

096447

73-0552  
3.14.73



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

3

FEDERAL PERSONNEL AND  
COMPENSATION DIVISION



FEB 28 1973

B-146947

The Honorable Elliot H. Richardson  
The Secretary of Defense

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The General Accounting Office (GAO) has reviewed the management of the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) program administered by each of the military services. We discussed our observations on areas of concern with the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Education and with managers of the ROTC program for each of the military departments and have incorporated their comments in this report.

Because the ROTC programs are the principal source of officers for both the Active Forces and the Reserves, GAO examined selected areas of program management to identify those which could be improved. We particularly considered what progress the services were making in dealing with the problem of declining enrollment.

In addition to our work at the headquarters of each of the services, we examined policies, procedures, and practices at 10 universities and colleges having one or more senior ROTC units and at seven high schools having junior ROTC units.

The senior ROTC program, conducted at civilian colleges and universities and at military colleges, prepares selected college students for commissions in the military services. There are 72,500 students in the 536 senior ROTC units for the 1972-73 school year. Program costs are expected to be \$155 million for fiscal year 1973.

The junior ROTC program, conducted at secondary schools, fosters national pride and provides high school students with a knowledge of military subjects which will be of benefit if they enter the military services. There are 140,000 students in the 1,091 junior ROTC units for the 1972-73 school year. Program costs are expected to be \$16 million for fiscal year 1973.

701443 096447

The Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Education, who is also the Director of ROTC Programs, develops policy and maintains liaison with departments, agencies, and schools interested in ROTC. The Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force have overall responsibilities for their respective ROTC programs. The recently established Training and Doctrine Command manages the Army ROTC program, the Naval Training Command manages the Navy ROTC program, and the Air University manages the Air Force ROTC program.

Each service manages and administers its respective senior program independently. We found that increased coordination between the services was needed in several areas of ROTC program administration. These areas concern the (1) retention of unproductive ROTC units, (2) decline in enrollments, (3) lack of a uniform staffing criterion, (4) duplication of applicants' physical examinations, (5) loss of investment because of program dropouts, and (6) lack of uniform program cost reporting.

#### RETENTION OF UNPRODUCTIVE UNITS

Each military service retained senior ROTC units which did not meet the Department of Defense's prescribed officer production requirements. The Army and the Navy had not disestablished any units for failing to meet prescribed officer production requirements, but the Air Force had disestablished 18 units for this reason.

In the 1970-71 school year, the Army, Navy, and Air Force had 22, 4, and 23 units, respectively, which continued operating but which did not meet the production criteria for that year. The Army, Navy, and Air Force had designated one, three, and eight of these units, respectively, as substandard, because they had not met the 4-year average production requirements.

Some schools wanted to establish units that could meet the officer production requirements. At the time of our review, the Army had 10 applications from schools desiring to host senior units and the Navy had 31. The Air Force did not have any formal applications, although 90 schools had expressed written interest in the Air Force ROTC program. We were told that in February 1972 the Department of Defense temporarily relaxed its officer production requirements through June 1974 because of changing conditions in the services and at the schools.

After we told program managers about this matter, they notified 28 schools that their ROTC units' officer production was marginal and requested their assistance in improving the programs at their schools. Declining enrollments, discussed below, indicate the need for further program improvements.

The services were not uniformly applying statutory restrictions for establishing and maintaining junior ROTC units. The Vitalization Act provides that no school establish or maintain a junior unit unless the unit contains at least 100 physically fit male students who are at least 14 years of age and who are U.S. citizens. In the 1970-71 school year, 178 of the 844 junior ROTC units did not meet this enrollment criterion.

Program officials acknowledged that there were many junior ROTC units that did not meet the enrollment criterion. They stated, however, that these units were producing many enlistments and recommended that they therefore be retained. They stated further that they were preparing a legislative proposal recommending that the existing enrollment criterion be reduced from 100 to 50 and include females.

#### DECLINE IN ENROLLMENTS

According to the services, the senior ROTC programs usually have produced the number of officers needed, despite their declining enrollments. Service officials attribute the decline to the elimination of compulsory ROTC programs at civilian schools, antimilitary attitude on campus, institution of the draft lottery, and proposed elimination of the draft.<sup>1</sup>

The number of senior ROTC units increased from 495 in 1964, when the Vitalization Act was passed, to 536 in 1973. Total enrollments, however, decreased from 268,742 in the 1963-64 school year to 72,459 in the 1972-73 school year.

The services have made several changes to improve the senior ROTC program and to reverse the downward trend in enrollment. Modifications, such as allowing course substitution and using guest lecturers, have been made in curriculums.

---

<sup>1</sup>On January 27, 1973, the Secretary of Defense announced an immediate halt in the draft, except for doctors and dentists, and stated that in the future the Armed Forces would rely on volunteers to fill their ranks.

B-146947

Recent legislative changes increased the number of monetary scholarships which could be awarded and the amount of subsistence allowances payable to ROTC students.

In addition, the services have sponsored various nationwide, regional, and local advertising and recruiting programs to inform the public and to influence students to enroll.

Although the services indicated that the senior ROTC program currently was producing the required number of officers, our discussions with enrollees indicated that elimination of the draft would have a substantial adverse impact on ROTC program enrollment. Therefore the services should closely monitor the factors designed to reverse declining enrollment to see how these factors are influencing the program and should develop changes or incentives to insure adequate program participation.

The Director of ROTC Programs has agreed that the services need to give close attention to the trend in enrollments and has stated that he now holds monthly meetings with the service managers to monitor the ROTC program as a whole.

#### LACK OF A UNIFORM STAFFING CRITERION

The services have separate criteria for staffing senior ROTC units. As a result, the ratios of staff to enrolled students range from 1:2 to 1:85.

The Army and Air Force staffing criteria are based on the types of programs offered and on the number of students enrolled. The Navy criterion is based on the number and types of courses taught at each unit. A unit staff's duties and responsibilities, basically the same for each service, consist of preparing for and conducting classroom instruction, managing uniforms and equipment, performing administrative duties, and counseling program enrollees. In addition, Army instructors are expected to spend a considerable amount of time visiting high schools. Navy administrative personnel also support any active duty personnel enrolled in other educational programs at the colleges or universities.

The minimum number of personnel authorized for each service differs, as shown below.

	<u>Army</u>	<u>Air Force</u>	<u>Navy</u>
Officer	5	3	7
Enlisted	4	2	5
Civilian	-	-	<u>1</u>
Total	<u>9</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>13</u>

Program officials agreed that there was a need for a uniform staffing criterion and stated that they were developing such a criterion for all the services to adopt.

#### DUPLICATION OF APPLICANTS' PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

One of the costs involved in the ROTC scholarship application process is for physical examinations. For the 1971-72 school year, the Army, Navy, and Air Force gave 2,000, 10,000, and 3,000 physical examinations, respectively, to 4-year scholarship applicants. Of 6,726 applicants examined during 1971, 451, or 7 percent, had been examined by more than one service.

Since the Army, Navy, and Air Force have annually been awarding 1,000, 1,500, and 500 4-year scholarships, respectively, it seems that an unnecessarily large number of physical examinations are being given and that greater coordination among the services is needed.

Program officials stated that they were exploring a single-examination arrangement for applicants, similar to the one currently used for service academy applicants.

#### LOSS OF INVESTMENT BECAUSE OF PROGRAM DROPOUTS.

Each year many scholarship enrollees drop out of the program, but only a few are subject to active duty for not completing the program. The Government does not receive the benefit intended from those individuals who are not obligated to serve on active duty. Program officials assured us that the cases of those obligated to serve were automatically reviewed and that, unless there were extenuating circumstances, the individuals were called to active duty.

During the 1970-71 school year, 1,523 scholarship enrollees dropped out of the program. Although 787 of those enrollees had dropped out of the Navy program, only 66 could be called to active duty.

We suggested to program officials that the scholarships of enrollees who drop out of the program be converted to loans, such as National Defense Education loans or Department of Health, Education, and Welfare loans. These officials concurred in our proposal but stated that legislative authority would be required. They advised us that they would prepare such a legislative proposal.

#### LACK OF UNIFORM PROGRAM COST REPORTING

Each service's ROTC cost information reporting system produces incomplete cost accumulations which do not provide the Department of Defense or the Congress with reliable data for comparing the service's reported total program costs or average officer production costs with its budget requests. We found that certain costs directly associated with the programs had not been included in the reported program costs.

Each service computes average officer production costs for officers commissioned through its ROTC program. However, those average costs are not a valid basis for comparison, because each service develops different types of average costs and uses different methods for computing the costs.

The Director of ROTC Programs agreed with our findings and said that he hoped to revise the budget formats to provide comparable data.

- - - -

We believe that the actions planned or taken by the Director of ROTC Programs and the services' program managers should result in needed management improvements. However, because of the importance of ROTC programs as the primary source of military officers, we plan to follow the services' actions in making these improvements and to look at this and other officer accession programs in the future.

We are sending copies of this report to the Director, Office of Management and Budget; the Secretaries of the Army,

B-146947

Navy, and Air Force; and the Chairman of the House and Senate  
Committees on Appropriations, Armed Services, and Government  
Operations.

500 Jno  
700 500  
401500

Sincerely yours,

*Thomas D. Morris*

Thomas D. Morris  
Acting Director

(5)