

UNITED STATES  
GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

*REPORT TO THE CONGRESS*

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*BY THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL  
OF THE UNITED STATES*

## An Assessment Of All-Volunteer Force Recruits

Department of Defense

According to Defense Department data, the quality of recruits during the first full year of the all-volunteer force probably has not decreased. However, GAO questions the reliability of some of the data.

The services used eight different selection and aptitude classification tests. A common selection and classification test and common aptitude areas composed of common composites would facilitate interservices quality comparisons and allow applicants to qualify for other services without further testing. Defense began using a common test on January 1, 1976, and agreed to establish a time frame for common composites if their feasibility can be established.





COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

B-157371

To the President of the Senate and the  
Speaker of the House of Representatives

We reviewed the military services' recruiting activities for the all-volunteer force. This report, the first of four, discusses the quality and quantity of enlistees and the services' mental testing procedures.

In addition, GAO has prepared three other reports: (1) "Improving the Effectiveness and Efficiency of Recruiting," (2) "Advertising for Military Recruiting: How Effective Is It?" and (3) "Overview of Military Recruiting Activities." These reports will be issued under separate covers.

We have made our study pursuant to the Budget and Accounting Act, 1921 (31 U.S.C. 53), and the Accounting and Auditing Act of 1950 (31 U.S.C. 67).

We are sending copies of this report to the Director, Office of Management and Budget; the Secretary of Defense; and the Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas B. Stated".

Comptroller General  
of the United States



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#### ABBREVIATIONS

ACB-61	Old Army Classification Battery
ACB-73	New Army Classification Battery
AFEES	Armed Forces Examining and Entrance Station
AFQT	Armed Forces Qualification Test
AFVTG	Armed Forces Vocational Testing Group
AQE	Airman Qualifying Examination
ASVAB	Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery
AVF	all-volunteer force
BTB	Basic Test Battery
DOD	Department of Defense
EAD	Educational Affairs Division
GAO	General Accounting Office
SBTB	Short Basic Test Battery

COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S  
REPORT TO THE CONGRESS

AN ASSESSMENT OF ALL-VOLUNTEER  
FORCE RECRUITS  
Department of Defense

D I G E S T

Due principally to the dedicated efforts of the recruiting commands, the Department of Defense has essentially met the services' strength goals without any appreciable drop in quality in fiscal year 1974, the first full year of operation under the all-volunteer force concept. Recruiting successes during fiscal year 1975 were even better, but were probably helped by depressed economic conditions.

Department of Defense reports show that the personnel recruited into the all-volunteer force, when compared to their counterparts who either volunteered or were inducted into the services in a previous year (fiscal year 1964) and during the Vietnam War (fiscal year 1969), were of higher quality by some standards and lower by others, with no apparent preponderance in either direction.

Using traditional quality measures, GAO found a slight decline in the number of enlistees both with high school diplomas and with scores above or below average on the military aptitude test. There was a moderate increase in the number of enlistees with average tests scores. GAO also found evidence that Defense may overstate quality in its reports. (See pp. 6 to 12.)

GAO looked at the mental testing practices of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps. At the beginning of the review, no single mental test was acceptable to all the services and the tests used could be compromised.

When GAO brought this matter to the attention of Department officials, they reacted immediately with a directive specifying a common test to be given at Armed Forces Examining and Entrance Stations for all

the services. The Armed Forces Examining and Entrance Stations were given central management control over a single aptitude test to be used by all services as of January 1, 1976.

Defense officials also said they are exploring ways to prevent compromising the test. The promptness of this action fortified GAO's belief, gathered throughout its review, that neither the services nor Department of Defense want or will condone these practices. Although the services are progressing satisfactorily toward adopting a common test, they are not doing enough to reach an agreement on an interpretation of its results. (See pp. 18 and 19.)

The Department of Defense spent about \$4.7 million during fiscal year 1974 to support its high school recruiting and testing program, testing about 1.1 million students for enlistment eligibility. Of 307,000 male seniors, only 196,000 were potential enlistees. Only 9,700 were enlisted on the basis of the test given them in high school. About 33,700 enlistees who had been tested in high school appear to have been unnecessarily retested at enlistment. (See pp. 23 to 25.)

In 1973, the Department of Defense established the Armed Forces Vocational Testing Group to manage the high school recruiting and testing program and to present the military services to the educational community as a single entity.

This latter objective has not been fully achieved because all the services, except the Marine Corps, developed separate programs to further their recruiting interests with the educational community. These programs are similar in many respects but are funded and managed independently. Each program employs civilians with a background in education to improve the service's image through better communications with the educational community. (See pp. 26 and 27.)



In order to improve the quality of personnel recruited, GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense:

- Establish a time frame for the services to agree on common aptitude or occupational areas composed of common composites. (See p. 20.)
- Evaluate the high school recruiting and testing program and the services' various liason programs with the educational community. If these programs are found justified, their management should be consolidated under one agency, independent of service affiliation. (See p. 30.)

Defense officials agreed with this report and its recommendations, except that they are not yet satisfied that common composites can be developed. They believe that test results must relate to performance in job training which is different among the services.



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Responding to increasing public pressure to abolish the draft, President Nixon appointed a commission in February 1969, chaired by former Secretary of Defense Thomas Gates, to investigate alternatives. In April 1970, the Gates Commission recommended that the draft be abolished by July 1, 1971, in favor of an all-volunteer force (AVF). This recommendation was accepted by the President; however, its implementation was deferred until July 1, 1973, to allow time for a more orderly conversion.

The AVF concept involved the transition from a military force recruited primarily through conscription or the threat of conscription to one recruited on a purely volunteer basis. Since the decision to convert was made, debate both in the Congress and throughout the Nation has centered on the military services' ability to attract sufficient quantity and quality of personnel.

The term quantity needs no explanation. On the other hand, quality is not a simple concept. Quality is measured in terms of moral, physical, and mental attributes--the three characteristics used by the services to determine a recruit's enlistment eligibility. As the AVF has been a reality for more than 2 years, the quantity and quality of personnel recruited by the services in an all-volunteer environment can be measured. Furthermore, these results can be compared with those of the draft era. We have performed a review to assess the efforts of the services to recruit an AVF in sufficient quantity and quality.

This report includes the results of our review of the services' ability to recruit mentally qualified personnel. Aspects of our review regarding the moral and physical qualifications of personnel recruited into the AVF are being reported separately.<sup>1</sup>

~~The Selective Service Act of 1948 prohibited any person to be inducted into the armed forces unless and until he is found physically and mentally fit for training and~~

enlistment eligibility of personnel for all of the services. A 1951 amendment to the Selective Service Act of 1948 provided that an individual was mentally fit for induction in the services if he attained a percentile score of 10 points on the AFQT. The common service AFQT was the only test used to determine a recruit's mental eligibility from 1951 until 1958. From 1958 to 1973 recruits scoring in category IV on the AFQT were required to pass supplementary aptitude tests to be eligible for military service.

AFQT percentile scores are grouped to form mental categories which are used to measure the overall quality of enlistments, to make cross-service comparisons, and to observe historical trends. The mental categories and the related AFQT scoring range are shown below.

<u>Mental categories</u>	<u>Scoring range</u>
I	93-100
II	65-92
III A	50-64
III B	31-49
IV A	21-30
IV B	10-20
V (unacceptable)	9 and below

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In 1972, the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) authorized the services to use mental tests of their choice to determine a recruit's enlistment eligibility, provided the scores of these tests could be converted to AFQT percentile scores. As a result, the AFQT was abandoned as a common test to mentally qualify recruits. The Army, Navy, and Air Force began using tests of their choice in 1973. The Marine Corps continued using the AFQT until July 1, 1974, when it adopted the test used by the Air Force.

The Congress imposed quality stipulations of education levels and mental categories on the military services in the 1974 Department of Defense (DOD) Appropriation Act. The act reads: AGC 01073

"None of the funds in this Act shall be available for the enlistment or pay of non-prior non-

of the total non-prior service enlistments for the entire fiscal year."

The Defense Supplemental Appropriation Authorization Act approved June 8, 1974, removed the restriction on enlistment of non-high school graduates because the Army and Marine Corps were unable to meet recruiting goals. The 1975 DOD Appropriation Authorization Act permits the Secretaries of the military services to use high school graduation as an enlistment criterion, but does not prohibit enlisting nongraduates to meet strength goals. The 18-percent restriction on enlistment of mental category IV personnel remained in effect.

#### SCOPE OF REVIEW

We have reviewed various aspects of the military services' recruiting efforts in connection with the all-volunteer force. Also, Senators George McGovern and James Abourezk asked us to look into certain recruiting improprieties. Due to the complexity of the review, we have prepared four reports, as follows: 1) "Overview of Military Recruiting Activities," FPCD-75-171, 2) "Improving Effectiveness and Efficiency of Recruiting," FPCD-75-169, 3) "Advertising for Military Recruiting: How Effective Is It?" FPCD-75-168, and 4) this report, which concerns quantity and quality of enlistees and mental testing procedures of the services.

We contrasted the quality level of fiscal year 1974 recruits as shown by DOD records with the quality of recruits from earlier periods to evaluate AVF recruitment. We chose to use 5-year intervals to define trends in quality. Hence, our comparison points are fiscal year 1964, before the Vietnam War, and fiscal year 1969, during the Vietnam War; in both, the draft was used. We reviewed the mental testing practices of the services and the efforts taken to develop and adopt a common mental test to be used by all of the services to classify recruits in mental categories. We also reviewed some aspects of DOD's high school recruiting and testing program whereby students who are potential recruits are tested to determine whether they are mentally qualified for military service.

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addition, selected high school officials throughout the United States were asked their opinion of DOD's high school recruiting and testing program and the military services in general. Recruits are grouped into three basic categories, i.e., prior-service personnel, nonprior-service females and nonprior-service males. The review was limited to nonprior-service males because:

- This category comprised 86 percent of all fiscal year 1974 recruits.

- The recruiting objective for this category was the most difficult to achieve.

## CHAPTER 2

### QUANTITY AND MENTAL QUALITY

#### OF THE ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE

The military services essentially met their strength and recruiting goals for the first full year of operation under the all-volunteer force concept. These goals were achieved without any appreciable drop in quality, although we did obtain some evidence which casts doubt on the quality statistics reported. (See our report "Improving the Effectiveness and Efficiency of Recruiting," FPCD-75-169.) In our opinion, the overall effort to recruit sufficient qualified enlistees in the first year of the AVF has been successful, due principally to the dedicated efforts of the recruiting commands.

Although our fieldwork was completed well before the end of fiscal 1975, we noted that the second year appears to have been even more successful. All of the services have raised their recruiting standards in an effort to further improve quality. The success in 1975 was probably helped by depressed economic conditions but also by improved recruiting proficiency. However, as shown in this and the accompanying reports, we believe the cost of this effort can be reduced considerably, and steps can be taken to improve the effectiveness of the recruiting effort and the reliability of reported data.

#### QUANTITY

The planned aggregate military strength as of the end of fiscal year 1974 was 2,174,000. The actual strength level achieved was 2,162,000, or 99 percent of planned strength. Planned and actual yearend strength levels for each service as reported by DOD are shown below.

	<u>Planned</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Air Force	645,000	644,000
Army	782,000	783,000
Marine Corps	196,000	189,000
Navv	551.000	546.000
Total	2.174.000	2.162.000

shortfall was attributed to manpower-accounting deficiencies.

During the year, the services enlisted 412,847 volunteers, about 96 percent of their total recruiting objective. They achieved about 95 percent of their recruiting objective for nonprior-service males, about 106 percent of their objective for nonprior-service females and about 112 percent of their objective for prior-service personnel. Nonprior-service male recruiting results by service for fiscal year 1974 are shown below.

	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Percent of objective</u>
Air Force	65,330	65,723	100.1
Army	184,200	166,798	90.6
Marine Corps	51,800	46,634	90.0
Navy (note a)	<u>72,465</u>	<u>74,539</u>	102.9
All services	<u>373,795</u>	<u>353,694</u>	94.6

<sup>a</sup>The statistics also include active duty reservists.

The Army and Marine Corps attributed their recruiting shortfall to the legal requirement that at least 55 percent of recruits be high school graduates. The Army further attributed its shortfall to the legal limitation that mental-category-IV personnel may not exceed 18 percent of the total recruited.

Despite falling short of their 1974 recruiting objectives, the services were less than 1 percent short of their planned yearend strength. This may be attributed to a reduction in planned strength levels from 2,252,000 at the end of fiscal 1973 to 2,174,000 at the end of fiscal 1974. Furthermore, the services experienced higher personnel retention rates than expected and recruiting objectives for prior-service personnel and nonprior-service females were exceeded.

#### QUALITY



during the draft era. However, in the all-volunteer environment the services are no longer required to give the AFQT. They are using more comprehensive selection and classification tests to determine enlistment eligibility, guarantees, and assignments. The scores from these tests are statistically convertible to AFQT percentile scores.

On the basis of their AFQT percentile scores, service applicants are divided into five mental categories, I through V, in order of decreasing scores. Category III is average. Test scores below 10 (mental category V) legally disqualify an individual for military service induction.

Distribution by mental category of nonprior-service males enlisted by the services during fiscal 1974 is shown in chart 1.

Chart 1

	Categories			
	I	II	III	IV
	(percent)			
Air Force	4.5	38.7	56.2	0.6
Army	1.9	22.8	55.9	19.4
Marine Corps	2.5	30.0	59.7	7.8
Navy	2.4	33.0	61.0	3.6
All services	2.8	31.1	58.2	7.9

We compared the above results for the first year of the AVF, to that achieved during two draft years--fiscal 1964, before the Vietnam War, and fiscal 1969, during the Vietnam War. These comparisons show that quality levels fluctuated among the four categories. The following series of charts illustrates the comparative quality levels achieved by the services during the three time periods selected.

A decrease in the number of mental category I personnel has occurred, as shown in chart 2. This trend may indicate a reduced quality level under the AVF. However, there has been a concurrent decreasing in the number of mental category IV personnel enlisting under the AVF, as shown in chart 2.

CHART 2

NON-PRIOR SERVICE MALE PERSONNEL COMPRISING MENTAL CATEGORY I

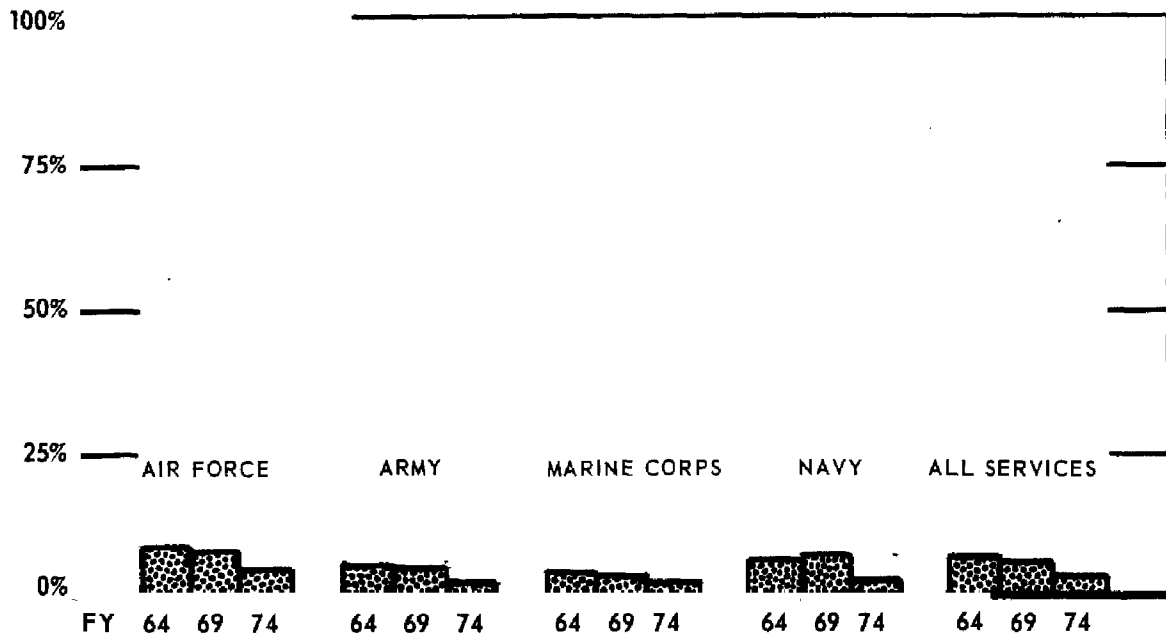
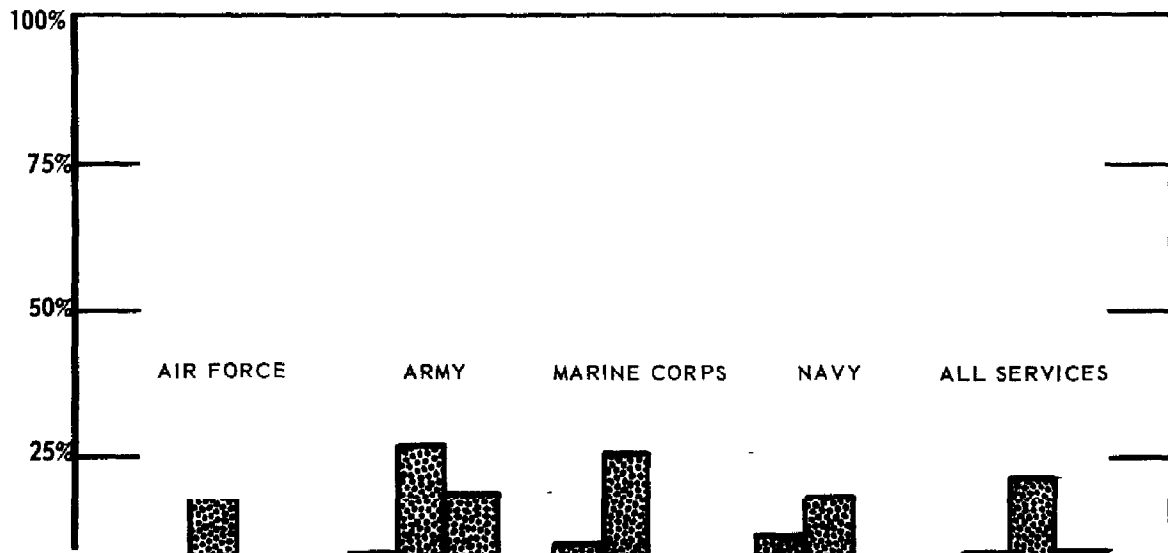


CHART 3

NON-PRIOR SERVICE MALE PERSONNEL COMPRISING MENTAL CATEGORY IV



The declining percentage of recruits in categories I and IV has caused a proportionate expansion in the percentage of recruits in the midlevel mental categories, as illustrated in chart 4.

CHART 4

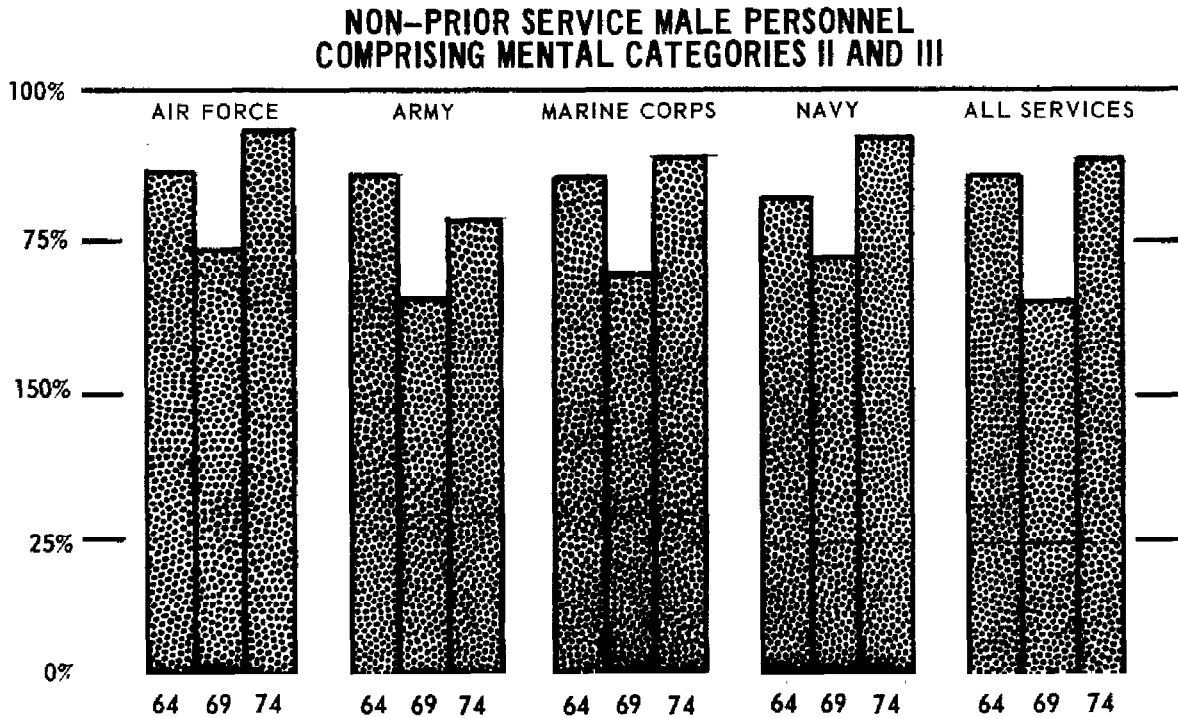


Chart 5 shows that in the highest quality levels, mental categories I and II, the services experienced a percentage loss in fiscal year 1974 larger than those of fiscal years 1964 and 1969. Chart 6 shows the corresponding rise in the percentage of mental category III personnel.

CHART 5

### NON-PRIOR SERVICE MALE PERSONNEL COMPRISING MENTAL CATEGORIES I AND II

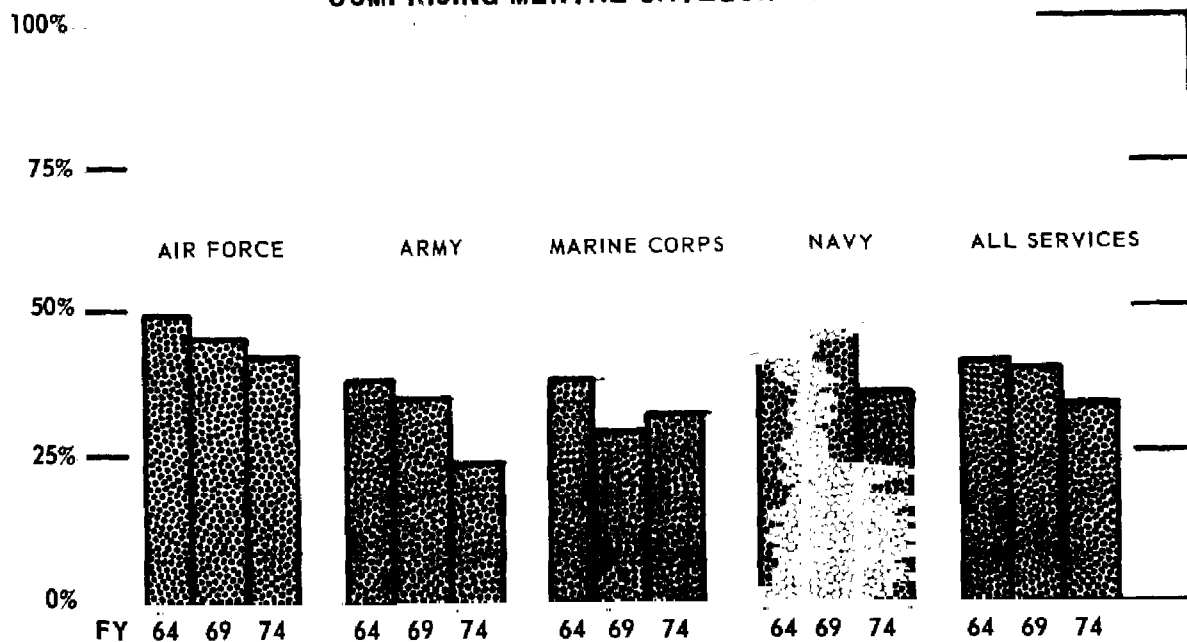
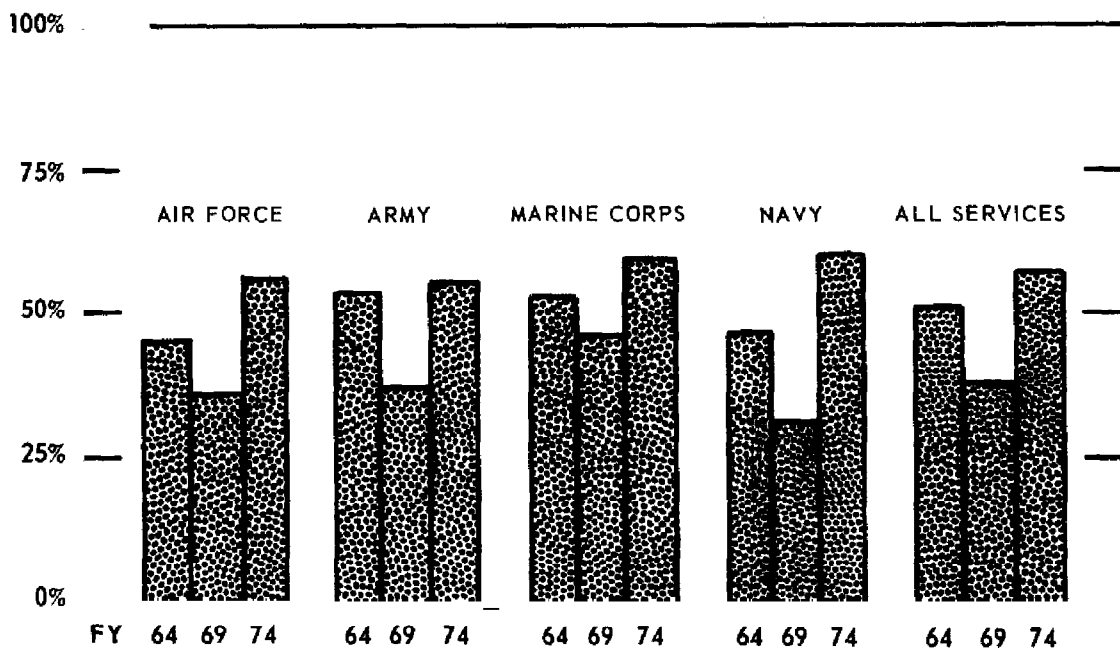


CHART 6

### NON-PRIOR SERVICE MALE PERSONNEL COMPRISING MENTAL CATEGORY III



Since the percentage of mental category I and II personnel has decreased, it is apparent that part of the increase in percentage of mental category III personnel during fiscal 1974 is attributable to that decrease as well as the decrease in the enlistment of mental category IV personnel shown in chart 3.

#### Reliability of reported mental quality

The data in the above charts was reported by the recruiting commands. As shown in our report titled "Improving the Effectiveness and Efficiency of Recruiting" (FPCD-75-169), there are differences between test results reported by the recruiting commands and retest results reported by processing centers or training stations. The Navy and Marine Corps retests showed some statistically significant differences. In general, the recruiting data shows a higher percentage of scores falling in mental category IV than do the tests at the time of enlistment.

There are factors that could have biased these results, such as the different mental attitudes of the recruits, the fact that the biggest differences were based on the results of different tests, and the potential for compromising the test at the time of recruitment as discussed in the above-mentioned report, and some downward trend may be statistically inevitable. However, because retest results were generally lower, we believe the mental quality reported by DOD may be overstated. When they became aware of the situation, DOD officials took immediate steps to improve control over the mental testing at the time of enlistment and are exploring other actions. We believe the actions taken and planned should correct the problem.

#### Educational level

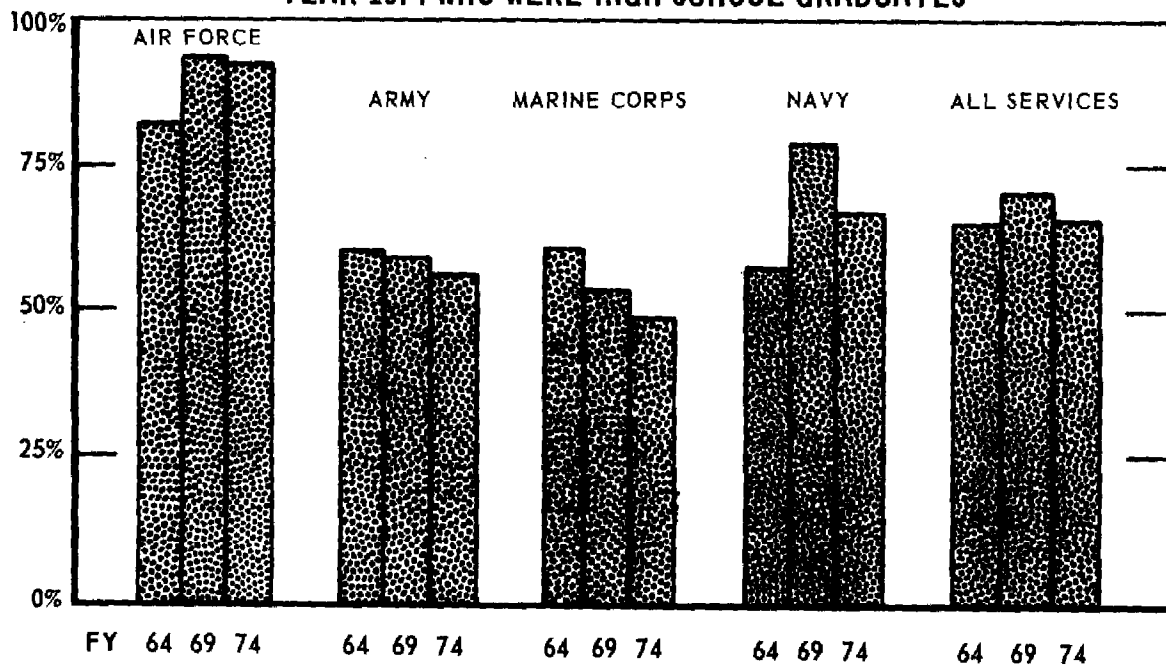
According to DOD, a high school diploma is an indicator of an individual's motivation and discipline. Non-high school graduates (those who do not possess a high school diploma or the equivalent) tend to have more discipline problems, higher retraining rates, and a higher percentage of early discharges. For example, a report prepared for the Army and issued in April 1974 states that the probability of an Army volunteer with 8 years of education or less being found unsuitable during the first 18 months of service is 48 percent, while the probability for a high school graduate is only 8 percent.

In a report to the Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, the Assistant Secretary of Defense

(Manpower and Reserve Affairs) stated that 66 percent of all fiscal year 1974 nonprior-service male recruits were high school graduates upon entry into the military as compared with 64 percent in the civilian labor force between 16 and 24, the ages of enlistment. Statistics by service are shown in chart 7.

CHART 7

**PERCENTAGE OF NON-PRIOR SERVICE PERSONNEL RECRUITED DURING FISCAL YEAR 1974 WHO WERE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES**



The fact that about 85 percent of all enlisted personnel in the services are high school graduates, when compared with the recruit percentages shown above, indicates that many individuals take advantage of inservice educational opportunities.

**EFFORTS BY THE SERVICES TO IMPROVE RECRUITING RESULTS**

DOD allows each service to establish its own mental criteria for enlistment. During most of fiscal year 1974, the services were legally allowed to enlist no more than 18

percent mental category IV personnel and no more than 45 percent non-high school graduates. The high school graduate requirement was eliminated in June 1974, yet the services retained high quality enlistment standards. In addition, the services have implemented several programs to improve quantity and mental quality of recruits.

### Quantity

While the Air Force and Navy successfully met their recruiting quantity goals, the Army and Marine Corps did not. The reasons usually cited for these disparities include the "glamour" of the Air Force and Navy, the greater applicability to civilian jobs of their technical training, and the greater physical exertion and likelihood of combat assignment in the Army and Marine Corps.

Various proposals have been made and some implemented to avoid enlistment shortfalls:

- Reduction of active-duty military strength.
- Conversion of military personnel positions to civilian positions.
- Recruitment of more women.
- Passage of legislation providing enlistment and reenlistment bonuses for a wide variety of skills.
- Modification of intelligence and educational minimum requirements to permit more capable non-high school graduates and more recruits with lower mental test scores to enter the services.

### Quality

Service quality requirements are governed by the enlistment test score minimum each service has established. Since the advent of the AVF, all the services have raised their enlistment criteria. Although the minimum legally acceptable AFQT percentile score for inductees is 10, none of the services will enlist personnel scoring less than 21. Furthermore, the Air Force, Navy, and Army will accept only those mental category IV personnel who are high school graduates.

The Air Force has the most stringent enlistment criteria of all the services. The recruitment of mental category IV personnel is limited to 45 per month, nongraduates of high school must score in the first two mental categories

to be accepted. Twice during the first 6 months of fiscal year 1975, the Air Force tightened its enlistment criteria by increasing its minimum acceptable test scores.

The Army is also gradually tightening its enlistment criteria and has implemented several new programs to improve the quality recruits. The Army established a fiscal year 1975 goal of limiting mental category IV accessions to 18 percent, the same as the fiscal year 1974 ceiling. This percentage was further restricted in September 1974 to 15 and again in October 1974 to 12 for the remainder of the year. In addition, the service has established a fiscal year 1975 goal of limiting the enlistment of non-high school graduates to 42 percent.

The Army has instituted a trainee discharge program to screen out enlistees who demonstrate a lack of motivation, discipline, or aptitude for Army life within the first 6 months of enlistment. Another program has been implemented to identify and discharge individuals from the Army during the 6th through the 36th month of service who are unable to adjust to military life and perform their duties as expected of the average soldier. (See our report to the Secretary of Defense, "Urgent Need for a Department of Defense Marginal Performer Discharge Program," April 23, 1975, FPCD-75-152.) Other programs, including one to assist enlistees in obtaining college credits, have been initiated to attract high quality enlistees.

The Marine Corps has also taken steps to improve the quality of personnel recruited. It has limited the enlistment of mental category IV personnel to 2 years and 10 percent and by a requirement that they achieve certain aptitude scores.

At the request of The Senate Armed Services Committee, the Marine Corps reported on the quality and quantity of personnel and the mission and structure of the Corps in December of 1975. The report acknowledged the fact that the overall quality had been falling, causing discipline problems and increased drug use and desertion.

As a result, the Marine Corps has taken action to recruit better enlistees. Enlistment standards have been raised by reducing the number of equivalency certificates accepted as substitutes for high school graduation and by requiring 67 percent of all fiscal year 1976 recruits and 75 percent of all fiscal year 1977 recruits to be high school graduates. The Marine Corps has also begun a program to speed up discharges for marginal and substandard



performers. Through these efforts, the Marine Corps has realized improvement. During the first 5 months of fiscal year 1976, unauthorized absence and desertion rates dropped.

To improve the quality of Navy recruits, a program was established early in 1973 by the Navy Recruiting Command to look for weaknesses in recruit applicant screening procedures which permitted marginal performers to qualify for enlistment. The Navy has also required that 90 percent of its nonprior-service enlistments achieve entrance test scores that would qualify them for admission to its technical schools.

### CONCLUSIONS

At the end of fiscal year 1974, the services' actual strength was within 1 percent of that planned. During the year they reached about 96 percent of their recruiting objectives.

In comparing the quality of AVF personnel to their counterparts who either volunteered or were drafted into the services in fiscal year 1964 and fiscal year 1969, the quality of nonprior-service males recruited during fiscal year 1974 was higher by some standards and lower by others. The tendency has been a modest decline in the proportion of enlistees with above average test scores, a moderate increase in the proportion of enlistees with average test scores, and a steady decline in the percentage of recruits scoring below average. However, some of the data may be overstated. The services have tightened their enlistment criteria. Additionally, programs have been instituted to attract more highly qualified personnel and to discharge those unsuited to military life. All things considered, the quality of recruits under the AVF concept probably has not decreased.

We believe that these results represent a very good first-year effort by the services and DOD, and there are clear indications of further improvement. Our recommendations for improving the operational and management controls over testing are contained in our report on "Improving Effectiveness and Efficiency of Recruiting" (FPCD-75-169).

## CHAPTER 3

### MENTAL TESTING PRACTICES

During fiscal year 1974, the services used different tests to determine the mental eligibility and aptitude of military applicants not tested in high school. The services used eight different selection and aptitude classification testing batteries. The purpose of these testing batteries was (1) to determine each applicant's mental fitness according to the requirements of the Selective Service Act of 1948, as amended, (2) to determine if the applicant met the minimum enlistment criteria, and (3) to classify the applicant into an aptitude or occupational area. Most of the tests are designed to be administered before an applicant enters active duty.

Each nonprior-service applicant is given a battery of mental tests before enlistment to establish his fitness. Until January 1973, the Armed Forces Examining and Entrance Stations (AFEES) administered the common service AFQT to all nonprior-service males to determine their basic service eligibility. (AFEES is a joint service organization charged by DOD with determining an applicant's enlistment eligibility.) Each service, except the Marine Corps, now uses its own tests to classify its nonprior-service male personnel. The Marine Corps used the Army's classification test.

In 1972, the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) authorized the services to choose their own selection tests. Conversion tables were required to establish the equivalent AFQT percentile score necessary to determine the mental category of an applicant according to the Selective Service Act of 1948, as amended. Consequently, during 1973 the Army, Navy and Air Force abandoned the AFQT as their selection test. The Army and Navy developed their own tests to determine basic eligibility, and the Air Force began using the Armed Service Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). The Marine Corps continued to use the AFQT. Beginning in December 1972, all the services accepted the ASVAB when administered to high school students under the high school recruiting and testing program. (See ch. 4.)

The Army, Navy, and Air Force tests yield aptitude scores used for classification, as well as AFQT percentiles. The Marine Corps uses the AFQT as its enlistment selection test and the Army's test for classification purposes. All of these tests are composed of varying numbers of subtests

designed to measure specific abilities. Subtest results are combined in various ways to compute the composite aptitude scores.

During fiscal year 1974, eight different selection and classification tests were used by the services. In addition, the services were required to accept the results of the high-school-administered ASVAB-I and ASVAB-II, which are different forms of the Air Force test (ASVAB-III).

Selection and Classification Tests  
Used During Fiscal Year 1974

<u>Service</u>	<u>Test title</u>	<u>Number of subtests</u>	<u>Testing hours</u>
Army	New Army Classification Battery	16	3
Navy	Short Basic Test Battery	3	1
	Basic Test Battery	6	2
Marine Corps	Armed Forces Qualification Test	4	1
	New Army Classification Battery Booklet II	10	1-1/2
	Old Army Classification Battery	11	5
Air Force	Armed Forces Qualification Test	4	1
	Airman Qualifying Examination	10	2
	Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Form III	9	2-1/2
All services	Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Forms I and II	9	2-1/2

The various Army, Marine Corps, and Air Force selection and classification tests, aptitudes, and subtests used to derive aptitude scores during fiscal year 1974 are shown by service in appendix I.

Appendix II shows the occupational specialty categories, basic test battery subtests, and combinations of subtests used by the Navy to classify recruits in fiscal year 1974. Although the Navy used different terminology in defining its testing system, the purpose of testing is generally the same for all services, i.e., to classify an individual according to his aptitudes.

The services used the AFQT, ASVAB, New Army Classification Battery (ACB-73), Basic Test Battery (BTB), and Short Basic Test Battery (SBTB) in fiscal year 1974 to derive official AFQT percentiles. In addition, the Marine Corps derived an AFQT percentile score for their own use from the Old Army Classification Battery (ACB-61), which was administered to all recruits in basic training not previously classified.

#### NEED FOR A COMMON SERVICE SELECTION AND CLASSIFICATION TESTING BATTERY

In November 1972, a task force report issued by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) recommended that the services begin using the common service test administered under the high school testing program--the ASVAB--as their primary selection and classification test by January 1, 1973, or soon thereafter. The report said a common selection and classification testing battery would:

- Not subject applicants to multiple testing as they compare enlistment options, nor require them to take further tests after enlistment.
- Simplify the referral of applicants from one service to another.
- Broaden the recruiting market.
- Facilitate cross-service comparisons of the quality of enlistees.
- Eliminate the wide variance in entry requirements for similar jobs.
- Be more efficient.

The services generally agree that these advantages would be realized by a common selection and classification test. Another important contribution of common testing and interpretation is interservice training.

DOD ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT  
A COMMON SERVICE TEST

In May 1974, the Defense Manpower Policy Council established a steering committee chaired by the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) to develop and implement a common aptitude test by September 1, 1975.

In February 1975, the committee reported the Navy's opposition to using the new common service testing instrument to determine eligibility for Navy schools before validating it in selected schools. The Navy indicated it could not use the same validation procedures planned by the Army, Marine Corps, and Air Force to adopt the new test. The earliest it could place the new test into full operation was June 1, 1976.

In a December 1975 memorandum, the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) directed that the ASVAB-VI and ASVAB-VII will be the only tests administered at the AFEES starting January 1, 1976. One of the scrambled versions of the tests may be used for inservice testing purposes and ASVAB-III or current tests will continue to be used for Reserve and National Guard applicants, who are not tested at the AFEES. The memorandum also stated that enlistment eligibility established by ASVAB will be valid for a maximum of 1 year from the date the test was administered. Regulations and procedures for retesting were also discussed in the memorandum. ASVAB-V will replace ASVAB-II in high schools no later than March 1, 1976.

The Chairman of the Joint Service Working Group responsible for developing the new test said he did not expect the services to agree on the use of common aptitude areas composed of common composites by the time the test is implemented. He did say that work was being done to identify military jobs common to the services.

## CONCLUSIONS

The use of a common selection and classification test and common aptitude areas composed of common composites would streamline the all-volunteer enlistment process, benefiting the applicants as well as DOD.

DOD implemented a common test on January 1, 1976. An applicant can now take one test and qualify for entrance into any one of the four services. However, each service still uses its own composites to determine specific job classifications. Standards for entry into similar occupations vary, and so does the quality of personnel assigned. However, the services are taking steps to identify military jobs common to the services to facilitate an agreement on common aptitude areas.

In our November 1973 report to the Secretary of Defense entitled "Opportunities for Increased Interservice Use of Training Programs and Resources" (B-175773), we said that interservice training offers potential economies and efficiencies through better use of training facilities, equipment, and personnel. That report pointed out that DOD has long recognized this potential. In 1972 a permanent subcommittee was established to work on training curriculums and technology and to develop plans and procedures for the continued exchange of training resources. In our opinion, interservice training cannot be fully effective without a common basis for measuring the quality of participating students.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Secretary of Defense establish a time frame for the services to agree on common aptitude or occupational areas composed of common composites.

## DOD COMMENTS AND ACTIONS PLANNED

DOD did not agree fully with this recommendation. DOD informed us that common composites must be validated and would be useful only if they efficiently predict performance. The services began collecting validation data in January 1976 and conclusions as to the feasibility of common composites will be available by July 1, 1976. If they are found feasible, DOD said it will establish a time frame for their adoption.

The military services' decision to administer only the ASVAB-VI and ASVAB-VII at the AFEES (see p. 19) is the first step toward common interpretation of test results. Raw scores for all applicants will be recorded on the application for enlistment. Each service will be able to translate these raw scores to its composites. These individual composites have been established on the basis of years of research relating scores on service aptitude tests to performance in job training.

The services will begin collecting validation data in January on the performance of individuals on the ASVAB, in training, and on the job. The Secretary of Defense will oversee these data collections to investigate the feasibility of common composites. Results of this feasibility study will be available by July 1, 1976. Should the study support the feasibility of common composites, appropriate milestones will be set at that time for implementation of common composites.

We believe the lack of common composites are a serious problem, and therefore urge that this validation program move forward as rapidly as possible. Obviously, increasing interservice training is one solution to this problem.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE HIGH SCHOOL

#### RECRUITING AND TESTING PROGRAM

In 1958, the Air Force initiated a program for testing high school students' vocational aptitude, primarily to inform recruiters of each student's mental quality. They could thus channel their recruiting efforts toward qualified students. The idea of testing high school students quickly spread to the other services and each began its own program, independently developing aptitude tests.

In 1966, the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) directed the services to explore the feasibility of a common aptitude test battery which could

- help counsel high school students on vocational choices,
- provide qualification data, and
- be used in assigning enlistees to jobs.

As a result, Army, Navy, and Air Force psychologists subsequently developed the Armed Service Vocational Aptitude Battery, form I, a battery of nine subtests, various combinations of which could be used to derive aptitudes and mental categories.

In April 1967, the Assistant Secretary issued policy guidance for the services' dealings with high school authorities and for the common aptitude testing battery in high school recruiting. This directive was implemented in 1968 by a joint service regulation.

However, the services continued to act independently, ignoring the guidance. Consequently, it was revised in December 1972, setting up a separate, jointly staffed organization with overall responsibility for the high school testing program. The Armed Forces Vocational Testing Group (AFVTG) was established in March 1973 at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, and staffed from the Army, Air Force, Navy Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and the civilian community.

The revised directive states that the services will use high school ASVAB scores for general enlistment. Enlistees will not be required to take additional tests for guaranteed training and assignment, except where the ASVAB lacks the test components for determining eligibility, such as for



ground combat or advanced electronics. ASVAB test results can establish enlistment eligibility for 2 years.

The ASVAB test is offered without obligation to the schools and students. School counselors are given a manual which details the test construction, validity, and reliability and also outlines occupational areas for both the civilian and military vocational tasks. AFVTG scores the test and reports to the schools in about 30 days.

The high school recruiting and testing program is most effective when the ASVAB is administered to high school seniors; therefore, AFVTG basically encourages testing them. If a school insists on testing freshmen, sophomores, or juniors, it is permitted to do so only if seniors are also tested that same school year.

Testing responsibilities are allocated on the basis of each service's nonprior-service enlistment objective. Interservice recruitment committees composed of senior recruiters in a given area identify the recruiting office that will be responsible for "selling" the program to a particular school and arranging for the administration of the ASVAB.

#### HIGH SCHOOL TEST RESULTS

During fiscal year 1974, about 1.1 million high school students were tested under the program. Of this number 582,000 were males and 484,000 were females. The genders of the remaining 34,000 were unreported. About 307,000 of the male students were seniors. Based upon data obtained from the educational community, we estimate that about 32 percent of these male seniors would enter college and could not be considered as potential enlistees. The balance of 209,000 "military eligibles," i.e., those potentially enlistable, must be further reduced, because approximately 4 percent of them tested below mental category IV, making them ineligible. The remaining 196,000 represent about 18 percent of the total male students tested. Of the total males tested, about 125,000 were freshmen and sophomores. These students would have to be retested, because their ASVAB scores are acceptable for only 2 years.

#### Use for Enlistment

The 1972 DOD directive required the use of high school ASVAB scores, yet AFEES records showed that during fiscal year 1974 only 4,600 applicants for enlistment had such scores. Furthermore, only 2,295 nonprior-service personnel (including 25 females) qualified for the Army, Navy, and

Marine Corps on the basis of their high school ASVAB test scores, as follows.

Army	939
Navy	56
Marine Corps	<u>1300</u>
	<u>2295</u>

AFEES records did not distinguish between the Air Force's entry test, ASVAB-III, and the high school test, ASVAB-II. Therefore, we could not determine the number of Air Force personnel who qualified on the basis of high school ASVAB test scores. The Air Force Recruiting Service did maintain data, however, showing that for the period June 1974 through January 1975, about 10 percent of that service's nonprior-service personnel were enlisted on the basis of their high school ASVAB test scores. We estimate that a total of 9,700 enlistees qualified on the basis of their high school ASVAB test scores in fiscal year 1974.

We compared high school ASVAB test results for 2.9 million students tested from fiscal year 1971 through fiscal year 1974 with Army, Navy, and Marine Corps fiscal 1974 enlistees, to determine how many had been tested with ASVAB in high school.

In contrast to the 4,600 applicants shown by AFEES records, we identified about 41,000 enlistees that had been tested with ASVAB in high school. Since only 2,295 qualified on the basis of their high school ASVAB test scores, the balance had been retested on enlistment. Of this number, we found that about 33,700 had been tested within 2 years of enlistment. It would appear, therefore, that retesting was unnecessary. The evidence indicates that retesting occurred principally because the services preferred to use individually developed aptitude tests.

The services did not maintain records of the cost of high school recruiting and testing program. However, at our request they estimated the cost of the program for fiscal year 1974 as follows:

AFVTG	\$1,519,000
Air Force	647,000
Navy	932,000
Army	<u>1,600,000</u>
	<u>\$4,698,000</u>

Marine Corps officials stated that the Corps had not

incurred any cost for the high school recruiting and testing program during fiscal year 1974 except for personnel assigned to AFVTG, included in the \$1,519,000 figure above. They explained that the Marine Corps had no high school testers in the field during fiscal year 1974 but would have 47 such testers costing about \$432,000 during fiscal year 1975. Marine Corps recruiters did participate in introducing the program, as part of their normal jobs.

The high school recruiting and testing program is expensive in relation to the number of students tested versus the number of accessions based on high school test scores. According to the Air Force's estimate that 10 percent of its recruits qualified through the high school program, the total for all services during fiscal year 1974 was less than 10,000, or about 2.5 percent of the total nonprior-service personnel enlisted.

#### PROGRAM BENEFITS

The principal benefits derived from the high school recruiting and testing program are:

- High schools and students are given a free vocational testing and counseling instrument.
- Recruiters are given the names, addresses, post-high-school intentions, and enlistment qualifications of students.

The program informs students about their aptitudes in various areas that they may consider in planning their careers. It also demonstrates the similarity of civilian and military job-skills and the opportunities available in the services to acquire these skills.

Service representatives consider the program an excellent recruiting tool. The program also gives the services an opportunity to establish better relations with the educational community.

#### HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATORS' APPRAISALS OF THE PROGRAM

We distributed 2 questionnaires to principals and counselors at 935 randomly selected high schools. We asked them:

- Why they did or did not participate in the program?
- Were they satisfied with the program?

--How may the program be improved?

--What was their attitude towards the military as an employer and a career?

We received 567 responses from principals and 586 from school counselors. Seventy-four percent of the schools responding participated in the program during the 1973-74 school year. The majority of these expressed general satisfaction with the program and planned to continue participating. The principle reason for their participation was that the test results provide them with a counseling tool.

About 13 percent of the participating schools were dissatisfied with these aspects of the program:

--Interpretative material, particularly for female aptitudes, and posttest counseling.

--Qualifications of test administrators.

--Delay in returning test results.

--Use of the test as a recruiting tool.

The schools that decided not to participate in the program gave these reasons for their decision:

--They used other aptitude tests.

--They could not add ASVAB to the school schedules.

--They did not consider ASVAB beneficial.

SERVICE-DEVELOPED PROGRAMS TO GAIN SUPPORT  
FROM THE EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY

In 1966, when the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) directed the services to explore the feasibility of a common aptitude test battery to be used in the high schools, he was concerned about recruiters' competing to place their service's test in a given school, creating a poor image of the military. When the common high school test did not correct this problem, he revised his directive, in December 1972, to establish the Armed Forces Vocational Testing Group to manage the high school recruiting and testing program.

A principal objective of AFVTG was to present the military services to the educational community as a single

entity, not as separate groups acting independently. However, this objective has not been fully achieved, because each service, except the Marine Corps, funds and manages separate liaison programs, hiring civilians to improve its image in the academic community.

The following is the stated objective of the Navy's program, but is similar to those of the Air Force, Army, and AFVTG programs.

"To encourage educators at all levels of the profession to endorse and support the All Volunteer Force concept and to provide full information to students relevant to Navy career and educational opportunities to the end that they will be attracted to enlist in the Navy."

A brief description of the services' programs follow.

### Air Force

In 1972, the Air Force Recruiting Service established the educational affairs division (EAD) within its Advertising Directorate to present the Air Force to the academic community. EAD manages six programs designed to inform educators of Air Force education and training opportunities. Brief descriptions of these programs follow:

#### Educational conventions

Personnel attend national, regional, and State education association conventions to maintain rapport with the educational community and to advertise Air Force opportunities.

#### Annual tour program

Educators take 1- to 5-day tours of Air Force installations.

EAD hopes the educators will invite the division to present Air Force programs to career counselors. Tours are also conducted to familiarize potential applicants (such as student nurses, medical specialists, dieticians, occupational therapists, and graduate nurses) with specific programs, lifestyle, opportunities, and facilities available to Air Force personnel.

#### Liaison with educational associations

Personnel appear as guest speakers at national, regional and State educational conventions and meetings. They also

seek membership on working committees of various educational organizations.

#### Conferences with State school systems

The objectives of this program are (1) to get State officials to endorse Air Force programs and (2) to establish communication with agencies that can further assist the Air Force.

#### Development of educator-oriented literature and other advertising materials

Pamphlets, brochures, articles, exhibits, etc. are directed at educators. Also, EAD responds to educators' requests for information.

#### Recruiting Service Volunteer Program for Reserve Officers

Influential educators affiliated with the Air Force Reserve conduct educational liaison with local communities for the Reserve.

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The cost of EAD during fiscal year 1974 was about \$953,000. However, additional costs for advertising officers and field recruiters who helped EAD to staff convention and fair booths were not readily available.

#### Army

The Army's use of civilians to assist in its recruiting efforts in the educational community was limited until early 1975 to one individual at each of five regional recruiting offices. However, in 1975 the Army formulated plans to add 68 civilians with educational backgrounds. Four were planned for Recruiting Command Headquarters at Fort Sheridan, Illinois, and 1 to each of the service's 64 district recruiting offices. The civilians provide

- guidance on a variety of educational areas,
- general educational and career counseling to military personnel and potential enlistees, and
- liaison with the academic community.

As of March 1975, only 6 of the 68 educators had been hired by the Army. Budgeted cost for these 68 for the second half of fiscal year 1975 was \$463,000, and we estimate the annual salary cost of the 5 individuals assigned to the regions at about \$102,000. Any other costs, such as travel expenses, incurred by these five were not readily available.

### Navy

The Navy educator liaison program is staffed with 75 civilian education specialists and 59 uniformed personnel who divided their time between administering the ASVAB in the high schools and the Navy's Basic Test Battery at the AFEES. The program cost about \$575,000 in fiscal year 1974 for the six activities described below.

#### Armed Forces recruiting and testing program

Education specialists administer the ASVAB in the high schools.

#### Educator orientation visits

Educators visit Navy ships, training centers, and other Navy educational institutions, learning of the opportunities available in the Navy for education, training, and experience.

#### Navy Recruiting Command convention program

At national, regional, and State educational conventions, conferences, and workshops, personnel present a comprehensive view of the Navy.

#### Graduate education course on career options and opportunities for the military

The pilot project has been established as a graduate level course directed at teachers, counselors, or school administrators continuing their own education. It is sponsored by the Navy; however, the other services are involved. The course describes the benefits, program, and lifestyle of each service. Educators with no military experience are given an opportunity to view military life at a Navy installation after a semester of classroom work.

NAVY RECRUITING Command  
educator action council

Nationally known educators promote the Navy as a career choice and an educational experience.

Navy career education program

Students, teachers, and school counselors are alerted to the various occupations available in the Navy.

COUNCLUSIONS

Although precise cost data and the number of accessions based on high school ASVAB scores were not available, the data we obtained indicates the high school recruiting and testing program is expensive in relation to the number of students tested versus the number of accessions based on high school test scores. Furthermore, as the program expands to test more students, the cost of the program will increase. However, the common service test discussed in chapter 3 of this report should increase enlistment based on high school ASVAB scores.

Three of the four services have initiated education liaison programs to gain the academic community's support for the AVF. These programs are duplicative and create the undesirable impression that the services are competing with each other. In view of this, individual liaison programs are questionable, and they could be damaging.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Secretary of Defense evaluate the high school recruiting and testing program and the education liaison programs in terms of need, cost, and benefits and consider the comments of high school principals and counselors.

If these programs are justified, we recommend that they be managed by one organization which has no particular service affiliation. An independent component within DOD should be established for this purpose, with the responsibility for administering all preenlistment testing.

DOD COMMENTS AND ACTIONS

The Department of Defense agrees with our recommendation that the Secretary of Defense evaluate the high school recruiting and testing programs and the educational liaison programs in terms of needs, costs, and benefits. Department officials said they already have such evaluation programs underway.



APPENDIX I

Subtests		Air Force												Army												Marine Corps											
		Airman Qualifying Examination				Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery				New Army Classification Battery (ACB-73)				Army Classification Battery				Armed Forces Qualification + ACB-73 Test				Surveillance & communications				Combat				Field artillery				Operator & food			
Subtests		Administrative	General	Electronics	Mechanical	Administrative	General	Electronics	Mechanical maintenance	General maintenance	Clerical	General technical	Skilled technical	Electronics	Surveillance & communications	Combat	Field artillery	Operator & food	Mechanical maintenance	General maintenance	Clerical	General technical	Skilled technical	Electronics	Surveillance & communications	Combat	Field artillery	Operator & food									
Word knowledge																																					
Verbal																																					
Arithmetic reasoning		X	X																																		
Mathematics knowledge																																					
Arithmetic computation		X																																			
Mechanical comprehension					X																																
Mechanical aptitude																																					
Mechanical principles																																					
Space perception																																					
Pattern analysis																																					



NAVY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTIES AND BASIC TEST BATTERY SUBTESTS USED TO CLASSIFY RECRUITS																			
Occupational specialties																			
Navy basic test batter subtests	Operations analysis	Operations control	Graphics	Administration	Supply and accounting	Food Preparation and service	Precision equipment	General mechanics	Fabrication	Aviation maintenance and handling	Aviation-electricity and electronics	Security	Technical specialties	Constructions	Electricity	Ordnance		Undecided	
																or	X	or	X
General classification	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			X	X
Arithmetic reasoning	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X	X				X	X	
Mechanics							X	X	X	X				X	X				X
Clerk																			
Shop practices							X	X	X	X				X	X				X
Electronics													X						X

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS  
RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTERING  
ACTIVITIES DISCUSSED IN THIS REPORT

	<u>Tenure of office</u>	
	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
<u>DOD</u>		
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE:		
Donald H. Rumsfeld	Nov. 1975	Present
James R. Schlesinger	July 1973	Nov. 1975
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:		
Martin R. Hoffmann	Aug. 1975	Present
Norman R. Augustine (acting)	July 1975	Aug. 1975
Howard H. Callaway	May 1973	July 1975
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS):		
Donald G. Brotzman	Mar. 1975	Present
M. David Lowe	Feb. 1974	Jan. 1975
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

Tenure of office  
From                      To

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY (cont.)

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY (MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS):		
Joseph T. McCullen, Jr.	Sept. 1973	Present
James E. Johnson	June 1971	Sept. 1973
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. Louis H. Wilson	July 1975	Present
Gen. Robert E. Cushman, Jr.	Jan. 1972	June 1975

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE:		
Thomas C. Reed	Dec. 1975	Present
John L. McLucas	May 1973	Dec. 1975
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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