

BY THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL

# Report To The Congress

OF THE UNITED STATES

## Difficulties In Selected Army Reserves Recruiting Under The All-Volunteer Force

*AG 000025* A steady decline in the numbers of Selected Army Reserve and Army National Guard recruits is increasing the gap between reserve troop requirements and strength. The Army's recruiting plans have not been directed at overcoming these shortages. In addition, there has been a decline in recruit quality and an increase in turnover rates.

*AGC 00437*

*AG 000005* The Department of Defense has taken or is considering numerous actions to improve Selected Reserves recruiting such as

- increasing the numbers of full-time recruiters,
- increasing advertising funds, and
- introducing enlistment and reenlistment bonuses.

While these actions may be desirable, their feasibility, cost, and impact on other components of the total force, particularly the Active Forces need to be assessed.



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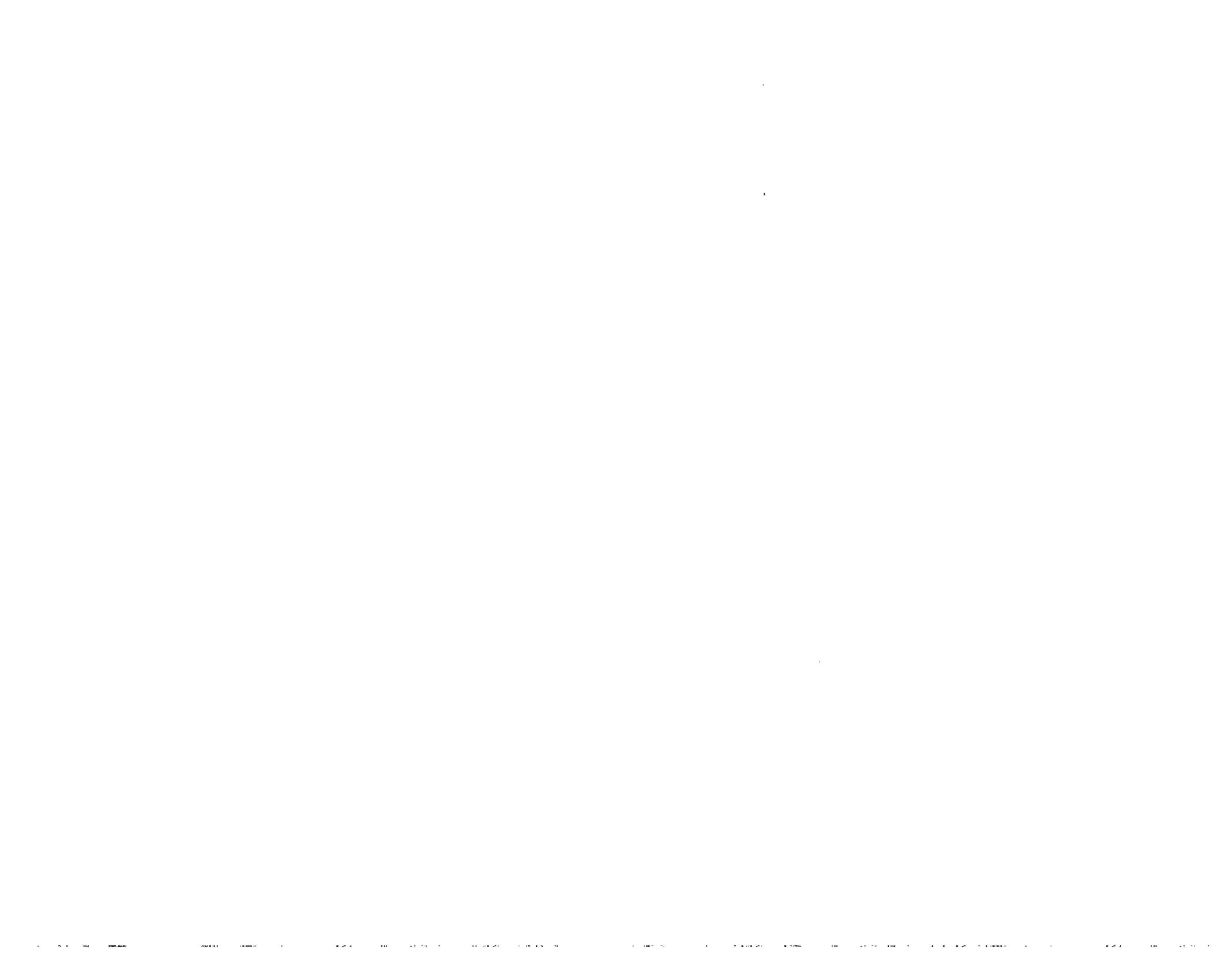
To the President of the Senate and the  
Speaker of the House of Representatives

*CW000001*

This report discusses some serious problems in Selected Army Reserves and Army Guard recruiting that need to be resolved in the near future if the Nation is to rely on the Selected Reserve to fill mobilization manpower requirements.

We are sending copies of this report to the Director, Office of Management and Budget; the Secretary of Defense; and other interested parties.

*James R. Atchell*  
Comptroller General  
of the United States



COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S  
REPORT TO THE CONGRESS

DIFFICULTIES IN SELECTED  
ARMY RESERVES RECRUITING  
UNDER THE ALL-VOLUNTEER  
FORCE

D I G E S T

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Recruiting for the Nation's Selected Reserves (Air National Guard and Army National Guard; Air Force, Army, Naval, and Marine Corps drilling Reserves) has changed since the draft ended in 1972.

During the draft the Selected Reserves had long waiting lists of males with no prior military service wanting to enlist. Since 1972 the Reserves have usually had to recruit individuals with prior military service because those with no prior service have generally not been enlisting. In addition, the Reserve strengths have been declining, the largest being in the Army. For this reason this report concentrates mainly on the Army's (Reserve and National Guard) recruiting problems.

GAO compared peacetime force structure requirements for fiscal year 1978 with Reserve strengths and found that

- the Army Reserve had a manpower shortage of 64,000 and the Army National Guard had a shortage of 70,000 and that
- the Army's recruiting plans had not been directed at overcoming these shortages.

Since December 1976 Army recruiting objectives have been based on enlistments expected rather than on actual manpower needs. Moreover, recruiting has been less than expected, resulting in greater shortages in these Reserve components.

The Army Reserve and Guard should base recruiting objectives on peacetime force structure requirements like other Reserve

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components. If recruiting results were compared to actual manpower needs, the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Army could better assess the seriousness of its recruiting problems and determine the resources and actions necessary to correct them.

In addition, the Army Reserves' goals for prior-service and non-prior-service recruits do not agree with the objectives set for recruiters. GAO believes these goals and recruiting objectives should be similar. (See pp. 2 and 5.)

About two-thirds of the enlisted recruits in the Selected Reserves are individuals with prior military service. The Office of the Secretary of Defense considers these recruits desirable because of their experience, eligibility to reenlist, and combat experience. About half of the Army Reserve and Army National Guard prior-service recruits were from the Active Forces but many are questionable mobilization assets because of their failure to complete their active enlistment tour. The other half were former reservists, many of which had not been on active duty since fiscal year 1971. (See p. 13.)

Other factors increasing recruiting needs include high turnover rates of prior-service reservists who are reenlisting for 1- and 2-year periods. Many prior-service reservists have completed their 6-year legal military obligations and are only contractually obligated to serve but are leaving any time they wish because the Army is not enforcing their contract obligations. The Army has discontinued its practice of ordering reservists to active duty for not participating in drills. (See p. 17.)

The quality (as defined by the Department of Defense) of non-prior-service recruits has also changed since the All-Volunteer Force

replaced the draft. About half of the recruits in fiscal year 1977 did not graduate from high school and about 70 percent of the recruits were in lower mental categories III and IV. During the draft era, mostly high school graduates and higher mental category persons signed up for the Reserves. (See p. 17.)

The services and the Department of Defense have taken, or are considering, numerous actions to improve Selected Reserve recruiting. They have increased the number of full-time recruiters, increased advertising funds, and introduced enlistment and reenlistment bonuses and educational programs.

In addition, there are several proposals and tests under way to attract new recruits and to reduce turnover. Many of the proposals and tests are directed towards the high quality (high school graduate with a mental category between I and III) male with no prior military service. While improving the recruiting of such individuals is desirable and necessary, there are many questions still to be answered regarding the feasibility, cost, and impact these improvements will have on the other components of the Total Force, particularly the Active Forces. The Army has not demonstrated that Reserve recruiting does not compete in the same market as Active Force recruiting. (See p. 22.)

The Selected Reserves stated that they need the same manpower quality as the Active Forces because when they mobilize they must meet the same demands as the Active Forces. But when the increased demand in the Selected Reserves for male high school graduates in the high mental category is added to the Active Forces' needs and compared to the decreasing supply, the military services may find a need to reexamine their recruiting enlistment standards for the 1980s. (See p. 22.)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Secretary of Defense should direct the Army to

- establish recruiting objectives based on the manpower needs of its Reserve components;
- adjust fiscal year 1979 and future objectives accordingly;
- bring the recruiting objectives for the Army Reserve in line with its goals for non-prior- and prior-service personnel;
- reassess its policy of enlisting in the Selected Reserves those persons it determined were not acceptable for active duty; and
- determine the effect of (1) 1- and 2-year enlistments, (2) non-obligated reservists, and (3) the practice of not ordering reservists to active duty for not participating in drills on mobilization and recruiting needs.

## AGENCY COMMENTS

The Office of Management and Budget said that the subject of this report is vitally important to the viability of the reliance being placed on Reserve Forces and, as pointed out, recruiting resources have increased significantly in recent years for the Reserves. The Office stated that because the report appeared to evolve around meeting peacetime requirements immediately, its discussion on establishing recruiting objectives takes a much too short term approach. The Office believed that prudent manpower and fiscal management dictated establishment of peacetime manning goals accompanied by a realistic glidepath towards achievement and that this approach is reflected in Army's program.

GAO agrees that the Army should establish peacetime manning goals and a realistic program to achieve them but disagrees that Army's program reflects this. As discussed in chapter 2 of this report, the Army has not based its recruiting objectives on peacetime requirements and, contrary to congressional testimony no changes have been made to its plans.

GAO discussed this report with Department of Defense officials responsible for Reserve recruiting programs and they said the report has been very helpful in assessing some possible problems in the Army's recruiting program for the Selected Reserves. They also stated that they intended to investigate those situations where a problem appears to exist and would take steps to correct them.



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ABBREVIATIONS

DOD	Department of Defense
GAO	General Accounting Office
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Recruiting for the Army Reserve and National Guard Forces has changed dramatically since the draft ended in 1972. During the draft the Selected Reserves had long waiting lists of males with non-prior-military service wanting to enlist. Recruiting and advertising costs were negligible. In addition, Reserve units were responsible for their own recruiting and used part-time recruiting staffs.

After the draft ended the waiting lists quickly disappeared and Guard and Reserve personnel strengths declined. The following table shows the declines in personnel strengths for all components.

<u>Fiscal year</u>	<u>Yearend strengths</u>
	(000 omitted)
1971	978
1972	925
1973	919
1974	925
1975	896
1976	823
1977	808
1978	789

The Selected Reserve Forces' structure as used in this report includes the Army Reserve, Army National Guard, Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard, Naval Reserve, and Marine Corps Reserve.

Reserve end strengths have been declining since 1971. The effect of this decline on national security is seen when Reserve Force structures' peacetime requirements are compared with Reserve end strengths for fiscal year 1978 as shown on the following page.

<u>Component</u>	<u>Wartime requirement</u>	<u>Peacetime requirement</u>	<u>End strength</u>	<u>Peacetime shortage</u>
------(000 omitted)-----				
Army				
Reserve	267	250	186	64
Army				
National Guard	431	411	341	70
Air Force				
Reserve	57	57	54	3
Air National Guard	101	93	92	1
Naval				
Reserve	87	87	83	4
Marine Corps				
Reserve	<u>37</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	<u>980</u>	<u>932</u>	<u>789</u>	<u>143</u>

Since officer strengths generally met requirements, the shortages were in the enlisted ranks--primarily the lower grades. Our review concentrated on the Army Selected Reserve and the Army National Guard because of the severity of shortages in these components.

In an attempt to obtain additional enlistees, recruiting resources for the Reserves have been increased from about \$88 million in fiscal year 1977 to about \$137 million for fiscal year 1979, or about 56 percent.

Since combining Army Active and Reserve recruiting programs in fiscal year 1978 under the Army Recruiting Command, Army district recruiting commanders are now responsible for the Army Selected Reserves as well as Active Army recruits. The Army National Guard has a separate recruiting force.

The Active Navy and Marine Corps recruiting forces recruit all non-prior-service recruits for their respective Active and Reserve components. The Navy and Marine Corps Reserves have separate recruiting forces which recruit prior-service recruits.

The Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard have their own recruiting forces.

## GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE (GAO) REVIEWS

Using the budgetary approach, we reported that annual cost increases attributable to the All-Volunteer Force were more than \$3 billion each year since 1973 (FPCD-78-11, Feb. 1978).

In reporting on the Selective Service System (FPCD-79-4, Dec. 1978), we stated that the Selective Service did not have the capability to draft people in the time needed by the Department of Defense (DOD).

In commenting on the use of mental aptitudes or high school graduation as indicators of quality (FPCD-79-34, Apr. 1979), we pointed out there were severe limitations on their use as enlistment standards or as means to judge the All-Volunteer Force's success or failure. We emphasized the need for a more complete definition of a quality first-term enlisted person.

In May 1979 1/ we reported on the problems of getting people into the Active Force after mobilization, particularly the critical shortage of doctors at examining and entrance stations, and the problems of getting enough training units or competent trainers.

In June 1979 2/ we reported on the shortages of people in the Individual Reserves, the limitations of DOD calculations concerning these reasons, and the likelihood that shortages would continue until about 1984 if DOD's proposed remedies were successful. However, we question that premise as being optimistic.

In two companion July 1979 reports on the Selected Reserve, we questioned the ability of the Guard and Reserve to perform their mission if called upon. Regarding Selected Reserve training, 3/ we stated that improvements have been made since 1974 and idleness has been reduced but that the amount of time spent on training for the job has not

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1/"Problems in Getting People Into the Active Force After Mobilization," FPCD-79-40, May 1979.

2/"Can the Individual Reserve Fill Mobilization Needs?," FPCD-79-3, June 1979.

3/"Efficiency of Reserve and Guard Training Has Improved Since 1974, but More Can Be Done," FPCD-79-59, July 1979.

increased. In the manpower/personnel weaknesses report, 1/ we pointed out the shortages of people, the number of unqualified people, the turnover of people, and the impact of these weaknesses on readiness as reflected in the services internal or Joint Chiefs of Staff prescribed evaluations. We raised the question of whether the critical weaknesses in the Selected Reserve can be resolved in an All-Volunteer Force environment.

This report, the eighth of the series, deals with our assessment of the Selected Reserve and the recruiting policies and practices used to get volunteers. We plan to integrate this series of jobs into an overall assessment of the peacetime force.

#### SCOPE OF REVIEW

We reviewed Reserve Forces recruiting, particularly with respect to the Army. Our audit work was conducted at the National Guard Bureau, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics), and Army Reserve in Washington, D.C.; U.S. Army Recruiting Command, Reserve, and Guard units in the Chicago, Illinois, area; Naval Reserve Recruiting Command, New Orleans, Louisiana; Air Force Reserve and Guard units in the Dallas, Texas, area; and Army Forces Command, Atlanta, Georgia.

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1/"Critical Manpower Problems Restrict the Use of National Guard and Reserve Forces," FPCD-79-58, July 1979.

## CHAPTER 2

### SELECTED ARMY RESERVES RECRUITING

#### PLANS NOT BASED ON NEEDS

The Army's recruiting plans have not been directed at overcoming the shortages in its Reserve components. Since the beginning of the All-Volunteer Force, the end strengths of the Army Reserve and Guard have been declining. However, since December 1976 recruiting objectives have been based on expected enlistments rather than on manpower needs. Moreover, actual recruiting has been less than expected, resulting in lower objectives in subsequent periods and greater shortages in Reserve components. We believe the Army Reserve and Guard should base recruiting objectives on peacetime force structure requirements the same as other Reserve components.

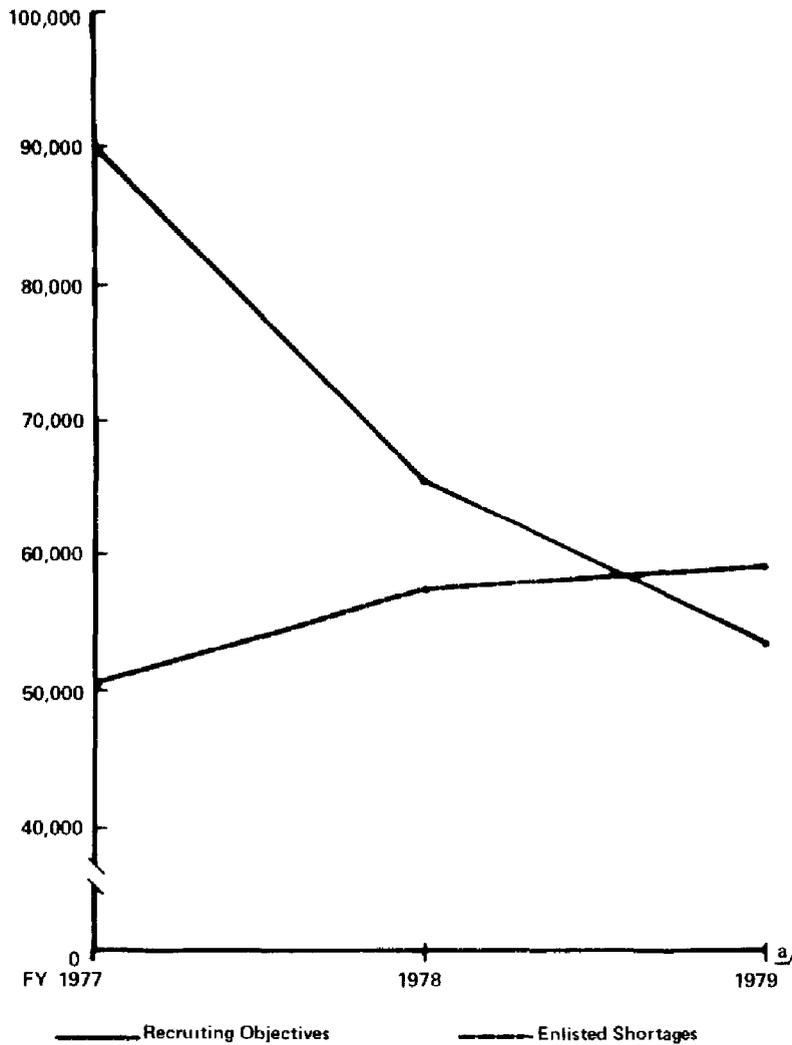
In March 1979 DOD officials testified before a congressional committee that the Army Reserve and Guard were not recruiting to fill peacetime requirements and in the future their recruiting objectives would be based on needs. To date, Army Reserve and Guard recruiting objectives have not been adjusted to reflect peacetime requirements. If recruiting results were compared to manpower needs DOD and the Army could better assess the seriousness of its recruiting problems and determine the resources and actions necessary to correct them.

In addition, the Army Reserve's goals for prior-service and non-prior-service recruits established to meet congressionally authorized strengths do not agree with the objectives set for recruiters. We believe these goals and recruiting objectives should be similar.

#### SETTING SELECTED ARMY RESERVES OBJECTIVES

Since fiscal year 1977, recruiting objectives for the Selected Army Reserves have been based on estimates of its ability to recruit personnel rather than on manpower needs. This caused objectives to be lowered in each succeeding period when actual recruiting results were less than expected. The following graph shows the decline in objectives and the increase in shortages since then.

U.S. ARMY RESERVE RECRUITING OBJECTIVES AND ENLISTED SHORTAGES



<sup>a/</sup>As of March 31, 1979.

Early in fiscal year 1977, Army headquarters officials reduced the objectives from 90,000 to 68,234 and later to 64,225 because recruiting officials complained that these quotas did not reflect their capabilities. Since then the objectives have been based on estimates of the recruiters' ability to enlist personnel.

We calculated recruiting objectives for the Army Reserve using peacetime requirements and retention rates and compared them with the Army's objectives. Army officials had understated their recruiting objectives as shown below:

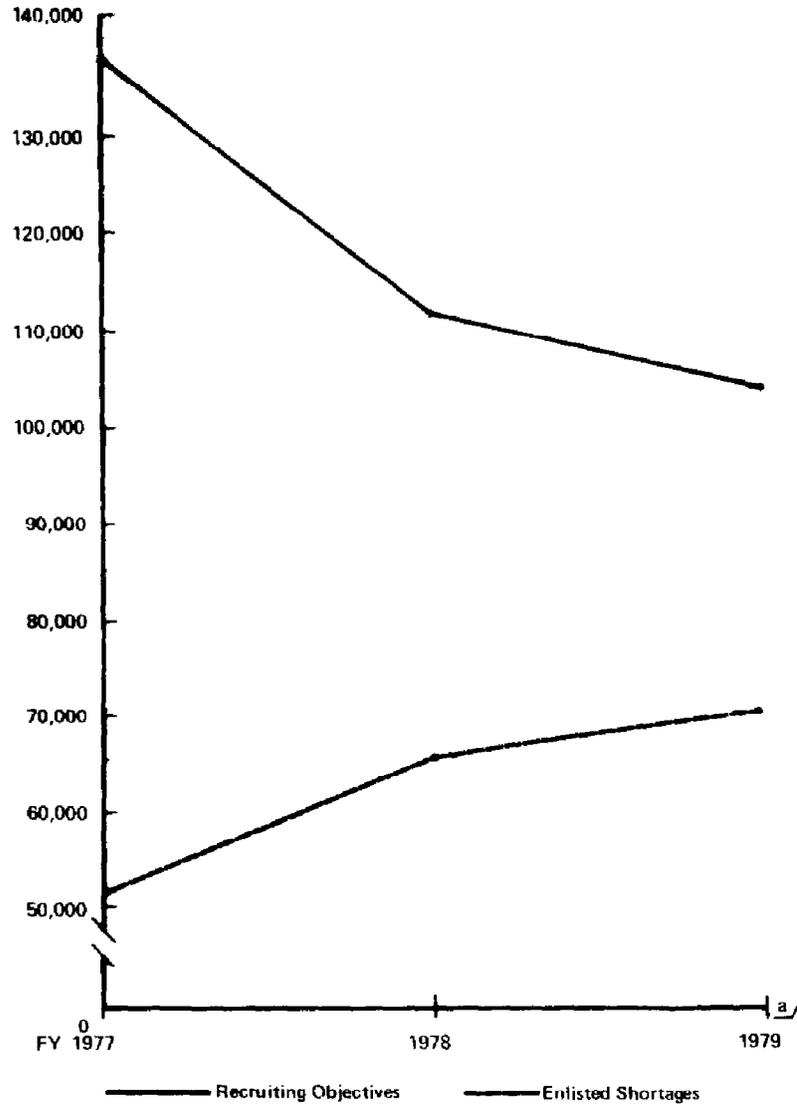
<u>Fiscal year</u>	<u>Our recruiting objectives</u>	<u>Army Reserve recruiting objectives</u>
1977	110,323	90,000
1978	109,228	66,021
1979	103,424	54,589

By not basing its recruiting objectives on manpower needs, the Army is presenting to DOD and the Congress a false image of the actual recruiting situation. The Army reported to the Congress that it achieved 82.2 and 92.5 percent of its Reserve recruiting objectives for fiscal years 1977 and 1978, respectively. But comparing recruiting results with manpower requirements showed that the Army Reserve achieved only 47.8 and 48.4 percent of their needs for fiscal years 1977 and 1978, respectively.

ARMY NATIONAL GUARD  
RECRUITING OBJECTIVES

The Army National Guard recruiting objectives are set in much the same way as the Army Reserve objectives. The basic difference is that the Army Guard objectives are apportioned among the States and are not the responsibility of a central recruiting command. As can be seen in the following graph, Army Guard recruiting objectives have declined and personnel shortages have increased since fiscal year 1977.

U.S. ARMY NATIONAL GUARD RECRUITING OBJECTIVES AND ENLISTED SHORTAGES



a/As of March 31, 1979.

We found the following understatement when we calculated recruiting objectives for the Army Guard using peacetime requirements and compared them to the Army's objectives.

<u>Fiscal year</u>	<u>Our recruiting objectives</u>	<u>Army Guard recruiting objectives</u>
1977	153,486	138,078
1978	156,058	111,165
1979	171,188	104,000

BASIS FOR RECRUITING OBJECTIVES  
HAS NOT CHANGED

On March 1, 1979, the Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Reserve Affairs) testified before the Manpower and Personnel Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee that:

"There is a distinct difference between the way we authorize strength for the Army Reserve components as compared to the other Reserve components. For several years we have programmed the strength of the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve based on our estimates of the ability of those components to recruit and retain personnel rather than our real needs. For the other Reserve components our authorization request does state our peacetime objective strength."

Officials in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) stated that in the future recruiting objectives would be based on peacetime end strength requirements.

At the time our review was completed (June 1979), however, recruiting objectives for fiscal year 1979 for both the Army Reserve and Army National Guard had not been adjusted and were still not based on needs. Furthermore, neither the Army Reserve nor the Army Guard planned to recruit on any basis other than what they felt they could reasonably expect to achieve.

Army Reserve and Army National Guard personnel projected end strengths--as of December 20, 1978, for the Reserve and March 1, 1979, for the Army Guard--on which recruiting goals are based have not been changed. In addition, as shown in the following table, end strengths planned through fiscal year 1985 are:

<u>Fiscal year</u>	<u>Army Selected Reserve</u>	<u>Army National Guard</u>
1979	191,700	348,727
1980	193,300	357,058
1981	195,800	365,194
1982	197,800	372,628
1983	196,800	378,403
1984	197,300	383,118
1985	197,300	386,735

We were told that these end strength objectives were what the services felt they could reasonably expect to achieve. We noted that peacetime requirements are currently 253,285 for the Army Reserve and 419,986 for the Army Guard.

SETTING GOALS FOR NON-PRIOR-SERVICE AND PRIOR-SERVICE RECRUITS

Army officials testified before the House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee that the goal of the Army Reserve was a mix of 60-percent non-prior-service and 40-percent prior-service recruits. They said this mix was desirable because it helped to keep the force young, allowed people to be trained for the right jobs, and reduced turbulence.

We found that, despite this goal, Army headquarters officials were heavily weighting recruiting objectives towards prior-service recruits as follows.

<u>Fiscal year</u>	<u>Recruiting objectives</u>	
	<u>Percent non-prior-service</u>	<u>Percent prior service</u>
1977	37	63
1978	28	72
1979	33	67

Army Guard officials said their goal was a 50/50 mix of non-prior-service and prior-service recruits. Thus, recruiting objectives for the Army Guard were set accordingly.

CONCLUSIONS

The Army recruiting objectives for its reserve components should be based on its manpower needs. Setting these objectives on estimates of recruiting capability as is presently done can contribute to increased shortages in these components and present a false image of the recruiting situation. While Army officials reported to Congress that their Reserve achieved 92.5 percent of its recruiting objectives for fiscal year 1978, the Army in fact had recruited less than 50 percent of their manpower needs.

Furthermore, DOD failed to revise the Army's recruiting plans and set recruiting objectives based on manpower needs as it had promised the Congress. Finally, while telling the Congress it wanted 60-percent non-prior-service recruits for the Army Reserve, Army officials set recruiting objectives of 37 percent or less.

Army's recruiting plans could be characterized as a design for failure since the result will be ever increasing manpower shortages. The Army has not made clear the basis for setting recruiting objectives, i.e., the number of recruits who can be attracted with the current level of recruiting resources or the number of recruits who can be attracted regardless of the resources committed. While we would not expect the total manpower shortage to be overcome in a single year, basing recruiting objectives on manpower needs is the only way to resolve the shortage. If DOD is not successful in meeting these needs, the Nation may have to consider whether it can accept less dependence on Reserve Forces in wartime or whether maintaining national security requires the return to some form of draft to provide Selected Reserve manpower.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the Army to

- establish recruiting objectives based on the manpower needs of its Reserve components,
- adjust fiscal year 1979 and future objectives accordingly, and
- bring the recruiting objectives for the Army Reserve components in line with its goals for non-prior-service and prior-service recruits.

#### AGENCY COMMENTS

The Office of Management and Budget said that the subject of this report is vitally important to the viability of the reliance being placed on Reserve Forces and, as pointed out, recruiting resources have increased significantly in recent years for the Reserves. The Office stated that because the report appeared to evolve around meeting peacetime requirements immediately its discussion on establishing recruiting objectives took a much too short-term approach. The Office believed that prudent manpower and fiscal management dictated establishment of peacetime manning goals accompanied by a realistic glidepath towards achievement and that this approach is reflected in Army's program.

We agree that the Army should establish peacetime manning goals and a realistic program to achieve them but disagree that Army's program reflects this. As discussed in

this chapter, the Army has not based its recruiting objectives on peacetime requirements and, contrary to congressional testimony no changes have been made to its plans.

Department of Defense officials said that they have taken numerous actions which are expected to overcome the manpower shortages through the planning years, but recognizes that this cannot be achieved in a single year. They told us that recruiting objectives are set at a level that can be achieved and the budget established accordingly. The Department officials also stated that as the recruiting objectives are met and manpower programs exceeded, higher objectives and end strengths will be approved and budgeted.

## CHAPTER 3

### PRIOR-SERVICE AND NON-PRIOR-SERVICE RECRUITING MIX

The All-Volunteer Force recruiting policies and practices have changed most of the guardsmen and reservists from non-prior-service to prior-service recruits. During the draft era most of the recruits were non-prior-service volunteers. About two-thirds of the enlisted recruits in the Army Reserve and Guard are prior-service recruits. DOD officials believe prior-service recruits are desirable because of their experience, record of past success, eligibility to reenlist, and combat experience. These factors are used to judge the quality of prior-service recruits while mental test scores and educational levels are used to judge the quality of non-prior-service recruits.

During fiscal year 1977 and 1978 about half of the Army Reserve and Guard prior-service recruits are from the Active Forces, but many are questionable mobilization assets because of their failure to complete their active enlistment tour. The other half were former reservists many of which had not been on active duty since fiscal year 1971.

Other factors affecting prior-service recruits as mobilization assets are turnover rates and expiration of their obligated terms of military service. These prior-service recruits can enlist for periods of 1 or 2 years thus contributing to the turnover problem. Furthermore, many prior-service recruits have completed their 6-year legal military obligation and are only contractually obligated to serve but are leaving any time they wish because the Army is not enforcing their contract obligations.

The quality of non-prior-service recruits as defined by DOD, has also changed under the All-Volunteer Force. About half are non-high school graduates in lower mental categories III and IV compared with mostly high school graduates and high mental category persons recruited during the draft era.

Another problem causing increased recruiting needs for the Army Reserve and Guard is that the Army has discontinued its practice of ordering reservists to active duty for not participating in drills. Each of these problems is discussed in detail in the following sections.

## PRIOR-SERVICE RECRUITS

On December 31, 1978, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics) issued a report entitled "America's Volunteers, A Report on the All-Volunteer Armed Forces." This report stated that "Prior-service accessions have higher quality than the non-prior-service accessions, and because they comprise two-thirds of the accessions, are sustaining the overall quality of Selected Reserve accessions." Quality of accession is normally defined by DOD in terms of educational levels and mental categories (there are five categories, category I is the highest). The above report, however, stated that quality as defined in those terms is less important for prior-service recruits than non-prior-service recruits because prior-service recruits have experience, a proven record of success in the Active Forces, and are eligible to reenlist in either the Active Forces or the Selected Reserves. Also, prior-service recruits are considered the source of valuable combat experience.

Army regulation AR 140-111 defines prior-service recruits as persons who are not currently serving in the Army Selected Reserves and who have completed 1 or more days of active duty or active duty for training.

To determine how many prior-service recruits were joining the Army Reserve and Guard from the Active Forces we requested an analysis of prior-service recruits during fiscal years 1977-78 by months of active duty and reasons for leaving active service for both components. The following table shows the source of the Army Reserve and Guard prior-service recruits for fiscal years 1977 and 1978.

<u>Fiscal year</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Source of prior-service recruits</u>	
		<u>Active Forces</u>	<u>Other</u>
1977:			
Army Reserve	40,715	22,986	17,729
Army National Guard	<u>60,475</u>	<u>28,831</u>	<u>31,644</u>
Total	<u>101,190</u>	<u>51,817</u>	<u>49,373</u>
1978:			
Army Reserve	39,326	22,620	16,706
Army National Guard	<u>49,052</u>	<u>26,368</u>	<u>22,684</u>
Total	<u>88,378</u>	<u>48,988</u>	<u>39,390</u>

We analyzed the prior-service recruits from the Active Forces by length of Active service tour and reasons for discharge. The length of service for Active service recruits in the Army Reserve and Guard is summarized in the following table.

Prior Active Service  
Recruits by Length of Prior Service

<u>Years of service</u>	<u>Fiscal years</u>	
	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>
0	60	55
1	1,708	1,668
2	7,101	5,514
3	14,856	10,628
4	16,937	18,545
5	4,858	5,469
6	1,224	1,578
7+	<u>5,073</u>	<u>5,531</u>
Total	<u>51,817</u>	<u>48,988</u>

Since 1972 enlistment terms have been for 3 and 4 years. Using the 3-year enlistment option as criteria, Active service recruits with less than 3-years Active service were discharged before completion of their enlisted term. The reasons for the early discharges vary, but they indicate that many prior-service recruits did not complete their active duty tour. Of the 51,817 prior-service recruits in the Army Reserve and Guard during fiscal year 1977, 5,909

were discharged for such reasons as medical disqualification, dependency or other hardships, failure to meet minimum behavioral or performance criteria, marriage, and pregnancy. Similarly, of the 48,988 prior-service recruits in 1978, 5,892 were discharged from Active service before expiration of their enlistment term for the above reasons. Based on the data, we believe that about 11 percent of prior-service recruits in fiscal year 1977 and about 12 percent recruits in fiscal year 1978 are of less than desirable quality and questionable mobilization assets.

Army officials said that in many cases the reason for discharge from the Active Forces was a temporary condition which should not preclude enlistment in the Reserves. We believe that if the discharge was only temporary, the Active Forces would not have discharged the person and that these cases need further review.

OSD officials told us that the 88,763 prior-service recruits in fiscal years 1977 and 1978 in the "other" category were prior service from Reserve components rather than from active duty. OSD provided us data for the 39,390, or about 45 percent of these other prior-service recruits which showed that they had not been on extended active duty since fiscal year 1971. Extended active duty can be 1 day on active duty for any reason other than training. The necessity for extended active duty has not been assessed one way or the other. However, an OSD official stated that if he had a choice between a person with active-duty experience or one without he would select the one with active-duty experience.

In attempts to get additional recruits, the Reserve components have been allowing prior-service recruits to enlist for 1- and 2-year periods. While this practice has been successful in attracting a certain number of prior-service recruits the impact on turnover has not been evaluated. DOD's December 1978 report (see p. 13) did not provide data details, but it did show that turnover rates for prior-service recruits in the Selected Reserve are similar to those for non-prior-service recruits. Accordingly, about 50 percent of the prior-service recruits that entered the Army Reserve in the July-September 1974 timeframe were no longer in the Reserve by the end of fiscal year 1977. The affect this practice has on the mobilization capability of the Selected Reserve Forces has not been evaluated.

Another factor affecting mobilization of prior-service recruits from Active and Reserve Forces is whether the person is still obligated under the 6-year military term or

whether the person is past the legal obligation period. Federal law, 10 U.S.C. 651 provides for a military service obligation of 6 years. Since the All-Volunteer Force began, the obligation has been treated as more contractual than statutory. In addition, the enlistment contract stated in part 12 (4, e) that:

"Except in a time of war or national emergency declared by Congress, I may be transferred to the Standby Reserve, upon my request, if I am not serving on active duty and if my total active duty (other than active duty for training) service and satisfactory service in the Ready Reserve has lasted at least 60 months \* \* \* I may not transfer to the Standby Reserve while I am serving under agreement to remain in the Ready Reserve for a stated period."

In the event of a long warning period before mobilization, recruits serving under a 1- or 2-year Selected Reserve commitment may not mobilize because their contracts have expired. Individuals no longer obligated comprised about 13.4 percent of Active Forces recruits in the Army Reserve and Guard in fiscal year 1977 and 16.4 percent in fiscal year 1978.

This problem is much greater when all prior-service recruits are considered. For example, of the 88,378 prior-service recruits recruited into the Army Reserve and Guard in fiscal year 1978, about 44,900 or 50 percent were no longer legally obligated to serve.

Another factor contributing to the Army Reserve turnover is that the services are generally not enforcing the enlistment contracts for recruits in the Selected Reserves. According to the enlistment contract, reservists may be ordered to perform additional active duty for training for not more than 45 days if they fail to perform the required training duty satisfactorily. In most cases reservists not performing satisfactorily are allowed to leave the Reserves and are not forced to spend additional time on active duty. The explanation we received from OSD and the services was that the Active Forces do not want these people either.

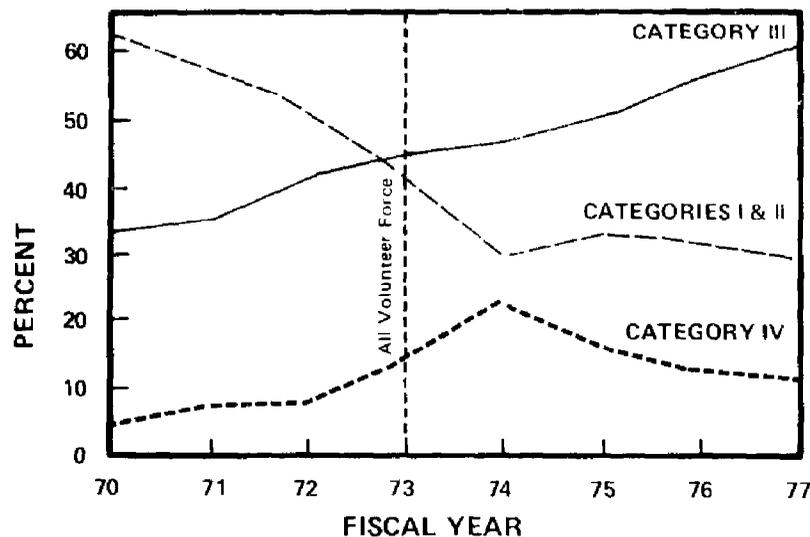
#### NON-PRIOR-SERVICE RECRUITS

During the draft era non-prior-service recruits in the Selected Reserves were predominantly high school graduates and in high mental categories I and II. In fiscal year 1977 about half of the recruits were non-high school graduates. About 70 percent of the recruits were in the lower mental categories III and IV.

These two criteria, education and mental category, are the principal measures of recruit quality used by DOD. The ending of the draft has resulted in a lower quality of non-prior-service recruits in the Selected Reserves.

The following chart shows Selected Reserves' non-prior-service recruit trends by mental category in fiscal years 1970 through 1977.

Selected Reserve Non-Prior-Service Recruits  
by Mental Category

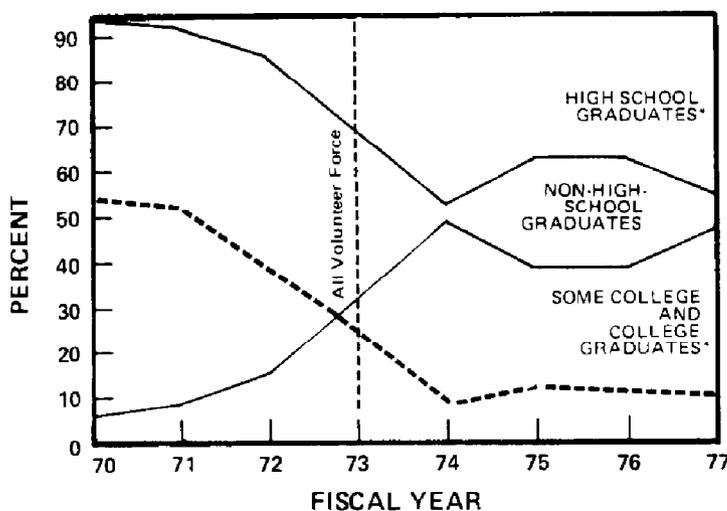


It is generally accepted by DOD that possession of a high school diploma is the best single measure of a person's potential for adapting to life in the military. According to DOD studies high school graduates are more likely to complete their terms of service than their contemporaries who have not received a high school diploma.

Since the early 1970s the quality of the Reserve Forces (as defined by DOD) has been affected by two major events: (1) college-trained recruits who joined the Reserves to avoid the draft no longer have draft avoidance as a motivating factor and (2) these college-trained recruits were replaced with non-high school graduates in order to maintain Reserve strengths.

The following chart shows this trend in educational attainment of Selected Reserve non-prior-service recruits during fiscal years 1970 through 1977.

Educational Attainment of  
Selected Reserve Non-Prior-Service Recruits



\* HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE LINE INCLUDES THOSE WITH SOME COLLEGE AND COLLEGE GRADUATES

Reserve officials have stated that they need the same manpower quality as the Active Forces. Officials stated that in the event of a mobilization their mission will be similar to the Active Forces.

Turnover of non-prior-service recruits

Another problem facing the Reserve components is turnover. The following table shows that about half of the non-prior-service recruits who entered the force during the first quarter of fiscal year 1974 were not in the Active or Selected Reserve Forces 3-years later even though the typical initial commitment in the Reserves is 6 years.

Selected Reserve Force  
0 to 36 Month Attrition (note a)

<u>Attrition from</u>	<u>Army National Guard</u>	<u>Army Reserve</u>	<u>Naval Reserve</u>	<u>Marine Corps Reserve</u>	<u>Air National Guard</u>	<u>Air Force Reserve</u>	<u>DOD (note b)</u>
Selected Reserve components	64	61	71	66	39	(b)	63
Transfer to Active	-6	-8	-13	-11	-4	(b)	-9
Transfer to other Selected Reserve	-2	-2	-2	2	11	(b)	-1
Active/Selected Reserve Forces	56	51	56	4	25	(b)	53

a/Percent of July to September 1974 non-prior-service recruits not in force at the end of fiscal year 1977.

b/Data not available for the Air Force Selected Reserve.

During the draft era, reservists who failed to attend a prescribed number of paid drills were generally ordered to active duty. Since the All-Volunteer Force, however, this practice has generally been discontinued. We were told by officials from OSD and the services that reservists have not been ordered to active duty because the Active Forces do not want them.

### CONCLUSIONS

The contention that prior-service recruits are maintaining the quality of the Reserve Forces because they comprise two-thirds of the recruits, bring a proven record of success with the Active Forces, and are the source of valuable combat experience is only partially correct. Only about half of the prior-service recruits are identified as being from the Active Forces and at least 10 percent of these are not suitable for active duty. About 45 percent of the other prior-service recruits for fiscal year 1978 have not been on extended active duty since fiscal year 1971. The quality of these recruits has not been assessed.

One-third of the recruits are non-prior-service. These are predominantly in the lower mental categories. About half of these had less than a high school education. By using DOD criteria, the quality of Army Reserve and Guard recruits has declined during the All-Volunteer Force.

We also believe that the mobilization capabilities of the Army Reserve and Guard are further hampered by high turnover rates and expiration of obligated terms of service. DOD and the Nation are relying on the Reserve Forces in the event of full mobilization. We believe that DOD needs to reassess the policies of allowing 1- and 2-year enlistment contracts for prior-service recruits in the Army Reserve and Guard and not requiring recruits to complete their tour of duty.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the Army to

- reassess its policy of enlisting in the Selected Reserves those persons it determined were not acceptable for active duty and
- determine the effect (1) 1- and 2-year enlistments, (2) non-obligated reservists, and (3) the practice of not ordering reservists to active duty for not participating in drills has on mobilization and recruiting needs.

#### AGENCY COMMENTS

DOD officials stated that they define the quality of today's Reserve Force as being more representative of the Nation at large and there is no cause for alarm. We noted that the Reserve Forces are not getting the same quality as the Active Forces although they stated they needed it.

The officials stated that they will ask the Army to provide specific cases of waivers granted for prior-service recruits who have enlisted in the Reserve Forces but who have not completed their initial Active Force enlistment. Although the Army is confident its waiver program is satisfactory, DOD officials are desirous of taking a more detailed and careful look at the program. DOD officials also told us that it will need legislative action to correct the problem of high turnover rates of prior-service recruits who have completed their 6-year enlistment and that further investigation will be made of its practice of not ordering reservists to active duty for not attending drills.

## CHAPTER 4

### PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS IN RESERVE AND GUARD RECRUITING

The services and DOD have taken or are considering numerous actions to improve Selected Reserve recruiting. They have increased the number of full-time recruiters, increased advertising, and initiated enlistment and reenlistment bonuses and educational programs. In addition, there are several proposals and tests under way to attract new recruits and to reduce turnover. Many of the proposals and tests are directed towards the high quality (high school graduate with a mental category between I and II) non-prior-service male. While it may be desirable and necessary to improve the recruiting of such individuals, there are many questions still to be answered regarding the feasibility, cost, and impact these improvements will have on the other components of the Total Force.

The Army Reserves and Guard have stated that they need the same manpower quality as that of the Active Forces because when they are mobilized the Reserves have to do the same job as the Active Forces. The military services may need to reexamine their recruiting enlistment standards for the 1980s when the increased demand in the Selected Reserves for male high school graduates in the high mental category is added to the Active and Reserve Forces and compared to the decreasing supply of recruits.

### ONGOING INITIATIVES AND PROPOSALS

According to OSD, the Selected Army Reserves would like to attract people in the 20 to 25 age group. However, each non-prior-service recruit must receive about 12 or more weeks of basic and initial skill training. If taken at one time, this can present hardships on potential recruits. To alleviate this problem, DOD has taken or is considering the following:

- Providing a split training option whereby an individual can take basic and initial skill training in two separate periods rather than all at once.
- Establishing a program where people with certain skills could conduct and accomplish their initial skill training in the community.
- Conducting a test of a vocational technical training program in which the recruit receives initial skill training during his senior year of high school while he is attending drills.

- Considering the expansion of a civilian acquired skill program in which recruits receive constructive credit for civilian schooling or acquired skills.

Other initiatives include:

- Expanded educational assistance. (Educational assistance for members of the Selected Reserve was authorized for the first time by Public Law 95-79, July 30, 1977.)
- Increased recruiting and advertising programs.
- Modified enlistment terms, including (a) shorter enlistment programs and (2) combining an Active Force enlistment with an obligatory period of service in the Reserve.

The initiatives, however, while they may increase the numbers of non-prior-service recruits in the Selected Reserves, will be in direct competition with Active Forces recruiting incentives. The cost of the increased competition in a declining recruiting market has not been assessed. The Army and DOD have not demonstrated that Reserve recruiting does not compete in the same market as Active Force recruiting.

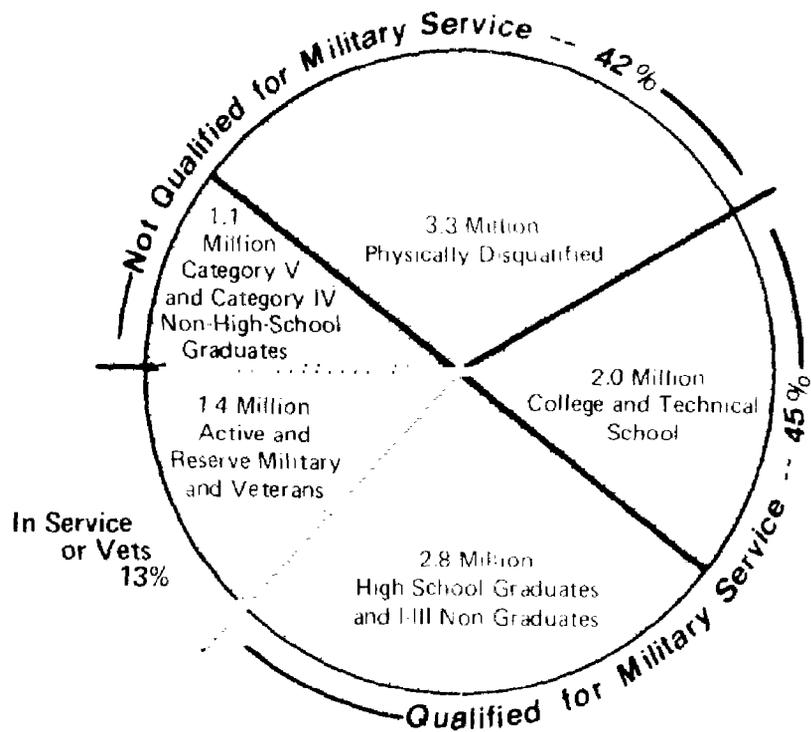
#### DECLINING MANPOWER SUPPLY

According to the December 1978 OSD report on the All-Volunteer Force, the prime recruiting pool for the Active military consists of males in the 17 to 21 age group. OSD projects that after a peak of over 10 million in 1978 the number of 17- to 21-year-old males will decline. By 1990 the number of males in this same age group will have declined by 17 percent from the 1978 levels.

With a smaller population of the 17- to 21-year-old males, OSD expects that the number of males completing high school each year will also decline. This will intensify competition for high school graduates among colleges, vocational schools, private employers, and the military. If educational institutions are able to prevent a decline in enrollments and private employers continue to hire young workers in similar numbers as today, the supply of enlistees to the military could decline even more than the population.

As shown in the following chart, of the 10.6 million males 42 percent are ineligible either because they are physically disqualified or in mental category V or are in category IV but do not hold high school diplomas.

Distribution of 10.6 Million Males, Ages 17 to 21,  
Fiscal Year 1977 Estimates



Source: U.S. Army Recruiting Command.

PROPENSITY TO ENLIST  
IN RESERVE COMPONENTS

In addition to supply and demand considerations there is the question of willingness to enlist in the Reserve components. A November 1977 DOD study contained the following results of a survey of young male potential non-prior-service recruits.

### Propensity to Enlist for the Non-Prior-Service Sample

<u>Propensity</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Sample (men only)	1,897	100.0
Definitely will enlist	56	3.0
Probably will enlist	254	13.4
Might enlist	380	20.0
Probably will not enlist	533	28.1
Definitely will not enlist	674	35.5

Source: Associates for Research in Behavior, Inc.

Similar results were obtained in studies of potential recruits to the Active services.

### CONCLUSIONS

Many DOD initiatives to recruit male non-prior-service recruits from a diminishing market are planned or in process. While there are over 10 million males, ages 17 to 21, only about 4.8 million are qualified as non-prior-service recruits. Recent studies indicate that few of those, however, have a propensity to enlist either in the Reserve or Active Forces. Both Active and Reserve Forces are probably attempting to recruit from the same market and, therefore, are in competition. The cost of this competition in terms of opposing Active and Reserve Forces recruiting incentives has not been assessed.

### AGENCY COMMENTS

DOD recognizes a certain degree of competition between Active and Reserve Force recruiting especially since the implementation of the incentive program. DOD stated that the competition issue will be the subject of very close scrutiny as the incentive program progresses.



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

JUL 12 1979

Mr. H. L. Krieger  
Director, Federal Personnel and  
Compensation Division  
United States General Accounting Office  
Washington, D. C. 20548

Dear Mr. Krieger:

This is in reply to your letter to the Deputy Director, OMB, of June 29, 1979, requesting comments on a GAO draft entitled, "Need for Improvements in Army Selected Reserve Recruiting" (Code 965009).

The subject of the report is vitally important to the viability of the reliance being placed on Reserve forces. Recruiting for these forces is a key element in their readiness. As pointed out in the draft, recruiting resources for the Reserves have shown a significant increase in recent years and other improvements, such as emphasis on a full-time recruiting force, have been initiated.

While the treatment in the draft of the proper mix and quality of personnel, personnel turnover and enforcement of the training obligation brings out important points, it is felt the discussion on establishment of recruiting objectives (Chapter 2) takes a much too short term approach. While Army Reserve and National Guard strengths are currently below peacetime objectives, improvements in manning levels are being realized. The primary basis for the discussion in Chapter 2 appears to evolve around the belief that short-term recruiting goals should be established which, if achieved, would meet peacetime strength requirements immediately. We believe, under current circumstances, prudent manpower and fiscal management dictates establishment of peacetime manning goals accompanied by a realistic glidepath towards achievement. This is the approach reflected in the Army's program.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the proposed draft report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "David Sitrin".

David Sitrin  
Deputy Associate Director  
for National Security

(965009)

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