Most participants (81%) never served in Vietnam. Among those who did, most deserted after they had completed tours and been reassigned--15% deserted from Vietnam-based units, 74% while assigned stateside, and 11% from other overseas locations. Osburn et al. (1954) and Kristiansen (1970) report that some men have difficulty adjusting to garrison life after combat.

MOS group. Table 4 shows the participants' primary MOS grouped according to the Department of Defense system (DOD, 1965). They may or may not have been performing these jobs when they deserted. Apprehended participants had significantly fewer combat troops and more craftsmen than the non-apprehended, but the groups were otherwise quite similar. Most participants came from the less technical occupations: combat (32%), craftsmen (18%), supply (13%), and repair (11%), although 12% were from administration.

However, it is important to look at relative figures, since the number of deserters from each occupational group may well be a function of the number of men so assigned during this era. Unfortunately, such comparisons are not easily made. We were unable to locate figures for all years, and those we did locate (Boyd and Jones, 1973; Department of Defense, 1973) showed that the relative strengths of the MOS shifted rather dramatically during the period, particularly those in combat jobs (Table 5). Nevertheless, the "Craftman" MOS stands out in available data. A close examination of this group showed that their greater proportion of deserters was attributable to the large number of "duty soldiers" who subsequently deserted. Duty soldiers are often assigned because they are not progressing well in other MOS, frequently because they are delinquents or misfits. Thus, past failures--not vocational factors--may have been responsible for the disproportionately high number of craftsmen who deserted.

Table 5

COMPARISON OF PARTICIPANTS WITH NON-DESERTERS AND TOTAL ARMY, BY MOS GROUP

MOS Group[a]		Percent: Total Participants N = 2573	Percent: Non-Deserters[b] FY '68-'69 N = ± 160,000	Percent: Army[c] 30 June 1971 N = ± 1,200,000	Statistical Evaluations
Combat	(0)	32	28.3	23.3	Participants vs. non-deserters $\chi^2 = 1860.15$[d]
Electronics	(1)	7	4.4	5.6	
Communications	(2)	4	8.7	7.9	Participants vs. total EM $\chi^2 = 1633.50$[d]
Medical	(3)	4	4.1	5.2	
Technical	(4)	1	2.0	2.3	
Administration	(5)	12	20.0	21.0	
Repair	(6)	11	15.5	16.6	
Craftsmen	(7)	18	3.4	3.9	
Supply	(8)	13	13.6	14.2	

[a] Occupational grouping used by Department of Defense, from Department of Defense Occupational Conversion Table: Enlisted. March 1965.

[b] Source: Boyd and Jones, 1973

[c] Source: Department of Defense, 1973

[d] Significant beyond the .001 level

Summary of participant characteristics at absence. Demographic differences between subgroups were generally small, and the measure of service in Vietnam showed no differences at all. Some minor differences seemed related to why men were apprehended, and the small difference in MOS may have been affected by differences in education and mental ability.

Although mostly descriptive in nature, these findings do have implications for Army planners; they point to where the problem exists and where to apply resources. For example, men with previous offenses and men who are duty soldiers should probably be examined more closely.

Situational factors associated with desertion. Table 6 provides data on three situational factors associated with absence: the year men left the service, the locations from which they left, and the duty status from which they left (e.g., training, transit between locations, combat).

The years in which participants deserted appear in Table 6. There was no significant difference between groups on this measure. The largest number of desertions occurred during 1969-71.

Subgroups did not differ significantly on location of their units. When a man deserts while in transit between units, he is listed as absent from the unit to which he was going. Most men (88%) deserted from units based in the continental United States. Among the 12% who deserted overseas, only 3% left units based in Vietnam. Staff work by the Army just before U.S. troops left Vietnam showed that most men listed as absent from Vietnam-based units had deserted while in transit or on leave and were not physically present in Vietnam.

Table 6 also shows the duty status of participants when they deserted. Although most men (56%) were physically with their units, 38% deserted while in transit, on leave, or convalescent. Lonn (1966), Osburn et al. (1954), and Stouffer et al. (1965a, b) also found high losses in transit, etc. Only 1% left directly from combat. There was a statistically significant difference between the two subgroups; the apprehended were more likely to have been with their units when they left (in training, garrison, or combat). Such men were more likely to be in the USADIP system as deserters and thus more likely to be caught.

Table 6

SITUATIONAL FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH DESERTION, FOR PARTICIPANTS

Situational Factor	Percent of Participants: Apprehended	Non-Apprehended	Total	Statistical Evaluations
Year of Last Absence	N = 1142	N = 2657	N = 3799	χ^2 = 17.27[a]
Prior to 1967	3	3	3	V = .07
1967	5	4	4	
1968	12	11	11	
1969	25	23	23	
1970	23	26	25	
1971	22	24	24	
1972	7	8	8	
1973 or later	4	3	3	
Location of Absentee's Unit	N = 1142	N = 2655	N = 3797	χ^2 = 9.11[a]
Continental USA (*CONUS*)	89	88	88	V = .05
Europe (USAREUR)	5	5	5	
Other Locations Overseas	5	4	5	
Vietnam	2	4	3	
Duty Status	N = 691	N = 2251	N = 2942	χ^2 = 38.38[b]
Training (BCT/AIT)	28	23	24	V = .12
Garrison	37	30	31	
Leave/Convalescence	18	21	20	
Transit	12	20	18	
PCF/Stockade	4	6	6	
Combat	1	1	1	

[a]Not statistically significant.

[b]Significant at the .001 level.

Reasons for absence. Participants gave reasons for leaving in their written statements to the Board and to the MEDDAC interviewers.[9] Table 7 shows percentage figures on both sources of data, reasons given to the Board, and reasons given to the interviewers. Appendix C provides an index of individual reasons and discusses the methods used in collecting the data.

Participants gave reasons for absence to the MEDDAC team, the JASB, both, or neither. More apprehended men were willing to give reasons to interviewers than to the Board, by a small but statistically significant difference.

The reasons for absence given the Board were grouped into five broad categories modified from those of an earlier study (U. S. Congress, 1968; 1972): (1) personal/family/financial, (2) adjustment to the Army, (3) objections to war, (4) allegations of Army mismanagement, and (5) other (Table 7). Most of the reasons were in the first category,[10] which is consistent with research from World War II (Rashkis, 1945), the Korean conflict (Osburn et al., 1954), and Vietnam (Hartnagel, 1974; Presidential Clemency Board, 1975). Next most frequent was failure to adjust to the Army (27%), whether early or after combat. Objections to war included verbal statements and such behavior as seeking conscientious objector status, by 12% of the men, which compares to the 7% and 9% reported by Hartnagel (1974) and the Presidential Clemency Board (1975), respectively. The category of Army mismanagement included such things as statements of alleged harassment or being sent home to await orders. The apprehended subgroup was significantly more likely to give personal/family/financial reasons and less likely to mention Army adjustment or mismanagement--although they may have been stating reasons that would be most acceptable to the Army.

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[9] Some authorities do not feel that it is necessary to ask why men desert. They look rather at the consequences of the act and assert that the motivation may be inferred: deserters wish to deny their services to the military. This is analogous to assuming that, if showering with a friend results in the conservation of water, then all who engage in such behavior do so to conserve water. Kelman, for example, (1975) offers a rationale for the silence of deserters who do not claim to resist war: "Their lack of a well-articulated position can be understood if we consider that these men came disproportionately from poor, uneducated and minority backgrounds. Unlike the well-educated, middle-class men of their generation, they lacked the conceptual frameworks, the verbal skills, the role models and the counseling opportunities that would have enabled them to develop a conscientious objector position." (p. 20).

[10] The reported reasons do not necessarily mean these men had more family or financial problems than others, but rather that they chose to solve such problems outside the Army.

Table 7

REASONS FOR ABSENCE

Reasons for Absence	Percent of Participants: Apprehended	Non-Apprehended	Total	Statistical Evaluations
Source of Data:	N = 1142	N = 2657	N = 3799	χ^2 = 27.89[a]
Both MEDDAC & JASB	77	84	82	V = .09
MEDDAC Only	16	10	12	
JASB Only	7	5	6	
No reason given	1	1	1	
Reasons Given to JASB	N = 952	N = 2367	N = 3319	χ^2 = 73.91[a]
Personal/Family/Financial	60	45	50	V = .15
Army Adjustment	20	29	27	
Objections to War	12	12	12	
Army Mismanagement	5	10	9	
Other	2	3	3	
Reasons Given the Interviewers	N = 1057	N = 2657	N = 3714	χ^2 = 152.46[a]
Family/Marital/Financial	50	35	40	V = .20
Army Adjustment	18	26	24	
Administrative/Leadership	17	21	20	
Related to Vietnam	11	15	14	
Legal	2	1	1	
Drugs	2	3	2	

[a]Significant beyond the .001 level.

The categories of reasons from the MEDDAC interviewers were collapsed and the unit of analysis changed so that the answers could be more readily compared with answers given the Board. Family/marital/financial problems were most frequent (40%), followed by Army adjustment (24%) and problems in administration and leadership (20%). Apprehended soldiers were significantly more likely to have family, marital, or financial problems than the non-apprehended ones.

MEDDAC and Board results are very similar, despite differences in methodology and slight sample differences.

Participants' use of Army resources to solve AWOL problems. Because the Army offers a wide range of help to men with personal, family, and financial problems, it is appropriate to ask whether the participants had sought or received such help before deserting. Table 8 shows the percentages of participants who had asked for help, and the kind of help they sought: chain of command (e.g., went to the company commander), non-chain of command (e.g., went to the chaplain), or administrative (e.g., hardship discharge).

Most men (58%) said they did seek some kind of Army help before deserting, and most used more than one channel (e.g., administrative relief through the chain of command). There was a small but statistically significant difference between groups; the apprehended were more likely to seek help, possibly because their problems were more likely to be amenable to military aid.

Yet the Army is puzzled that more men did not try to solve their problems within the system. Previous research (Osburn et al., 1954; Littlepage and Fox, 1972) suggests that deserters have negative attitudes toward official help and have difficulty using it effectively.

Chain of command resources, for example, were not utilized very often. This was true despite the fact that the Army has instituted programs to aid company-level leaders in dealing with soldiers' problems. Most men (55%) did not go to their supervisors for aid in the problems which led to their desertion; among those who did, most stopped at the company level. Previous research has demonstrated that both willingness to seek help and actual AWOL rates of a company are related to perceived interest in the leaders in the soldiers' problems (Blackman et al., 1966; Osburn et al., 1954; McCubbin et al., 1971).

We might speculate that resources outside the chain of command would be more utilized in some instances. Non-chain of command resources are those unrelated to supervision, which the Army furnishes directly (e.g., Army Community Service) or encourages the men to use (e.g., Red Cross). Only about a third of the participants had used these services, and there was no difference between subgroups.

Administrative measures were also poorly utilized. For example, a man with family problems might get emergency leave, a hardship discharge, or reassignment nearer his home; men with moral objections to war can be released as conscientious objectors or be assigned non-combat

Table 8

PARTICIPANTS' USE OF ARMY RESOURCES TO SOLVE AWOL PROBLEMS

Army Resources	Percent of Participants: Apprehended	Non-Apprehended	Total	Statistical Evaluations
	N = 549	N = 2123	N = 2672	χ^2 = 13.40[a]
Sought Help	65	56	58	Φ = .07
Did Not Seek Help	35	44	42	
Chain of Command Resources	N = 495	N = 2044	N = 2539	χ^2 = 7.38[b]
None	49	56	55	V = .05
Some:	51	44	45	
Within Platoon	(3)	(3)	(3)	
First Sergeant	(3)	(5)	(4)	
CO Commander	(39)	(32)	(33)	
Above Company	(4)	(4)	(4)	
Other	(3)	(1)	(2)	
Non-Chain of Command Resources	N = 499	N = 2109	N = 2608	χ^2 = 6.35[c]
None	64	70	69	Φ = .05
Some:	36	30	31	
Chaplain	(19)	(17)	(18)	
Mental Health	(8)	(5)	(6)	
Red Cross	(6)	(5)	(5)	
Other	(3)	(3)	(3)	
Administrative Resources	N = 531	N = 2123	N = 2654	χ^2 = 23.56[a]
None	57	68	66	Φ = .09
Some:	43	32	34	
Emergency leave	(13)	(3)	(8)	
Reassignment	(6)	(5)	(5)	
Hardship Discharge	(11)	(8)	(9)	
CO-1A0 Status	(4)	(4)	(4)	
Other	(9)	(8)	(8)	

[a] Statistically significant at the .001 level.

[b] Statistically significant beyond the .01 level.

[c] Not statistically significant.

duties (1A0 status). Yet Table 8 shows that 66% of the participants had not tried any of these. There was a very small but statistically significant difference between subgroups; the apprehended participants were more likely to have sought administrative relief.

It is difficult to generalize about the efficacy of Army assistance from these data. The fact that these men did not use it does not mean that it provides no help. However, the consistency in findings from Korea (Osburn et al., 1954) and Vietnam (Littlepage and Fox, 1972 and this report) suggest such agencies are not always viewed favorably by delinquents and potential deserters. The reasons for this phenomenon deserve further investigation.

DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS SINCE ABSENCE

Participants' characteristics since desertion were described along 12 dimensions. The first five cover the time between last absence and entry into the Program: (1) USADIP classification, (2) length of last absence, (3) primary location since last absence, (4) AWOL activities (including employment), and (5) AWOL-caused problems. The next three describe the men at the time they entered the Program: (6) age, (7) location, and (8) marital status. The final four stem from participation in the Program: (9) method of entry into the Program, (10) date of discharge, (11) length of alternate service, and (12) post-discharge plans.

Description of participants during absence. The five dimensions here are measured by eight variables, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9

DATA DESCRIBING PARTICIPANTS DURING ABSENCE

Descriptive Category	Percent of Participants: Apprehended	Non-Apprehended	Total	Statistical Evaluations
Status in USADIP Records	N = 1112	N = 2633	N = 3745	$\chi^2 = 65.08^a$
Listed as Deserter	84	71	75	$\Phi = .13$
Not Listed	16	29	25	
Length of Last Absence	N = 1142	N = 2657	N = 3799	$\chi^2 = 20.72^a$
1 Year or Less	7	4	5	$V = .07$
2 Years	7	9	9	
3 Years	24	27	26	
4 Years	24	26	25	
5 Years	22	19	20	

Table 9 (Continued)

Descriptive Category	Percent of Participants: Apprehended	Non-Apprehended	Total	Statistical Evaluations
6 Years	10	9	9	
More than 6 Years	6	5	6	
Location While Absent	N = 883	N = 2446	N = 3329	χ^2 = 16.03[a]
United States	92	87	88	V = .07
Outside USA	7	10	9	
Both In and Out	2	3	3	
Primary Location While Absent	N = 883	N = 2446	N = 3329	χ^2 = 24.43[a]
USA	93	88	89	V = .09
Canada	4	9	7	
Europe:	2	2	2	
Scandinavia	(1)	(1)	(1)	
Other European Locations	(1)	(1)	(1)	
Other (e.g., Mexico)	2	1	1	
AWOL Activity	N = 669	N = 2170	N = 2839	χ^2 = 4.36[b]
Normal Routine	90	87	87	Φ = .04
Attempts to Hide:	10	14	13	
More Mobility	(6)	(7)	(7)	
Identity Change	(3)	(6)	(5)	
Isolation	(2)	(1)	(1)	
Employment	N = 1068	N = 2537	N = 3605	χ^2 = 5.18[b]
Steady Employment	86	84	85	V = .04
Irregular Employment	10	12	11	
Unemployment	4	3	3	
Other	1	1	1	
Emotional Problems as Judged by Interviewers	N = 770	N = 2405	N = 3175	χ^2 = 4.58[b]
None	35	31	32	Φ = .04
Some:	65	69	68	
Mild	(31)	(37)	(35)	
Moderate	(25)	(26)	(26)	
Severe	(9)	(6)	(7)	
AWOL-Caused Problems as Reported by Participants	N = 560	N = 2163	N = 2723	χ^2 = 1.12[b]
None:	62	65	64	Φ = .02
Some:	38	35	36	
Employment	(13)	(13)	(13)	
Family/Marital	(14)	(11)	(12)	
Drugs	(8)	(6)	(6)	
Other	(5)	(5)	(5)	

[a] Significant beyond the .001 level.

[b] Not statistically significant.

USADIP is the central agency handling deserters, and USADIP records provided the estimates of potential participants in the Presidential Program. Table 9 shows that only 75% of the participants had been listed in the USADIP records. The listing has a demonstrable effect on apprehension (84% of the apprehended had been listed, vs. 71% of the non-apprehended).[11]

Because the Vietnam conflict had ended 17 months before the Program began, the length of last absence was longer than the typical periods noted by Littlepage and Fox (1972), who found 50% of the deserters were absent 4.8 months or less, or Biegel (1968), who found half were absent less than 80 days. There was a small but statistically significant difference between subgroups; the apprehended had left earlier and been gone longer. Of the total participants, 95% had been gone 2 or more years and 60% at least 4 years.

The primary location while absent was generally the United States. Most men (88%) never left this country, and 3% more lived in the U.S. part of the time. More of the apprehended had stayed in the U.S., which is not surprising considering the difficulty of apprehending deserters living abroad. Only 12% of the participants lived primarily outside the U.S.; Canada was mentioned most often (68% of the time), then Europe (17%, roughly half in Scandinavia and half in other countries).

Participants' activities were considered under two aspects: Did they follow normal routines or try to hide? Did they hold steady jobs? Table 9 shows the percentages of participants who followed normal routines and who tried to hide, by frequent change of address (mobility), avoiding past associates or familiar places (isolation), or assuming false identities. When more than one method of hiding was used, it was recorded as the most severe form: identity change, isolation, and mobility, in that order. Most men (87%) said they did not try to hide. (However, this figure may be suspect, since attempting to hide is one of the grounds for differentiating between prolonged absence and actual desertion and therefore may be under-reported.) The subgroups did not differ significantly.

Four categories of employment were considered: Steady work, sporadic work, unemployment, and other (e.g., in school, jail, hospital). Most participants (85%) held steady jobs; few (3%) were unemployed. (These

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[11] It should be stressed that these findings do not show the status of the records system in general. If the 938 men not listed were the only ones not in the system, they would represent less than 1% of the men estimated to have deserted during this period. On the other hand, if most of those who deserted without being listed in the records did not avail themselves of the Program, the 25% figure could be conservative.

figures cannot be compared directly with national unemployment statistics, as Bureau of Labor definitions were not used.) The fact that 96% of the federal fugitives found at least intermittent work indicates that not all employers check their potential employees. Although it is possible that many men worked at jobs where background checks might not be routinely made, Roulstone, Knapp, Book and Taylor (1975) report that the occupations of the participants included sheriffs and narcotic agents. Hartnagel (1974) also found that many deserters obtained jobs and did not expect that bad conduct discharges would affect their lives adversely.

The interviewers judged the men's AWOL-related emotional problems, where such problems were noted, and rated the severity as mild, moderate, or severe. The interviewers inferred from what the men said that most (68%) had experienced some adverse emotional reactions to being AWOL, and that these may have helped motivate them to enter the Program. There were slightly more adverse reactions among the non-apprehended group.

The participants themselves reported that being AWOL caused them other problems. But most men (64%) said they did not have such problems, which agrees with Hartnagel's (1974) data. Employment was mentioned by 13%, family/marital by 12%. The groups did not differ.

These findings, if taken at face value, suggest that life as a federal fugitive is not as difficult as it is often assumed to be. They also suggest that those who remain at large for a number of years are not very different from those who return to military control in a short time.

Description of participants when the Program began. Table 10 presents the three measures of participants at the time of the Program: age, home area, and marital status.

Ages of participants at the start of the Program (16 September 1974) were computed from the dates of birth in Army records. The average participant was 26.7 years old--considerably older than the typical deserter returning to military control, and consistent with the abnormally long absences. Littlepage and Fox (1972) had found the average age 21.32 years, Hartnagel (1974) 22 years, and Osburn et al. (1954) 22.6 years. The apprehended group was significantly older than the non-apprehended, as they had been older when they deserted.

Participants' addresses were categorized as they had been at entry (see Table 2); the basic geographic distribution had not changed. There was no significant difference between subgroups. Marital status was coded as it had been at last absence (see Table 4); 62% were now married, compared to 39% then, which is consistent with ages and length of absence.

Participation in the Program. The four measures of participation in the Program--how a man entered the Program, his date of discharge from the Army, length of alternative service assigned, and his post-discharge plans--are given in Table 11.

Table 10

DATA DESCRIBING PARTICIPANTS WHEN THE PROGRAM BEGAN

Descriptive Category	Percent of Participants: Apprehended	Non-Apprehended	Total	Statistical Evaluations
Age	N = 1142	N = 2656	N = 3798	χ^2 = 49.98[a]
Less than 23	11	11	11	V = .11
23	12	12	12	
24	13	17	16	
25	16	17	17	
26	16	14	15	
27	10	11	11	
28-29	12	10	11	
30-31	6	5	5	
Over 31	3	3	3	
Home Area[b]	N = 1120	N = 2620	N = 3740	χ^2 = 5.09[c]
South	37	37	37	V = .04
North Central	22	25	24	
Northeast	23	22	22	
West	17	16	16	
Marital Status	N = 1142	N = 2657	N = 3799	χ^2 = .63[c]
Married	61	62	62	Φ = .01
Not Married	39	38	38	

[a] Significant beyond the .01 level.

[b] 54 participants living outside of the continental United States were left out of this analysis.

[c] Not statistically significant.

Table 11

PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM

Program Participation	Percent of Participants: Apprehended	Non-Apprehended	Total	Statistical Evaluations
Method of Entry into the Program	N = 1114	N = 2418	N = 3532	Not applicable
Participant Called	0	65	45	
Relative Called	0	8	6	
Letter of Inquiry	0	12	9	
Walk-In	0	14	10	
Apprehended	100	0	32	
Date of Discharge	N = 1115	N = 2638	N = 3753	χ^2 = 1114.59[a]
September '74	36	2	12	V = .54
October '74	26	16	19	
November '74	9	7	8	
December '74	10	11	11	
January '75	14	44	35	
February '75	3	13	10	
March '75	1	7	5	
Length of Alternative Service	N = 1142	N = 2657	N = 3799	χ^2 = 3.91[b]
Maximum (24 months)	57	53	54	Φ = .03
Reduced (0-23 months)	43	47	46	
Post-Discharge Plans	N = 597	N = 2166	N = 2766	χ^2 = .44[b]
Alternate Service	91	92	92	V = .01
Undecided	4	4	4	
Legal Challenge	3	2	2	
Other	2	1	1	

[a] Significant beyond the .001 level.

[b] Not statistically significant.

A man could enter the Program in one of five ways: (1) he could telephone Fort Harrison and ask for instructions on how to enter (participant called); (2) a relative could call Fort Harrison for the instructions (relative called); (3) he or a friend could write to Fort Harrison to ask about the Program (letter of inquiry); (4) he could come to Fort Harrison without prior notification (walk-in); or (5) he could be already under civil or military control (apprehended). Among the non-apprehended, the participants most frequently called (65%). For the total sample, the only meaningful statistic is that 32% were apprehended.

The month and year the men were discharged from the Program and the Army also reflects the date they entered the Program. Most men (85%) had been processed and discharged by the end of January 1975, when the Program was originally scheduled to end. There was a significant difference between groups; the apprehended entered early, and 81% of them had been processed before 1 January 1975, more than a third in the first 15 days of the Program. The attitude of the general public and the press toward the Program changed during the period it existed, and this attitude shift may have affected potential participants. There was also some modification in data-gathering procedures as the Program progressed.

The Board assigned men 24 months of alternate service unless mitigating circumstances warranted a reduction. Table 11 shows that 54% of the men, and more of the apprehended (57%) than the non-apprehended (53%), were assigned maximum service. Men who had been apprehended generally had less time in service and were less likely to have served in Vietnam (criteria for reducing length of alternate service).

Most participants (92%) stated that they planned to perform their alternate service, although many have not done so.

DESERTION AND ANTI-WAR PROTEST

Desertion is popularly believed to indicate disenchantment with a war (for example, Vietnam). A frequent corollary is that deserters are the same as anti-war protesters. The high rates of desertion during the Vietnam conflict and statements by deserters (particularly those living in exile) have been cited to support this belief. But such "evidence" does not explain why desertion rates were higher during World War II (a popular war) than during the Korean War (an unpopular one), nor does it necessarily rely on representative deserters. (For example, among the 88% of the participants who stayed in the U. S., only 9% left the Army for anti-war reasons as opposed to 36% of participants who had lived abroad.)

Written statements to the Board and verbal statements to the interviewers suggest that for most participants (87%), desertion was a means to an end, personal rather than political. One may of course suspect the statements made by participants (who are not necessarily representative, either). Indirect evidence of the validity of their statements can be deduced by determining whether participants--especially those who gave anti-war reasons--resemble anti-war protesters.

Characteristics of anti-war activists. This approach seems simple. It is not. Previous studies have not directly compared deserters with anti-war activists nor shown how anti-war deserters differ from other deserters, in spite of the amount of literature on desertion (Appendix B) and research on anti-war activists (e.g., Westby and Braungart, 1966; Polner, 1970a, b; Mowlana and Geffert, 1971; Kerry and VVAW, 1971; Useem, 1973; Helmer, 1974; Laufer and Sloan, 1975; Jennings and Markus, 1975).

Data on the characteristics of VVAW came from three surveys: VVAW-sponsored demonstrations in Washington, D. C. (Mowlana and Geffert, 1971), and Boston (Helmer, 1974) and a separate study by Helmer of Vietnam veterans living in Boston, some of whom were VVAW members (Helmer, 1974). Extreme caution must be used in interpreting these data since they are not necessarily representative of VVAW nationwide, of Army veterans, or of deserters. For example, all three studies involved small samples (172, 83, and 30 respectively). Some were non-Army veterans, and most--if not all--were non-deserters. However, despite the rather gross nature of the data, it seems clear that VVAW members were different both from Army men in general and the specific participants in the Program on all nine measures of demographic comparison.

Compared with soldiers serving during this era, VVAW members were disproportionately white, from the Northeast, volunteers, trained soldiers, relatively high in rank, served in combat jobs, and saw service in Vietnam. In the same comparison with soldiers serving during this era, the participants were disproportionately black, from the South, volunteers, untrained, relatively low in rank, from non-combat jobs, and with no Vietnam service. It is clear that anti-war veterans and deserters cannot be equated.

Differences among deserters. Did participants in the Program who gave anti-war reasons for desertion (see Table 7) differ from other participants? Did any such differences match demographic patterns among anti-war activists? Table 12 compares entry characteristics of anti-war and other participants. Those who objected to war were more likely to be white, not from the South but from the West, better educated, and more intelligent. The one similarity was that both groups tended to be volunteers. The anti-war participants seem to follow the general pattern of the VVAW.

Table 13 compares service experiences of the anti-war and other participants. There were no differences on completion of training, MOS, or grade, but those who objected to Vietnam were less likely to have served there. Anti-war participants were also more likely to have deserted in 1969, less likely in 1971. The nature of the data and the changes in the size of the U. S. forces during these years make it difficult to interpret these findings without a good deal of additional analysis. However, these findings do mitigate against simple explanations such as "service in Vietnam increased anti-war feelings" or "changes in civilian attitudes greatly increased the amount of anti-war desertions."

Table 12

ENTRY CHARACTERISTICS OF ANTI-WAR AND OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Characteristics	Percent of Participants Giving Anti-War Reasons	Percent of Participants Giving Other Reasons	Statistical Evaluations
Race	N = 404	N = 2893	χ^2 = 14.14[a]
White	86	78	Φ = .07
Black	14	22	
Region of the Country	N = 402	N = 2892	χ^2 = 52.51[a]
South	24	40	V = .13
North Central	27	24	
Northeast	25	23	
West	24	14	
Education	N = 404	N = 2915	χ^2 = 174.95[a]
Non-Graduate	44	67	V = .23
High School Graduate	35	29	
Some College	21	5	
Mental Ability	N = 395	N = 2807	χ^2 = 102.25[a]
Category I (93-100%)	6	2	V = .18
Category II (65-92%)	30	14	
Category III (31-64%)	40	43	
Category IV & V (0-30%)	24	41	
Method of Entry	N = 405	N = 2916	χ^2 = 7.06[b]
Volunteer	50	57	V = .05
Draftee	48	42	
Reserve	2	2	

[a] $p > .001$

[b] Not statistically significant.

Table 13

ARMY EXPERIENCES OF ANTI-WAR AND OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Army Experiences	Percent of Participants: Giving Anti-War Reasons	Percent of Participants: Giving Other Reasons	Statistical Evaluations
Completion of Training	N = 372	N = 2700	χ^2 = 1.09 [a]
Yes	71	73	Φ = .02
No	29	27	
MOS	N = 263	N = 1983	χ^2 = 8.03 [a]
Combat	32	32	V = .06
Electronics	7	7	
Communications	4	4	
Medical	5	3	
Technical	* [b]	1	
Administrative	16	12	
Repair	10	10	
Craftsmen	16	17	
Supply	10	13	
Pay Grade (Rank)	N = 359	N = 2562	χ^2 = 7.78 [a]
E1	38	29	V = .04
E2	29	27	
E3	18	15	
E4	12	13	
E5-E6	3	5	
Served in Vietnam	N = 406	N = 2915	χ^2 = 26.79 [c]
Yes	10	21	Φ = .09
No	90	79	
Year of Desertion	N = 406	N = 2920	χ^2 = 50.82 [c]
Prior to 1967	2	3	V = .12
1967	4	4	
1968	12	11	
1969	35	21	
1970	24	25	
1971	17	25	
1972	6	8	
1973 or later	1	4	

[a] Not statistically significant.

[b] Less than 1%.

[c] Significant beyond the .001 level.

Table 14 compares these groups on the measures of age, education, and marital status at the time the program began. The anti-war participants were less likely to be 23 or younger, and more likely to be 25 or older, better educated, and not married than other participants.

Table 14

CHARACTERISTICS OF ANTI-WAR AND OTHER PARTICIPANTS WHEN THE PROGRAM BEGAN

Characteristic	Percent of Participants: Giving Anti-War Reasons	Percent of Participants: Giving Other Reasons	Statistical Evaluations
Age	N = 405	N = 2920	$\chi^2 = 27.63$[a]
Less than 23	5	9	V = .09
23	9	11	
24	14	15	
25	21	16	
26	17	16	
27	12	11	
28-29	13	12	
30-31	5	3	
Over 31	4	7	
Education	N = 249	N = 2053	$\chi^2 = 97.31$[a]
Non-Graduate	26	51	V = .21
High School Graduate	37	35	
Some College	37	14	
Marital Status	N = 406	N = 2920	$\chi^2 = 36.63$[a]
Not Married	52	36	Φ = .10
Married	48	64	

[a]Significant beyond the .001 level.

We find that the anti-war participants were different from other deserters and that these differences were in the direction of the pattern among VVAWs. These findings increase confidence in the statements of the majority that they had not deserted because of the war; they also suggest that if non-participation in the Program were a political act, non-participants should resemble anti-war deserters.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF NON-PARTICIPANTS

Approximately half of those estimated to be eligible for the DOD portion of the Presidential Program actually participated in it (Department of the Army, 1975). The question arises, were the participants like other deserters during the Vietnam Era or were they a special group? If large differences between participants and non-participants emerge, statements about deserters based on data about participants must be advanced cautiously. Are there differences between the two groups large enough to limit our findings? Do such differences fit a pattern? The non-participants are also of interest--i.e., who they were may suggest something about the nature of the Program or how future clemency programs could be improved.

Three hypotheses could explain non-participation in the Program. First, certain anti-war/pro-universal-amnesty groups (e.g., the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, VVAW, American Civil Liberties Union) called for a boycott of the Presidential Program (Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, undated; Amex/Canada, 1975). If a man were responding to this appeal, we would expect him to resemble VVAW members or the anti-war participants.

Second, a man might have heard about the Program but decided against participating because he saw no benefit in it for himself. This man would have successfully adjusted to life as a fugitive--AWOL for a long time, married, possibly with dependents--and be in touch with mass communication networks. The people most likely to read newspapers or watch television news are well educated, older, male, and with good incomes (Roper, 1975; Newspaper Advertising Bureau, Inc., undated; American Newspaper Publishers Association, 1973a, b).

Third, those who did not participate may simply not have heard about the Program or not realized that they were eligible for it. The Program was well publicized, but if non-participants were typical deserters, they would fall into the very categories of persons least likely to follow the news or understand its implications. Furthermore, only 72% of the public had heard of the Program in August 1975 and many of these misunderstood who was eligible--43% correctly identified fugitives in foreign countries, but only 17% realized that fugitives in this country were eligible, and 15% mistakenly identified clearly ineligible groups (Gallup Opinion Index, 1975).

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The non-participants discussed in this report were a 1 in 10 sample of Vietnam Era deserters from USADIP records who had not entered the Program as of 15 January 1975. (Men who subsequently entered the Program were eliminated from the original sample of 675.) Although some of the 602 non-participants in the sample might have cleared their cases through normal military channels, or been ineligible for the Program because of other offenses, in the main this is believed to be a sample of eligible men who, for whatever reason, remain at large.[12]

Using all participants in comparisons with non-participants could have biased the results, for not all were in the USADIP system. But previous analyses have demonstrated that those in and out of the system were quite similar, except in how they left the Army. On most variables, bias is therefore unlikely. Where large differences among the participants existed, groups were examined separately.

DESCRIPTION OF NON-PARTICIPANTS AT ENTRY INTO THE ARMY

Descriptive data on participants and non-participants at entry were compared along the dimensions of (1) race, (2) region of the country, (3) education, (4) mental ability, (5) method of entry, (6) year of entry, and (7) age at entry (Table 15; see also Tables 2 and 3).

Like the participants, non-participants were disproportionately black. Men who entered the Army from the continental United States came disproportionately from the Northeast, but a greater proportion of non-participants originally came from areas outside the continental U. S. Level of civilian education showed no statistical differences; both groups were mainly high-school dropouts. Mental ability at entry also showed no statistically significant differences--a disproportionately large number of both groups scored in the lowest three categories. The majority of both groups were volunteers, although more non-participants came from the reserve forces and fewer from the draft than among participants. The difference was statistically significant but small. Non-participants were likely to have entered service earlier in the Vietnam period than participants.

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[12] As of 14 March 1975, 765 Army Vietnam Era deserters chose to adjudicate their cases through normal military channels rather than participating in the Presidential Program. Of those using normal channels, 527 men had been processed since 1 January and therefore might have come from the non-participant sample. Although all 527 might have come from our sample, a more realistic estimate would be that 1/10th or 53 of them were sample members. If this estimate is correct, the majority of the non-participant sample are men who are still at large.

Table 15

DATA DESCRIBING ABSENTEES AT ENTRY

Descriptive Category	Percent of Absentees: Participant	Percent of Absentees: Non-Participant	Statistical Evaluations
Race[a]	N = 3769	N = 587	χ^2 = .22[b]
White	80	79	Φ = .01
Black	20	21	
Region of the Country	N = 3763	N = 574	χ^2 = 11.24[b]
South	37	35	V = .05
North Central	25	21	
Northeast	23	29	
West	15	16	
In-Outside Continental U.S.A	N = 3795	N = 591	χ^2 = 18.23[c]
Continental USA	99	97	Φ = .06
Outside Continental USA	1	3	
Education	N = 3792	N = 571	χ^2 = .45[b]
Non-High School Graduate	64	63	V = .01
High School Graduate	29	29	
Beyond High School	7	7	
Mental Ability (AFQT)	N = 3652	N = 579	χ^2 = 6.58[b]
I (93-100 percentile)	2	3	V = .04
II (65-92 percentile)	16	19	
III (31-64 percentile)	43	40	
IV & V (0-30 percentile)	39	39	
Method of Entry	N = 3794	N = 587	χ^2 = 47.51[c]
Volunteer (RA)	55	54	V = .11
Draftee (US)	43	40	
Reservist (NG & ER)	2	7	
Year of Entry	N = 3758	N = 593	χ^2 = 45.60[c]
Prior to 1966	8	15	V = .10
1966	9	10	
1967	12	14	
1968	20	15	
1969	24	20	
1970	15	12	
1971	9	10	
1972 or later	3	4	

Table 15 (Continued)

Descriptive Category	Percent of Absentees: Participant	Percent of Absentees: Non-Participant	Statistical Evaluations
Age at Entry	N = 3792	N = 593	$\chi^2 = 41.18^c$
17	14	15	V = .10
18	15	14	
19	30	24	
20	19	18	
21	5	9	
22 and 23	15	12	
24 and older	3	8	

[a] 66 participants and 3 non-participants were from other races (e.g., Orientals, American Indians). Since they made up less than 2% of the members of either sample, they were eliminated from this analysis.

[b] Not statistically significant.

[c] Statistically significant beyond the .001 level.

Non-participants were also slightly older at entry but still generally under 20--consistent with the larger proportion of reservists. In short, both participants and non-participants tended to be "typical deserters."

Moreover, non-participants were apparently not acting out of sympathy for the universal amnesty position. Non-participants tended to differ from both VVAW members and participants giving anti-war reasons in race, place of origin, education, and mental ability.

Non-participants living outside the continental U.S., and those leaving earlier, would have been more difficult to notify about the Program.

DESCRIPTION OF NON-PARTICIPANTS AT ABSENCE

Comparable data from participants and non-participants at absence were available for nine of the 13 descriptive categories previously discussed: (1) age, (2) marital status, (3) length of service, (4) completion of training, (5) military occupational specialty, (6) pay grade (rank), (7) service in Vietnam, (8) year of last absence, and (9) location of assigned unit. Comparisons for four of these--age at absence, MOS, pay grade, and year of last absence--were calculated twice, once from the total sample of participants and once from only those deserters carried in the USADIP records, to insure against the possible bias noted above. Results from the calculations were essentially the same.

Table 16 shows characteristics of deserters at the time they left the service (see also Table 4). Non-participants were older at absence, a difference consistent with the findings that they were older at entry and had served longer. More were unmarried at absence (74% vs. 61% of the participants). Increased participation by married men may have been due to pressure from wives for men to participate. It was also easier to notify married men about the Program, as the next of kin of a married man is his wife, not his parents, and the address tends to be more current.

Desertion was clearly a first-tour phenomenon; 87% of participants and 79% of non-participants had served three years or less, but non-participants had served a little longer. This difference, whatever its cause, argues against the premise that such men entered the Army with anti-war/anti-military attitudes, because such attitudes are associated with leaving the Army early or avoiding service altogether (Presidential Clemency Board, 1975). Slightly more non-participants had completed individual training (82% vs. 74% of the participants). The groups did not differ in MOS. Most deserters came from combat, administration, craftsmen, supply, and repair groups. Again, a history of misconduct and assignment to the code "duty soldier" seem to be responsible for the number of deserters among craftsmen. There was no difference between the groups on pay grade (rank) at absence; most men (69%) were in the lowest ranks (E1 or E2) despite having completed training and having longer average time in service. Probably, like the participants, they had previously been in trouble and been reduced in rank. Most non-participants (85%), also like the participants (81%), did not serve in Vietnam.

Table 17 shows two situational factors associated with absence (see also Table 6). The comparison of year of last absence shows a small but statistically significant difference between groups: participants deserted slightly earlier. Most left from units based in the United States (89% of non-participants, 88% of participants). The non-participants were less likely to have deserted from other overseas locations (e.g., Korea, Japan). In both groups many more men served in Vietnam (15%) than deserted from Vietnam-based units (4%).

Table 16

DATA DESCRIBING ABSENTEES AT TIME OF LAST ABSENCE

Descriptive Category	Percent of Absentees: Participant	Percent of Absentees: Non-Participant	Statistical Evaluations
Age at Last Absence	N = 3798	N = 593	χ^2 = 66.99[a]
17 Years	2	3	V = .12
18	7	5	
19	13	12	
20	26	21	
21	20	17	
22	11	11	
23	7	8	
24	5	8	
25 and over	8	15	
Marital Status	N = 3798	N = 585	χ^2 = 34.87[a]
Not Married	61	74	Φ = .09
Married	39	26	
Length of Service	N = 3745	N = 583	χ^2 = 39.27[a]
0-3 Months	12	15	V = .10
4-6	18	14	
7-9	11	9	
10-12	9	6	
13-24	25	23	
25-36	12	12	
Over 36 months	13	21	
Completion of Training	N = 3497	N = 547	χ^2 = 17.08[a]
Still in Training	26	18	Φ = .07
Training Completed	74	82	
Military Occupational Specialty	N = 2573	N = 448	χ^2 = 7.80[b]
Combat	32	32	V = .05
Electronics	7	7	
Communications	4	3	
Medical	4	3	
Technical	1	1	
Administration	13	15	
Repair	11	11	
Craftsmen	14	15	
Supply	12	12	
Pay Grade (Rank)	N = 3799	N = 583	χ^2 = 4.32[b]
E1	40	43	V = .03
E2	27	26	
E3	15	16	
E4	12	10	
E5 and E6	6	6	
Served in Vietnam	N = 3793	N = 586	χ^2 = 4.87[b]
No	81	85	Φ = .03
Yes	19	15	

[a] Significant beyond the .001 level.

[b] Not statistically significant.

Table 17

SITUATIONAL FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH DESERTION, FOR ABSENTEES

Situational Factor	Percent of Absentees: Participant	Percent of Absentees: Non-Participant	Statistical Evaluations
Year of Last Absence	N = 3799	N = 585	$\chi^2 = 19.51$[a]
Prior to 1967	3	5	V = .07
1967	4	3	
1968	11	10	
1969	23	20	
1970	25	26	
1971	24	25	
1972	8	8	
1973 or later	3	4	
Location of Absentee's Unit	N = 3797	N = 590	$\chi^2 = 17.40$[b]
Continental USA (CONUS)	88	89	V = .06
Europe (USAREUR)	5	5	
Vietnam	3	4	
Other Locations Overseas	5	1	

[a] Significant beyond the .01 level.

[b] Not statistically significant.

DESCRIPTION OF NON-PARTICIPANTS SINCE ABSENCE

The two measures of status since absence available for both participants and non-participants appear in Table 18 (see also Tables 9 and 10). As expected, non-participants were somewhat older. There was no difference between groups on length of AWOL.

Table 18

DATA DESCRIBING ABSENTEES SINCE ABSENCE

Descriptive Category	Percent of Absentees: Participant	Percent of Absentees: Non-Participant	Statistical Evaluations
Current Age	N = 3798	N = 593	$\chi^2 = 60.90$ [a]
Less than 23	11	11	V = .12
23	12	11	
24	16	12	
25	17	15	
26	15	13	
27	11	11	
28-29	11	14	
30-31	5	9	
Over 31	3	7	
Length of Last AWOL	N = 3799	N = 581	$\chi^2 = 5.86$ [b]
1 Year or Less	5	6	V = .04
2 Years	9	9	
3 Years	26	28	
4 Years	25	25	
5 Years	20	17	
6 Years	9	8	
More than 6 Years	6	7	

[a] Significant beyond the .001 level.

[b] Not statistically significant.

DISCUSSION

The three alternative explanations for non-participants were: (1) support of efforts to boycott the Program, (2) a decision that the Program was of no benefit, and (3) lack of knowledge that the Program existed. Although the results are not unequivocal, the best explanation appears to be a lack of awareness or understanding of the Program. This argument is supported by the findings that non-participants tended to be outside the continental United States (where publicity would have been less), to be single, and to have deserted earlier in the conflict. Moreover, like the participants, the non-participants were less educated and less intelligent than others serving during the era and thus less likely than the general public to have heard about the Program or to understand who was eligible.

If the non-participants had been responding to anti-Program appeals, we would have expected them to resemble others known to hold anti-war views (i.e., VVAW members or participants who deserted for anti-war reasons). But they did not. Instead, they resembled participants as a whole and were probably no more likely to hold anti-war views.

The explanation that potential participants had heard about the Program but decided that it would not benefit them was also not supported. Non-participants were not better educated or more intelligent, to be more aware of the Program or better able to weigh its potential benefits. Furthermore, although currently older, they were not more settled in their post-service lives, as the length of desertion was the same for both groups.

In summary, non-participants were similar to participants; both groups looked like typical deserters.

THE PROBLEM OF DESERTION

Unauthorized absence is not a new problem, and many attempts have been made to solve it. A selected bibliography on the topic, Appendix B, starts with George Washington but could have started with the first recorded history of armies.

Statistics on the magnitude of the unauthorized absence problem are kept in the form of rates (or incidence) rather than numbers of individual absentees. The rates are ratios of the number of occurrences of unauthorized absence within a given period (usually a calendar quarter) divided by the number of men in the active force for the same time period. The ratio is traditionally converted to rates per 1000 men in the force. The rise and fall of AWOL and desertion rates during the Vietnam era can be seen in Figure 1.

Some idea of the number of deserters responsible for these rates can be derived by counting the number of times men deserted during the period and determining how often deserters--on the average--desert. Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, ASD(M&RA), keeps data on the number of Dropped From Rolls (DFR) actions by fiscal year for each of the services. Interpolating from those figures yield an estimate of 380,000 Army desertions for the Vietnam era.

An estimate of how often a given deserter deserts is available from MILPERCEN. Table 19 shows the number of men deserting and the number of times each one deserted within each of three years: FY 1972-1974. For example, because of multiple desertions 32,841 men were responsible for 35,290 desertions in FY 1972. These figures underestimate the number of multiple desertion actions since figures do not carry over from previous years. However, the data suggest that most men desert only once within a given year (93%, 83%, and 86%, respectively).

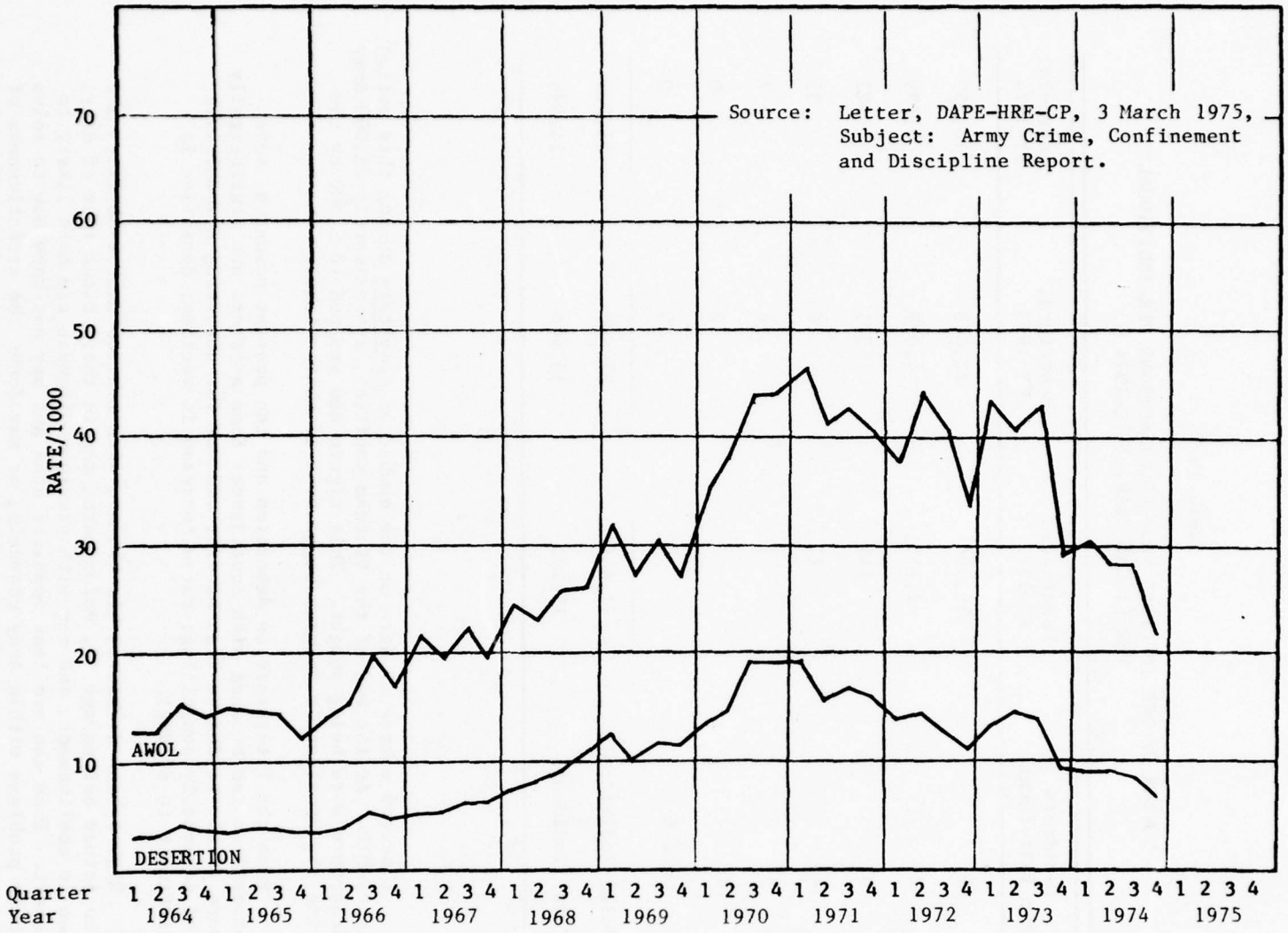

Figure 1. AWOL/Desertion rates world-wide during the Vietnam era.

Table 19

NUMBER OF DFR (DROPPED FROM ROLL) ACTIONS PER INDIVIDUAL PER FISCAL YEAR, 1972-1974

Incidents Per Individual	Deserters, FY 1972	Deserters, FY 1973	Deserters, FY 1974
1	30,566	22,878	18,257
2	2,115	4,078	2,599
3	147	521	322
4	12	16	35
5	1	6	7
6	0	2	0
Over 6	0	0	0
Total Individuals	32,841	27,695	21,220
Total Incidents	35,290	33,404	24,596

A second source of data on the number of deserters during this period is USADIP. At the end of the Vietnam conflict, approximately 23,000 Army deserters were being sought. This figure had dropped to 8,500 by the time the President's Program began some 17 months later.

From the literature on desertion and the present research, some assertions can be made with confidence: Some soldiers are statistically more likely to desert than others; reasons for deserting are multiple and personally compelling; rates increase in wartime; desertion is difficult to predict.

High-school dropouts, blacks, men with limited mental ability, men who joined before age 18, volunteers, men in their first tour of duty, men in confinement, and men with previous offenses are more likely to desert. Such men are less sophisticated and may not know how to solve their problems within Army channels, or may doubt the effectiveness of the Army system. They may also be simply escaping from the Army. However, most personnel with these characteristics do not desert.

Men most frequently desert for personal, family, and financial reasons; failure to adjust to military life. Factors associated with the Vietnam war were cited much less often by Program participants. The personal assistance the Army has developed is inherently unable to solve all these problems. Although the reasons men give for going AWOL can be categorized, each individual's problems are uniquely his own--it is his father who is sick, or his wife whose checks have not come. He may take advantage of circumstances that make desertion easier--being stateside, recently paid, on leave or in transit (e.g., Biegel, 1968; Osburn et al., 1954; Kristiansen, 1970; Lonn, 1966). However, most men in similar circumstances work their problems out within the Army system.

Desertion increases during a war. Induction standards are lowered, the leaders are inexperienced, personnel and pay systems are overloaded, and constant transfers make it difficult for leaders and men to know and trust each other. Nevertheless, predicting desertion is difficult. The event is actually rather infrequent, and many of the factors associated with desertion are themselves difficult to know about in advance.

Despite incomplete knowledge, the Army must respond to the problem of desertion. Three logical approaches are: (1) to keep high-risk men out of the service, (2) to convince soldiers not to desert, and (3) to apprehend AWOL soldiers (or persuade them to come back) before they become desertion statistics. For example, pre-service screening and removal of certain men from the service (e.g., trainees not adjusting to service life or men with previous offenses) support the first approach. Better methods of identifying and solving soldiers' problems and swift, appropriate punishment for deserters would support the second. More efficient apprehension of AWOL soldiers and stiffer punishment for desertion might support the third approach; so might no punishment at all (e.g., Lincoln's pardons of 1863 and 1865). Most of these techniques have been tried in some form in the past. Some should probably be more systematically tested before their efficacy is judged. No one technique is 100% effective, and none should be applied without considering its effect on the entire Army system.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

DEFINITION OF DESERTION

If an absence extends beyond 29 consecutive days, a soldier is dropped from the unit's rolls as a deserter.

Although most men administratively classified as deserters meet the 30 day requirement, a man can also be dropped from the rolls as a deserter if his unauthorized absence is less than 30 days and he meets any of the following seven requirements:

- has access to classified material, the disclosure of which "could result in exceptionally grave danger or serious damage to the United States."
- seeks political asylum in, voluntarily resides in, or is being detained by a foreign country.
- absents himself from his unit without authority while under charges for previous unauthorized absences.
- enters the armed forces of another country.
- leaves a unit while it is deploying overseas.
- escapes from confinement.
- leaves under circumstances which lead his commander to believe that he does not intend to return.

In addition to the administrative definition of desertion given above, the Department of Defense also recognizes a legal definition; a man is a deserter if he has been convicted of desertion by a court martial. However, few meet this definition because it is difficult to convict a person of desertion:

> In order for such a conviction to stand, it must be established that the individual left his military unit without authority and with the intent either never to return or to avoid hazardous duty or important service. Establishing the unauthorized absence is easy; proving the intent or state of mind is something else (Neinast, 1974, p. 36).

APPENDIX B

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON AWOL AND DESERTION

The following is a selected bibliography on AWOL and desertion in the United States armed forces since the Revolutionary War, with special emphasis on the Vietnam Era. As stated in Appendix A, the term "deserter" and the term "desertion," as applied to Vietnam Era soldiers, are administrative classifications, and are not to be interpreted in the strict legal sense.

References in Section I deal with the subject from the Revolution through World War II. Section II deals with the subject from the Korean conflict up to the U. S. involvement in Vietnam. Section III, dealing with AWOL and desertion during the Vietnam Era, is divided into a subsection containing research reports, a subsection with news articles and editorial comment from the New York Times, and a subsection with news articles and editorial comment from other news sources.

SECTION I
AWOL AND DESERTION FROM THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR THROUGH WORLD WAR II

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APPENDIX C

REASONS FOR ABSENCE

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

REASONS GIVEN TO JOINT ALTERNATE SERVICE BOARD

All participants in the Presidential Program had an opportunity to give written statements to the Board. They were specifically encouraged to give: (1) reasons for deserting, (2) the types of work they had done while absent, and (3) any additional information they felt might reflect favorably upon the outcome of the Board's decision. Participants' reasons were read and coded by clerks working for the Enlisted Records Center (ERC). These codes, in turn, were grouped into categories by ARI scientists using common elements within the codes. The sections which follow show the codes used by the clerks, the categories used to classify the codes, and the frequency with which the participants' reasons fell into given codes and categories.

The initial coding system. The system used by the clerks appears in Table C-1 below. It is an ARI adaption of a 42-item system used in an earlier study of deserters who left or attempted to leave the United States (U.S. Congress, 1968, 1972). The modifications involved (1) adding 5 categories (numbers 90, 91, 92, 93 and 94), and (2) changing the grouping of items to reflect the differences in the purposes of the two studies. The earlier study of deserters had been concerned with political motivations behind the exodus of the men, how many foreign nationals had left to return to their home countries, and other questions not considered in the ARI study.

The 48 codes were grouped into the following six categories: Personal/family/financial, Army adjustment, objections to war, Army mismanagement, other, and unknown (omitted from Table 8). Table C-2 shows: the codes grouped under each of these six headings, the number of participants whose reasons fell under each of these codes or groups of codes, and the number of reasons within a given code or category converted to a percentage of all reasons coded.

Table C-1

CODES FOR REASONS GIVEN TO JASB

Code Number	Description
1.	Unknown
2.	Family/Financial/Personal Problems
3.	Inability to Adjust to Military Life
4.	Inability to Adjust to Military Life & Anti-Vietnam
5.	Contempt for Authority & Anti-Vietnam
6.	Escaped from Confinement
7.	Under Investigation at Time of Absence (Other than for Drug Abuse)
8.	Under Charges (CM or Article 15) at Time of Absence (Other than for Drug Abuse)
9.	Under Investigation/Charges for Drug Abuse at Time of Absence
10.	Anti-Military, Anti-Political, Anti-Vietnam Protest
11.	Anti-Military
12.	Anti-Military, Family/Financial/Personal Problems and Anti-Political
13.	Anti-Military and Anti-Vietnam
14.	Anti-Military and Family/Financial/Personal Problems
15.	Anti-Military and Anti-Political
16.	Anti-Political
17.	Anti-Political and Family/Financial/Personal Problems
18.	Anti-Political and Anti-Vietnam
19.	Anti-Vietnam
20.	Anti-Vietnam and Family/Financial/Personal Problems
21.	Anti-Vietnam and Job Dissatisfaction
22.	Job Dissatisfaction--Current or Projected (Excluding Vietnam)
23.	Did not Want to Serve in Vietnam (Fear of Being Killed)...Not Anti-Vietnam
24.	On Orders to Vietnam
25.	Service Allegedly Reneged on Promises
26.	Conscientious Objector--Application Disapproved
27.	Conscientious Objector--Application Submitted, Deserted Prior to Determination
28.	Conscientious Objector--No C.O. Application, but claimed Pacifistic Beliefs
29.	Pacifistic Beliefs and was Afraid of Being Killed
30.	Alien...Returned to Country of Origin
31.	Alien...Gone to Country other than Country of Origin
32.	Ordered EAD...Did not Report/to Circumvent Required Enlistment or Military Obligation
33.	Ordered EAD...Did not Report and was Residing in Foreign Country
34.	Desired to Live with Spouse Who Was Residing in Foreign Country
35.	Considered Foreign Country to be "Nice" Place to Live
36.	Did not have any Allegiance to U.S. (Other than Aliens)
37.	Application for Discharge Disapproved...Other Than C.O.
38.	To Obtain Discharge from Service
39.	Alleged Racial Prejudice
40.	Request for Transfer to Vietnam Disapproved
41.	Did Not Want to Serve in RVN--Contributing Factor for Statement Not Known
90.	Post Vietnam Syndrome: Man had problems with or disliked some aspect of Garrison Life following a tour in Vietnam.
91.	Army Unresponsive: Soldier attempts to use the chain of command to obtain discharge, overseas orders, extnded leave, medical help, etc., and gets turned down or gets the run around. (This includes allegations of poor medical care.)
92.	Administrative Foul Up: Sent home to await orders, pay screwed up, records lost, etc.
93.	Harassment: Alleges misconduct by officer or NCO (e.g., assault, tearing up documents, etc.).
94.	Recruiting Irregularities: Recruiter lied, misled, etc., the promise is not kept or is much diferent from what the recruit expects.
99.	Other: None of the above

Table C-2

FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES FOR EACH CATEGORY AND CODE

Category and Code Number		Frequency	Percentage
A.	Personal/Family/Financial	1647	49.5
	2.	1647	49.5
	17.	0	0.0
B.	Army Adjustment	886	26.6
	3.	782	23.5
	6.	1	0.0
	7.	3	0.1
	8.	6	1.8
	9.	16	0.5
	11.	15	0.5
	12.	3	0.1
	14.	2	0.1
	15.	0	0.0
	22.	27	0.8
	32.	2	0.1
	33.	0	0.0
	37.	2	0.1
	90.	27	0.8
C.	Opposition to War	407	12.2
	4.	5	0.2
	5.	1	0.0
	10.	2	0.1
	13.	8	0.2
	18.	1	0.0
	19.	214	6.4
	20.	20	0.6
	21.	3	0.1
	23.	20	0.6
	24.	11	0.3
	26.	18	0.5
	27.	16	0.5
	28.	34	1.0
	29.	3	0.1
	41.	52	1.6
D.	Army Mismanagement	297	8.9
	25.	53	1.6
	91.	74	2.2
	92.	104	3.1
	93.	54	1.6
	94.	12	0.3
E.	Other Reasons	88	2.6
	16.	4	0.1
	30.	0	0.0
	31.	0	0.0
	34.	0	0.0
	35.	0	0.0
	36.	1	0.0
	38.	4	0.1
	39.	10	0.3
	40.	9	0.3
	99.	60	1.8
F.	Reason Unknown	(483)[a]	(12.7)[a]
	1.	483	12.7
G.	Total	3809	99.87[b]

[a] The 483 participants whose reason for absence is unknown do not appear in the adjusted total (3326) used for computing the percentages.

[b] Due to rounding, the percentages do not always total to 100%.

The results in this table support three conclusions. First, the names given the categories seem to accurately reflect the type of information which make them up. For example, all the codes appearing under the category Opposition to War refer to an attitude or behavior which reflects an unwillingness to engage in warfare. Second, the coding system is more elaborate than the nature of the data requires. Most of the codes are used by less than 1% of the participants; two codes (No. 2 and No. 3) describe the reasons given by 73% of the men. The third conclusion would be that category A, Personal/Family/Financial, is somewhat underrepresented as a reason for desertion since the theme is repeated in many of the codes subsumed under other categories (i.e., codes 12, 14, 17 and 20) and may well be present even when some other code was used (e.g., No. 41).

REASONS GIVEN TO MEDDAC

The procedures used by the MEDDAC interviewers differed from those used by ERC in several respects. First, the interviewers elicited the reasons for absence verbally and recorded them verbatum. Categorization was based upon the pattern of reasons that emerged. The 10 categories were: (1) no reason elicited, (2) problems adjusting to the Army, (3) family problems, (4) marital problems, (5) administrative mix-ups, (6) reasons related to the Vietnam conflict, (7) financial problems, (8) legal difficulties, (9) drug-related problems, and (10) faulty Army leadership. A second difference was in the way that multiple reasons were handled. The interviewers recorded each reason separately. But, only two reasons from each man were retained in the coding system, the reasons the interviewer judged most important as causes of desertion. Table C-3 shows the frequency of categories of reasons tabulated in this way. The "most important" reasons appear in the column totals. The secondary reasons appear in the row totals.

Judging from the column totals, it appears that family problems (category 3) were most often reported by the participants as reasons for deserting. This category is closely followed by failure to adjust to Army life (category 1). The third most important category was the class of reasons related to the Vietnam conflict (category 6), followed by administrative mix-ups (category 5) and marital problems (category 4). Faulty leadership (category 10), financial problems (category 7), drug-related problems (category 9), and legal difficulties (category 8) were much less frequently mentioned.

Although the information contained in these 10 categories is interesting in and of itself, there are several disadvantages in presenting the data in this form. First, the MEDDAC data are not directly comparable with the ERC data. Not only are the categories different but also the interviewer judgments are incorporated into the tabulation. Next, the presentation of individual categories ignores the natural relationships among several categories. For these reasons, the data in Table C-3 were converted by the methods detailed below.

Table C-3

FREQUENCY OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY REASONS FOR ABSENCE GIVEN TO THE INTERVIEWERS

Secondary Reasons / Category Name & Number	Primary Reasons (Category Numbers) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
1. Unknown	244	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	244
2. Army Adjustment	2	547	109	47	66	98	9	8	21	37	944
3. Family Problems	3	60	376	51	24	33	26	5	7	5	590
4. Marital Problems	0	21	53	218	7	17	9	2	2	1	330
5. Administrative	3	61	101	30	207	23	18	3	3	22	471
6. Vietnam	1	96	43	17	18	359	2	0	4	9	549
7. Financial Problems	1	13	151	46	15	5	36	1	0	2	270
8. Legal Difficulties	0	3	7	3	3	1	0	24	1	2	44
9. Drug Problems	0	16	9	5	4	8	1	4	44	3	94
10. Leadership	0	69	40	11	106	5	4	3	2	33	273
Total	254	886	889	428	450	549	105	50	84	114	3809

The first step was to convert the unit of observation from people giving reasons to numbers of times reasons were mentioned. This was accomplished by adding appropriate row and column totals and subtracting from the single values the number of cases in the intersecting cells. For example, 105 men mentioned financial difficulties as the primary reason for leaving the service. The same reason was mentioned as a contributing factor by 270 men. However, 36 men gave financial difficulties as both primary and secondary reasons. To convert this information to a single number--the number of times the reason was mentioned--it would be necessary to add the column and row totals and then subtract the number of men who appeared in both totals (e.g., 105 + 270 - 36 = 339). Totals computed for each of the categories (excluding category 1) were then summed to yield the total number for categorizable reasons (5,360) generated by those giving reasons. The totals for each category was then converted to a percentage by dividing in by the total categorizable reasons and multiplying the resulting value by 100.

The final step in the operations was to collapse some of the categories (and their percents) into broader ones which mirrored the ERC system. Category 3, 4, and 7 were collapsed into "family/marital/financial problems." Also, category 5 and 10 were collapsed into administrative/leadership. The remaining categories were unchanged.