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Urgent Need For A
Department Of Defense
Marginal Performer
Discharge Program

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UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

FEDERAL PERSONNEL AND
COMPENSATION DIVISION

B-164088

The Honorable
The Secretary of Defense 5

Dear Mr. Secretary:

This is our report on marginal performer discharge programs of the military services. The information in this report was informally discussed with members of your staff and staff members of each of the services.

We invite your attention to the fact that this report contains recommendations to you which are set forth on page 17. As you know, section 236 of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 requires the head of a Federal agency to submit a written statement on action taken on our recommendations to the House and Senate Committees on Government Operations not later than 60 days after the date of the report and to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations with the agency's first request for appropriations made more than 60 days after the date of the report.

We are sending copies of this report to the Chairmen, House and Senate Committees on Appropriations, Armed Services, and Government Operations, and to the Director, Office of Management and Budget. We are also sending copies to the Secretaries of the military services and the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Comptroller).

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Forrest R. Browne".

Forrest R. Browne
Director

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ABBREVIATIONS

DOD	Department of Defense
EDP	Expeditious Discharge Program
GAO	General Accounting Office
USAREUR	U.S. Army, Europe

GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
REPORT TO THE SECRETARY OF
DEFENSE

URGENT NEED FOR A DEPARTMENT
OF DEFENSE MARGINAL PERFORMER
DISCHARGE PROGRAM

D I G E S T

WHY THE REVIEW WAS MADE

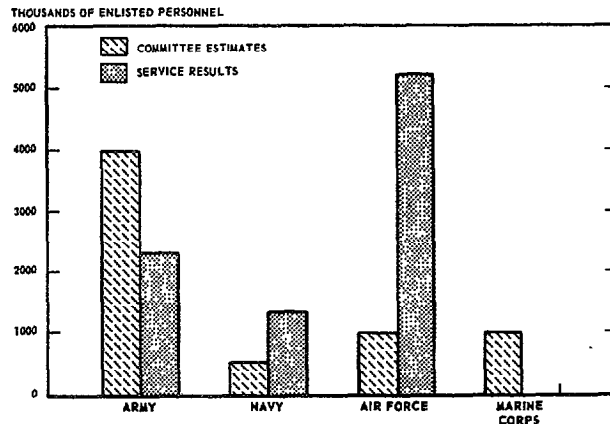
The House Committee on Appropriations, reporting on the Department of Defense (DOD) appropriation bill for fiscal year 1974, stated that all the services need simplified programs to separate enlisted members considered to be marginal performers. The Committee described criteria for such simplified programs to be used in addition to established administrative discharge procedures. The Committee felt that under such programs, 6,500 marginal performers could be identified and discharged by the 4 services before the end of fiscal year 1974. GAO wanted to examine the programs implemented by the services to accomplish this.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Army, Navy, and Air Force introduced programs in fiscal year 1974 to simplify and expedite the discharge of marginal performers. The Navy and Air Force programs were servicewide; the Army limited its program to its command in Europe. The Marine Corps had no program. Furthermore, it used a quota system which delayed some discharges

under the established administrative discharge procedures. None of the marginal performer discharge programs incorporated all the criteria suggested by the Committee. (See p. 3.)

During fiscal year 1974, the Army, Navy, and Air Force discharged over 8,800 enlisted personnel. This exceeded the Committee's total estimate by about 3,300. Committee estimates and individual service results follow.



GAO believes that the Army and the Marine Corps have restrained the discharge of marginal performers in an attempt to meet yearend strengths authorized by the Congress. (See pp. 5, 10, and 12.) GAO also believes that important inconsistencies and inequities exist in and between the Army, Navy, and Air Force marginal performer programs, including:

--Type of discharge issued.
(See p. 12.)

--Consent and appeal procedures. (See p. 13.)

--Specificity of criteria. (See p. 14.)

--Length of evaluation period. (See p. 14.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

GAO recommends that the Secretary, DOD, as an immediate

measure, direct that (1) the Army's current program be extended Army-wide and (2) the Marine Corps discontinue the use of quotas which delay the discharge of some marginal performers. To avoid the continuation of inconsistent and inequitable practices and to reduce the costly burden of prolonged service by marginal performers, GAO also recommends that the Secretary have a uniform DOD-wide program designed and implemented as a matter of high priority.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Department of Defense (DOD) Directive 1332.14 (Administrative Discharges) dated December 20, 1965, states that the military services have the right and the duty to discharge enlisted members who clearly demonstrate they are unqualified for retention. This directive provides the services with policies, standards, and procedures for administrative discharges. Enlisted members who are unqualified because of substandard behavior or performance normally are discharged only after complex review procedures have been completed. This involves a considerable administrative burden and usually takes an average of 5 weeks without an administrative discharge board to 13 weeks with a board.

The House Committee on Appropriations, reporting on the DOD appropriation bill for fiscal year 1974, stated that all the services need simplified and expeditious procedures to administratively discharge enlisted members considered to be marginal, or nonproductive, performers in operational units. The Committee described a "marginal performer" as an enlisted member who created an administrative burden to the command due to minor military or civil disciplinary infractions or whose performance had been non-contributory to unit readiness and mission accomplishment.

COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS

The Committee made the following suggestions to simplify and expedite the administrative discharge of marginal performers:

- Commanding officers at battalion, ship, and squadron level should be given the authority to discharge members in their first enlistment who are in pay grade E-3 or below and who have completed at least 1 year of active duty.
- Separated members should receive an honorable discharge and not be recommended for reenlistment.
- The discharge should be a voluntary separation and, therefore, should not require complex review procedures.

--Identification of marginal performers should be made by the commissioned and noncommissioned officers in the operating units.

--The enlisted members thus discharged should be those whose loss without a replacement would not adversely affect the command's operational readiness.

The Committee suggested excluding from discharge those members who

--were in medical treatment status,

--had not completed a disciplinary punishment,

--were about to stand trial for serious violations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, or

--were in pay grade E-4 or higher.

The Committee felt that at least 6,500 marginal performers could be identified and discharged by such programs before the end of fiscal year 1974.

CHAPTER 2

MARGINAL PERFORMER DISCHARGE PROGRAMS

OF THE SERVICES

In fiscal year 1974, the Army, Navy, and Air Force, but not the Marine Corps, introduced programs to simplify and expedite the discharge of marginal performers. These programs resulted in over 8,800 discharges.

The following table compares the number of marginal performers discharged during fiscal year 1974 by each of the services with the goals set forth in the Committee report.

<u>Service</u>	<u>Committee goal</u>	<u>Actual discharges</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Army	4,000	2,295	-1,705
Navy	500	1,345	845
Air Force	<u>1,000</u>	<u>5,207</u>	<u>4,207</u>
Total	<u>5,500</u>	<u>8,847</u>	<u>3,347</u>
Marine Corps	<u>1,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-1,000</u>

None of the programs incorporated all the criteria suggested by the Committee. The programs were developed independently and vary in features. The table on the following page compares the major features of the current programs of the services.

<u>Program feature</u>	<u>Committee suggestion</u>	<u>Army</u>	<u>Navy</u>	<u>Air Force</u>
Title	Elimination of Marginal Performers	Expeditious Discharge Program (EDP)	Article 3850220.5	Minimally Productive/Limited Potential Airmen
Date initiated	To be effective during FY 1974	Oct. 1973	Nov. 1973	Mar. 1974
Coverage	All the services	Four Army commands	Navy-wide	Air Force-wide
Characteristics of marginal performer	Presence creates an administrative burden due to minor military or civil disciplinary infractions or performance has been non-contributory to unit readiness and mission accomplishment	Cannot or will not meet acceptable Army standards because of poor attitude, lack of motivation, lack of self-discipline, inability to adapt, or failure to demonstrate promotion potential	Burden to the command due to substandard performance or inability to adapt to military service	Demonstrates limited potential for normal career progression as manifested by duty performance or behavior; gives no indication of becoming acceptable airman within a reasonable time.
4 Identifying-initiating authority	Commissioned and non-commissioned officer in operating unit	Commissioned and non-commissioned officer in operating unit	Commissioned and non-commissioned officer in operating unit	Commissioned and noncommissioned officer in operating unit
Enlistment	First	First	First	First
Grade	E-3 or below	Unspecified	E-3 or below	E-3 or below
Time in service (after initial training period)	Over 12 months	6 to 36 months	Over 12 months	6 to 36 months
Length of evaluation period	Unspecified	Unspecified	180 days	60 days (if out of training)
Enlisted personnel consent requirement and appeal procedures	Voluntary	Voluntary	Involuntary	Involuntary
Type of discharge	Honorable	Honorable or General	General	Honorable
Discharge authority	Commanding officers at battalion, ship, and squadron level	Brigade commander	Unit commander or Chief of Naval Personnel	Base commander

ARMY DISCHARGE PROGRAM
FOR MARGINAL PERFORMERS

In May 1973 the Commander in Chief of the U.S. Army, Europe (USAREUR), recommended to the Army Chief of Staff that a voluntary discharge procedure be established to separate enlisted members who either cannot or will not adapt to military service. He noted that the current administrative discharge process was time consuming and burdensome, and the Army could no longer afford to carry noneffective soldiers for months and burden unit leaders with additional paperwork, counseling, and legal actions.

The recommendation was approved and USAREUR was designated to test a pilot program (Expeditious Discharge Program (EDP)) to voluntarily discharge marginal performers. EDP was implemented in USAREUR in October 1973 and was to be terminated on June 30, 1974.

USAREUR recommends Army-wide
implementation of EDP

In February 1974 USAREUR submitted an interim evaluation recommending Army-wide implementation of EDP. USAREUR officials described EDP as a highly effective program for early identification and expeditious discharge of nonproductive soldiers. Despite the USAREUR recommendation, EDP was implemented only in Europe during fiscal year 1974. For the 9 months (Oct. through June 1974) that EDP was tested in USAREUR, 2,295 discharges were approved. On the basis of the success of the USAREUR program, we believe an Army-wide program could have identified and discharged at least 4,000 marginal performers in fiscal year 1974, as estimated in the Committee report.

On June 6, 1974, the Army extended EDP indefinitely in USAREUR. At the same time, the Army indicated that the program would be applied Army-wide in fiscal year 1975.

It was not until November 1974 that even a limited expansion of the program outside of USAREUR was implemented. The expansion was limited to 3 additional commands and further limited to a maximum of 4,200 marginal performer discharges in those commands for the rest of fiscal year 1975. The reason cited for the limited expansion was that to do otherwise could cause the Army to fall below its authorized yearend strength level.

Army officials stated that the Army planned to implement EDP Army-wide beginning in fiscal year 1976.

Identification and discharge procedures

EDP separates marginal performers who have at least 6, but not more than 36, months of active duty and who demonstrate they cannot or will not meet Army standards for one or more of the following reasons:

- Poor attitude.
- Lack of motivation.
- Lack of self-discipline.
- Inability to adapt socially or emotionally.
- Failure to demonstrate promotion potential.

Commissioned and noncommissioned officers in operating units are responsible for identifying and counseling enlisted members who demonstrate one or more of these conditions. If the enlisted member continues to demonstrate substandard performance or behavior, the unit commander recommends to the commander with special courts-martial authority that the enlisted member be discharged under EDP. (The brigade commander normally has that authority.) There is no minimum evaluation time period that must elapse before the discharge, and the unit commander does not have to document numerous instances of unsatisfactory behavior to substantiate his recommendation. In USAREUR, EDP processing time was about 4 weeks; however, other administrative discharges required from 5 to 19 weeks.

The unit commander initiating the action recommends the type of discharge. Either an honorable or general discharge can be issued, based on the commander's personal evaluation of the enlisted member's military record. In USAREUR Army officials told us that there was no definitive criterion for determining type of discharge. During fiscal year 1974, approximately 45 percent of the EDP discharges were honorable and 55 percent were general.

EDP regulations require that the enlisted member be notified in writing of the recommended discharge, the reasons for it, and the type and effect of the discharge. The enlisted member has the right to decline the discharge. If he does so, other disciplinary or administrative discharge procedures may be initiated.

Program results

The Army has established a marginal performer program for USAREUR, which resulted in 2,295 discharges in fiscal year 1974. In addition, 3 other Army commands have been authorized to collectively discharge a maximum of 4,200 marginal performers in fiscal year 1975. The Army plans to extend the program Army-wide in fiscal year 1976. We believe that until the Army fully implements EDP, however, marginal performers will continue to cause an unnecessary and costly administrative burden to the Army and may adversely affect its operational capability.

NAVY DISCHARGE PROGRAM FOR MARGINAL PERFORMERS

From January through April 1973, Navy unit commanders discharged approximately 5,200 enlisted members under a program described as a "convenience of the government discharge by reason of marginal performance." A follow-on program ran from May through October 1973. In November 1973 the Navy established a permanent discharge program. This program is set forth in Article 3850220.5 of the Bureau of Naval Personnel manual.

Identification and discharge procedures

Article 3850220.5 gives criteria and procedures for discharging enlisted members "considered to be a burden to the command due to substandard performance or inability to adapt to military service * * *" (Underscoring supplied.) The member must

- be in pay grade E-3 or below,
- be serving in his first enlistment,
- have served continuously on active duty for more than 12 months,
- have average performance marks below the minimum needed for honorable discharge and reenlistment, and
- have been evaluated for 180 days in the same command.

Commissioned and noncommissioned officers in operating units are responsible for identifying, counseling, and formally notifying enlisted members who meet these criteria. If an enlisted member continues to demonstrate substandard performance or behavior, the unit commander then recommends that he be discharged under Article 3850220.5 procedures.

Unlike Army enlisted members, the Navy enlisted member cannot decline the discharge. If he objects to it in writing, the final decision is made by the Chief of Naval Personnel in Washington, D.C., rather than by the unit commander. According to Navy officials, very few members objected to such a discharge in fiscal year 1974. The processing time for Article 3850220.5 discharges is about 2 weeks.

In the Army both honorable and general discharges are issued, but Navy enlisted members receive only general discharges since one of the program criteria requires that the average performance marks of the individual be below the level needed for honorable discharge.

Program results

During the 8 months of fiscal year 1974 that Article 3850220.5 was in effect, the Navy discharged over 1,300 marginal performers. That was almost three times the number the Committee felt the Navy could identify and discharge during the year.

AIR FORCE DISCHARGE PROGRAM FOR MARGINAL PERFORMERS

In March 1974 the Air Force introduced the "Minimally Productive/Limited Potential Airmen" program to alleviate existing burdensome and time-consuming administrative discharge procedures. The goal of this program, like those of the Army and Navy programs, is to rapidly identify and discharge marginal performers early in their career before they develop into a more serious problem. The program separates enlisted members who:

- Demonstrate limited potential for normal career progression as manifested by duty performance or behavior.
- Give no indication of becoming acceptable within a reasonable time.
- Are serving in their first enlistment, are in the grade of E-3 or below, and have less than 3 year's total active military service.
- Are in basic training, technical school, or have been present for duty with the current unit of assignment for at least 60 days.

Identification and discharge procedures

When a squadron commander believes that discharge of an enlisted member in his unit would be appropriate under this program, he informs the member in writing of the proposed discharge and the reasons for it. If the member wishes to request retention, military legal counsel is made available to assist in preparing the request. The squadron commander forwards a letter to the discharge authority, normally the base commander, listing the specific reasons for the recommendation and giving information about the member's background, disciplinary history, and request for retention if the member desires to make one.

The base commander either approves or disapproves the discharge recommendation; no administrative discharge board is involved. No concurrence is obtained from the enlisted member because such a discharge is not considered a voluntary separation. Air Force officials stated it is their responsibility to identify and expeditiously separate marginal performers.

If discharge is approved, the enlisted member always receives an honorable discharge. This is to compensate him for certain forfeited rights, such as a hearing before an administrative discharge board.

Program results

From March through June 30, 1974, 5,207 enlisted members who had completed their basic and technical school training were discharged as minimally productive. That was over five times the number the Committee felt the Air Force could identify and discharge during the year.

THE MARINE CORPS DOES NOT HAVE A MARGINAL PERFORMER DISCHARGE PROGRAM

The Marine Corps has not established a marginal performer discharge program. Marine Corps officials told us that non-productive Marines are administratively discharged for unsuitability or unfitness. We reviewed a sample of unsuitability and unfitness cases at Camp LeJeune, North Carolina. The cases took 5 to 7 weeks to process without an administrative discharge board and about 13 weeks with a board. The Army, Navy, and Air Force marginal performer cases required 2 to 4 weeks to process.

Officials at Headquarters, Marine Corps, stated that recruits who have successfully completed basic training have proven their potential to develop into productive Marines. They believe a marginally performing Marine should not be discharged until every possible means of rehabilitation and motivation have been tried, and it is clear that the enlisted member will not respond to concerned leadership. In contrast to the Marine Corps viewpoint, Army and Air Force officials told us they believe that a marginal performer can successfully complete training because of its structured environment. Only when he is placed in an operational unit where he must perform without constant supervision does his lack of aptitude and motivation become apparent.

Nonexpiration of active service
attrition rate

Administrative discharges in the Marine Corps are part of a quota system called the nonexpiration of active service attrition rate. The name is derived from the failure of the discharged member to remain on active duty until the date of his expiration of active service. The nonexpiration of active service attrition rate includes losses due to retirement, death, desertion, and punitive and administrative discharges.

Headquarters, Marine Corps, has calculated that, if its major commands maintain a maximum Marine Corps-wide nonexpiration of active service attrition rate of 8.8 per thousand of onboard enlisted members per month and if accession goals are met, the Marine Corps can achieve the yearend strength authorized for it by the Congress. An official at Headquarters, Marine Corps, stated that meeting yearend strength goals is of primary concern because it affects future funding from the Congress. The major commands were therefore encouraged by Headquarters, Marine Corps, not to exceed the 8.8 per thousand rate.

The date members are discharged for retirement, death, desertion, and punitive reasons cannot be controlled. However, the date of an administrative discharge for unsuitability or unfitness can be controlled and, in some cases, has been manipulated by the commander with the discharge authority. For example, officials from two of the three commands based at Camp Lejeune told us that, when a month's nonexpiration of active service attrition quota is filled, they have delayed approval of additional administrative discharges until the first day of the following month. The delayed discharges are then counted in the next month's quota so as not to exceed the current month's quota. An

official from the third command stated it disregards the nonexpiration of active service attrition rate and acts on the cases when they are submitted.

The Marine Corps does not separate marginal performers as rapidly as it could because it relies on the established, drawn-out administrative discharge process rather than a simplified and expeditious process as recommended by the Committee and used by the other three services. In addition, the Marine Corps has delayed the discharge of some marginal performers by controlling administrative discharge losses through the nonexpiration of active service attrition rate. Such delays are unnecessary, administratively burdensome, and may adversely affect the operational capability of the Marine Corps.

CHAPTER 3

INCONSISTENCIES AND INEQUITIES

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Both the Army and the Marine Corps have restrained the discharge of marginal performers in an attempt to meet year-end strengths authorized by the Congress.

--The Army limited its expeditious discharge program for marginal performers in fiscal year 1974 to USAREUR. In fiscal year 1975, three additional commands have been included in the program. However, these 3 commands have been limited to a maximum of 4,200 such discharges. It is not until fiscal year 1976 that the Army plans to extend its program Army-wide.

--The Marine Corps has not implemented an expeditious discharge program for marginal performers. It continues to rely on the established, drawn-out administrative discharge process. Furthermore, the Marine Corps has delayed the discharge of some marginal performers by controlling administrative discharge losses through the nonexpiration of active service attrition rate.

The Navy and Air Force, in contrast, have implemented vigorous, servicewide programs to discharge marginal performers.

PROGRAM INCONSISTENCIES AND INEQUITIES

We believe that important inconsistencies and inequities exist among the services' marginal performer programs, including the types of discharges, the consent and appeal procedures, the specificity of criteria, and the length of the evaluation period.

Type of discharge

According to DOD Directive 1332.14, issuance of an honorable discharge is conditioned upon proper military behavior and proficient performance of duty with due consideration for the member's age, length of service, grade, and general aptitude. A general discharge is appropriate when a member's military record is not sufficiently meritorious to warrant an honorable discharge.

The Army, Navy, and Air Force marginal performer discharge programs separate enlisted members for generally the same type of marginal behavior and performance, but they issue different types of discharges.

- The Air Force issues only honorable discharges (see app. I).
- The Navy issues only general discharges (see app. II).
- The Army issues either honorable (see app. III) or general discharges (see app. IV).

We believe that issuing different discharges for generally the same type of marginal behavior and performance is inconsistent and inequitable.

Consent and appeal procedures

The Army allows a marginal performer to decline a discharge recommendation. If he does so, he is allowed to continue on active duty and the case is closed. Other administrative or disciplinary discharge procedures are applied if his future conduct warrants it.

The Navy does not allow a marginal performer to decline a discharge recommendation. He may, however, object in writing. In that event, the recommendation and the objection are forwarded directly to the Chief of Naval Personnel for a final decision.

The Air Force follows the same procedure as the Navy except that the final decision is normally made at the local base commander level rather than at a major headquarters level.

The administrative procedures used in accomplishing a discharge in each of the services' programs seem to be efficient in that they do not involve complex and multiechelon reviews. As previously noted, they take considerably less time than other administrative discharge procedures. To that extent, the services' programs have responded to the Committee's desire for expeditious processes.

We are concerned, however, with the difference between the consent requirements of the Army and the lack of a consent requirement in the Navy and Air Force. Since the objectives of all of the programs are generally similar, it seems that the major principle of consent should be applied consistently and equitably in all of them.

Specificity of criteria

The criteria used by each of the services to identify a marginal performer are summarized below:

Army	Navy	Air Force
<i>Cannot or will not meet acceptable Army standards because of</i>	<i>Is considered to be a burden to the command due to substandard performance or inability to adapt to military service.</i>	<i>--Demonstrates limited potential for normal career progression as manifested by his duty performance or behavior and</i>
<i>--poor attitude,</i>		<i>--gives no indication of becoming an acceptable airman within a reasonable time.</i>
<i>--lack of motivation,</i>		
<i>--lack of self-discipline,</i>		
<i>--inability to adapt socially or emotionally, or</i>		
<i>--failure to demonstrate promotion potential.</i>		

The initial identification of a marginal performer is made by commissioned and noncommissioned officers at the lowest level in the command structure. Their identification is subject to interpretation by each officer who can initiate discharge action. The more general and vague the criteria are, the greater the chance of different interpretations by initiating commanders within and among the services.

We believe that definitive, less subjective, and consistent criteria are needed to assure that marginal performance is assessed fairly and uniformly within and among the services.

Length of evaluation period

The services' programs vary in the minimum time period a marginal performer must be evaluated in an operational unit before discharge recommendations may be initiated:

- The Army does not specify a minimum period.*
- The Navy requires 180 days.*
- The Air Force requires 60 days.*

The Army stated it did not establish a minimum evaluation period to keep its program simple and to avoid placing an additional procedural requirement on the initiating commander. The USAREUR test revealed that the personnel discharged by EDP spent an average of 2 to 3 months in their units before separation action was initiated; therefore, the Army felt the inclusion of a minimum evaluation period in the expanded program was unnecessary. Both the Navy and Air Force stated that, in their judgment, their respective periods provided a reasonable amount of time for evaluation and were sufficiently long to prevent arbitrary decisions.

None of the services provided validated test data to support the basis for their minimum evaluation period; their decisions were strictly judgmental.

We believe that each service should observe an adequate and equitable evaluation period before discharging marginal performers. The differences in evaluation policy and length and the lack of validation data lead us to believe that some individuals may be discharged prematurely and others retained beyond a reasonable length of time.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

In fiscal year 1974, the Army, Navy, and Air Force, but not the Marine Corps, introduced programs to simplify and expedite the discharge of marginal performers. The Army restricted its program to Europe, while the Navy and Air Force implemented vigorous, servicewide programs. The Marine Corps relied on the established, drawn-out administrative discharge process. Until all the services fully implement marginal performer discharge programs, we believe that marginal performers will continue to cause an unnecessary and costly administrative burden and will adversely affect the services' operational capabilities.

The existing marginal performer discharge programs were developed independently by the Army, Navy, and Air Force and contain what we believe to be major inconsistencies and inequities. They are as follows:

- Although the Army, Navy, and Air Force programs separate enlisted members for generally the same type of marginal behavior and performance, they issue different types of discharges. We believe that issuing different discharges to members separated for generally the same type of behavior and performance is inconsistent and inequitable.
- The Army discharge program for marginal performers allows an enlisted member to decline a discharge recommendation. The Navy and Air Force do not give an enlisted member that option. Since the objectives of all these discharge programs are similar, we believe that the major principle of consent should be applied consistently and equitably in all.
- The initial identification of a marginal performer is made by commissioned and noncommissioned officers at the lowest level in the command structure. The more general and vague the criteria are, the greater the chance of different interpretations by commanders initiating discharge recommendations. We believe that more definitive, more consistent, and less subjective criteria than are currently used by the Army, Navy, and Air Force are needed to assure that marginal performance is assessed fairly and uniformly within and among the services.

--The Army, Navy, and Air Force programs vary in the minimum time period a marginal performer must be evaluated in an operational unit before a discharge recommendation may be initiated. None of the services provided validated test data to support the basis for their minimum evaluation time period; their decisions were strictly judgmental. We believe that each service should observe an adequate and equitable evaluation period before discharging marginal performers. The differences in evaluation policy and length and the lack of validation data lead us to believe that some marginal performers may be discharged prematurely and others may be retained beyond a reasonable length of time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Secretary, DOD, as an immediate measure, direct that (1) the Army's current program be extended Army-wide and (2) the Marine Corps discontinue the use of the nonexpiration of active service quotas which delay the discharge of some marginal performers under established administrative procedures.

We also recommend that the Secretary establish a uniform, DOD-wide program for the expeditious discharge of marginal performers. This program should assure that consistent and equitable standards are applied, especially to the following program features:

- Type of discharge issued.
- Consent and appeal procedures.
- Specificity of criteria.
- Length of the evaluation period.

To avoid the continuation of inconsistent and inequitable practices and to reduce the costly burden of prolonged service by marginal performers, we recommend that the uniform DOD-wide program be designed and implemented as a matter of high priority.

CHAPTER 5

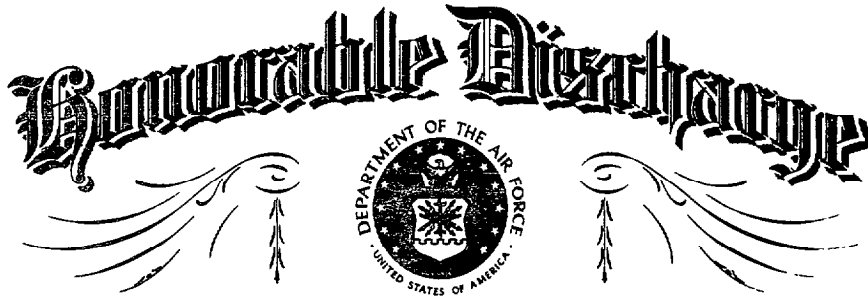
SCOPE OF REVIEW

This review was conducted at the headquarters of each military service and at selected field locations in the continental United States and Europe as follows.

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Location</u>
ARMY:	
Headquarters, U.S. Army Armor Center and Fort Knox	Fort Knox, Ky.
Headquarters, USAREUR and Seventh Army	Heidelberg, Germany
Headquarters, 3rd Armored Division	Frankfurt, Germany
NAVY:	
Bureau of Naval Personnel	Washington, D.C.
Naval Station, Norfolk	Norfolk, Va.
U.S.S. John F. Kennedy	Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Portsmouth, Va.
U.S.S. Guadalcanal	Norfolk, Va.
AIR FORCE:	
Rickenbacker Air Force Base	Columbus, Ohio
MARINE CORPS:	
Camp LeJeune	Jacksonville, N.C.

At each location we reviewed policies, practices, procedures, and regulations for discharging marginal performers. We also examined individual case files of enlisted members discharged as marginal performers.

Military officials responsible for administering marginal performer discharge programs are shown in appendix V.



from the Armed Forces of the United States of America

This is to certify that

VOIDVOIDVOIDVOIDVOIDVOIDVOIDVOIDVOIDVOID

was Honorably Discharged from the

United States Air Force

on the VOID *day of* VOIDVOIDVOID *This certificate is awarded*
as a testimonial of Honest and Faithful Service

VOIDVOIDVOIDVOIDVOID

VOIDVOIDVOIDVOIDVOID

DD FORM 256 AF PREVIOUS EDITIONS OF THIS FORM MAY BE USED. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT RECORD - SAFEGUARD IT!

General Discharge



Under Honorable Conditions
from the Armed Forces of the United States of America

This is to certify that

VOID

_____ *was Discharged from the*
United States Navy

on the _____ day of _____ under honorable conditions

DD-277N (Rev. 1-30)

BEST DOCUMENT AVAILABLE

Honorable Discharge



from the Armed Forces of the United States of America

This is to certify that

was Honorably Discharged from the

United States Army

*on the _____ day of _____ This certificate is awarded
as a testimonial of "Honest and Faithful" Service*

DD FORM NO 256A 1 MAY 50

BEST DOCUMENT AVAILABLE

General Discharge



Under honorable conditions
from the Armed Forces of the United States of America

Richard C. [unclear]

Special Discharged from the

Army of the United States

on the _____ *day of* _____ *under honorable conditions*

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PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS
RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTERING
ACTIVITIES DISCUSSED IN THIS REPORT

	Tenure of office	
	From	To
<u>DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE</u>		
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE:		
James R. Schlesinger	July 1973	Present
William P. Clements (acting)	May 1973	July 1973
DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE:		
William P. Clements	Jan. 1973	Present
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS):		
William K. Brehm	Sept. 1973	Present
Carl W. Clewlow (acting)	June 1973	Aug. 1973
<u>DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY</u>		
SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:		
Howard H. Callaway	May 1973	Present
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS):		
M. David Lowe	Feb. 1974	Present
Carl S. Wallace	Mar. 1973	Jan. 1974
CHIEF OF STAFF:		
Gen. Fred C. Weyand	Sept. 1974	Present
Gen. Creighton W. Abrams	Oct. 1972	Sept. 1974
<u>DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY</u>		
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY:		
J. William Middendorf II	Apr. 1974	Present
John W. Warner	May 1972	Apr. 1974
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY (MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS):		
Joseph T. McCullen, Jr.	Sept. 1973	Present
James E. Johnson	June 1971	Sept. 1973

 Tenure of office

From

To

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS:

Adm. James L. Holloway III	July 1974	Present
Adm. Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr.	July 1970	July 1974

COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS:

Gen. Robert E. Cushman, Jr.	Jan. 1972	Present
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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE:

John L. McLucas	May 1973	Present
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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR
FORCE (MANPOWER AND RESERVE
AFFAIRS):

David P. Taylor	June 1974	Present
James P. Goode (acting)	June 1973	June 1974

CHIEF OF STAFF:

Gen. David Jones	Aug. 1974	Present
Gen. George S. Brown	Aug. 1973	July 1974
Gen. John D. Ryan	Aug. 1969	July 1973

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