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UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE  
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NATIONAL SECURITY AND  
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

B-207788

RELEASED

OCTOBER 11, 1983

The Honorable Joseph P. Addabbo  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Defense  
Committee on Appropriations  
House of Representatives



Dear Mr. Chairman:

Subject: Information on the Military Services' Enlisted  
Aide Program (NSIAD-84-12)

In the Congressional Record dated December 8, 1982, you expressed an intent to have the General Accounting Office review and provide information on the management and use of enlisted aides by the military services. Anticipating your request, we met with your staff on January 13, 1983, and agreed to answer the following questions:

- What is the historical and legislative background of the enlisted aide program?
- How is the enlisted aide program administered?
- What are the staffing levels of the enlisted aide program?
- What does the enlisted aide program cost?
- Who comprises the enlisted aide population?
- How are enlisted aides used?
- Are enlisted aides being used improperly?

OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

To respond to these questions, we met with and obtained information concerning the history and administration of the aide program from personnel responsible for managing the enlisted aides at each of the services and at the Department of Defense (DOD). We also obtained regulations pertaining to the management and use of enlisted aides and documents on placement,

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demographics, staffing, and funding. Because of the small number of individuals and the relatively small monies involved in the enlisted aide program, in the interest of expediency, we did not verify the accuracy of the information provided concerning staffing and funding, as shown in the charts on pages 5 through 9.

We conducted this review from January 1983 to August 1983 in accordance with generally accepted Government auditing standards.

WHAT IS THE HISTORICAL AND LEGISLATIVE  
BACKGROUND OF THE ENLISTED AIDE PROGRAM?

Current DOD regulations <sup>1/</sup> concerning the enlisted aide program state that enlisted aides relieve officers of minor duties which, if performed by the officers, would be at the expense of the officers' primary military and official duties. Enlisted aides have been provided to officers of the U.S. Armed Forces since the Revolutionary War. In the early days of the program, officers in the ranks of Lieutenant (O-1) through General (O-10) were eligible to be assigned enlisted aides. Following a congressionally imposed reduction in the authorized number of enlisted aides in January 1974, DOD issued a revised Directive 1315.9 which eliminated the assignment of aides to officers below star rank. Senior officers in the ranks O-7 through O-10 in certain positions remain eligible for the assignment of aides.

Army and Air Force

Although there is no statute specifically authorizing the assignment of Army or Air Force enlisted members to the personal staffs of officers in these services, the furnishing of enlisted aides to Army and Air Force officers is a long recognized custom. However, present law <sup>2/</sup> does prohibit Army and Air Force officers from using enlisted members as servants. In the case of the United States v. Robinson, 6 USCMA 347, 20 CMR 63 (1955), the court held "servant" to mean one who works for the personal benefit of an officer. The court concluded, however, that if an essential military purpose is served by an enlisted aide performing the same menial work done by a servant, then it is not a violation of the law.

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<sup>1/</sup>DOD Directive 1315.9: "Utilization of Enlisted Personnel on Personal Staffs of General and Flag Officers," June 21, 1976.

<sup>2/</sup>Section 14 of An Act making Appropriations for the Support of the Army for the Year ending June thirty, eighteen hundred and seventy-one, and for other Purposes, dated July 15, 1870 (Chapter 294, 16 Stat. 319), codified for the Army and Air Force as 10 U.S.C 3639 and 8639, respectively.

DOD Directive 1315.9 and the implementing regulations of the services also prohibit officers from using enlisted aides for duties which benefit only themselves and have no reasonable connection with the officers' official responsibilities.

### Navy and Marine Corps

The use of enlisted aides in the Navy and Marine Corps is specifically authorized by law <sup>3/</sup>. The source statute, section 16(b) of the act of August 2, 1946 (chapter 756, 60 Stat. 855), enacted into permanent law a provision that permitted a limited number of enlisted members to work in

- public quarters (Government-owned housing) of certain officers,
- messes temporarily set up on shore for officers attached to specific units, and
- such bachelor officers' quarters and messes as were specifically designated by the Secretary of the Navy.

The 1946 act states that the Secretary of the Navy may freely assign enlisted personnel to duty in a service capacity in officers' messes and public quarters under such regulations as he prescribes. The provision prohibited enlisted members from working in the residence or quarters of an officer on shore as a cook or waiter or in other servant-type positions.

### HOW IS THE ENLISTED AIDE PROGRAM ADMINISTERED?

The Office of the Secretary of Defense, on the basis of a congressionally authorized enlisted aide ceiling, annually allocates a number of aides to each service.

DOD regulations <sup>4/</sup> require the services to submit a semi-annual report to the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Logistics) showing the number of enlisted aides authorized to each service and the number of aide positions filled. The officer positions to which an aide is assigned are broken out by location, (state or foreign country), grade of officer holding the position, name of the officer holding the position along with his/her duty title, organization,

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<sup>3/10</sup> U.S.C. 7579.

<sup>4/</sup>DOD Directive 1315.9: "Utilization of Enlisted Personnel on Personal Staffs of General and Flag Officers," June 21, 1976.

geographic location, the number of enlisted aides authorized to the position, and the number of enlisted aides assigned to the position at the time of the report. The reports are based on data compiled as of March 31 and September 30 of each year.

Except for allocating aides to each service and compiling the semiannual enlisted aide report, the Office of the Secretary of Defense is not actively involved in the day-to-day administration of the enlisted aide program.

Each of the services has established an organization including a program officer responsible for dealing with and coordinating all facets of the enlisted aide program, from accepting and processing applications from potential aides to compiling the semiannual enlisted aide report.

WHAT ARE THE STAFFING LEVELS  
OF THE ENLISTED AIDE PROGRAM?

Since we issued a report <sup>5/</sup> on the enlisted aide program in 1973, the authorized ceiling for enlisted aides has significantly declined. In December 1972, the number of aides authorized totaled 1,915. By March 1974, the Congress had begun imposing ceilings on the authorized number of enlisted aides, and by October 1976, it had reduced the ceiling to 300--an 85-percent reduction since December 1972. The congressionally authorized ceiling of enlisted aides has remained at 300 since October 1976.

Since 1976, the number of enlisted aides allocated by DOD to the services each year has remained fairly constant, but is slightly adjusted periodically in response to the number of senior officers from each service currently serving in such organizations as the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The following chart shows changes in the enlisted aide ceiling and service distribution figures between December 1972 and October 1982.

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<sup>5/</sup>"Enlisted Aide Program of the Military Services" (B-177516, dated April 16, 1973).

Enlisted Aides  
Ceilings and Distribution  
(Dec. 1972 - Oct. 1982\*)

Distribution by Service					
<u>Date</u>	<u>Army</u>	<u>Navy</u>	<u>Air Force</u>	<u>Marine Corps</u>	<u>Total DOD</u>
Dec. '72	630	585	600	100	1915
Mar. '74	473	278	432	62	1245
Jun. '74	256	151	234	34	675
Oct. '74	172	128	172	28	500
July '75	176	122	174	28	500
Oct. '75	110	114	140	22	386
Oct. '76	86	91	106	17	300
Oct. '77	98	80	105	17	300
Oct. '78	98	80	105	17	300
Oct. '79	98	80	105	17	300
Oct. '80	98	80	105	17	300
Oct. '81	98	80	105	17	300
Oct. '82	107	78	97	18	300

\*Note: These figures represent the ceilings on the number of enlisted aides and do not represent the actual number of personnel assigned to those functions.

On the basis of the October 1, 1982, enlisted aide report, we found that the services had filled 285 of the 300 authorized enlisted aide positions. The following chart shows by service, the number of enlisted aides authorized, the number of aides assigned to positions, and whether the positions are located in the United States or overseas.

Service	Number of aides authorized	Number of aides assigned	Number of aides within the United States	Number of aides assigned overseas
Army	107	107	77	30
Navy	78	73	57	16
Air Force	97	87	68	19
Marine Corps	18	18	16	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>67</b>

After receiving their allocation of enlisted aides, the service Secretaries are responsible for determining the general and flag officer positions to be authorized aides and the number of aides to be authorized in each position. These determinations are based on the responsibilities of the officer assigned each particular position.

In October 1982, the services had 1,050 officers in the ranks of O-7 through O-10. As the following chart shows, 226 or 21.5 percent of these 1,050 officers who occupied command-type positions were assigned enlisted aides.

NUMBER OF GENERAL OFFICERS ASSIGNED  
ENLISTED AIDES AS OF  
OCTOBER 1982

Service	General, Admiral O-10		Lt. General, Vice Admiral O-9		Maj. General Rear Admiral O-8		Brig. Gen., Rear Admiral O-7		Total	
	Number in rank	Number assigned aides	Number in rank	Number assigned aides	Number in rank	Number assigned aides	Number in rank	Number assigned aides	Officers in ranks O-7 thru O-10	Officers in ranks O-7 thru O-10 assigned aides
Army	11	11	45	39	143	33	197	5	396	88
Navy	9	8	29	21	85	19	128	4	251	52
Air Force	12	12	36	28	120	28	170	3	338	71
Marine Corps	2	2	7	7	23	6	33	—	65	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1,050</b>	<b>226</b>

As the chart shows, 128 or about 57 percent of the general and flag officers assigned enlisted aides are in the 2 highest grades, O-9 and O-10. Only 12 enlisted aides are assigned to Brigadier General or Rear Admiral grade officers.

WHAT DOES THE ENLISTED  
AIDE PROGRAM COST?

The cost of the enlisted aide program has declined from about \$22 million in 1973 to approximately \$6 million in 1983. Adjusting to allow for inflation, the cost of the 1973 enlisted aide program expressed in current dollars would be about \$45 million. The 1983 figure, furnished by DOD and broken out below, includes base pay and allowances for subsistence and quarters for the 283 enlisted aides actually assigned as of June 1983.

<u>SERVICE</u>	<u>AIDES ASSIGNED</u>	<u>COST</u>
Army	104	\$2,282,384
Navy	74	1,517,949
Air Force	87	1,637,458
Marine Corps	<u>18</u>	<u>495,144</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>283</u></b>	<b><u>\$5,932,935</u></b>

On the basis of information furnished by the officials in each service responsible for the enlisted aide program, we found that, currently, no costs are uniquely attributable to the program aside from the compensation paid to the aides. In the past, the services had training facilities and instructors for teaching etiquette and food preparation, which also contributed to the cost of the program. The services now rely chiefly on on-the-job training and on the service member's experience and other training.

Service records do not distinguish between enlisted aides and other service members in the same occupational specialty. Accordingly, no meaningful historical cost figures are available or can be developed; any figures computed would be a projection using the current grade and years-of-service percentages applied to the historical compensation and allowance rates and personnel ceilings.

WHO COMPRISES THE ENLISTED  
AIDE POPULATION?

Requirements for entering the enlisted aide program vary somewhat from service to service; however, the regulations for all services require that applications be made on a voluntary basis. Some of the other requirements for acceptance into the program concern a minimum length of military service remaining,

a satisfactory service attitude and history, minimum age and aptitude, a favorable background investigation, and a certificate for or experience in food preparation.

To determine what types of individuals were being selected for the enlisted aide program, we asked the services to provide certain demographic information on enlisted aides. Using information provided by the Marine Corps in March 1983, by the Navy in April 1983, and by the Army and Air Force in June 1983, we devised the following chart which illustrates, by service and DOD as a whole, the race, sex, and rank percentages of enlisted aides.

	DOD	ARMY	AIR FORCE	NAVY	MARINE CORPS
<b>1. <u>Number of Aides</u></b>	283	104	87	74	18
<b>2. <u>Race</u></b>					
Caucasian	45.6%	67.3%	62.1%	—	27.8%
Black	25.8%	29.8%	32.2%	1.4%	72.2%
Other	28.6%	2.9%	5.7%	98.6%	—
<b>3. <u>Sex</u></b>					
Male	98.9%	99.0%	97.7%	100.0%	100.0%
Female	1.1%	1.0%	2.3%	—	—
<b>4. <u>Rank</u></b>					
E-9	2.8%	2.8%	2.3%	1.4%	11.1%
E-8	11.3%	8.7%	8.0%	10.8%	44.4%
E-7	39.2%	57.6%	29.9%	28.4%	22.2%
E-6	33.2%	27.8%	25.3%	52.7%	22.2%
E-5	9.9%	2.8%	24.1%	5.4%	—
E-4	2.1%	—	5.7%	1.4%	—
E-3	1.4%	—	4.6%	—	—

In addition, we asked the services to provide for each enlisted aide, the length of military service and the length of service as an enlisted aide. The following chart shows the years of military service versus the years of service as an enlisted aide.



<u>Years of Military Service</u>	<u>Years As An Enlisted Aide</u>								<u>Total Across</u>
	<u>0-4</u>	<u>4-8</u>	<u>8-12</u>	<u>12-16</u>	<u>16-20</u>	<u>20-24</u>	<u>24-28</u>	<u>28+</u>	
0-4	4								4
4-8	19	1							20
8-12	27	5	1						33
12-16	36	20	11	3					70
16-20	34	28	13	3	2				80
20-24	14	12	7	10	4				47
24-28	2	5	2	6	8	1			24
28+			2	1	1			1	5
<b>Total Down</b>	<u>136</u>	<u>71</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>1</u>		<u>1</u>	<u>283</u>

#### HOW ARE ENLISTED AIDES USED?

DOD Directive 1315.9 generally defines the proper and improper usage of enlisted aides. The directive states that, in connection with military and official functions and duties, enlisted aides may be used to:

1. Assist with the care, cleanliness, and order of assigned quarters, uniforms, and military personal equipment.
2. Perform as point of contact in the officers' quarters. Receive and maintain records and telephone calls, make appointments, and receive guests and visitors.
3. Assist in the planning, preparation, arrangement, and conduct of official social functions and activities, such as receptions, parties, and dinners.
4. Assist in purchasing, preparing, and serving food and beverages in the general and flag officers' assigned quarters.
5. Accomplish tasks that aid officers in performing military and official responsibilities, including performing errands for the officer, providing security

for the quarters, and providing administrative assistance.

As mentioned previously, the directive also states that no officer may use an enlisted member as a servant for duties that contribute only to the officer's personal benefit and that have no reasonable connection with the officer's official responsibilities.

Because the DOD and service regulations concerning proper and improper usage of enlisted aides were so general, we suggested in our 1973 report that it would help in controlling the program if the regulations governing the enlisted aide program were revised to include a specific list of tasks that aides should and should not do.

Although none of the services have developed such a comprehensive list of tasks, the Navy and Marine Corps have incorporated into their regulations examples of improper duties for enlisted aides. These regulations specifically prohibit enlisted aides from:

1. Caring for pets, including feeding;
2. Caring for infants or children;
3. Taking care of the grounds, other than mowing, watering, and general yard policing.
4. Operating, caring for, maintaining, or cleaning any privately owned vehicle;
5. Maintaining privately owned recreational or sporting equipment, except in connection with the use of such equipment for official purposes; and
6. Performing any personal services solely for the benefit of or at the direction of dependents or unofficial guests, including (1) any driving, shopping or private errands, and (2) laundry services.

Service officials responsible for managing the enlisted aide program said that it would be almost impossible to develop a comprehensive, specific list of proper and improper duties for aides, particularly when court decisions have held and DOD regulations state that the propriety of any duty performed by the aides is governed by the official purpose which the duty serves rather than the nature of the duty. The qualification

concerning the propriety of duties would require the official responsibilities of each officer assigned an aide be analyzed individually and all conceivable aide duties listed.

Although we recognize the difficulties inherent in developing a comprehensive list of proper and improper duties for aides, we continue to believe that a more specific and more inclusive list of duties than currently exists would help in controlling the enlisted aide program and would assist those officers occupying positions that are authorized aides.

ARE ENLISTED AIDES BEING USED IMPROPERLY?

Despite the lack of what we believe are adequate regulations concerning the proper and improper use of enlisted aides, none of the officials responsible for managing the enlisted aide program were aware of any complaints originating either from within or from outside the services alleging improper use of enlisted aides. Program officers stated that any complaint concerning improper use of an aide would have been investigated and that the matter would be brought to their attention either before or during the investigative process.

Because the enlisted aide program is voluntary, enlisted aides may request to be removed from the program at any time, without furnishing a reason. Accordingly, no historical records are available which show why aides requested to leave the program.

Program officers informed us that they have had isolated instances where enlisted aides have requested removal from the program either because they felt they were being misused (i.e., they were not able to use what they believed to be their particular talent at their particular position) or because, despite preselection counseling, they had not really comprehended the exact duties or functions to be performed.

Officials responsible for the aide program stressed that the service Secretaries had included in their operating regulations a requirement that officers assigned to positions authorized an aide be charged with abiding by both the letter and intent of the regulations regarding usage. Moreover, according to these officials, officers occupying positions that are assigned enlisted aides are highly placed, are aware of the privilege they have been awarded, and are careful to avoid jeopardizing both the privilege and their reputation as an officer.

In an attempt to determine whether there were reported incidents of misuse of enlisted aides with which the program officers were not aware, we contacted the DOD Hotline, the Inspector General's office, and the audit offices of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Responsible officials in these offices were not aware of any complaints concerning the misuse or abuse of enlisted aides.

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As arranged with your office, unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we do not plan to distribute this report further until 5 days from its issue date. At that time, we will send copies to the Secretaries of Defense, Army, Navy, and Air Force; the Commandant of the Marine Corps; and other interested parties.

Sincerely yours,



Frank C. Conahan  
Director