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[Allegations of Recruiter Malpractice in the Marine Corps].
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Report to Rep. Richard C. White, Chairman, House Committee on Armed Services: Military Personnel Subcommittee; by Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General.

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Marine Corps recruiting efforts in the Detroit, Michigan, and Tulsa, Oklahoma, areas were reviewed following allegations by two former recruiters of widespread recruiting malpractices in those areas. The review included: investigations of recruiting stations; reviews of recruiting policies, procedures, and practices; examination of records, reports, and correspondence; and interviews with present and former recruiters. Allegations of malpractice involved enlistment of unqualified applicants by trading them for other unqualified applicants in nearby states, schooling them to lie, and running fake police checks. Findings/Conclusions: These allegations could not be verified at the recruiting stations visited, and review of the records generally did not support these contentions. At Tulsa, there were irregularities in the enlistment of one individual, and in Detroit, two individuals were rejected for physical reasons. Eight out of 109 recruiters in Detroit and two out of 43 recruiters in the Oklahoma City Recruiting Station were disciplined for recruiting malpractices or irregularities during the past 2 years. (RRS)

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



FEB 2 1977

B-157371

The Honorable Richard C. White, Chairman
Subcommittee on Military Personnel
Committee on Armed Services
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In a June 7, 1976, Subcommittee letter, it was requested that we review the Marine Corps recruiting efforts in the Detroit, Michigan, and Tulsa, Oklahoma, areas following testimony from two former recruiters alleging widespread recruiting malpractices in those areas.

We (1) investigated recruiting stations in Detroit, Michigan; Kansas City, Missouri; Oklahoma City and Tulsa, Oklahoma (a substation of Oklahoma City) and the Armed Forces Examining and Entrance Stations at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Kansas City, Missouri; and Little Rock, Arkansas; (2) reviewed recruiting policies, procedures, and practices; (3) examined records, reports, and correspondence; and (4) interviewed present and former recruiters.

The former recruiters alleged that unqualified applicants were enlisted by (1) trading them for other unqualified applicants in nearby states, (2) schooling them to lie, and (3) running fake police checks. However, such generalizations could not be verified at the stations we visited, nor could either recruiter's contention that numerous recruiters were involved in these practices be substantiated. Both men provided some names of applicants, but the records generally did not support the facts as described. At the Tulsa Recruiting Substation, there were irregularities in the enlistment of one individual, but those records also did not fully support the facts as described by the former recruiter. In Detroit, we verified that two individuals were rejected for entrance into the active Marine Corps for physical reasons but 1 month later were enlisted into the Marine Corps Reserves.

Eight out of 109 recruiters in the Detroit Recruiting Station and 2 out of 43 recruiters in the Oklahoma City Recruiting Station were disciplined for recruiting malpractices or irregularities during the last 2 fiscal years.

FPCD-77-22

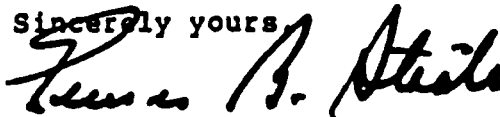
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More detailed information on the allegations is provided in appendixes I and II, respectively.

To comply with the Committee's time frame, we did not request formal written comments. Instead, we met with officials of the Department of Defense, the Navy, and the Marine Corps, who provided us with comments. Their comments were incorporated as appropriate.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James B. Steidle". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

Comptroller General
of the United States

SUMMARY OF RECRUITING PRACTICES IN TULSA, OKLAHOMA

On June 3, 1976, Mr. John P. Pitchlynn, a Marine Corps recruiter in Tulsa, Oklahoma, until November 1975, testified before the Military Personnel Subcommittee, House Committee on Armed Services. Mr. Pitchlynn said that recruiters frequently enlisted men into the Marine Corps who were mentally, physically, and morally unqualified. He alleged that recruiter malpractice was widespread--about 40 percent of the enlistments in Tulsa was fraudulent. The results of our review are summarized by the subject areas covered by Mr. Pitchlynn's allegations.

TRADING UNQUALIFIED
APPLICANTS OUT OF STATE

Mr. Pitchlynn said the most common means of getting unqualified people into the Marine Corps was by exchanging them for unqualified persons from other States. He explained that if an applicant, for example, failed the entrance examination or had a criminal record, a Tulsa recruiter could call a recruiter in a neighboring State, find out what kind of rejects that recruiter had, and exchange rejects.

Mr. Pitchlynn estimated that about three recruits a week were rejects from other States. One example he gave described an applicant who tried to get into the Army and then the Marine Corps and who was involved in a trade with someone in Arkansas. He was enlisted into the Marine Corps in Arkansas less than 1 month after failing the entrance examination in Tulsa and attempting twice to enlist at Tulsa after failing the initial examination. He was caught both times. The Marine Corps generally requires a 6-month waiting period before a rejected applicant can be retested.

The Marine Corps investigation found that after the applicant failed the enlistment examination and was caught trying to retest, it was Mr. Pitchlynn who attempted to enlist the applicant by changing his social security number; he was again caught. However, Mr. Pitchlynn denies ever having had him tested and available records did not fully support the Marine Corps charges. Although incomplete, the files of another recruiter suggest that he may have been the recruiter who retested the individual under a different social security number.

Although there were irregularities in this case, record evidence was not available to substantiate recruiter malpractice. Furthermore, we found no evidence to support Mr. Pitchlynn's allegation that the recruit was "traded" for someone in Arkansas. Mr. Pitchlynn could not document the

allegation that recruiters were involved in a trade. He said there was a chance the applicant went to Arkansas by himself.

Irregularities identified
by the Marine Corps

The Officer in Charge, Oklahoma City, provided documentation relating to the Marine Corps investigation of a case in which an applicant came from Arkansas to Oklahoma for enlistment. In March 1975, an applicant took the entrance examination in Little Rock, Arkansas, failed the mental test, and was refused enlistment into the Marine Corps. Later during the same month, he took the test in Oklahoma City without retest authorization, passed the test, and was enlisted into the Marine Corps. The investigating officer recommended no action be taken. However, the Officer in Charge, Oklahoma City, gave the recruiter a letter of reprimand for dereliction of duty because the recruiter failed to ascertain whether the applicant had previously tested in Arkansas.

Comparison of applicants in
Oklahoma with applicants in
Arkansas, Kansas, and Missouri

Mr. Pitchlynn told us that Tulsa recruiters traded unqualified applicants for other unqualified individuals from Arkansas, Kansas, and Missouri. To determine the extent of these trades and whether it continues, we compared applicants' records processed at the Oklahoma City, Kansas City, and Little Rock examining stations between November 1974 and January 1975. In addition, we compared Tulsa applicants during June and July 1976 with applicants in Arkansas, Kansas, and Missouri and found no indication that out-of-state trading existed during these periods.

MAKING DEALS WITH JUDGES
AND DISTRICT ATTORNEYS

Mr. Pitchlynn testified that recruiters asked judges and district attorneys to remove disqualifying factors from recruits' criminal records. He provided one example but record evidence was not available to support the allegation.

Mr. Pitchlynn said he was present when another recruiter asked a judge to dismiss a murder charge against someone whose name he could not remember. Both the recruiter and judge deny the allegation. The recruiter recalled a meeting where, in the presence of Mr. Pitchlynn, he and the judge discussed the case of a specific individual whom the recruiter had enlisted into the Marine Corps. While in an unauthorized absence status, the recruit was charged in a shooting death and later convicted of second degree manslaughter.

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The recruiter said he had never asked to have charges against anyone dropped.

The judge told us he would not dismiss any charges, particularly murder, because the individual agreed to enlist in the service, and that he had never compelled anyone to join the service. He said if someone had already applied for enlistment and was arrested for a minor offense, it is conceivable that charges may have been dropped in order to give the individual a clean record. However, he could not think of a single instance in which this had occurred.

According to the Officer in Charge, Oklahoma City, a listing of all people accused of murder or manslaughter from September 1974 through May 1976 in the judge's district was compiled at the District Attorney's office in Pawhuska, Oklahoma. He said none was enlisted or had applied for enlistment into the Marine Corps. The listing had been lost and was not available for our review. We did not attempt to reconstruct the list; however, we questioned whether the individual's name would even show up on the list if charges had been removed from his record.

RACIAL QUOTAS

In his testimony, Mr. Pitchlynn stated that racial quotas existed and suggested that the Marine Corps limited the number of blacks that could be recruited.

The Officer in Charge, Oklahoma City, stated that at no time had he ever denied any applicant enlistment in the Marine Corps because of his race, color, religion, or national origin. He provided documentation showing minimum minority recruiting goals which he said were the only guidelines given recruiters and did not in any way prevent their recruiting more minorities. The officer said that during fiscal year 1976, the goals were exceeded.

We discussed Mr. Pitchlynn's allegation with another Marine Corps officer and five recruiters. Each of them stated that the allegation was false.

Mr. Pitchlynn subsequently informed us that he did not intend his testimony to be an allegation against the Marine Corps. He said his noncommissioned officer in charge told recruiters that "we gotta watch out about putting too many blacks in." At this time Mr. Pitchlynn said that to the best of his knowledge, no one was ever denied enlistment into the Marine Corps because of race or color.

**RECRUITING MR. PITCHLYNN'S
REJECTED APPLICANTS**

Mr. Pitchlynn testified that one recruiter consistently recruited eight men a month and that he enlisted one of Mr. Pitchlynn's rejects. The Subcommittee's records identified the recruiter, but Mr. Pitchlynn denied the identification. He said he left the recruiter's name with the staff at the hearings but could not recall it during our visit. However, he gave us the name of the recruit who had been previously rejected.

The Tulsa substation records show that Mr. Pitchlynn processed the rejected recruit's application sometime during September 1975. The individual failed the entrance examination and was considered a mental reject. About 6 months later, on February 28, 1976, he was again tested, attained a significantly higher score, and was enlisted into the Marine Corps. The recruiter told us that he enlisted the individual but that another recruiter had helped him prepare for the examination.

Recruiting records from July 1974 through June 1976 showed that none of the Tulsa recruiters consistently enlisted eight people per month. During the 24-month period, two recruiters enlisted eight or more recruits twice and two other recruiters enlisted eight or more recruits once. Mr. Pitchlynn said he based his statement concerning how many enlistments other recruiters were getting on comments made by his noncommissioned officer in charge. Mr. Pitchlynn said eight men a month may have been an overstatement.

**ORDERS TO RECRUIT
UNQUALIFIED PEOPLE**

Mr. Pitchlynn testified that he and other recruiters were ordered to recruit unqualified people. Specifically,

"I don't care how or where you get the bodies.
Just get them. But remember to cover yourself,
and I don't want to hear the details."

Mr. Pitchlynn further indicated that the Officer in Charge, Oklahoma City, told him to do whatever it takes to get the bodies.

Mr. Pitchlynn could not document his statements. Those accused denied ever giving such an order.

We discussed this matter with two Marine Corps officers and four Tulsa recruiters who said they had never been told

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or heard of an order such as alleged by Mr. Pitchlynn. They acknowledged the use of the phrases "more for the Corps" and "whatever it takes" as slogans to help motivate recruiters. However, at no time were these slogans intended to suggest, as alleged by Mr. Pitchlynn, that recruiters enlist unqualified people.

PRESSURES OF MAKING QUOTA

Mr. Pitchlynn testified, as did other recruiters, that they were under unbearable pressure to meet their quota, and that the quota must be made at all costs.

However, the recruiters said that the most pressure came from their families because of the long hours they had to work and denied ever having been intimidated if they were unable to meet their quota.

In our discussions with Mr. Pitchlynn he said there was much pressure in recruiting because performance is judged on salesmanship and making quotas. Mr. Pitchlynn said he was a reserve Marine on active duty which made a difference. He said if he had been a regular Marine, he would have been reassigned.

From September 1974 through June 1976, 43 recruiters served at the Oklahoma City station. During the period, seven recruiters (16 percent) were relieved from duty--five for the good of the service and two for cause. ^{1/} We noted that the quota was not the only factor in determining whether a recruiter would be relieved. For example, one recruiter received an outstanding rating on his fitness report for meeting his quota. However, he was relieved for the good of the service because of marital problems which were a potential embarrassment to the Marine Corps.

We noted that another recruiter's last fitness report had an excellent rating, yet the recruiter was relieved for cause. The Officer in Charge, Oklahoma City, explained that the recruiter had (1) trouble coping with the pressures of meeting a quota, (2) a very negative attitude, and (3) asked to be relieved. The officer said the recruiter was suspended from his duty and assigned others while awaiting final word

^{1/}Recruiters relieved for cause were those who had motivation or attitude problems, poor fitness reports, and low productivity. Those relieved for the good of the service had tried to perform but could not.

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on the request for reassignment. The officer said as soon as the recruiter was taken off recruiting duty his attitude changed and he performed quite well. His last fitness report covered a 2-month period, and he was rated excellent on regular performance of duties and was recommended for noncommissioned officers' school.

VIEWS OF OFFICER IN CHARGE

The Officer in Charge, Oklahoma City, said that although some improprieties occur, he does not believe recruiting malpractice is as widespread as alleged by Mr. Pitchlynn. He said improper recruiting practices like exchanging one unqualified individual for another from a different State could have happened. However, he said he had been unable to substantiate any of Mr. Pitchlynn's allegations.

The Officer in Charge suspected one recruiter who may have been involved in irregularities with a recruiter in Arkansas. The officer said he was never able to prove it, but because of the questionable circumstances, he officially reprimanded the recruiter. Documentation showed that another recruiter had failed to follow established procedures in obtaining parental consent before enlisting an applicant under 18 years old. He also disciplined that recruiter.

SUMMARY OFRECRUITING PRACTICES IN DETROIT, MICHIGAN

On May 25, 1976, Mr. Kenneth Taylor, a Marine recruiter in Detroit until December 1974, testified before the Military Personnel Subcommittee, House Committee on Armed Services, saying that Marine recruiters had to "get around the system" because of pressures on recruiters to attain quotas.

In his testimony, Mr. Taylor mentioned the three areas of disqualification for enlistment--physical, mental, and moral--and said for each of the three, there are numerous ways of "getting around the system" and qualifying an applicant. He discussed all three areas, but gave only a few examples. While some recruiters could possibly have done some of the things Mr. Taylor alleged, such as run fake police checks and school potential recruits to lie, we could not verify this.

Mr. Taylor gave an example of an applicant who was processed at the Armed Forces Examining and Entrance Station in 1973 and 1974 under different names so he would not have to wait the required 6 months to be retested after failing the initial test.

The recruiting station in Detroit publishes daily reports on the processing results from the examining station and copies are provided to each recruiting substation. We examined the reports for the period January 19, 1973, through December 31, 1974, and found some of the names identified by Mr. Taylor on recruiting stations' reports. However, information was not available to substantiate or deny the allegation that different names were the same individuals.

In his testimony, Mr. Taylor said that he processed two applicants in 1973 and 1974 who had been physically disqualified for active duty. Subsequently, he enlisted both men into the Marine Corps Reserves because, at the time, a cursory physical examination was being given at the Reserve Station.

We found that these two individuals were rejected for active duty for physical reasons. A month later, both men were enlisted into the Marine Reserves after being examined by the Medical Officer in a Naval Reserve Training Center in the Detroit area, who found both men physically qualified. Later Mr. Taylor brought the facts to the attention of his commanding officer and was given a letter of reprimand based on his unsolicited statement and supporting evidence.

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Mr. Taylor, in his testimony, said he believed the officer should have had the recruits reexamined by another medical officer. This was not done because the medical defects did not show up during the examination at the Naval Reserve Training Center. The officer said the only thing Mr. Taylor did wrong was to not mention the possible physical defects to the medical officer.

During the 2-year period ending June 30, 1976, 8 out of 109 recruiters who served at the Detroit recruiting station were accused of recruiting malpractices.

VIEWS OF RECRUITERS

We obtained the names of recruiters who had worked with Mr. Taylor and discussed his allegations of recruiting malpractice. Only one of the recruiters believed Mr. Taylor violated procedures to the extent Mr. Taylor said he did. He said recruiters cannot strictly follow Marine Corps policies and procedures and be successful recruiters. He also said he explains the Marine Corps policy to applicants before he asks them if they ever got the bad, experiment with drugs, etc., and he believes other recruiters do the same. This procedure is probably the simplest to abuse and the most difficult to prove, he said, considering all of the rules and regulations, perhaps 90 percent of recruiters are involved in malpractice at one time or another.

DISCUSSIONS WITH MR. TAYLOR

We met with Mr. Taylor to discuss recruiting malpractice and obtain other examples of additional information that would be helpful in verifying his allegations. We told him it was difficult to identify malpractice from the records; for example, we could not prove that two similar names were the same person. Mr. Taylor reasserted that this was possible but agreed the records would not reveal this fact. He said the cases mentioned in his testimony and in the newspapers were the only ones he had researched and the only ones he could document. He believes most of the men he recruited would be successful, even though, in his judgment, 90 percent of the applicants he recruited were not qualified under established procedures.