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Changes by the Marine Corps to correct problems in recruiting and recruit training were studied. These changes included: placing Recruit Training Depot Commanders in charge of recruiting as well as training nonprior service personnel; increasing the number of high school graduates recruited and limiting the enlistment of lower mental category individuals; and attempting to identify factors which indicate whether an individual can successfully complete the first enlistment. Findings/Conclusions: During the 6 months following implementation of the changes, no positive trends were identified which could be attributed solely to the changes. Recommendations: The Secretary of Defense should direct the Commandant of Marine Corps to: establish a recruit-training program more fully based on measurable training objectives; require periodic inspections to be sure that the actual training conforms to the prescribed program; start processing recruits without delay and start platoons into training immediately after processing; and reevaluate the need to continue each of the special training platoons. (RRS)

00134

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*REPORT OF THE
COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES*

Marine Corps Recruiting
And Recruit-Training
Policies And Practices

Department of the Navy

This report discusses the Marine Corps recruiting and recruit-training programs. Since 1974, the quality of recruits has improved and there are indications these improvements have had a positive effect, i.e., fewer disciplinary problems.

GAO could not identify any trends resulting from changes in the recruit-training program; however, it may be too early to measure effects of the changes.

GAO identified opportunities to improve the recruiting and recruit-training programs.



COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

B-157371

The Honorable Sam Nunn, Chairman
Subcommittee on Manpower and Personnel
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As requested in your May 3, 1976, letter we are reporting on our review of Marine Corps recruiting and recruit training. In your letter you asked us to identify and evaluate the effect of changes implemented in the Marine Corps recruiting and recruit-training programs.

This report contains recommendations to the Secretary of Defense which are set forth on pages 8 and 20. 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 to the House and Senate Committees on Government Operations not later than 60 days after the date of the report and to the the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations with the agency's first request for appropriations made more than 60 days after the date of the report. We will be in touch with your office in the near future to arrange for release of the report so that requirements of section 236 can be set in motion.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James B. Stacks".

Comptroller General
of the United States

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COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S
REPORT TO THE CHAIRMAN,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MANPOWER
AND PERSONNEL, SENATE
ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

MARINE CORPS RECRUITING
AND RECRUIT TRAINING:
POLICIES AND PRACTICES
Department of the Navy

D I G E S T

Over the past 18 months, the Marine Corps has announced a series of changes to correct problems in its recruiting and recruit training. In July 1976, the Marine Corps placed the Recruit Training Depot commanders in charge of recruiting as well as training men and women with no prior service. (See p. 3.)

Since 1974 an increasingly larger percentage of high school graduates have been recruited by the Marine Corps. (See p. 4.)

The Marine Corps, through research, has attempted to identify individual attributes which indicate whether a person can successfully complete recruit training and the first enlistment. In the past little had been done to determine how the military environment affected recruit success and attrition. (See p. 5.)

During the 6 months following the announcement on April 1, 1976, of changes to the recruit-training program, GAO did not find any positive trends which could be attributed solely to those changes. However, it may be too early for effects of the changes to be measured in such trends. (See p. 9.)

Recruit-training procedures, administrative duties, and noninstructional time are not clearly and measurably related to training objectives. The San Diego Recruit Depot in scheduling training did not follow the program of instruction directed by headquarters and increased the training days from 77 to 79 as a result of a misunderstanding, which has since been corrected. The time recruits spend at the training depots can be greatly reduced. Unnecessary, excessive, or delayed training should be eliminated. (See p. 13.)

Alternatives other than sending recruits to special platoons for more instruction or rehabilitation should be considered. Marine Corps officials have questioned the need for the special platoons and in some cases disbanded these platoons. The other services do not use correctional custody and medical rehabilitation platoons in their recruit-training programs. (See p. 17.)

The Secretary of Defense should direct the Commandant of the Marine Corps to:

- Redirect much of the focus of its research to examine in depth the effects of the military and, more specifically, the recruit-training environment on attrition. (See p. 8.)
- Establish a recruit-training program more fully based on measurable training objectives and require the content and training procedures to relate to those objectives. Unnecessary content should be eliminated and the program shortened accordingly.
- Require periodic inspections to make sure that actual training conforms to the prescribed program.
- Start processing recruits without delay and start platoons into training immediately after processing.
- Reevaluate the need for continuing each of the special training platoons. (See p. 20.)

The Marine Corps generally agrees with GAO's recommendations. However, the Marine Corps did not agree that recruit-training procedures are not clearly and measurably related to training objectives.

The Marine Corps is taking the following actions:

- Two studies have been started to examine the relationship between attrition and organizational/environmental factors.

- During biennial visits, the Inspector General's investigation teams and assigned training officers will give special attention to the problems noted in this report.
- Ways are being studied to reduce the time between the recruits' arrival and their first training day.
- Marine Corps Headquarters is reviewing a recently completed study of effectiveness of the special training branches at Parris Island. Also, the recruit management information system is now providing data useful in determining true costs and value of the special training branch.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In a May 3, 1976, letter the Chairman, Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Manpower and Personnel, requested us to study the changes announced by the Marine Corps to correct problems in recruiting and recruit training. The Chairman requested a preliminary report on our findings as soon as possible and a more detailed report later showing the effects of these changes.

Our interim report (FPCD-76-72, July 20, 1976) identified (1) policy and procedural changes to improve the recruiter force and the quality of recruits, (2) the announced changes to improve the recruit-training program and prevent abuses, and (3) statistical data relating to attrition. It also discussed the difficulty in obtaining accurate historical data due to lack of a formal management information system at the recruit depots.

Since January 1, 1973, the Marine Corps has depended on voluntary enlistments as the source of its personnel. In the past Marine Corps officials attributed numerous problems, such as sharp increases in unauthorized absences, desertions, and incidences of major crimes, to lower quality people entering the Marine Corps. The officials said the lower quality was due to irregular recruiting practices before and after January 1973 and to the restriction on the first term attrition rate in order to maintain required force levels.

Recruit training is the basic introductory and indoctrination training given to all enlisted personnel on entering military service. Recruit training is to provide an orderly transition from civilian to military life, motivation to become a dedicated and productive member of the service, and instruction in the basic skills required by all members of the military service involved. Recruit training emphasizes discipline, observance of military rules, social conduct, physical conditioning, and building self-confidence and pride in being a service member.

Male recruit training is given at Parris Island, South Carolina, and San Diego, California, recruit depots. Female recruits are trained at the Parris Island recruit depot. During fiscal year 1977, the Marine Corps plans to enter into training about 58,000 male and female recruits.

Marine Corps Headquarters is responsible for developing and monitoring all recruiting and recruit-training

programs. This task involves determining recruiting objectives by fiscal year and what resources, in terms of personnel and dollars, are required to meet their objectives. To implement the recruiting program, Marine Corps Headquarters sets forth policies and procedures for recruiting as well as establishes enlistment criteria--mental, moral, and physical. Headquarters also monitors the recruiting effort to determine how effective the program is in terms of enlisting the necessary number of qualified recruits.

In addition, Marine Corps Headquarters establishes recruit-training requirements and develops the instruction program to be used at the training depots. Headquarters is responsible for monitoring the training program to insure new recruits receive the necessary training.

Scope

We conducted the review at Marine Corps Headquarters and the San Diego Recruit Depot, San Diego, California. Our work was completed in November 1976 and concentrated on identifying the effects of changes in the recruiting and recruit-training programs. We reviewed policies, procedures, and practices relating to recruiting and recruit training; examined records, reports, and correspondence; and interviewed officials at headquarters and the depot.

CHAPTER 2

ASSESSMENT OF RECRUITING CHANGES

Since 1974 the Marine Corps has made a number of changes designed to improve its recruiting program. In our interim report, dated July 20, 1976, we described these changes, which included establishing a new recruiter control system, setting high quality goals, and developing new testing procedures. In this chapter we will identify more recent changes and the impact the changes have had.

RECENT RECRUITING PROGRAM CHANGES

Changes made by the Marine Corps

In July 1976 the Marine Corps placed the Recruit Training Depot Commanders in charge of recruiting as well as training nonprior service personnel. The six recruiting districts were split geographically--three were assigned to the Recruit Depot at San Diego, California, and three to the Parris Island Recruit Depot, South Carolina. The basic rationale for this change was that the responsibility for recruiting and training would rest with a single command.

Since the reorganization, both depots have begun to use a situation report which shows each recruiting station how its recruits are doing in recruit training and whether any were discharged and why. The report compares information collected on each recruit at the Armed Forces Examining and Entrance Station with the information collected at the recruit depot. The report shows any discrepancies in the information and indicates, in the case of discharges, where the problem or deficiency should have been detected. It identifies possible problems in the way a recruiter is performing.

Changes Implemented by the Department of Defense

In addition the Department of Defense has taken measures to improve recruiting for the All-Volunteer Force. In January 1976 the services were required to give a single mental test--the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery--as an enlistment qualification. Several versions of the test have been developed to reduce possible test compromise.

In July 1976 a four-service joint command (Military Enlistment Processing Command) assumed responsibility for

the examining stations and nonprior service entrance testing. This command functions independently of the services' recruiting commands. Department of Defense officials believe that by separating these two functions the possibility of test compromise will be greatly reduced.

As of October 1976 the entrance national agency checks on new enlistees was initiated at the examining stations rather than the depots to permit a more timely identification of individuals with disqualifying criminal records. The check generally will be completed before sending the individual to recruit training. This change should be most beneficial in checking on individuals enlisting under the delayed entry programs.

QUALITY OF MARINE CORPS RECRUITS

As cited in the interim report, the Marine Corps has taken steps to recruit higher qualified individuals. New enlistment goals, such as increasing the number of high school graduates recruited and limiting the enlistment of lower mental category (group IV) individuals, have been implemented.

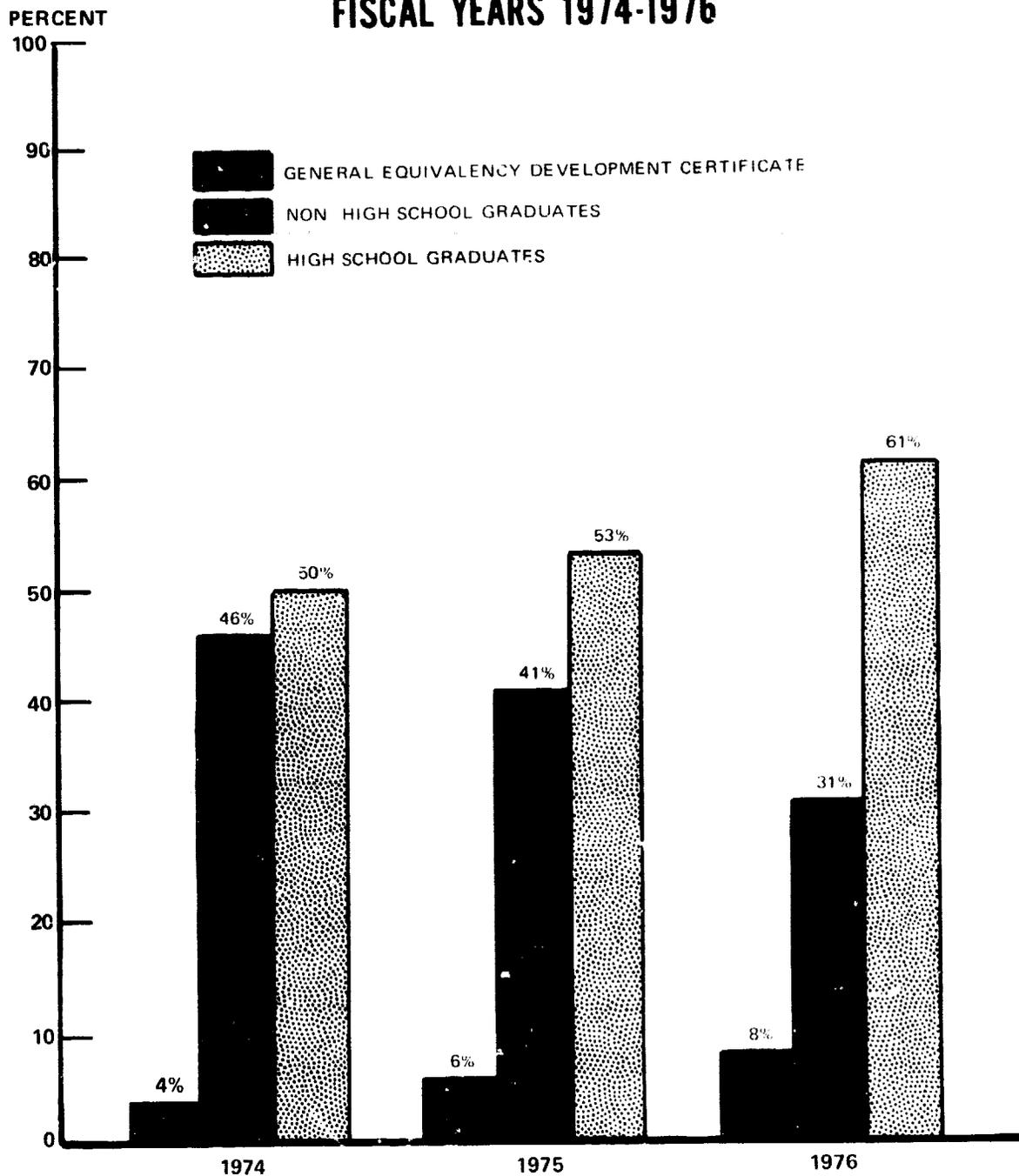
On the basis of analysis of historical data, the Marine Corps has determined generally that high school graduates are more likely to perform at a satisfactory level with less disciplinary problems than non-high school graduates. In addition, the Marine Corps has determined that an individual with a general education development certificate, which equates to a high school diploma, may not be as successful in the Marine Corps as a person with a high school diploma.

High School Graduates/Mental Groups

The level of recruits' education for fiscal years 1974-76 is shown in chart 1. The chart shows that the percentage of high school graduates has increased since fiscal year 1974. Statistics provided on mental group distribution over the past 3 fiscal years show that the percentage of mental group IVs recruited has decreased. This reflects the service's effort to meet the Department of Defense enlistment requirements of 55 percent high school graduates in fiscal year 1975 and the self-imposed goal of 67 percent in fiscal year 1976 while limiting the percentage of mental group IVs to 10 percent.

CHART 1

LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF REGULAR MALE ACCESSIONS FOR FISCAL YEARS 1974-1976



EFFECTS OF RECRUITING CHANGES

The Marine Corps provided some information which implies a positive effect of the above trends. This information showed that over the past 3 fiscal years more Marines were entering the highly technical skill fields and successfully completing training. In the past the Marine Corps had not always been successful in satisfying its technical skills needs. The number of major crimes reported by the provost marshal has also decreased from fiscal year 1975 to 1976 based on a study of criminal offenses committed in 19 major Marine Corps Commands.

In addition, Marine Corps-wide statistics on disciplinary problems (i.e., unauthorized absences, desertions, courts-martial, and confined population) decreased from fiscal year 1975 to 1976. As shown in the next chapter, the same indicators for personnel in recruit training have also shown a downward trend. (See p. 10.) Also, according to headquarters quarters officials, field commanders commented that new recruits assigned to active units have improved.

FOCUS OF RESEARCH

The Marine Corps has attempted to identify factors which determine the probability or likelihood of an individual completing his first term. Some analysis has been done to evaluate individual characteristics, i.e., age, education, economic status, and social and environmental variables.

The Center for Naval Analysis had done some analysis for the Marine Corps, looking at variables and their relationship to recruit-training attrition. These studies support the fact that education is a good predictor--high school graduates have a lower attrition rate than non-high school graduates. Age is also an important factor; older recruits have a higher attrition rate.

The Marine Corps is reviewing past studies to determine if enlistment criteria should be revised, considering the total recruiting effort. For example, if, on the basis of present standards, the service cannot meet its recruiting goals, it would not be advantageous to make enlistment criteria more stringent and therefore reduce the population of potential recruits.

In addition, the Marine Corps has recently granted contracts to three research groups to do exploratory development research, which should be completed by June 1977, on personnel attrition.

One study will look at attrition of first term enlistees in the Navy and Marine Corps, focusing on the social and organizational factors influencing attrition. Some factors to be evaluated are career opportunities in the military and civilian sectors; value placed on military training; expectations; influence of military and civilian peers; and demographic factors, i.e., age, education, economic status.

Another study will develop cost models to evaluate manpower policies affecting enlisted first term attrition. This cost analysis framework will permit the assessment of the full costs of recruiting, training, and retraining an enlisted man through at least his initial term of service. In addition, the proposed model should be able to identify the cost implications of a wide variety of policy issues concerning manpower and management.

A third study looks at the causes and costs of enlisted personnel attrition in the Navy and Marine Corps. This study will identify the individual (e.g., ability), organizational (e.g., leadership climate, job content) and environmental (e.g., availability of civilian alternatives) variables and their effects on attrition and success. Of these studies, only this one addresses the environment of military life as a factor.

In a recent report, "Student Attrition At the Five Service Academies" (FPCD-76-12, March 5, 1976), we found that an important factor in early attrition appeared to be the students' incompatibility with the military environment. Some individuals cannot or will not adapt to the disciplined military life.

CONCLUSIONS

The Marine Corps has taken measures to improve the quality of recruits. More Marines are entering highly technical skill fields and successfully completing training. In addition disciplinary problems, i.e., unauthorized absences, desertions, and courts-martial as reported by the Marine Corps, have declined since 1975.

The Marine Corps has attempted to identify factors to determine if an individual is likely to complete recruit training as well as the first enlistment. Most of this effort has been directed toward the characteristics of recruits entering the Marine Corps. In the past little work has been done to analyze the impact of the military environment surrounding new recruits and its relationship to attrition. We believe the Marine Corps needs to redirect the focus of

its research to examine if factors in the military environment contribute to attrition.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Marine Corps should be encouraged to continue its efforts to improve both the recruiting process and quality of recruits. To compliment this process we recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the Commandant of the Marine Corps to:

- Redirect much of the focus of its research to examine in depth the effects of the military and, more specifically, the recruit-training environment on attrition.

AGENCY COMMENTS

The Marine Corps agrees with our recommendation. The Marine Corps advised us that two studies were initiated recently to examine the relationship between attrition and organizational/environmental factors; to isolate as specifically as possible the positive aspects of stress; and to identify any aspects which may have an undesirable effect.

CHAPTER 3

EFFECTS OF CHANGES IN RECRUIT- TRAINING POLICIES AND PRACTICES

The Commandant of the Marine Corps announced in April 1976 a series of policy changes to improve the recruit-training program. The changes included (1) reducing the hours of instruction, (2) increasing supervision, (3) improving screening and training of commissioned and noncommissioned officers, and (4) establishing a confidential interview of all recruits during training.

To determine what effects these changes had on the program, we analyzed data on

- attrition,
- recruit disciplinary actions,
- unauthorized absences,
- desertions,
- medical treatments, and
- allegations during confidential interviews.

The indicators for the 6-month period after the changes were announced did not disclose any trends which could be attributed solely to those changes; however, it may be too early for effects to be measured.

ATTRITION RATES

During the 6-month period since the changes were announced, the attrition rate at the San Diego Recruit Depot was 13.5 percent while the rate for the same period in 1975 was 10.7 percent. There has been a small reduction in the attrition rate in recent months compared to the same months in 1975. The following chart shows the monthly attrition rate for these periods:

<u>Month</u>	<u>Attrition rate</u>		<u>Increase or decrease (-)</u>
	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	
April	25.1	31.3	6.2
May	11.4	18.4	7.0
June	6.4	10.5	4.1
July	9.1	10.3	1.2
August	8.9	8.5	-.4
September	10.9	10.1	-.8

RECRUIT DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

At the San Diego Recruit Depot, there were decreases in the number of nonjudicial punishments and courts-martial during the period April through September 1976 when compared with the same period in 1975. However, the downward trend in both cases started in mid-1975 and the number of incidents has continued at the reduced rate through 1976, as shown by the following table:

	<u>Nonjudicial punishment</u>			<u>Courts-martial</u>		
	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>Increase or decrease (-)</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>Increase or decrease (-)</u>
January	531	188	-343	3	2	-1
February	395	167	-228	6	3	-3
March	400	205	-195	6	2	-4
April	378	216	-162	13	4	-9
May	271	141	-130	6	0	-6
June	265	163	-102	0	0	0
July	212	197	-15	5	0	-5
August	247	220	-27	2	0	-2
September	262	197	-65	2	2	0
October	235	150	-85	2	3	1
November	159	105	-54	1	2	1
December	198	130	-68	1	1	0

UNAUTHORIZED ABSENCES AND DESERTIONS

The number of unauthorized absences and number of deserters at the San Diego Recruit Depot decreased from April through September 1976 compared to the same period in 1975. The downward trend in both cases started in mid-1975 or early in 1976 and the number of incidents generally has continued at the decreased levels through 1976, as shown by the following table:

	<u>Unauthorized absence over 24 hours</u>			<u>Deserter absent more than 30 days</u>		
	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>Increase or decrease (-)</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>Increase or decrease (-)</u>
January	54	23	-31	22	14	-8
February	39	10	-29	13	11	-2
March	19	33	14	18	6	-12
April	26	13	-13	19	5	-14
May	34	17	-17	5	2	-3
June	50	12	-38	9	4	-5
July	28	21	-7	9	3	-6
August	40	29	-11	6	2	-4
September	36	22	-14	10	11	1
October	37	13	-24	11	1	-10
November	25	14	-11	8	1	-7
December	37	19	-18	10	4	-6

RECRUIT MEDICAL TREATMENT

The number of recruit medical treatments fluctuated widely month to month during the past 21 months at the San Diego Recruit Depot. However, the number of treatments during the period June through September 1976 were somewhat higher than at the same time in the prior year. We could not obtain an explanation for this increase.

ALLEGATIONS DURING CONFIDENTIAL INTERVIEWS

To give recruits a chance to report maltreatment without disclosing prematurely their identity and to serve notice on drill instructors that any abuses would be hard to cover up, the Commandant announced that a confidential interview with each recruit would be conducted during the course of training. The practice was implemented during the last week in May 1976. Of 54 alleged cases of recruit abuse at San Diego Recruit Depot during the period July through September 1976, 10 were reported during the confidential interview. Of those 10, 2 were substantiated, 5 were unsubstantiated, and 3 were being investigated at the time our field work was completed.

CONCLUSION

Our analysis of certain indicators during the 6 months after the Commandant announced changes in the recruit-training program did not disclose any trends that could be related to these changes. Consequently, we could not determine any positive effects from the changes. But it may have been too early for effects of the recent changes to be known.

AGENCY COMMENTS

The Marine Corps said that in addition to the indicators shown in the report, there were fewer recruits hospitalized for psychiatric reasons and recycled for poor physical fitness at both depots for the period July through September 1976 when compared to the same period in 1975. The Marine Corps also said that about 98 percent of the recruits at both depots are qualifying now with the rifle, compared to 87 percent before the changes. Further, the Marine Corps said these improvements could be the direct result of changes in recruit-training policies and practices as well as the higher quality recruits mentioned in the report.

CHAPTER 4

NEED FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN THE RECRUIT-TRAINING PROGRAM

While a number of changes in recruit training have been initiated, there are opportunities for the Marine Corps to further improve its recruit-training program. We believe these opportunities can be realized by:

- More clearly relating program to training objectives.
- Avoiding delays in starting recruit training.
- Eliminating special training platoons which may not be needed.

MORE CLEARLY RELATING PROGRAM TO TRAINING OBJECTIVES

Recruit-training procedures are not clearly and measurably related to all training objectives. Also, administrative duties and noninstructional time are not related to attaining measurable training objectives. The San Diego Recruit Depot was not scheduling its training according to the program of instruction directed by Marine Corps Headquarters, and increased the number of training days from 77 to 79 despite headquarters disapproval.

Training experts say that sound training programs must have measurable training objectives and that content and training procedures must be clearly and measurably related to those objectives.

We reviewed the program of instruction to determine what established criteria was available to evaluate the performance compared to the learning objectives. In some cases we found that hours were scheduled for training but there was no definite criteria for measurement. For example, the learning objectives for close order drill are to execute individually or as a member of a unit all drill movements with or without arms to the drill instructor's satisfaction. Marine Corps Headquarters arbitrarily reduced the number of training hours from 60 to 45 in April 1976. However, the San Diego Recruit Depot in July 1976 scheduled 57 hours for this training. In neither case were the hours based on a test to determine the time actually needed to train recruits. The Army schedules 12 hours, the Air Force 20 hours, and the Navy 20 hours of drill in their recruit-training programs.

Marine Corps officials said there are measurable performance objectives for some subjects. For example, the recruit must attain a minimum acceptable score with the rifle and on the physical fitness test and must demonstrate a minimum acceptable level of proficiency in first aid. They said close order drill is used to move a unit in an orderly manner from one place to another, to teach discipline and instant obedience to orders, and to develop spirit in the unit. They said the precision and polish of the movements are indicative of the unit's pride, attention to instruction, competitiveness, and esprit de corps and that a drill instructor is able to judge the unit's spirit observing its drill.

The headquarters program of instruction for recruit training allows 162.5 hours of administrative time for activities such as immunizations, dental work, and laundry/cleaning turn-in and pickup. Included in administrative time is 70 hours for mess and maintenance duties. These duties consist of cleaning mess hall floors, tables, and equipment; emptying garbage cans in the mess area; and emptying waste cans in offices and polishing brass on doors in the headquarters administrative building for one week during recruit training. Administrative duties, such as mess and maintenance activities, were not related to measurable training objectives. There is no statement about how the mess and maintenance duties relate to the duties performed on the job, nor is there a measurable learning objective identifying what the learner will accomplish as a result of having been assigned to the duties.

Marine Corps officials said the week devoted to mess and maintenance accomplishes the following:

- Familiarizes the recruit with operations and functioning of a mess hall.

- Familiarizes the recruit with the various types of details that he will participate in while he is nonrated.

- Provides a source of labor for the recruit depots which precludes increases in manpower or the expenses of contracting for civilian labor.

They said the Marine Corps made no cost-benefit studies considering alternative ways of performing mess and maintenance duties.

In developing and refining its one station unit training concept the Army has used task analysis to shorten its recruit-training program from 8 to about 6 weeks. The Army designed one station unit training to reduce training time by eliminating administrative and other non-instructional time from the program of instruction. It also designed a test to show whether a soldier could be trained in critical tasks in less time and adjusted the curriculum hours as needed on the basis of test results. The Marine Corps can use techniques similar to the Army's to determine areas which should be eliminated.

The San Diego Recruit Depot has not strictly followed the headquarters program of instruction prescribed by the Marine Corps order on male recruit training. Since April 1976 Marine Corps Headquarters prescribed a program of 433.5 hours of instruction in academic subjects, performance testing, and inspections. The Depot scheduled only 399.75 hours. The Depot reduced or deleted hours of instruction in some subjects, increased hours in other subjects, and included academic subjects that were not in the headquarters program of instruction. For example, the hours for close order drill were increased from 45 to 57 hours, physical training was decreased by 16 hours, and 4 hours of military leadership training were added. Headquarters officials said the training program at the Depot should conform to the prescribed program. They said deviations can be made upon approval; however, there were no deviations approved in this case.

Although Marine Corps Headquarters did not approve a request to increase the number of training days from 77 to 79, the Depot added the extra days because of a misunderstanding. This was corrected when we called it to headquarters' attention.

AVOIDING DELAYS IN STARTING RECRUIT TRAINING

Of 160 series started into training at San Diego during the period April 1975 through September 1976, it took an average of 10.3 days to process each series (four platoons) and enter it into the training cycle. Five days are normally required to process recruits for training. In addition, there are delays in starting the recruits into the processing cycle which substantially increase recruit-training costs.

Recruits generally arrive at the depot at night and can begin processing the next morning. Processing is done in platoons, which consist of 60 to 90 men; three platoons

can begin processing daily. Four platoons make up a series which begins training together either on a Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday.

The following examples illustrate delays in processing and entry into the training cycle.

Platoon number	Number of recruits	Date of arrival	Date processing began	Date training began	Days		
					Before processing	Processing	Total
3081	85	7/30/76	8/2/76	8/16/76	2	14	16
3082	85	7/30/76	8/2/76	8/16/76	2	14	16
3083	85	7/30/76	8/3/76	8/16/76	3	13	16
3084	85	7/31/76	8/3/76	8/16/76	2	13	15

We had reported previously on the delays resulting from the Marine Corps' decision that a series consisting of four platoons begin training together. ¹/ Any platoon that is ready to begin training before any of the others in the series waits until the others are ready to begin on one of three starting days. This type of scheduling has resulted in trainee delays of about 68,000 staff-days during 1974 at a cost of \$1.5 million. We suggested that the delay could have been avoided, for example, by starting two platoons rather than waiting to start a series of four and by starting training 5 days a week rather than just 3. Marine Corps officials agreed that delays could be reduced by these methods. They stated, however, that some of the training requires the presence of the series commander and that it would be difficult for him to attend the training if platoons within a series were on different schedules. They also said that scheduling problems would be created if training began 5 days a week or if platoons within a series started on different days.

The lack of supervision may no longer be a problem because since June 1976 an additional officer has been assigned to each series. Delays prior to beginning processing can be avoided by better scheduling practices.

Officials at Marine Corps Headquarters agreed that 10 days for processing were too long, and said steps are being taken to reduce processing time. They said they are examining the feasibility of commencing training every day rather than waiting for a series to be formed.

¹/Military Training Time and Costs Should Be Reduced Through Improved Management (FPCD-76-4, Sept. 2, 1975).

ELIMINATING SPECIAL PLATOONS WHICH MAY NOT
BE NEEDED

The cost effectiveness of the special training platoons is questionable. Several high ranking Marine Corps officials have expressed concern about the need for the special training platoons; studies have been made and others are still in progress to determine if they are necessary. A high percentage of the recruits assigned to some of the platoons are discharged before graduation.

At each of the depots there is a special training branch which provides additional instruction or rehabilitation for recruits who, for academic, physical, disciplinary, or medical reasons are unable to assimilate recruit training at the normal rate. The special training branches consist of the physical conditioning platoon for overweight and understrength recruits, the correctional custody platoon for recruits with disciplinary problems, and the medical rehabilitation platoon for recruits recuperating from illness and injuries. At San Diego the branch also contains an academic proficiency platoon.

During the past 2 years Marine Corps officials have questioned the need for the special platoons, and in some cases, disestablished them. For example, on November 1, 1975, the academic proficiency platoon at Parris Island was terminated on the basis of a study which showed the program was not cost effective in relation to recruit production. Motivation platoons at both depots were disestablished in April 1976 at the direction of the Marine Corps Commandant.

A Parris Island Depot study, dated January 20, 1976, recommended (1) retaining the special training branch in its present form, (2) experimenting with variations of existing remedial training program, and (3) stressing leadership at the platoon level as an effective method of reducing the number of recruits assigned to the motivation and correctional custody platoons.

Marine Corps Headquarters staff is reviewing a recently completed study of the effectiveness of the Special Training Branch at Parris Island. Also the Recruit Information Management System is providing data which is proving useful in determining the true costs and value of the Special Training Branch.

The following chart shows the platoon population during calendar year 1975:

<u>Special platoon</u>	<u>Parris Island</u>			<u>San Diego</u>		
	<u>Number assigned</u>	<u>Number dis- charged</u>	<u>Per- cent</u>	<u>Number assigned</u>	<u>Number dis- charged</u>	<u>Per- cent</u>
Medical rehabili- tation	2372	593	25	1869	308	16
Academic profi- ciency	1029	196	19	837	42	5
Physical con- ditioning	3124	767	25	1315	144	11
Correctional custody	980	372	38	2222	533	24

There are differences in the types of remedial training offered in the Marine Corps and the other services during recruit training. The other services do not have correctional custody and medical rehabilitation platoons. The Air Force does not have a physical conditioning platoon.

A June 1976 Department of Defense report to the Secretary of Defense on preventing abuses in recruit training in the military services pointed out that in addition to differences in types of remedial training undertaken in these units, the rate of use of these units varies among the services. The report said that few recruits are assigned to these units in the other services while a high percentage of Marine Corps recruits are assigned.

The criteria for assignment to the special platoons at the San Diego Recruit Depot is as follows:

- Recruits who score at or below the 5th grade 5th month reading level, on the basis of a reading test administered to every recruit whose general classification test or general technical test score is below 110, will be assigned to the academic proficiency platoon for 4 weeks of reading instruction.
- Recruits who are either obese or fail to achieve one-half pull-up on the initial physical fitness test are assigned to the physical conditioning platoon.
- Recruits are assigned to the correctional custody platoon for infractions of the Uniform Code of Military Justice on the basis of company or battalion commander's nonjudicial punishment proceedings.

--Navy medical officers assign recruits to the medical rehabilitation platoon when the recruit has a temporary disability which prevents him from continuing training or is recovering from illness or surgery.

The Marine Corps can consider alternative criteria in testing potential recruits which would eliminate the need for certain platoons. For example, an alternative to the physical conditioning platoon would be to establish minimum physical fitness performance levels before a recruit entered the service. There are established minimum and maximum weight standards which must be met before an examining physician at the Armed Forces Entrance Examining Station can consider a recruit physically qualified. However, an official told us there are no minimum physical fitness levels for entry into the Marine Corps. We noted that the service academies use a test to measure candidates' physical aptitude. A reading test could also be administered as part of the entrance examinations and minimum qualifying levels could be established.

RECRUIT TRAINING MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

On December 7, 1976, the Marine Corps implemented a recruit training management information system to assist in identifying trends and correcting problems in the program. The system provides for gathering, analyzing, and providing feedback of information to the depots on alleged abuse cases, deaths, injuries, stress fractures, special training branch strengths, recruit strengths, and unauthorized absences. The first report from the Marine Corps Commandant to the depot commanders was issued in December 1976. In addition, the Marine Corps has reported to the Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Manpower and Personnel on allegations of abuse and injuries.

CONCLUSIONS

The Marine Corps needs to critically reexamine its recruit-training program and to take action where improvements can be made. The training curriculum should be based on measurable training objectives and the training content and procedures should be clearly and measurably related to those objectives. Periodic inspections should be made to make sure the prescribed training program is being followed.

We believe the opportunity exists to reduce substantially the time recruits spend at the recruit-training depots. Action should be taken to eliminate delays in

beginning training. Unnecessary or excessive training should be deleted from the program of instruction. To achieve these savings, Marine Corps officials can utilize the Army's experience in substantially reducing its recruit-training program.

The Marine Corps should reexamine its use of special platoons at the depots and determine whether they should be terminated. Continuing the platoons should be on the basis of a determination of their cost effectiveness compared to other alternatives. The Marine Corps should consider the experience of the other services in determining the need for each special platoon.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the Commandant of Marine Corps to:

- Establish a recruit-training program more fully based on measurable training objectives and require the content and training procedures to relate to those objectives. Unnecessary content should be eliminated and the program shortened accordingly.
- Require periodic inspections to be sure that the actual training conforms to the prescribed program.
- Start processing recruits without delay and start platoons into training immediately after processing.
- Reevaluate the need to continue each of the special training platoons.

AGENCY COMMENTS

The Marine Corps generally agreed with our recommendations and said actions were underway which relate to our recommendations. However, the Marine Corps did not fully agree with our finding that recruit-training procedures were not clearly and measurably related to training objectives.

Also the Marine Corps did not agree that administrative and noninstructional time was meant to and should be made to relate directly to training objectives; however, it agreed this time should be reduced and said action is underway to accomplish a significant reductions.

The Marine Corps advised us it was taking the following actions with regard to the other recommendations:

- During the biennial Inspector General inspections of the depots, which are scheduled at San Diego in February 1977 and at Parris Island in December 1977, special attention will be given to problem areas noted in this report and training officers will be assigned to the inspection teams.
- The headquarters has initiated a study to find out the best method to process the recruits without delay and to start the platoons into training immediately after processing. Every effort will be made to reduce the time between the recruits' arrival at a depot and the first training date.
- The present plans call for retaining the physical conditioning, correctional custody, and medical rehabilitation platoons; however, headquarters is presently reviewing a recently completed study of the effectiveness of the special training branch at Parris Island, and an evaluation of the academic proficiency platoon is being conducted at San Diego. In addition, the Recruit Information Management System is now providing data which is proving useful in determining the true costs and value of the special training branch.

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

May 3, 1976

Honorable Elmer B. Staats
 Comptroller General of the United States
 Washington, D. C.

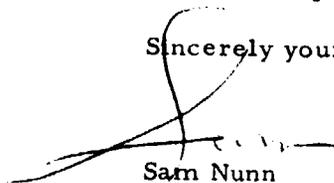
Dear Mr. Staats:

The Manpower and Personnel Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee is concerned with reported problems in Marine Corps recruiting and recruit training policies and practices. To assist us in reviewing these matters, we request that you perform a study of changes announced in this area which are designed to correct these problems.

The study in the recruiting area should address changes made to improve the quality of individuals entering the Marine Corps. Work in the recruit training area should address the implementation of recently announced changes designed to correct alleged abuses. Statistical data should be obtained where available to show trends and the effects of these changes.

A preliminary report on your findings is requested before the end of June 1976 and a more detailed report measuring the effects of these changes should be provided to the Committee by January 1977. Mr. Frank Sullivan of the Committee staff is available to discuss this request in more detail. The details of our request are enclosed.

Sincerely yours,



Sam Nunn
 Chairman, Subcommittee
 on Manpower and Personnel

Enclosure

Recruiting

1. Describe policy changes made by the Marine Corps since FY 1974 relating to recruiter standards and performance and the personnel he recruits.
2. Describe the mental testing of recruits policy and the changes that were made since FY 1974.
3. Describe the recruiting of high school graduates and the policy changes made since FY 1974.
4. Verify whether all recruits are given two physical and two mental tests, one at the Armed Forces Entrance and Examining Station and another at basic training. Describe the different test results.
5. Obtain statistical data and analyse for trends, including
 - A. Test and retest results.
 - B. Numbers and percent of high school graduates.
 - C. Other applicable measures of the quality of recruits.

Note: The data will be shown quarterly for FY 1974, 1973 and 1972 if it is available.

Recruit training

1. Describe the recent policy changes announced by the Commandant and how they have been implemented by the training establishment.
2. Show any results of such changes that are observed.
3. Compare the program of instruction (POI) before and after the announced changes. Show intensity of training (numbers of hours each day in training, physical stress, mental stress and other measures).
4. Describe the actual supervision of recruit training in terms of numbers of DIs and officers present during each phase of training.
5. Obtain certain statistical data and analyse for trends.
 - A. Attrition during recruit training by reason.
 - B. Reports of complaints or abuses.
 - C. Deaths and injuries during training.
 - D. Expeditious discharges.

Note: This data will be shown quarterly for FY 1975 to present and annually prior to FY 1975.