



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

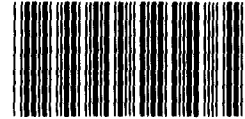
119453

FEDERAL PERSONNEL AND
COMPENSATION DIVISION

B-208753

SEPTEMBER 16, 1982

The Honorable John F. Lehman
The Secretary of the Navy



119453

Attention: Comptroller of the Navy (NCB-53)

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Subject: Success of the Programed School Input Program
Justifies Expansion (GAO/FPCD-82-53)

We have recently reviewed the Navy's Programed School Input (PSI) program--a school guarantee option which sends enlistees to duty stations for a period of time before returning them to a Navy school for initial skill training in a specific occupation. In recent years approximately 3,000 enlisted personnel have been recruited annually (about 3% of total enlistees) under this option.

Our review of the program indicates that, despite some implementation problems discussed in enclosure IV, the program has afforded the Navy and its enlistees the following advantages:

- The Navy is provided with a recruit's service before a large training investment is made.
- The PSI recruit is provided an opportunity to adapt to the Navy before initial skill training begins, thus reducing the likelihood of attrition during the enlistment term.
- The Navy's training investment on large numbers of enlistees who will leave before completing their first term of enlistment is decreased.

Although Navy officials generally agree that the program is successful and have taken steps recently to rectify certain implementation problems, they are not planning to increase its size. We do not believe the full potential of this program is being realized, and we recommend specific actions to make the program more effective.

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THE PSI PROGRAM: BACKGROUND

After recruit training, approximately 70 percent of all enlisted personnel entering the Navy receive 7 to 50 weeks of formal job-entry skill training. The remaining 30 percent, including PSI enlistees, receive only 2 to 4 weeks of apprentice training before being sent to an initial duty station. PSI enlistees, however, are guaranteed skill training at a later date.

PSI enlistees are used to perform necessary duties as untrained resources and are, in effect, screened before the Navy makes its heavy training investment. For those PSIs who leave before completing their first year of service, the Navy has made only a minimum training investment (recruit training and combat survival) and received some service in return. In contrast, other enlisted personnel who leave during or after extended skill training, but before to fleet assignments, do not give the Navy a good return on its training investment.

The enlistment contracts for PSIs stipulate that they have been "guaranteed" attendance at a specific initial skill training school within 15 months after active duty commencement. However, during those initial 15 months, the enlistees will serve as seamen, firemen, or airmen. The contract also states that:

"While in-rating on-the-job training is not guaranteed, it is recommended that such training be afforded if practicable. This does not preclude assignment of the enlistee to general command support duties (mess-cooking, compartment cleaning, etc.,) required of all non-rated personnel in accordance with individual command policy and procedures."

The purpose of the PSI program is to facilitate scheduling of formal skill training for personnel recruited during the peak months of May through September. Enlistees in this program are scheduled for training the following February through July.

During the 15 months, the guaranteed return to school may be canceled in one of three ways: (1) voluntarily, by the recruit, (2) involuntarily, for disciplinary reasons, and (3) automatically, if the enlistee is promoted to E-4.

By design, the program has been limited to enlisting school-qualified, nonprior service males. Since 1977 the number of PSI enlistees has been about 3 percent or less of the annual enlistees and about 5 percent of those guaranteed training.

<u>Fiscal year</u>	<u>PSI recruits</u>	<u>Total enlisted personnel attending training</u>	<u>Total enlistees recruited</u>
1977	3,466	64,684	111,557
1978	1,293	61,134	89,009
1979	2,173	59,452	88,344
1980	2,950	61,070	99,351
1981	3,200	62,262	106,322

Because Navy Recruiting and Personnel Command officials generally have been satisfied with the program's success in facilitating scheduling of enlistees for skills training, they see no need to expand it.

OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

We reviewed the PSI program to determine if it is a more effective approach to using and training enlisted personnel than the traditional method. We conducted our work during July 1981 to March 1982 in accordance with our current "Standard for Audit of Governmental Organizations, Programs, Activities, and Functions."

We visited the following locations to discuss the PSI Program with command-level officials and to review relevant policies, procedures, and documents:

- Headquarters, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Manpower, Personnel, and Training), Chief of Naval Personnel (OPNAV), Washington, D.C.
- Headquarters, Naval Recruiting Command, Washington, D.C.
- Enlisted Personnel Management Center (EPMAC), New Orleans, Louisiana.
- Headquarters, Navy Military Personnel Command (NMPC), Washington, D.C.
- Chief of Naval Education and Training, Pensacola, Florida.
- Chief of Naval Technical Training, Millington, Tennessee.
- Service School Commands at Great Lakes, Illinois, and San Diego, California.
- Navy Air Technical Training Center, Millington, Tennessee.
- Fleet Combat Training Center, Dam Neck, Virginia.
- Five ships in the Atlantic Fleet.

--Four ships in the Pacific Fleet.

--Naval Personnel Research and Development Center, San Diego, California.

--Center for Naval Analyses, Arlington, Virginia.

We interviewed 160 PSI enlistees and 41 shipboard supervisions. Of the PSI enlistees, 61 were at the schools under instruction. The other 99 were aboard ships; some were awaiting instruction, and others had returned from training. The ships visited and those enlistees and supervisors interviewed were selected on the basis of their availability. We are not projecting the results because the selection was not statistically valid.

As part of our review, we examined enlisted master file data on 7,813 PSI enlistees in the Navy as of June 30, 1981, and who had entered the Navy during fiscal years 1977-80. Records were not available for an additional 2,069 PSI enlistees who had separated from the Navy prior to June 1981. We also did not include the PSI enlistees who entered the Navy in fiscal year 1981, because their service records lacked sufficient data to permit desired analyses.

Using these records and other data, we attempted to identify and evaluate several aspects of the program (that is, effective use of personnel, cost, retention, advancement, academic benefit, and reenlistment) which the Navy should consider when deciding whether or not to expand it. We found that much of the data we needed was not readily available. With assistance from headquarters, NMPC, and OPNAV, we were able to develop some data on all but one of these aspects (reenlistment).

The methodology for the automatic data processing analyses and a profile of the PSI population are in enclosures I and II. Enclosure III shows certain comparisons between the PSIs in our data base and all 4-year enlistees recruited for the same occupational ratings.

PSI PROGRAM OFFERS ADVANTAGES

Our analysis of the PSI program indicates that the order in which experience and training are provided under this program allows the Navy to more effectively use and train its personnel. The program is a viable alternative to the traditional practice of making the large training investments in enlistees before (1) their adaptability to shipboard life can be ascertained and (2) training resources are expended on many of the enlistees who leave the Navy in the first year of their enlistment. By providing an enlistees with on-the-job-training (OJT) and command support duties at their initial duty station before their school training, the Navy can more effectively employ its personnel,

improve individual training, and more effectively spend its training resources. Although all ratings are not suitable for this PSI approach (those with nuclear prerequisites, for instance), the immediate potential universe appears to be the 15,000 to 20,000 4-year enlistees. This figure is based on the number of enlistees recruited annually since 1977 and having the same ratings targeted for PSI personnel. The PSI program may also be applicable to other ratings with 4- and 6-year enlistments.

The PSI program improves the use of enlisted personnel

The PSI enlistment contract notes that more effective use of PSI enlistees at their initial duty station is a major aspect of the program. The Navy urges commanding officers to use PSI enlistees in tasks related to skills they will acquire during future training because the program is "an excellent opportunity for maintaining (or increasing) motivations as well as acquiring experience in the rating." However, the Navy also notes that unit manning requirements occasionally must override the desire for individuals to receive OJT. In those instances, PSI enlistees would probably perform general command-support duties (compartment cleaning, mess-cooking, etc.,) normally assigned to enlisted personnel below petty officer rank, including large numbers of recent initial skill training graduates. Interviews with 160 PSI enlistees (61 at school and 99 aboard ship) about their work at their initial duty stations confirmed that they are receiving a mixture of both OJT and command-support experiences. Of the 160, 136 reported performing command support duties and 143 reported receiving OJT.

Navy officials told us that enlistees' performance of command-support duties is usually recorded in their file. This generally precludes the person from having to perform these duties again. Therefore, PSI enlistees who performed these duties before going to school will generally return to work in their rating area. Of the 62 PSI enlistees we interviewed who had completed training, 55 said that they were working in their rating area. Only a small number of these had to perform command-support duties when they returned from school.

By contrast, when the graduates from initial skill training report to their first duty station, they do so expecting to contribute immediately to the operation. However, this typically does not occur because of the need for personnel to perform command-support duties. In our opinion, for these enlistees the 12 weeks or more of unskilled work they perform does little to reinforce what they have just spent 7 to 50 weeks learning. In

fact, a recent Department of Defense study 1/ stated that "the Navy's practice of assigning most initial skill training graduates to mess-cook duties * * * is bound to result in skill decay and a setback in the learning process that may end up requiring more intensive OJT."

Having PSI enlistees who perform command-support duties, as well as work in their prospective rating areas during their initial duty assignment, offers the Navy certain practical advantages in efficiently and effectively using its personnel. The program

- provides initial duty stations with personnel, who have not yet received costly skill training to perform command-support duties;
- provides enlistees a chance to receive some OJT in their designated skill areas; and
- allows enlistees to continue developing their skills immediately after completing school.

Fleet experience before training
benefits recruits

Providing a recruit with fleet experience before initial skill training has been considered an advantage for many years. According to a 1971 study 2/ by the Naval Personnel and Training Research Laboratory prior fleet experience is academically beneficial. Research shows that students returning from the fleet performed better in initial skill training school than did recent recruits who went directly to school. The study concluded that such factors as OJT experience in one's rating area, familiarity with the Navy and its job ratings, motivation, and maturity positively influenced school performance. The study recommended increasing fleet input to initial skill training schools since "training a fleet man is a better investment of Navy funds."

Another study 3/ conducted in 1979 at the Chief of Naval Education and Training headquarters reported that recruits (including PSIs) who go to the fleet first are more likely to complete subsequent initial skill training. It cited as an

1/Report the OJT Study Task, On-The-Job Training In the Department of Defense dated January 1981, prepared under the auspices of the Defense Education and Training Executive Committee.

2/Technical Bulletin STB72-1, "A Comparison of the Performance of Fleet and Recruit Input to Class 'A' Schools" (July 1971).

3/Comparison of Accession and Fleet Input Attrition Rates In Specialized Training (Aug. 21, 1979).

example that, in fiscal year 1978, 90 percent of the personnel returning from the fleet graduated from initial skill training as compared to 84 percent of those entering directly from recruit training.

We also found evidence that those who went to the fleet first benefitted academically. A review of the academic records of 66 PSIs who had graduated from the Occupation Specialist School, Dam Neck, Virginia, in March 1980 through August 1981, showed that

- 47 (71%) compiled average scores at or above the average of their graduating class;
- 25 (38%) had compiled average scores in the top 5 of their graduating class;
- 16 (24%) were honor graduates, compiling an average score of 93 or better; and
- 11 (17%) had the highest score in their graduating class.

An academic advantage was also perceived by 84 of 123 PSI enlistees we interviewed who were either in training or had returned to a duty station. It is understandable why 30 of 39 enlistees said they did not benefit academically--they had not received OJT in their rating area before going to school.

PSI program flexibility allows more effective use of training resources

The fiscal year 1981 cost of initial skill training in the Navy was more than \$540 million. Almost all of this training cost is invested in enlistees before they have received any ship-board experience. The PSI program offers the option of (1) making this investment after enlistees have some fleet experience, (2) avoiding the training investment for those PSIs who leave the Navy before completing their first term or do not receive initial skill training either voluntarily or involuntarily, and (3) more effectively using PSI enlistees. Under the first and third options, however, the Navy may incur additional costs for travel and per diem. Such costs can amount to as much as \$3,000 per enlistee.

A 1979 Navy report 1/ on PSI enlistees over the previous 4 years showed that before receiving skill training an average of

1/Fleet Returnable Quotas--Budget Rationale in Support of Fiscal year 1981 Programs (Sept. 27, 1979).

- 14 percent left the Navy (thereby canceling their school guarantee);
- 11 percent canceled their guarantee; and
- 4 percent did not return to school for miscellaneous reasons.

The data on PSI enlistees entering the Navy in 1980 showed that their leave rate (as of June 1981) was not as high as the 14 percent in the Navy study, but was equal to or less than the rate for all enlistees and all high school graduate enlistees who entered the Navy during the same months. The data also showed that the cumulative rate at which PSI enlistees leave the Navy has been comparable to the rate for all enlistees leaving since 1978.

Fiscal year	Percent of PSI enlistees who had left as of June 1981		Percent of Navy enlistees who had left as of June 1981	
	All PSI enlistees	PSI high school graduates	Total enlistees	Total high school graduates
1980	10.9	9.6	11.4	10.6
1979	15.3	13.6	19.7	16.7
1978	23.1	20.1	24.7	20.1

For those PSI enlistees who leave the Navy during their first year, no initial skill training investment is incurred, thereby providing the Navy an opportunity to train additional people with the same resources. Further, for whatever period such enlistees remain, the Navy is receiving useful services. In contrast, those enlisted personnel who leave while in skill training and/or before to fleet assignments have not provided the Navy with a good return on its training investment. More importantly, remaining PSI program participants who are sent to initial skill training after fleet experience are less apt to leave during their first year than initial skill training graduates since they have adapted to Navy life. Thus, large investments in training first-year personnel who will eventually leave can be avoided. These savings would potentially offset all or part of the additional travel and per diem costs for returning PSI enlistees to training.

The Navy also avoided investing skill training resources in 11 percent of the PSI enlistees in the 1979 study who canceled their guarantees. The training guarantee for these PSIs may have been canceled by the commanding officer for disciplinary reasons or voluntarily by the enlistee. For those canceled by the commanding officer, the Navy has avoided training a person who has not performed satisfactorily. Likewise, voluntary cancellations

preclude investing training resources in enlistees who may not like their prospective rating, who may want to remain aboard their current ship, or who try to advance through OJT.

Regardless of whether the training is voluntarily or involuntarily canceled, the PSI enlistees still serve and advance in the Navy. The following table shows the advancement of those 1977-79 PSI enlistees still in the Navy as of June 1981; some attended school, and some did not.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>"A" school attendees (note a)</u>		<u>Non-"A" school attendees</u>	
		<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1979	E-1, 2	253	19	217	46
	E-3	956	72	225	48
	E-4	116	9	<u>31</u>	7
	E-5	<u>4</u>			
Total		<u>1,329</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>473</u>	<u>b/100</u>
1978	E-1, 2	87	14	99	40
	E-3	197	31	63	25
	E-4	337	52	78	31
	E-5	<u>21</u>	3	<u>10</u>	4
Total		<u>642</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>250</u>	<u>100</u>
1977	E-1, 2	65	5	100	11
	E-3	162	13	174	19
	E-4	618	48	411	46
	E-5	<u>442</u>	34	<u>210</u>	24
Total		<u>1,287</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>895</u>	<u>100</u>

a/"A" school training is initial skill training.

b/Off 1% due to rounding.

In general, not attending an "A" school may have slowed career advancement for some enlistees, but not for all. As shown, in many cases the Navy gained petty officers (E-4s and E-5s) who perform satisfactorily without incurring any initial skill training costs.

CONCLUSIONS

The PSI program provides an opportunity for improved management of trained resources, but because of its limited use, its full potential is not being realized. We believe that the PSI

program provides an alternative to making the large "front-end" training investment in personnel before shipboard experience can be obtained and offers the Navy several advantages, including more effective use of its personnel and training resources. For these reasons, we believe the Navy should make a serious commitment to expand the size of the PSI program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To determine the PSI program's more optimum application, we recommend that the Secretary of the Navy:

- Determine the full potential for expanding the PSI program for inclusion in the fiscal year 1985 budget presentation. This should include assessing and quantifying program benefits from more effective use of enlisted personnel and initial skill training resources.
- Beginning in fiscal year 1984, make incremental increases in the PSI program size each year in the ratings already targeted as well as others that could be included until the optimum can be achieved.

AGENCY COMMENTS


We asked the Navy to comment on a draft of this report, but it did not provide its comments in time to be included in the final report.

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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 actions taken on our recommendations. This written statement must be submitted to the House Committee on Government Operations and the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs not later than 60 days after the date of this report. A written statement must also be submitted 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 this report.

Copies of this report will be sent to the Secretaries of Defense, the Air Force, and the Army, and interested congressional committees.

Sincerely yours,


Clifford I. Gould
Director

Enclosures - 4

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY
5800 S. UNIVERSITY AVENUE
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60637

PROFESSOR [Name]
[Address]
[City, State, Zip]

Dear Professor [Name]:

I am writing to you regarding the [topic] of your [document]. I have reviewed the [document] and find it very interesting. I am particularly interested in the [topic] and would like to discuss it further. I am currently working on [topic] and would like to know if you have any [information] on [topic]. I would be happy to meet with you at your convenience to discuss this further. Please let me know if you have any [information] on [topic]. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
[Name]

METHODOLOGY FOR STATISTICAL ANALYSESOF PSI PERSONNEL DATA

One of the prominent aspects of this review was the statistical analysis of the PSI population. We performed automatic data processing applications that resulted in various lists and analyses needed by the audit team. The procedures used follow.

DATA COLLECTION

The Naval Military Personnel Command (NMPC) provided, at our request, the enlisted master record for each PSI enlistee in fiscal years 1977-80 who was in the enlisted master file as of June 30, 1981. The resulting magnetic tape contained 8,285 personnel records. Each record contained data elements such as name, Social security number, date of birth, active duty service date, rate, pay grade, Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, and education level. NMPC officials told us the tape was the complete universe of PSI enlistees in the current Enlisted Master File but did not include data on those who had left the Navy a year or more earlier for various reasons.

DATA ANALYSIS

We chose to process the data at the National Institute of Health's computer facility. There the tape was run using DYL270 retrieval software and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

The DYL260 was used to select and reformat the preserved records. The records were generally sorted alphabetically by name and social security number. They were also reformatted by selecting 132 of the 3,000 characters in each record for inclusion in new files and subfiles for further analysis.

The SPSS analysis involved processing the entire PSI file to establish profiles by calendar and fiscal years in which enlistees entered the service. Subpopulations were also identified by rate code and by whether they were high school graduates and whether they had attended "A" school.

We coded all the SPSS control, data definition, and run cards. In each case the SPSS runs were against the complete population of that universe. No projections were required. The resulting packages were provided to the audit team.

PROFILE OF PSI POPULATION AS OF JUNE 1981

<u>Total population</u>	<u>FY 1977</u>	<u>FY 1978</u>	<u>FY 1979</u>	<u>FY 1980</u>
	<u>2,182</u>	<u>892</u>	<u>1,802</u>	<u>2,937</u>
Pay grade:				
E-1	2.2%	10.2%	7.5%	15.7%
E-2	5.3%	10.7%	18.6%	65.6%
E-3	15.4%	29.1%	65.5%	17.9%
E-4	47.2%	46.5%	8.2%	0.8%
E-5	29.9%	3.5%	0.2%	
Mental category:				
1	3.9%	3.6%	3.7%	3.7%
Upper 2	28.4%	27.1%	23.4%	33.0%
Lower 3	26.2%	30.3%	38.0%	43.6%
Lower 4	40.7%	38.2%	31.5%	17.9%
	.9%	.8%	3.4%	1.8%
Armed Forces qualification test scores:				
Mean	58.9	58.1	55.87	60.26
Median	56.2	55.5	54.10	58.45
Mode	48.0	56.0	56.00	62.00
Education level:				
Less than 12 years	23.6%	7.6%	5.3%	10.0%
12 years or more	76.4%	92.4%	94.7%	90.0%
12 years	69.6%	85.8%	89.0%	83.2%
13 years	3.2%	4.3%	3.4%	3.9%
14 years or more	3.5%	2.4%	2.4%	2.9%

<u>Non-"A" school attendeess</u>	<u>FY 1977</u>	<u>FY 1978</u>	<u>FY 1979</u>	<u>FY 1980</u>
	895/41%	250/28%	473/26%	<u>a/1,568/53%</u>
Pay grade:				
E-1	3.6%	23.2%	18.0%	23.3%
E-2	7.6%	16.4%	27.9%	60.2%
E-3	19.4%	25.2%	47.6%	16.2%
E-4	45.9%	31.2%	6.6%	0.3%
E-5	23.5%	4.0%	-	-
Mental category:				
1	3.5%	3.2%	4.2%	3.8%
2	27.6%	27.2%	23.5%	32.7%
Upper 3	43.6%	27.2%	34.5%	43.5%
Lower 3	24.6%	42.4%	35.7%	17.9%
4	.7%	-	2.3%	2.1%
Armed Forces qualification test scores:				
Mean	58.87	58.58	55.60	60.07
Median	56.32	56.19	52.83	59.55
Mode	58.00	60.00	47.00	62.00
Education level:				
Less than 12 years	23.8%	16.4%	8.5%	11.9%
More than 12 years or more	76.2%	79.2%	91.5%	88.1%
12 years	70.2%	83.6%	85.6%	81.0%
13 years	2.5%	2.8%	3.6%	4.0%
14 years or more	3.6%	1.6%	2.3%	3.2%

a/The FY 1980 "A" school and non-"A" school attendee breakout as of June 1981 does not reflect all school attendance because PSIs are returned in February through August.

ENCLOSURE II

ENCLOSURE II

<u>"A" school attendeess</u>	<u>Fiscal 1977</u>	<u>Fiscal 1978</u>	<u>Fiscal 1979</u>	<u>Fiscal 1980</u>
	1,287/59%	642/72%	1,329/74%	<u>a/1,369/47%</u>
Pay grade:				
E-1	1.3%	5.1%	3.8%	7.0%
E-2	3.7%	8.4%	15.3%	71.7%
E-3	12.6%	30.7%	71.9%	19.9%
E-4	48.0%	52.5%	8.7%	1.4%
E-5	34.3%	3.3%	.3%	-
Mental category:				
1	4.1%	3.7%	3.4%	3.7%
2	28.9%	27.1%	23.5%	33.2%
Upper 3	27.3%	31.5%	39.3%	43.8%
Lower 3	38.8%	36.6%	30.0%	17.9%
4	.9%	1.1%	3.7%	1.4%
Armed Forces qualification test scores:				
Mean	58.88	57.86	55.97	60.49
Median	56.13	55.17	54.40	58.37
Mode	48.00	56.00	56.00	62.00
Education level:				
Less than 12 years	23.5%	4.2%	4.1%	8.0%
12 years or more	76.5%	95.8%	95.9%	92.0%
12 years	69.2%	88.3%	90.1%	85.8%
13 years	3.7%	4.8%	3.4%	3.9%
14 years or more	3.5%	2.6%	2.4%	2.3%

a/The FY 80 "A" school and non-"A" school attendee breakout as of June 1981 does not reflect all school attendance because PSIs are returned in February through August.

SCHEDULE OF ATTRIBUTES OF PSI PERSONNEL COMPARED
TO ALL 4-YEAR NONPRIOR SERVICE MALES
RECRUITED IN THE SAME RATINGS

<u>Fiscal year 1980</u>	Total 4-year non- prior service males in same ratings (note a)	PSI personnel as of June 1981
Total number compared	15,687	2,937
Percent that were high school graduates:	89.2%	90%
<u>Mental group</u> <u>AFQT score</u>		
1	93	3.2%
2	65	29.7%
Upper 3	49	45.2%
Lower 3	31	21.1%
4	21	.9%
		3.7%
		33.0%
		43.6%
		17.9%
		1.8%
<u>Fiscal year 1979</u>		
Total number compared	16,303	1,802
Percent that were high school graduates:	95.3%	94.7%
<u>Mental group</u> <u>AFQT score</u>		
1	93	2.8%
2	65	25.9%
Upper 3	49	42.8%
Lower 3	31	27.0%
4	21	1.5%
		3.7%
		23.4%
		38.0%
		31.5%
		3.4%

a/Total includes PSIs as a part of 4-year obligation, nonprior service.

<u>Fiscal year</u>	Total 4-year non- prior service males in same ratings (note a)	PSI personnel as of June 1981
Total number compared	15,375	892
Percent that were high school graduates:	99.2%	92.4%

<u>Mental group</u>	<u>AFQT score</u>		
1	93	3.6%	3.6%
2	65	31.4%	27.1%
Upper 3	49	41.5%	38.2%
Lower 3	31	23.0%	30.3%
4	21	.5%	.8%

<u>Fiscal year</u>		
Total number compared	19,921	2,182
Percent of high school graduates:	99.9%	76.35%

<u>Mental group</u>	<u>AFQT score</u>		
1	93	5.7%	3.9%
2	65	38.5%	28.4%
Upper 3	49	36.9%	40.7%
Lower 3	31	18.3%	26.2%
4	21	.6%	.9%

a/Total includes PSIs as part of a 4-year obligation, nonprior service.

ASSIGNMENT AND PERSONNEL MANAGEMENTPROBLEMS AFFECT THE PSI PROGRAM

Navy officials consider the PSI Program successful in meeting its objectives despite several implementation problems which hinder the operation. These problems include assigning incorrect codes to the enlistees' records, which do not identify them as PSIs, enlistees' records and assigning incorrect dates for returning the PSI to training, which mislead the enlistees' initial duty station and can adversely affect utilization during the initial assignment. Navy directives have recently been issued to specifically address these problems, but further action is necessary to rectify them.

ASSIGNMENT OF INCORRECT
ACCOUNTING CODES

PSI recruits should be identified by code "108" in their enlistment assignment document and the Navy's Enlisted Master Record. If this identifier is incorrectly coded, the enlistees' first duty stations (usually a ship) are unaware of their school guarantees, are not expecting to return them for training within a year, and are not routinely considering whether or when to provide them OJT in their prospective rating area.

We found that coding errors occur frequently. According to the Enlisted Master Record, almost 80 percent of the PSIs entering the Navy in 1980 received an incorrect code. A check of 1981 enlistees' records by the Navy reportedly showed some improvement, but still over half were improperly coded. Typically, they were miscoded as "100", which merely identifies the enlistee as a seaman, fireman, or airman.

The impact of coding errors had been felt on the ships we visited. Personnel officers on eight of the nine ships said they had PSI enlistees with incorrect codes. Officials on six of these said the miscoding had delayed recognizing an enlistee as a PSI. This development often led to missed school return dates or delayed exposure of the enlistee to his rating area.

Moreover, approximately 20 percent of the 99 PSI enlistees we talked to aboard ship said their PSI status had initially gone undetected. To gain proper recognition, some enlistees reportedly had to go to the personnel or commanding officer to clarify their status. During our visits, eight of the nine ships started reviewing the service records of all new arrivals to verify the accuracy of their codes.

In April 1982, after we discussed the problem, NMPC directed EPMAC to modify its procedures to identify PSI enlistees in the text of their orders.

PROCEDURES PRECLUDE EFFECTIVE
ASSIGNMENT OF PSI ENLISTEES

EPMAC considers two major factors when assigning PSIs. First, it attempts to assign them to units where a large contingent of the prospective rating is stationed. Second, the unit selected should be one that is not to be deployed in June of the following year, the month in which EPMAC has assumed PSIs return for training. EPMAC officials told us that when these two conditions are met, the PSI has a greater chance of getting rating exposure and being returned for training with minimum interruption of the ship's operations.

However, there is a major flaw in these assignment procedures: PSI recruits do not always return to school during June. Many PSIs receive orders to return for training as early as February--4 months before EPMAC's assigned rotation date--and as late as August. As a result, the ship to which PSI enlistees are assigned may be deployed when they are due to return and must either incur additional travel costs to return them from its deployed location (thereby disrupting their deployment) or request a change in the school date. NMPC officials estimate that the fleet has generally requested changes to almost half the school dates first assigned, a practice that causes significant scheduling problems for the training schools.

EPMAC officials told us that if they had known of this range in return dates, detailers could have assigned PSI enlistees to duty stations which would more realistically accommodate the school dates. OPNAV and NMPC officials acknowledged that not assigning PSI enlistees to duty stations with appropriate rotation dates was causing problems for the duty station and NMPC. In April 1982 after we discussed the problem, NMPC announced it would assign the enlistees return dates of February, April, or June.