

# The Role of the Delayed Entry Program in Recruiting the All-Volunteer Force

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**PHOTO CREDITS (clockwise from upper left)**

*Air Force:* Members of the 364<sup>th</sup> Recruiting Squadron Delayed Entry Program (DEP) march out Aug. 30 to the Travis Air Force Base airfield in California to be part of the largest DEP swear-in ceremony to date. Thunderbirds Commander Lt Col Greg Thomas administered the oath of enlistment before more than 80,000 air show spectators. (U.S. Air Force photo by SSgt Justin Gress) (RELEASED)


*Army:* Fort Carson, CO. Fifty future Armed Forces servicemembers, including 27 Army recruits, prepare to recite the Oath of Enlistment during Military Appreciation Day at the Pepsi Center in Denver on Apr. 18, 2012. Approximately 400 soldiers received free tickets to the event that featured 50 servicemembers reciting the Oath of Enlistment during halftime. (U.S. Army photo by SSG Andrew Porch 2<sup>nd</sup> BCT PAO) (RELEASED)

*Marine Corps:* Twenty men and women from the Boston area swear an Oath of Enlistment into the Marine Corps in front of thousands at Fenway Park on May 3, 2010, during the park's Marine Appreciation Day festivities. (Photo by Sgt Michael S. Cifuentes) (RELEASED)

*Navy:* Denver, CO. RADM Albert Garcia III, 1<sup>st</sup> Naval Construction Division, speaks with local area DEP members from Navy Recruiting District Denver, before forming up to march in the Cinco de Mayo parade. Navy Week Denver is 1 of 20 such weeks planned this year in cities throughout the United States, arranged by the Navy Office of Community Outreach. (U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Air Warfare Lisa Aman) (RELEASED)

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## **Executive summary**

Throughout the 40-year history of the All-Volunteer Force (AVF), the services have refined policies and practices to ensure that their Delayed Entry Program (DEP) inventories provide a predictable flow of high-quality recruits to their entry-level training establishments. Recent economic conditions have created strong recruiting conditions with unprecedented recruit quality and large DEP inventories. This study explores whether the recent management of these large DEPs has resulted in DEP practice innovations and how DEP practices compare across services. Sharing these innovations and comparative practices could lead to a more efficient Department of Defense (DOD) recruiting effort.

## **Methodology**

The study team began by reviewing the laws and regulations that govern the DEP, recent DEP studies, and reports of any recent DEP lawsuits or irregularities. These reviews revealed that substantive regulation of DEP activities occurs at a relatively low level in the service recruiting commands. This is the level at which we chose to focus our data collection and analysis. We interviewed recruiters and subject matter experts at the battalion (Army), squadron (Air Force), district (Navy), and station (Marine Corps) levels and below, and also gleaned information from interviews conducted at this same level for this and a concurrent CNA study. We complemented this field data collection and qualitative analysis with quantitative analysis of service DEP and accession data.

## **Pre-enlistment DEP practices**

Many determinants of an applicant's enlistment success are set before he or she enters the DEP. Recruiter selection and training, applicant quality and screening, recruiter-applicant relationships, and influencer involvement are all critical to a DEP member's success, yet they are determined mostly before an applicant enters the DEP.

Field recruiting officials from all services described a demanding operating environment that requires thorough screening and careful selection of prospective recruiters, as well as substantial professional rewards for those who succeed. It is not possible to screen out all people who are not ideally suited for recruiting, but officials emphasize the need for screening refinements and assignment priority that ensure that the “best and brightest” represent the services in their greatest exposure to the American public.

Developing a quality DEP begins with prospecting for quality applicants who are rigorously screened for aptitude, education, physical and moral fitness, and commitment to service. Recently, the services have held quality well above the DOD standards of 60-percent aptitude category I–IIIA (50<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher on the Armed Forces Qualification Test) and 90-percent high school diploma graduates, and report approving fewer enlistment waivers than in more typical recruiting conditions. These expectations for high standards have been complemented by innovative screening procedures, including the following:

- Marine Corps and Army recruiters report checking applicant Facebook pages for obvious signs of disqualification (e.g., weight, tattoos, and discussion of problems with education, drugs, or law enforcement).
- Army, Air Force, and Navy recruiters report using credit checks to preclude assigning enlistment programs requiring security clearances to applicants with financial problems.
- Army, Navy, and Marine Corps recruiters use a field non-instrumented drug test to screen out applicants who would fail the official test at a Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS). The Air Force expressly prohibits recruiters from administering any field drug tests.
- The Marine Corps requires applicants to pass the initial strength test before going to the MEPS.
- Army recruiters report using the Federal Bureau of Investigation Live Scan capability to conduct quick-turn-around fingerprint checks so that police involvement can be uncovered early in the enlistment process.

Each of these innovations improves recruiting efficiency and helps ensure a higher quality DEP.

Establishing good recruiter-applicant relationships with early influencer involvement is fundamental to maintaining a DEP member's commitment while he or she remains in the DEP. The Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps all maintain a traditional recruiter-applicant relationship model: the recruiter is solely responsible for the applicant from prospecting through accession. The Army, however, has adopted a new recruiting model (termed Small Unit Recruiting–SUR) with a division of labor in which the relationship with the applicant is passed from a support team that prospects, to an engagement team that interviews and sells, back to the support team that processes, and then to the Future Soldier Leader who leads and manages the Future Soldier in the DEP. The Army reports early success with this approach, but it is formally studying the efficiency and effectiveness of this new model.

## **Post-enlistment DEP practices**

Applicants are typically excited about enlisting, but this excitement ebbs and flows during their DEP stays. The recruiting chain of command can sustain a high level of DEP member commitment through effective “welcome aboard” procedures, recruiter contact, DEP activities, and—when appropriate—DEP discharges. Command-level oversight and supervision also affect the preparation of DEP members and their continued commitment to serve.

All services have structured welcome-aboard procedures for new DEP members but do differ notably in the title they give to these new members. The Army and Navy refer to new DEP members as “Future Soldiers” and “Future Sailors,” whereas the Marine Corps and Air Force use more generic titles, such as “poolees” or “DEPers.” Marine Corps recruiters, in particular, feel that the title “Marine” should be reserved for those who have completed bootcamp.

Service recruiting officials all agreed that maintaining quality contact with DEP members is the most important aspect of DEP management. As a result, they have established weekly and monthly contact requirements for both in-person and telephonic (including other electronic means) contact. Text messaging is widely used by

most recruiters and DEP members to stay in touch and pass along information. Marine Corps recruiters use a Facebook page for DEP members and recruiters to exchange information and coordinate attendance at DEP activities. Marine Corps recruiters also check poolees' Facebook pages for any indications of poor conduct.

All services use their regularly scheduled DEP activities to prepare DEP members for bootcamp and conduct continuous screening. The biggest differences in DEP activities are with physical training and DEP referrals. At one end of the spectrum, the Navy has highly prescriptive provisions for conducting physical training, largely driven by several Future Sailor deaths in recent years. The Marine Corps' focus on maximizing physical fitness and meeting DEP members' expectations for challenge have resulted in wide local discretion for conducting rigorous physical training at DEP activities.

Although all services expect their DEP members to refer new applicants to their recruiters, the Air Force is the only service that does not provide incentives to do so, providing Air Force referrals is an expected part of being in its DEP.

## Empirical analysis

We find fairly consistent differences in the length of the average DEP stay. The Marine Corps and Navy have the longest DEP stays; the Army has the shortest.

Consistent with the existing literature, we find that longer time in DEP is associated with two attrition trends:

- Higher DEP attrition
- Lower active-duty attrition

Although we found that recruiting personnel were aware of the relationship between length of DEP stay and DEP attrition, it was not always clear that they understood the relationship between the length of one's stay in DEP and active-duty attrition. Discussing the impact of the length of the DEP stay on in-service attrition rates at the USMEPCOM/Services Stakeholders' Conference would help to ensure that recruiting service leaders have a more complete picture of the impact of DEP on recruit success.



# Introduction

This year (2013) marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the U.S. military draft and the move to an All-Volunteer Force (AVF), which is an impressive milestone for three reasons:

1. The services' ability to support the nation's defense needs through the volunteerism of its citizenry reflects a significant commitment to the country.
2. The nation has been at war for the past decade but still can create the force necessary in times of conflict.
3. The nation's volunteer military is more highly qualified than at any other time in U.S. history.

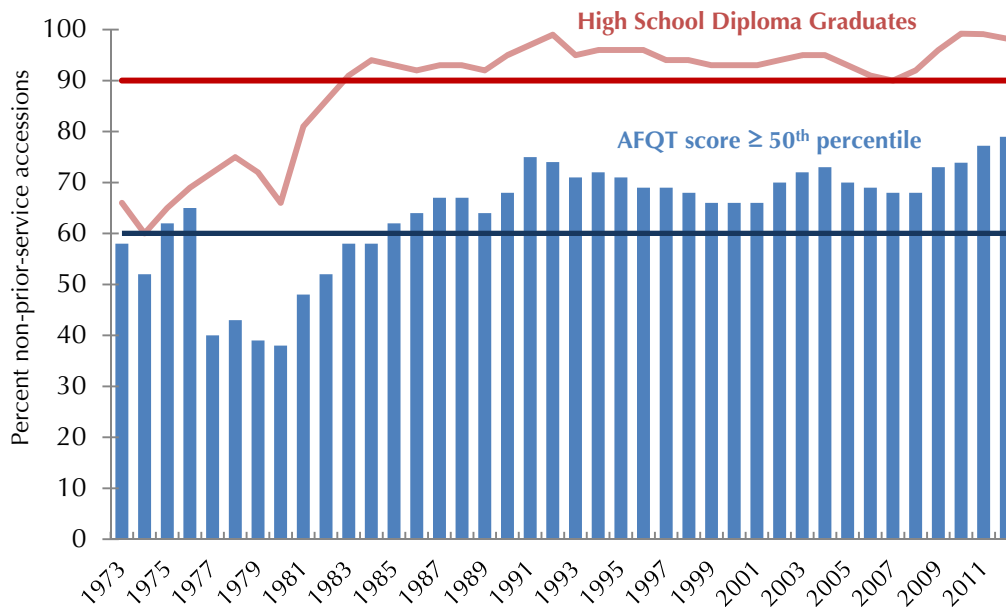
The military is composed of volunteers who are, in large measure, directly influenced to serve by the services' recruiters. Indeed, Army General Maxwell Thurman, generally credited with saving the AVF in the 1980s, preferred to call it the "All-Recruited Force" [1].

Recruiting strategies have evolved over time with the increasing ubiquity of the internet and instant-messaging capabilities. In addition, the number of interested and eligible youth changes dramatically with economic trends and unemployment fluctuations. Family culture, world events, and socio-demographic changes also play a role in the level of ease or difficulty that recruiters face in meeting their recruit quality and quantity goals. Recruiting is the heart of the AVF; if that fails, the AVF fails. This is evident in the importance that the services place on their recruiting commands and recruiting forces.

Recruiting has become less challenging with the economic downturn, but the services have used this time to focus on increasing the percentage of high-quality recruits. In fact, the number of recruits with Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) scores at or above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile and with high school diplomas exceeded DOD benchmarks in Fiscal Year 2012 (FY12) significantly, and the number was higher than any time since the AVF's inception in 1973. Across the services, 79 percent of all recruits scored in the upper half of the

AFQT, and virtually all were high school diploma graduates (see figure 1). This achievement is even more noteworthy given that only about 25 percent of age-eligible youth meet baseline recruiting standards.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 1. Enlisted recruit quality and DOD benchmarks, 1973–2012



Note: The horizontal lines represent DOD benchmarks for AFQT and education.

Source: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (OUSD) (Personnel & Readiness (P&R))/Military Personnel Policy(MPP).

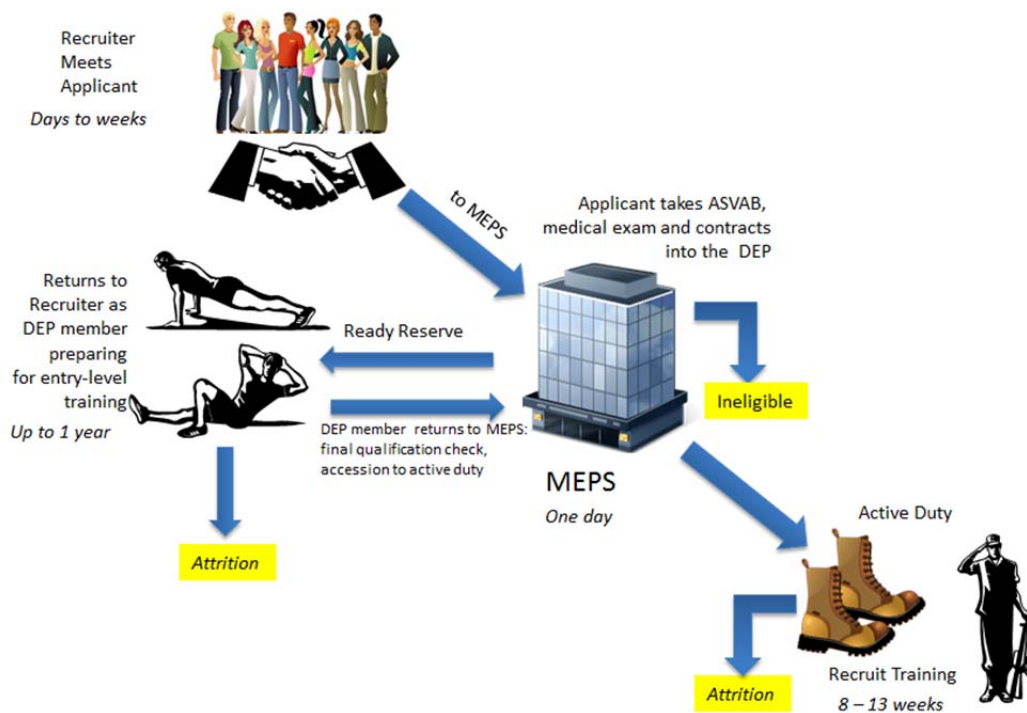
## Delayed Entry Program (DEP) overview

One important aspect of sustaining the AVF is the use of the DEP and the management of its members.<sup>2</sup> The DEP is a central component of

1. See Population Representation Report, 2011 at <http://ngycp/poprep/2011/index.html>
2. A person is called a “prospect” after speaking with a recruiter. If found to be generally qualified for service, he or she is known as an “applicant” and becomes a “DEP member” on entry to the DEP. Each service refers to its DEP members differently: “Future Soldiers” (Army), “Future Sailors” (Navy), “poolees” (Marine Corps), and “DEPers” (Air Force). DEP members become recruits when they access into active duty and ship to basic training.

all military services' recruiting processes and is central to the services predictably meeting their weekly, monthly, and yearly accession requirements. All non-prior service (NPS) applicants sign a contract into the DEP as part of the Ready Reserve, for up to 365 days. Later, when DEP members ship to basic training, they are accessed (enlisted) into active duty. These two enlistment-processing actions—contracting into the DEP and accessing into active duty—are key steps in the enlistment process (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. The enlistment process



The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) is a series of 8 tests measuring math, verbal, and other cognitive abilities. The AFQT is derived from the math and verbal ASVAB subtests.

The recruiting process begins with recruiters searching for and meeting prospects. Following initial qualification screening and a sales presentation to prospects and their families (and assuming they wish to enlist), the prospects visit 1 of 65 Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPSs) nationwide for a day to complete aptitude testing, physical examinations, and other screening and administrative actions. At the end of the MEPS visit, if the applicants are qualified,

they sign enlistment contracts that place them into the DEP. DEP members then work with their recruiters to prepare themselves physically, mentally, and administratively for accession and shipment to basic training installations at some future-designated date. When their planned accession date arrives, DEP members return to the MEPS for final screening before being accessed. At several points in this process, a DEP member may attrite or be deemed ineligible.

The DEP's primary purpose is to enable the services to maintain an inventory of qualified recruits—distributed across the weeks and months of each fiscal year—to meet future accession requirements. The seasonal nature of recruiting is a well-established phenomenon. As a new market of soon-to-be high school seniors becomes available in late May or early June, conditions for achieving recruiting (contracting) goals are generally most favorable. These young applicants, however, are not available for accession until the following summer when they have graduated from high school. Accession requirements in the nearer term must be met by accessing those not still in high school. The enlistment of graduated applicants has historically become increasingly difficult as the recruiting cycle proceeds through the winter and spring months, by which time the newest graduates have found employment or are enrolled in college. Therefore, the DEP allows the services to compensate for these seasonal market conditions by “stockpiling” recruits in especially fruitful weeks and months throughout each year so that weekly, monthly, and, ultimately, yearly accession requirements can be achieved with predictability.<sup>3</sup>

To varying degrees, the services' recruiting commands try to provide a relatively even flow of new recruits to the basic training installations. Because it is impractical for these installations to take all recruits in the summer months, it makes sense to “level load” shipments of

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3. Note that some applicants ship to recruit training in the same month in which they sign their enlistment contracts. In the mid-2000s, when the Army was struggling to achieve its recruiting goals, it offered a “direct ship” bonus. Direct ship recruits are more common in the Army than in the other services: since FY05, direct ships have represented 14 percent of Army accessions, 5 percent of Marine Corps accessions, 2 percent of Navy accessions, and 1 percent of Air Force accessions.

recruits in a way that efficiently synchronizes with training classroom size, authorized numbers of instructors, and scheduling constraints, as well as other logistical concerns. The Marine Corps is an exception to this; it accesses nearly one-half of its recruits in the summer months.

The DEP serves other important purposes that benefit both the services and DEP members. These benefits can be categorized as shipment planning, training preparation, and referral networking.

Shipment planning involves the completion of administrative actions needed for accession. For the service, this includes collection of vital documents and initiation of background checks to ensure that the DEP member is eligible for a security clearance. For the DEP member, shipment planning may include completing high school, giving an employer adequate notice of his or her intention to quit a current job, or allowing time to settle family matters before leaving for training.

Training preparation may involve preparing entry-level DEP members physically and mentally for the challenges of training and their transition to military life. Such activities as physical training, basic academic instruction, and orientation to military life help ensure that DEP members arrive ready to succeed at entry-level training. The benefits to the member and the service are obvious: DEP members are better prepared, and the services have positioned themselves to minimize entry-level training attrition. Furthermore, previous research suggests that a longer DEP stay is correlated with lower in-service attrition (see [2] and [3]). Our research, reported later in this paper, further supports these findings.

Referral networking involves using DEP members to assist recruiters in finding additional qualified prospects. Referrals from DEP members are critical in generating recruiter “leads” for the services, and generally account for 10 to 30 percent of all enlistments.<sup>4</sup> DEP members often are rewarded for these referrals with incentives.

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4. This range represents a consensus among the interviewed recruiters and recruiting officials.

## Legal and regulatory governance of the DEP

Section 513 of Title 10, United States Code, establishes the legal basis for the DEP, allowing the services to enlist applicants into the Ready Reserve for up to 365 days while they await accession into the active force and shipment to entry-level training. The services are authorized to extend this period an additional 365 days if it is in the best interest of the armed forces. However, neither statutory authority nor DOD regulatory guidance prescribes what kinds of activities are permitted or expressly forbidden in DEP management and leadership.

References to the DEP in various DOD directives and instructions are incidental, and no single document focuses exclusively and comprehensively on the DEP. For example:

- DOD Instruction (DODI) 1304.25, *Fulfilling the Military Service Obligation (MSO)*, indicates that an applicant's DEP time counts toward fulfillment of a member's overall service obligation;
- DODI 1235.14, *Administration and Management of the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) and the Inactive National Guard (ING)*, acknowledges the DEP as part of the larger reserve component but exempts it from the formal screening requirements;
- DODI 1300.18, *DOD Personnel Casualty Matters, Policies, and Procedures*, leaves casualty reporting for DEP members to the services' discretion; and
- DODI 1332.14, *Enlisted Administrative Separations*, discusses the service secretaries' authority to separate DEP members.

Regarding DEP separations, the armed forces technically have the authority to hold a DEP member to his or her enlistment contract and call to active duty anyone who signs a contract but fails to report to entry-level training. This provision is in each enlistment contract. However, it is not in the best interest of either the service or the individual to coerce him or her to enlist, so DODI 1332.14 states that:

“[a] person who is in the [DEP] may be separated because of ineligibility for enlistment under standards prescribed by the Secretary concerned or upon his or her request when authorized by the Secretary concerned.”

Substantive guidance and regulation of DEP activities begin largely at the service recruiting command level, becoming progressively more prescriptive and detailed at lower command levels. There are differences in how the services manage and lead their DEP members, but the consistent theme across almost all DEP policies and practices is the need to minimize avoidable DEP attrition. DEP attrition has been a notoriously difficult challenge for all of the services, and it is driven largely by constantly changing dynamics in the lives of DEP members. For example, members may fail to graduate from high school, incur injuries, find themselves in trouble with the law, decide to attend college, find civilian jobs that are too enticing to give up, or simply lose interest in military service altogether. However, to the extent that those who attrite from the DEP would perhaps have done so from entry-level training, DEP attrition could be beneficial for both the individual and the services.

## Methodology

To understand the DEP’s role in the recruiting process, the study team had many discussions with recruiters and commanders at the services’ field recruiting commands, listed below:

- Army
  - Alexandria Recruiting Center (VA)
  - Harrisburg Recruiting Battalion (PA)
  - Miami Recruiting Battalion (FL)
  - Kansas City Recruiting Battalion (MO)
  - Cleveland Recruiting Battalion (OH)
  - Los Angeles Recruiting Battalion (CA)
- Navy
  - Navy Recruiting District Richmond (VA)
  - Navy Recruiting District Chicago (IL)

- Navy Recruiting District Houston (TX)
- Navy Recruiting District Los Angeles (CA)
- Air Force
  - 317<sup>th</sup> Recruiting Squadron (Oxon Hill, MD)
  - 332<sup>d</sup> Recruiting Squadron (Nashville, TN)
  - 339<sup>th</sup> Recruiting Squadron (Clinton Township, MI)
  - 343<sup>d</sup> Recruiting Squadron (Offutt Air Force Base, NE)
  - 369<sup>th</sup> Recruiting Squadron (Encino, CA)
- Marine Corps
  - Recruiting Station Frederick (MD)

We also met with a variety of headquarters recruiting personnel at the Marine Corps Recruiting Command Headquarters in Quantico, VA and at the U.S. Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) in Fort Knox, KY.

At each of these locations, we held discussions with recruiting officials who have a wide range of experience, many of whom are able to speak more generally about their service because their assignment histories go beyond their current locations.

We also drew on information gleaned from teleconferences conducted for a concurrent CNA study, *Assessing the Timing, Employment, and Effectiveness of Enlistment Levers*. Most of the questions addressed a different topic, but we were able to identify information relevant to DEP practices. These teleconferences included personnel from Army recruiting stations, Navy recruiting districts, Air Force recruiting squadrons, and Marine Corps recruiting stations.

Our initial focus was to identify best practices for DEP management, both in minimizing DEP attrition and in preparing recruits to be successful at entry-level training. It soon became apparent, however, that differences in each service's contracting and accession processes, as well as differences in policy, prescribed the role of the DEP for each service. Due to a dearth of written material on service-specific policies, the importance of describing and contrasting service contracting and accession processes became apparent. Determining



and propagating successful recruiter- and service-level DEP practices—particularly those that maximize the effectiveness of the DEP—will benefit all services. Moreover, if the Navy has a practice that enhances DEP performance, sharing that practice with the other services will not diminish its effectiveness for the Navy.

Overall, there is much commonality among the services in DEP practices and policies, but there are also significant differences. One such difference that results in different DEP practices is the proportions of DEP members who are still in high school. High school students need to stay in the DEP until they complete high school, while graduates usually want to access as soon as possible. This mix affects the time spent in DEP and when applicants ship to entry-level training. There are also philosophical or policy differences. For example, the Marine Corps is willing to accept greater risk of injury by rigorously preparing DEP members for the physical demands of bootcamp. The Navy is at the other end of the spectrum, with highly prescriptive provisions for how physical activities can be conducted in the DEP.

Thus, to best understand DEP practices, we (with the research sponsor's consent) broadened the study scope and analyzed each service's recruiting processes and the role that the DEP plays in those processes. Later in the paper, we estimate DEP attrition and how length of time in the DEP affects active-duty attrition.

## **Role of the economy**

The current economic climate provides a unique opportunity to examine DEP practices across the services. The percentage of the year's accession requirement that is in the DEP on October 1 is called the "start pool." In FY08, when the unemployment rate was still relatively low, the Army's start pool was only 9 percent (see table 1).<sup>5</sup> However, as economic conditions deteriorated and unemployment rose in FY10, start pools increased for all services. All services are

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5. This low start pool was also likely related to the Army having to draw from its pool to support "surge" requirements for Operation Enduring Freedom.

fortunate to have begun each of the last four years with sizable start pools.

Table 1. Start pools by service

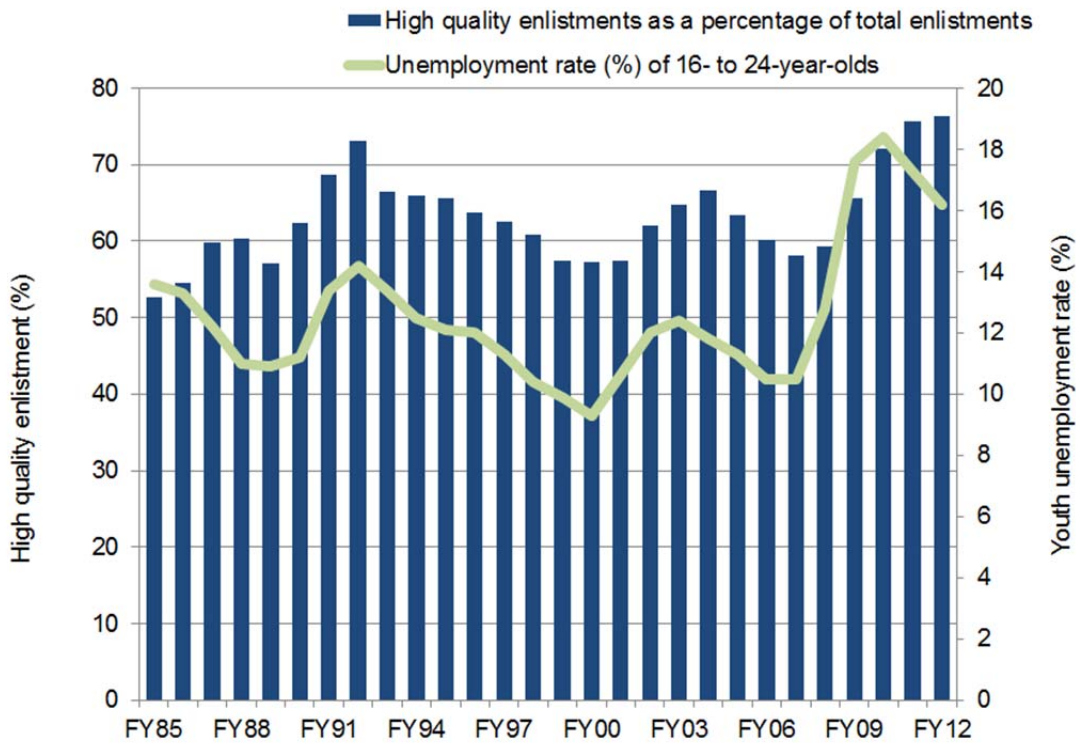
<b>Service</b>	<b>FY08</b>	<b>FY09</b>	<b>FY10</b>	<b>FY11</b>	<b>FY12</b>	<b>FY13</b>
Army	9%	17%	44%	50%	58%	40%
Navy	48%	50%	68%	59%	57%	48%
Air Force	35%	36%	38%	35%	34%	34%
Marine Corps	40%	41%	52%	63%	61%	54%
Unemployment rate (16- to 24-year-olds)	12.8%	17.6%	18.4%	17.3%	16.2%	16.4%

Note: FY13 unemployment rate through July 2013.

Source: OUSD, P&R, Directorate of Accession Policy.

The importance of the state of the civilian economy, although beyond the control of the services, cannot be overemphasized, and the direct relationship is well-documented [4]. Recruiting is more difficult when the economy is robust and civilian unemployment is low, and it is less difficult when the economy is stagnant and unemployment is high. Figure 3 illustrates the positive relationship between the unemployment rate and recruit quality.

Figure 3. The unemployment rate and high-quality recruits, FY85-FY12



Note: High-quality recruits are high school diploma graduates who score in the upper half of the AFQT.

Source: OUSD, P&R, Population Representation Report FY12, forthcoming.

In recent years, a lagging economy and reduced recruiting goals have led to smaller recruiting budgets. Funds for advertising, enlistment bonuses, and recruiting operations have fallen significantly. Cuts were to be expected; the danger is that, when the economy improves and unemployment falls, a lag in the restoration of these budgets will cause the services to be poorly positioned to address a more challenging recruiting environment. In such a case, the services will face inadequate start pools and a shortage of recruiters—especially those with experience in recruiting in a strong civilian economy.<sup>6</sup>

6. The services, in general, have been concerned about the ability of today’s recruiters (many of whom have spent their entire careers in a historically atypical recruiting environment) to adapt quickly to more typical and challenging recruiting conditions.

Identifying and assessing recruiter-level DEP practices now can prepare leadership to transition to a strategy of minimizing attrition in the DEP, and maximizing the program's effectiveness when the economy improves.

# Organization and mission assignment

## Service organizational structure

Although there are basic similarities among the services, each has organized its recruiting organization somewhat differently:

- The Air Force Recruiting Service (AFRS), commanded by a brigadier general (O-7), divides Air Force recruiting into three geographic groups: Northeast, South, and West/North-Central.
- U.S. Army Recruiting Command (USAREC), commanded by a major general (O-8) with a deputy commander (brigadier general [O-7]), divides Army recruiting into five geographic brigades: Northeast, Southeast, North Central, South Central, and West.
- The Navy Recruiting Command (NRC) and the Marine Corps Recruiting Command (MCRC), both headed by an O-7 or O-8, divide the country into two parts: Navy Recruiting Region - East (NRR-East) and NRR-West, and Marine Corps Eastern Recruiting Region (ERR) and Western Recruiting Region (WRR).<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, in the Navy, the recruiting commander reports through the three-star personnel organization, the Chief of Naval Personnel. In both the Army and Air Force, the recruiting commanders report through a four-star command: the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) for the Army, and the Air Education and Training Command (AETC) for the Air Force. The Marine Corps is the only service in which the recruiting commander reports directly to the service chief. Reporting directly to the Commandant

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7. In the Marine Corps, the generals heading the ERR and WRR are dual-hatted as commanders of the recruit training depots that are aligned with each recruiting region.

of the Marine Corps provides MCRC with additional leverage in both policy and budgetary matters.

Table 2 illustrates the organizational structure of recruiting for each service and shows the rank of the commanders at each level.

Table 2. Organizational structure for each service's recruiting command

Service command	Commander	Component and rank of commander <sup>a</sup>			
Air Force Recruiting Service (AFRS)	Brigadier General (O-7)	3 Recruiting Groups (RGs). Commanders are O-6s.	Each RG is divided into 8 Recruiting Squadrons (RSs). <sup>b</sup> Commanders are O-5s.	Each RS is divided into flights led by senior enlisted airmen	Recruiter locations
Number of units	1	3	27	184	1,050
United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC)	Major General (O-8) (Deputy Commander (O-7))	5 Recruiting Brigades. Commanders are O-6s.	Each brigade is divided into 7-8 battalions. Commanders are O-5s.	Each battalion is divided into 5-8 companies. Commanders are O-3s.	Each company is divided into 5-10 recruiting centers that are led by senior soldiers.
Number of units	1	5	35-40	250+	Numerous
Marine Corps Recruiting Command (MCRC)	Brigadier or Major General (O-7 or O-8)	Eastern Recruiting Region (ERR) and Western Recruiting Region (WRR). Commanders are O-7s.	Each region is divided into 3 Marine Corps Districts (MCDs). Commanders are O-6s.	Each MCD is divided into 8 Marine Corps Recruiting Stations (MCRSs). Commanders are O-4s.	Each MCRS is divided into 9-14 recruiting sub-stations (RSSs) that are led by senior enlisted Marines.
Number of units	1	2	6	48	500+
Navy Recruiting Command (NRC)	Rear Admiral (O-7)	Navy Recruiting Region East and Navy Recruiting Region West. Commanders are O-6s.	Each region is divided into 13 Navy Recruiting Districts (NRDs). Commanders are O-5s.	Each NRD is divided into 5-10 divisions. Each is led by a division leading chief petty officer (DLCPO).	Each division divided into 5-7 Navy Recruiting Stations (NRSs). Each is led by a station leading petty officer (SLPO).
Number of units	1	2	26	65-130	About 1,500

a. The number of units is not always precisely described. In those cases, we provide our best estimate.

b. The Air Force has an additional RS that is responsible only for recruiting enlisted and officer health professionals.

## Mission assignment

Recruiting commands have both yearly contracting and accession/shipping missions. In the services' recruiting commands, these missions are assigned, monitored, and executed at different command levels. Although contracting and shipping missions may seem far removed from a DEP study, they are important to understand because they affect how recruiters can manage their DEPs. In general:

- Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps recruiters, with some significant differences among them, focus on both their contracting and accession missions;
- Army recruiters are responsible for the gross contracting mission; and
- All services support, to varying degrees, their contracting and accession missions with job guarantee programs.

### **Navy: Recruiters' accession and contracting missions**

Each August, the Navy holds a "goaling conference" to distribute contracting and accession missions for the next fiscal year to the 13 Navy Recruiting Districts (NRDs) in each Navy Recruiting Region. With the aid of a goal-planning matrix, a review of each NRD's historical success in each mission category, and considerable discussion, each NRD is assigned a monthly gross enlistment-contracting mission and a projected monthly accession mission. The gross contracting mission includes the net new enlistment contracts required, plus the number of DEP discharges that the NRD is expected to take each month. For example, if the NRD is assigned an enlistment contracting mission of 120 new contracts for a given month, and is also expected to separate 10 Future Sailors from its DEP, its gross enlistment-contracting mission for the month would be 130.



Contracts are finalized at the MEPS, where the Navy classifier meets with the applicant to assign a job guarantee.<sup>8</sup> In addition to an applicant having to meet various job requirements (e.g., Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery [ASVAB] test score requirements), jobs in the system are identified by gender.<sup>9</sup> As the class date approaches, however, the gender identifier can be overridden if it looks like a class seat will not be filled.

Final monthly accession missions are provided by the fifth of each month and are specified by categories that include gender, rating, and components (i.e., active and reserve, including a non-prior-service and prior-service segmentation within the reserves). The senior classifier for each NRD is responsible for ensuring that monthly shipping dates on the enlistment contracts match the NRD's monthly accession mission within each of the assigned categories and components.

Once the DEP member ships to bootcamp, the Navy recruiter (unlike his/her Marine Corps counterpart, discussed next) has no additional official responsibilities. Yet, recruiters and commanders with whom we spoke noted that there is often feedback on the new recruit's performance and bootcamp experiences from either the recruit or his/her parents.

### **Marine Corps: Recruiters' accession and contracting missions**

Each Marine Corps Recruiting Station (MCRS) is assigned an enlistment contracting mission and an accession (shipping) mission. The overall accession mission assigned to each MCRS is broken into components (i.e., active duty, non-prior-service reserves, and prior-service reserves) and categories (i.e., men and women), and is specified in detail by monthly requirements. Mission changes are infrequent, and the MCRS commanding officer always has visibility on the MCRS monthly accession mission by component and category.

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8. Although Navy recruiters discuss job guarantees with applicants, the responsibility for discussing job guarantees with—and assigning them to—applicants rests with the Navy classifier, not the recruiter.

9. This process is somewhat more involved for job guarantees related to special operations (e.g., SEALs) and nuclear programs.

The Marine Corps has historically chosen to ship nearly half of its accession mission in the summer because it focuses strongly on the high school market, which is not available to ship until graduation. As a result, the Marine Corps accesses approximately 48 percent of its recruits in the summer (June through September), 31 percent in the fall and winter (October through January), and 21 percent in the spring (February through May).<sup>10</sup>

The MCRS receives an enlistment contracting mission for each month, but it is typically not by component and category. The MCRS operations officer assigns enlistment-contracting missions to the recruiting sub-stations by component and categories so that the collection of these contracts matches the detailed components and categories of assigned accession missions. In addition, the MCRS's enlistment contracting mission is received in net terms; thus, like the Navy, any monthly DEP discharges are added to that net mission to arrive at the MCRS's gross, monthly mission. Unlike the Navy, where the Navy classifier at the MEPS has sole responsibility for final assignment of job guarantees, Marine Corps recruiters give job guarantees.

The Marine Corps groups a number of similar military occupational specialties (MOSs) into job (or program) guarantees. These job guarantees are allocated across a number of periods throughout the FY and, as long as the applicant accesses within that period, the job guarantee remains valid; minor shipping date adjustments will typically not invalidate a job guarantee. Through the Marine Corps Recruiting Information Support System (MCRISS), these job guarantees are allocated to each MCRS, which, in turn, manages its allocation to support its recruiting operations. These guarantees belong exclusively to the MCRS to which they are allocated and remain so until the job guarantees are close to expiration, at which point they are made available MCRC-wide to use for current month accessions needing job guarantees.

A Marine Corps job guarantee is not tied to each individual accession allocation. Although the preferred practice is to ensure that new DEP members depart the MEPS with a job guarantee, applicants can be

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10. See [5] for a detailed description of Marine Corps recruiting practices.

enlisted with no job guarantee assigned and have the guarantee added at a later date. In addition, when a DEP member becomes temporarily unqualified and is moved to a new accession date, he or she can remain in the DEP without a job guarantee. As new job guarantees become available, they can be given to DEP members who need them. Finally, a small percentage of Marine Corps accessions ship to recruit training without a job guarantee; they enlist with an “open” contract and are subsequently classified into an MOS for which they are qualified.<sup>11</sup>

### **Air Force: Recruiters’ accession and contracting missions**

Air Force recruiting squadrons are given contracting and accession missions. The contracting mission shapes force diversity to an extent since the recruiting squadrons are incentivized to reach various diversity benchmarks. The yearly accession/shipping goals are distributed at the start of the year, but the list of available Air Force Specialty Codes (AFSCs) is not; the AFSC accession mission is distributed incrementally throughout the year.

Currently, when Air Force recruits enter the DEP, they typically do not know their specific job or accession date.<sup>12</sup> Instead, they usually sign contracts at the MEPS stating that they are willing to access during a given timeframe for either a list of jobs or one of four specialties: general, administrative, mechanical, or electronic. These four general areas are referred to as aptitude indexes (AIs).

AFSCs are distributed, along with ship dates, on a monthly basis. Once the DEP member has an AFSC, the recruiting squad owns this AFSC. If the DEP member is discharged, the squadron can fill the AFSC and associated ship date. It is only returned to a broader pool in the unusual case that the squadron cannot use it.

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11. When DEP members enlist with an open contract, they sign a memorandum of understanding just as if they were receiving a job guarantee to ensure that they understand the terms of enlistment.

12. This has not always been as prevalent as it is today. Instead, it is driven somewhat by the robust recruiting market and subsequent “queue” formed by DEP members.

About 70 percent of all Air Force accessions ship to basic training with a Guaranteed Training Enlistment Program (GTEP). The GTEP guarantees the DEP member a specific AFSC. The other 30 percent ship to basic training only knowing their AI. These recruits meet with a job counselor the second week of basic training to submit their AFSC choices and are then assigned their AFSC during week seven.

To stay in the Air Force DEP, recruits must remain qualified for Air Force service. If they lose qualifications (due to physical, legal, or moral reasons), their contracts will be canceled unless they are expected to regain qualification prior to their scheduled accession dates.

### **Army: Recruiters' contracting missions**

Army recruiters are focused on their gross contracting missions, using the Future Soldier Remote Reservation System (FSR2S). Each contract in this system has an MOS slot and a particular shipping date for the qualified applicant.<sup>13</sup> Thus, when contracts are written and recruits enter the Future Soldier program, they know their ship dates and the MOSs for which they will train. Only the Army offers this degree of job specificity, which is an important consideration for many applicants.

Throughout the year, each recruiting brigade is given a specific monthly goal for enlistment contracts it must write—its gross contracting mission. The brigade then gives each battalion under its command a contracting mission that, in turn, is distributed to the recruiting centers. Contracts are specified by component (reserve or active), by “high quality” or “other,” and by gender.<sup>14</sup> Since USAREC updates contracting goals throughout the year, field commanders do not know their yearly contracting missions until the final month of the fiscal year.

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13. In reality, there is a temporary job reservation based on ASVAB scores, and performance on the Enlistment Screening Test administered by the recruiter. The job offer becomes final when the applicant meets with the counselor at the MEPS.

14. High-quality recruits are Tier I recruits with AFQT scores in the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher. Other recruits are those whose educational backgrounds and test scores do not qualify them as Tier I.

USAREC centrally controls accessions. DEP (Future Soldier) attrition, currently targeted at 10 percent, is figured into the gross contracting goal; but, if Future Soldier attrition is higher than projected, USAREC adjusts these goals. Open slots caused by DEP losses go back into FSR2S and are opened to other Future Soldiers. (The recruiting unit with the loss has no particular claim on this slot.)

Army recruiters, like those in the Navy and Air Force, have limited formal feedback to the individual recruiter for how their recruits perform in basic training. However, if a recruiting unit ships a large number of recruits who are discharged from basic training, one of the command's higher headquarters provides feedback. Recruiting officials from Army recruiting battalions reported that there is often informal feedback from recruits in basic training. The level and frequency of feedback depend on the rapport that was built between the recruiter and recruit during the enlistment process. The battalion leadership strongly encourages recruiters to have frequent contact with recruits and their influencers.

Recruiting commands that assign both accession and contracting missions tend to leave it up to the recruiting units to determine how to replace DEP losses and accession no-shows. In contrast, the Army centrally plans and manages DEP losses and no-shows. If the no-show or Future Soldier attrition loss is picked up by another recruiting unit, there is no need for headquarters action. In fact, if overall Army losses are around the expected (and accounted for) 10-percent level, no further action is needed. However, if the slots caused by DEP losses that are not picked up by another recruiting unit exceed 10 percent, this means that more than 10 percent of school seats will not be filled, and the overall accession number will fall short. Headquarters will then need to put additional slots for the particular MOSs in FSR2S, as well as increase future gross contracting goals.

By managing accessions centrally and providing the recruiting units with only gross contracting goals by month, USAREC is able to regularly recalculate what it requires. Army production recruiters (and even commanders) are used to not knowing what will be expected of them in future months. By contrast, in systems where recruiting commands are given yearly goals at the beginning of the year, any goal changes create more disruption.

In addition, the concept of a start pool has limited application to lower command levels in the Army. On the first day of a new fiscal year, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps recruiters at all command levels can calculate their start pool for that new fiscal year. For Army recruiters, there is no concept of a start pool, and there would be no way to calculate it at the local level (because they do not know their yearly accession goal). The Army start pool is only meaningful at the headquarters level; USAREC knows the next year's accession goal, as well as the number of recruits already contracted.

We now turn to a discussion of pre-enlistment DEP practices. An applicant's DEP success—and, ultimately, success in service—are determined by many events that occur before he or she is ever scheduled to be processed at the MEPS.

## Pre-enlistment DEP practices

The seeds of a good DEP are sown when the services select and train quality recruiting personnel and maintain high applicant-quality standards. These two imperatives lay the groundwork for an effective recruiter-applicant relationship: applicants' motivations for service are nurtured and reinforced with quality leadership, and their qualifications are thoroughly investigated and tracked through an effective screening process. When the recruiter and applicant encourage the applicant's family and other key influencers to support the enlistment process, the conditions for successful enlistment are enhanced.

### The selection and training of recruiting personnel

During our interviews with field recruiting officials, the theme of assigning "top-quality" people to recruiting duty was pervasive. Each service described an operating environment in which recruiters must:

- Meet tight mission deadlines;
- Interact constantly with community leaders, school officials, parents, and applicants;
- Prepare their DEP members for recruit training;
- Adjust their time-management plans quickly to accommodate frequent disruptions; and
- Work independently (as individuals or in teams), often away from direct daily supervision and family support systems.

Although a small percentage of recruiting personnel immediately thrives in this environment, a larger percentage struggles before adjusting. A smaller but notable percentage never effectively makes the transition, with some having to be removed from recruiting duty. First, some recruiters lack the social skills to interact with the community, the agility to work in a multitasking environment, or the skills needed to negotiate emerging situations without their

supervisors close at hand. Second, some recruiters arrive at their new duties too encumbered by personal problems to be effective.

These recruiter challenges can, to some extent, be mapped back to their earlier career development. In the early part of a career, entry-level training and initial assignments are typically on a major military installation or at sea, working near one's supervisor and coworkers. These early assignments give supervisors the opportunity to reinforce technical training, emphasize core values, teach resourcefulness, and develop the leadership ability and maturity needed to work in an independent assignment, such as recruiting duty. However, because not all servicemembers achieve the professional standing required to succeed in an independent duty environment, each service uses a tailored screening process. Ideally, these processes will identify servicemembers with the maturity, stability, and leadership necessary for recruiting duty. However, even when supplemented with formal recruiting instruction courses that are revised over time, these screening processes still result in a notable percentage of recruiting personnel who are not well suited for the unique challenges of recruiting duty.<sup>15</sup>

The message from field recruiting officials from each of the services was clear. In addition to screening protocols and formal instruction, they believe that their services should assign their "best and brightest" to recruiting duty—noncommissioned and commissioned officers alike, who can operate effectively in an unstructured and independent environment.

To get this level of talent, the services need to reward successful recruiting tours and emphasize the importance of recruiting assignments. Unfortunately, this has not always been the case. In the early days of the AVF, General Maxwell Thurman embraced the importance of the Army's recruiting force. In a chapter of *Professionals on the Front Line: Two Decades of the All-Volunteer Force* entitled "On

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15. Each of the military services routinely reviews and updates its recruiter screening processes. One of the most recent initiatives in the Navy is the Recruiter Aptitude Battery Assessment (RABA). Because this new screening tool is still a pilot program, potential recruiters have not yet been excluded from recruiting duty based on RABA results.



Being All You Can Be: A Recruiting Perspective,” Thurman recounts nine internal Army management changes that set the course for recruiting success in the AVF era. The fourth of these nine actions involved:

“Assigning a “quality recruiting force,” whereby the very best serving soldiers were selected as recruiters and were provided with substantial training, rather than depending on professional recruiters, who sometimes forgot the arduousness of field service. The 1980s recruiting force knew that it would have an opportunity not only to recruit the force, but also to serve with those recruited in tactical units—even in combat. Ownership of product was the underlying principle at work” [1].

In 1996, General Charles C. Krulak, 31<sup>st</sup> Commandant of the Marine Corps, expressed his support for this same philosophy when he directed that all 48 Marine Corps recruiting stations’ commanding officers be selected from among the Marine Corps’ top majors by a board of generals and colonels.<sup>16</sup> Today, the Marine Corps institutionally considers selection as a recruiting station commander to be one of the top assignments an O-4 can receive (only 16 are selected each year), with successful completion of the assignment signaling a bright future as a senior leader.<sup>17</sup> Among the Marine Corps’ recent four-star generals, three were assigned to recruiting duty.<sup>18</sup>

This emphasis on the importance of recruiting has carried over into the enlisted ranks. Even in the midst of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, senior Marine Corps leaders and career counselors stressed that

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16. All Marine (ALMAR) Message 100/96

17. Marine Corps officers who successfully complete tours as recruiting station commanding officers are given their choice of assignment to the appropriate professional military education school or another duty station.

18. Gen Peter Pace (former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) commanded Recruiting Station Buffalo, NY; Gen James Mattis (recent Commander of U.S. Central Command) served in Recruiting Station Milwaukee, WI, as a junior officer before commanding Recruiting Station Portland, OR; and Gen John Paxton (current Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps) commanded Recruiting Station New York, NY, before commanding the WRR as a general officer.

a special duty assignment (e.g., recruiting) was a fundamentally important factor for promotion into the senior enlisted advisor ranks (i.e., first sergeant [E-8] and sergeant major [E-9]). Two of the three most recent Sergeants Majors of the Marine Corps were recruiting station sergeants major: SgtMaj John Estrada (Sacramento, CA) and SgtMaj Micheal Barrett (Cleveland, OH).

## **Applicant quality**

The recruiting literature has long demonstrated the relationship between an applicant's qualifications for service and his or her likelihood of shipping to entry-level training, completing that training, and completing the initial enlistment term. Applicants who have graduated from high school (or are in good standing to do so), have scored in the top half of the AFQT distribution, have avoided legal difficulties, and are in good physical condition have the lowest attrition rates during their enlistments. Because recruiters are well aware of this relationship, they seek applicants with these characteristics in their prospecting activities. They do so primarily because these applicants meet their services' standards and expectations, but they also do so for reasons that are more immediately beneficial to the recruiter: with all of the demands on a recruiter's time, it is far easier to lead and prepare DEP members who are doing well in school, staying away from legal difficulties, and not struggling with weight challenges.

In a more difficult recruiting environment, when recruiters are forced to take risks with applicants whose qualifications are not ideal, the challenges of enlisting less qualified applicants are compounded. Recruiters not only spend more time finding applicants but also spend more time keeping track of more "risky" DEP members and replacing those who are discharged. In addition, recruiters also feel the brunt of negative feedback from entry-level training and field commanders when lower recruit quality begins to increase entry-level training attrition.

In each of the field recruiting commands we visited, recruiting officials said that they valued high-quality applicants and, in some cases, had set applicant quality standards that exceeded those set by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and even their respective recruiting commands. Recruiters have adjusted to these

quality standards in the current environment and seldom attempt to process applicants who need enlistment waivers that would have been routinely approved in more challenging recruiting conditions. Each service has continued to report strong and stable DEP strengths, low entry-level training attrition rates, and improved quality of life for recruiting forces. In fact, a common sentiment expressed by nearly all of the field recruiting officials we interviewed was that recruiters have an upper hand with applicants—allowing recruiters to be much more selective with applicants and holding a tighter line on the discipline and performance of DEP members. Table 3 demonstrates the steady climb in recruit quality across the services, beginning with the erosion of the U.S. economy in the 2007–2008 timeframe. OSD accession standards for recruit quality are 60 percent AFQT category I–IIIA and 90 percent high school diploma graduates (HSDGs). No greater than 4 percent of accessions can be from AFQT category IV.

Table 3. Non-prior-service active-duty accessions, by quality measures, FY07–12

Accessions by AFQT category	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12
Army enlisted accessions						
I–IIIA	61%	62%	66%	64%	63%	64%
HSDG	79%	83%	95%	100%	99%	95%
IV	4%	3.5%	1.5%	0.4%	0.3%	0.5%
Navy enlisted accessions						
I–IIIA	73%	74%	78%	83%	89%	90%
HSDG	93%	94%	95%	98%	99%	99%
IV	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Air Force enlisted accessions						
I–IIIA	79%	79%	81%	91%	99%	98%
HSDG	99%	98%	99%	99%	100%	99%
IV	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Marine Corps enlisted accessions						
I–IIIA	65%	66%	71%	73%	73%	75%
HSDG	95%	96%	99%	100%	100%	99%
IV	3.1%	3.4%	0.7%	0.1%	0%	0%

Note: AFQT scores are uniformly distributed across percentiles. AFQT I–IIIA categories include the 50<sup>th</sup> through the 99<sup>th</sup> percentiles. AFQT category IV includes the 21<sup>st</sup> through 30<sup>th</sup> percentiles.

Source: OUSD, Directorate of Accession Policy.

By comparison, in FY12, the Navy and the Air Force accessed 90 and 98 percent AFQT category I–IIIA recruits, respectively, with the Army and Marine Corps accessing 64 and 75 percent. For the Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps, virtually all recruits were HSDGs; 95 percent of Army recruits had a high school diploma. The services used almost none of their flexibility to access AFQT category IV recruits in FY12.

When recruiting conditions allow the kind of selectivity reflected in table 3, many of the attrition challenges the services face in their DEPs and throughout the first enlistment term are minimized before the applicant ever enters the DEP.

## **Recruiter-applicant relationship**

Prospective applicants pursue enlistment for reasons ranging from the tangible benefit of pay to the intangible benefit of pride of belonging to an organization. An underlying dynamic in this pursuit is the relationship between the recruiter and the applicant. In most cases, applicants know little about military service and start talking with the recruiter to gather information. These early encounters between the recruiter and the applicant help form the basis for a successful relationship that can be maintained when the recruit is in the DEP.

Applicants want to ensure that the information they are receiving is accurate; when they discover information that confirms what their recruiter said, their trust in the recruiter deepens. Dishonesty on the part of the recruiter can severely damage the applicant’s opinion of the recruiter, the service, and the military. Similarly, recruiters want to ensure that the information they receive from the applicant is accurate. When the applicant tells the recruiter about his or her service qualifications and the recruiter subsequently confirms them, the trust relationship deepens. Dishonesty from the applicant about his or her qualifications can fracture the recruiter-applicant relationship and can call into question the applicant’s suitability for military service.

This trust dynamic is important for recruiting officials to understand because, for many applicants who come from families without military connections, the recruiter personifies the service. Ideally, the

services want applicants' loyalties to be focused on their particular service. Practically, however, the applicants' loyalties are commonly focused on the recruiter, whom they are trusting to guide them through the enlistment process and prepare them for entry-level training.

Confirmation of this dynamic can be found in the terms used by DEP members whose recruiters are rotating. A DEP member whose original recruiter has left is known as a "pool orphan" or a "DEP orphan." Recruiting supervisors know that these DEP members are often at higher risk of losing interest in military service and typically try to ship them before their recruiter rotates. When that is not possible, recruiting supervisors will often assume direct leadership responsibility for the DEP member or assign him or her to a top recruiter who they are confident can maintain the DEP member's motivation to ship to basic training.

The Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps all emphasize the development and preservation of the recruiter-applicant relationship throughout the recruiting process. From the time applicants first meet their recruiter until they access, their fundamental relationship is with that recruiter. The intent goes beyond continuity of the relationship and emphasizes the recruiter's personal accountability for mission assignment—shipping the applicants he or she enlists to meet the unit's accession mission.

Although the Army recognizes the importance of the recruiter-applicant relationship, it has moved away from the traditional model of the recruiter being solely responsible for the recruit from prospecting to shipping to basic training. USAREC recently launched the first major change in organizational structure since 1973. Termed "Small Unit Recruiting" (SUR), the effort aims to streamline the recruiting process by realigning both the recruiting force and recruiting locations, and changes the incentive structure for recruiters and how recruiter goals are assigned and monitored.

Under SUR, specialized recruiter teams work together to achieve the recruiting goal in a central facility called a recruiting center, which is formed by deactivating two or more current recruiting stations. The center absorbs the market, mission, materiel, and manpower of the closed recruiting stations. Some centers have a forward engagement

center to extend the center's reach to remote areas. *USAREC Manual 3-06* explains the structure and operations of these centers, which the Army says builds on proven industry concepts, including division of labor, skill specialization, and process improvement.

The recruiting center is the basic recruiting unit and is fundamental to the success of SUR. It has three components:

- **The Engagement Team** is the voice and face of the Army and directly engages the public every day. It executes the school recruiting program, engages the market, and tells the Army story. It is composed of personnel who interview prospects.
- **The Recruiting Support Team** is the center's administration, prospecting, and processing arm. It conducts prospecting operations and sets up interviews with the Engagement Team for qualified prospects.
- **The Future Soldier Leader** manages the Future Soldier training program (or the DEP). The leader plans, leads, trains, and prepares Future Soldiers for basic training. The leader provides mentoring, guidance, and care for Future Soldiers. On the surface, this division of labor suggests that the recruiter-applicant relationship gives way to a Future Soldier Leader-Future Soldier relationship. In reality, that is not the case, Army recruiters maintain a relationship with the Future Soldiers they recruited and remain full partners in helping prepare and mentor the Future Soldiers they recruited.

Probably the most innovative and meaningful aspect of the transformation under SUR is the conversion from an individual-based to a team-based recruiting and reward system. Until now, the Army's recruiting culture, like the three other services, has been a sales-based environment built on individual performance and reward. SUR calls for replacing individual recruiting missions with team missions, in which all recruiting center members are collectively responsible for the team's recruiting goal. Recruiters no longer earn incentive awards based on their individual production (although they can still earn the Master Recruiting Badge after demonstrating job proficiency).

The Army believes that recruiters should concentrate on doing what they do best—engaging with the public and with the recruit. SUR relieves them of administrative, processing, and DEP management tasks. The Army believes that this cultural change is consistent with the Army’s traditional team approach.

Recruiters in the Engagement Team, staff from the Recruiter Support Team, Future Soldier Leaders, and commanders in the Army battalions emphasized that there was camaraderie and teamwork among all members and that, so far, applicant handoffs between the three components have gone smoothly and applicants seem to feel like members of the Army “team.” It will take some time, however, before the effort can be fully evaluated.

## **Applicant screening**

All of the service field recruiting officials we interviewed were particularly attuned to the challenges of applicant screening and its importance in minimizing attrition and wasted recruiting resources. Although the services, in coordination with the MEPSs, use many standardized screening checklists and protocols, including the Enlistment Screening Test (EST)<sup>19</sup> for an estimate of aptitude, each of the services emphasized that screening is as much an art as it is a science, and that training in effective interview techniques must be continual.

Applicant screening is a responsibility shared among the recruiter, the recruiter’s supervisor, MEPS officials, and service counselors working in the MEPS. However, each service emphasized that it starts before a recruiter even meets a prospective applicant. Recruiters have tools and techniques to facilitate this preliminary screening. Before making “cold calls,” for example, recruiters can check the test scores they receive from the MEPS for those students who took the ASVAB at a particular high school. If the recruiter has already enlisted an applicant from that high school, the DEP member can be particularly helpful in letting the recruiter know of any obvious disqualifications

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19. The EST is an abbreviated AFQT that provides the recruiter with an estimate of what the applicant’s AFQT score will be when he or she actually takes the ASVAB.

his or her classmates might have. When recruiters walk through a local mall or school lunch room, they can visually survey prospective applicants for obvious disqualifying conditions before engaging them. These practices enable recruiters to sort through large numbers of prospective applicants quickly so that they can focus their efforts on those who appear to be basically qualified for enlistment.

In addition to the standardized applicant-screening protocols established by the U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command (USMEPCOM) in coordination with the services, local recruiting commanders have adopted other practices to improve their discovery of applicant disqualifications. Each of the services has leveraged social networking capabilities to improve their recruiting operations, whether for generating leads, screening applicants, or sharing information with DEP members. For applicant screening, MCRSs and Army recruiting battalions, for example, encourage their recruiters to view the prospective applicant's Facebook page before contacting them to look for information on obviously disqualifying conditions, such as weight, tattoos, or references to problems with education, drug use, or police involvement. Applicant-aged youth frequently reveal, through pictures and other postings, important information that helps to alert recruiters to potential disqualifications early in the prospecting and screening process.<sup>20</sup>

Army, Navy, and Marine Corps recruiters conduct field drug testing in their local recruiting offices before transporting applicants to the MEPS. This screening procedure saves the recruiter time and resources. It also has long-term benefits for the applicant, as some of the services permanently disqualify applicants if they test positive in the MEPS drug and alcohol test (DAT).<sup>21</sup> The Air Force, on the other hand, expressly prohibits its recruiters from conducting any field drug tests on applicants.

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20. Recruiters also routinely monitor the Facebook pages of their DEP members looking for any indications of disqualification or any other participation in activities that could jeopardize the DEP members' enlistment.

21. Service policies for whether an applicant is permanently or temporarily disqualified as a result of testing positive on the DAT tend to change depending on the difficulty of current recruiting conditions.



The services typically do not require applicants (other than those applying for special operations job guarantees) to participate in any physical conditioning until they have been contracted into the DEP. However, Marine recruiters explained that, as a rule, most MCRSs require their applicants to take an Initial Strength Test (IST) before they are allowed to process at the MEPS.<sup>22</sup> Because DEP members must pass the IST before they ship to bootcamp, testing them before they enter the DEP reduces the chances that a recruiter will have to dedicate extra time and effort to help a DEP member meet minimum IST standards. One could argue, however, that administering the IST before an applicant has passed the MEPS physical examination introduces risk and potential liability.

Moreover, Army, Navy, and Air Force recruiters conduct credit checks to ensure that applicants who are applying for job guarantees that require high-level security clearances do not have financial problems. Although the value of credit checks is obvious, it would seem that—with current reports of youth debt—more general use of credit checks for applicants might be a helpful tool.

In addition, based on our visits to and discussions with Army's recruiting battalions, we learned that local recruiting centers now have the Live Scan capability to execute quick turn-around Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) fingerprint checks so that police records can be discovered earlier in the enlistment process. Traditionally, MEPS officials have taken fingerprints as part of the enlistment process and have sent them to the FBI for an Entrance National Agency Check. If there is a match between the fingerprints and any police records, the FBI provides this information to the MEPS, at which point the DEP member is either discharged or granted an appropriate enlistment waiver. Putting this fingerprint-check capability at local recruiting offices enables recruiters to learn about disqualifications before spending time processing an applicant.

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22. The male IST standards are two dead-hang pull-ups, 44 crunches in two minutes, and a maximum time of 13:30 for a 1.5-mile run. Female standards are 12 seconds for a flexed-arm hang, 44 crunches in two minutes, and a maximum time of 15:00 for a 1.5-mile run. The female flexed-arm hang standard for the IST is currently under review as the Marine Corps transitions to pull-ups for women.

Army officials believe that this saves recruiter time and prevents erroneous enlistments. The other services might benefit from similar procedures.<sup>23</sup>

Finally, for each of the services, local commanding officers review any enlistment applications from applicants who were previously discharged from the DEP. In cases where an applicant had a temporary medical problem, the enlistment approval is usually perfunctory. However, commanders look much more closely at applicants who previously refused to access or who became otherwise disqualified for service.

## **Influencer involvement**

The relationship between a recruiter and an applicant will not—and should not—exist independent of influencer involvement. Almost immediately, the recruiter should try to include as many influencers as possible in the enlistment fact-finding and decision-making process. Most applicants are in their late teens or early twenties and still rely heavily on parents, grandparents, teachers, coaches, clergy, and other important influencers to guide them in their post-high-school choices. In some cases, the influencers may have strong connections to the military and may offer informed advice. Yet, in far more cases today, influencers have no affiliation with the military and do not know anyone with a military connection. The biases and predispositions of these influencers, regardless of their origins and veracity, play an important role in shaping a prospective applicant's enlistment decision.

Experienced recruiters work to make influencers advocates for the enlistment decision so that, when the applicant begins to question that decision, influencers actively encourage the applicant to complete the process. Recruiters typically achieve this level of

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23. Recruiters from the Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps all expressed significant interest in the Live Scan capability, believing that it would save them valuable time by learning about moral disqualifications earlier in the enlistment process.

influencer support by actively communicating with influencers and demonstrating concern for the applicant or DEP member.<sup>24</sup>

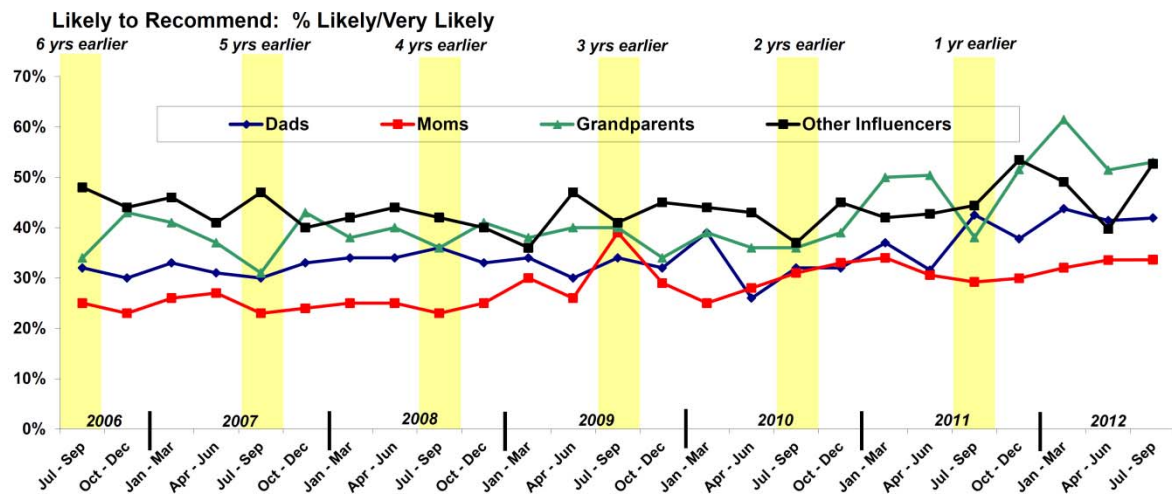
Figure 4 shows the likelihood of influencers to recommend military service to youth. Mothers are particularly hesitant; only about one-third are likely to recommend the military. By contrast, slightly over one-half (53 percent) of grandparents and other influencers (e.g., teachers, coaches, and clergy) would recommend military service. The likelihood to recommend military service has been trending upward in recent years from its lows of several years ago.

Despite this trend, however, table 4 demonstrates the challenge that recruiters face in how influencers perceive them. Recruiters, in general, are perceived as (a) being uncaring about young people interested in joining the military, (b) providing inaccurate information, (c) using pressure tactics, and (d) reneging on promises. Recruiters are mindful of these perceptions and sometimes try to avoid influencers as a result. When this happens, the recruiter may still be successful in enlisting the applicant; however, enlistments that are built on a weak foundation of influencer support frequently result in tentative applicant commitment and a higher chance of DEP discharge.

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24. Common examples include frequent visits, talking with teachers about the applicant's academic progress, offering study time at the recruiting office, attending sporting and other school events, and discreetly visiting parents (when the applicant is not present) to answer questions and check on the general welfare of their child.

Figure 4. Likelihood to recommend military service to youth



Source: Joint Advertising Market Research Studies (JAMRS) Summer 2012 Propensity Update

Table 4. Influencer perceptions of recruiter character

% "Mostly/Completely Agree"	Dads	Moms	Grandparents	Other Influencers
Military recruiters care about the well-being of people interested in military service	23%	24%	34%	31%
The information that military recruiters provide is trustworthy	27%	22%	35%	26%
Military recruiters usually present a truthful picture of military service	20%	18%	33%	27%
Military recruiters use "high pressure" tactics to get people to join the Military	45%	42%	35%	41%
People entering the Military often don't get the benefits promised by military recruiters	32%	27%	29%	29%

Source: DOD Ad Tracking Study Wave 29 (April-June 2010)

The evidence in table 4 argues for a strategy in which recruiters actively identify and engage influencers—particularly when the influencers are indifferent or unsupportive. The service recruiting officials we interviewed were all particularly mindful of the important role influencers play in an applicant’s enlistment decision and emphasized how their recruiter training is designed to ensure that recruiters actively engage influencers early in the enlistment process. This emphasis is complemented in each of the services by written

policies requiring recruiters to conduct “welcome aboard” meetings with new DEP members and their immediate families within the first week of enlistment.<sup>25</sup>

Next, we discuss the signing of the enlistment contract and entry into the DEP. Applicants are invariably enthusiastic when they go to the MEPS to enlist but, following the excitement of their enlistment day, their enthusiasm frequently ebbs and flows during their DEP time. DEP members who are high school seniors are typically busy with school activities and have no expectation of accessing before summer. Others who have already graduated from high school are often anxious to access as soon as possible because they may be dissatisfied with their jobs or they may need the income to pay bills and fulfill other obligations. In the current recruiting environment in which accession wait times are much longer than normal, recruiters must diligently use established successful practices and continue to develop new techniques to minimize DEP attrition.

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25. This was particularly emphasized in our interviews with the Army Recruiting Battalion in Miami. Parents and extended family members can be especially influential, particularly in the Hispanic community, as we learned from Army Center, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

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## Post-enlistment DEP practices

All services are currently enjoying robust DEPs and lower-than-normal DEP attrition; however, DEP discharges still exceed 10 percent annually. The most common DEP discharge reasons include apathy (i.e., refusal to access), moral disqualification, medical disqualification, and pregnancy. Staying in contact with DEP members and knowing what is happening in their lives are central to curbing DEP attrition, and each of the services has developed policies and practices to do so. In this section, we focus on the role of day-to-day interactions between DEP members and recruiters.

### “Welcome aboard” and initial contact

As we mentioned in the Introduction section, one of the first observable differences between the services after contracting a new DEP member is the term used to identify that person. In the Army and Navy, DEP members are called Future Soldiers and Future Sailors, respectively. In the Air Force and Marine Corps, however, they are referred to more generically as DEPers and poolees. Our conversations with recruiters revealed that these differences are more than superficial: they illustrate a fundamentally different way in which the services view their DEP members. Army and Navy recruiters suggested that their service-centric titles helped cultivate a sense of immediate belonging among DEP members. As such, they indicated that these titles had a positive effect on their DEP pools. Furthermore, in a recent issue of the Army’s *Recruiter Journal*, a station commander quipped, “Future Soldiers are Soldiers.” Our conversations with Marine Corps recruiters revealed a completely different mind-set; they felt that the title of Marine should be reserved for those who have completed basic training and, in doing so, have earned the title.

Once a recruit has been contracted into the DEP, each service has a welcome-aboard meeting. This meeting serves two purposes: it represents an opportunity to reassure new DEP members that their decision to join the military was the correct one, and it helps to clearly communicate expectations.

During the Army's welcome-aboard meeting, new Future Soldiers meet the company commander and go through a Future Soldier pre-execution checklist. This meeting occurs 3 to 10 days after contracting. Our discussions with Army recruiters indicated that this interval was timed to coincide with the typical "buyer's remorse" window. By engaging newly contracted Future Soldiers at this time, recruiters have the opportunity to minimize the extent to which applicants rethink their enlistment decisions. The Army strongly urges family members and significant others to attend the welcome-aboard meeting, which typically lasts an hour or two.

The Navy holds its welcome-aboard meeting (called the "72-hour indoctrination") sooner; it should occur within 72 hours of contracting but must take place within 5 days. During this meeting, Navy recruiters talk with new Future Sailors (and their families) and explain DEP requirements and activities. The recruiter then follows up with the Future Sailor within 7 days to conduct a mentoring session.

Our conversations with Air Force recruiters revealed an emphasis on both the responsibilities of the new DEP member to the Air Force *and* the responsibilities of the recruiter to the DEP member. The DEP member's three general responsibilities to the Air Force are (1) to maintain eligibility for Air Force service, (2) to attend DEP meetings and remain in contact with the recruiter, and (3) to strive to generate referrals. The recruiter's two primary responsibilities to the DEP member are (1) to supervise and prepare him or her for a successful transition from civilian life to one in the Air Force, and (2) to serve as a role model.

Finally, Marine Corps recruiters are required to visit new DEP members and their families within 72 hours of their enlistment to welcome them into the Marine Corps and explain DEP requirements and activities. This is also the point at which recruiters first provide parents with recruit graduation information and encourage them to attend.

## **Recruiter contact requirements**

Each service has established a minimum frequency with which its recruiters must contact DEP members. These frequencies address



both face-to-face meetings and telephone or electronic contact. Permissible forms of electronic contact vary.

Future Soldiers must contact their Future Soldier Leaders every week (four times a month)—rotating between face-to-face and electronic contacts. The Army recruiters with whom we spoke mentioned two groups for which the contact rules are different and more contact was warranted:

- Future Soldiers who are nearing their ship dates
- Future Soldiers who were “taped” during contracting as a result of being near or at the weight limit<sup>26</sup>

These groups are required to meet face-to-face with their recruiters each week.

The Air Force and Navy have similar contact requirements. Air Force DEP members must contact their recruiters once per week, with the form of contact rotating between electronic and in-person. Similarly, the Navy requires five contacts per month (two in person), in addition to a monthly DEP activity.

The Marine Corps has the least stringent official contact requirements: once a month in-person, and once a week electronically. However, recruiters we spoke to said that they often hold DEP meetings twice per week. They also frequently had DEP members exercise using recruiting substation equipment. In addition, separate DEP functions are conducted in rural areas to help bolster attendance and maintain strong relationships with these DEP members.

Recruiters also can require some DEP members to report more frequently. For instance, a DEP member who is struggling with his or her weight might be required to meet with the recruiter twice a week for remedial physical training. Similarly, a DEP member who is struggling academically may be asked to work on his or her

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26. Recruiters monitor the weight and body fat of DEP members who are near the weight ratio, as well as those who exceed it. They do so because of possible discrepancies between the scales used at the recruiting centers and those used at the MEPSs.

homework at the recruiting station. Recruiters also may ask to see a DEP member's report card, and speak with the recruit's high school guidance counselor if they detect any problems.<sup>27</sup> Successful recruiters have special relationships with school teachers and guidance counselors. This can be especially important for DEP members whose home environments are not conducive to academic achievement.

Moreover, recruiters frequently supplement their DEP communications by creating DEP member leadership positions. These leadership positions are helpful for passing information, organizing transportation for DEP activities, or providing encouragement and assistance to DEP members who may be struggling with physical conditioning or motivation. These positions have obvious practical value while applicants are in the DEP, but they also help to prepare DEP members for the recruit leadership positions they will assume at entry-level training.

Finally, some field recruiting commands publish DEP member newsletters to further enhance communications. These newsletters provide information about entry-level training, DEP member accomplishments, upcoming DEP activities, and tips on basic training preparation. Some Army recruiting battalions encourage Future Soldier Leaders to choose a "Future Soldier of the Month" and highlight his or her achievements in the newsletter. (Parents especially like to see their son or daughter highlighted in this way.) Information is also included for parents on such issues as contacting their recruit at basic training, sending mail, or attending the entry-level training graduation ceremony. These newsletters often are posted on the recruiting organization's social networking site for ease of access and distribution.

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27. Recruiters collect periodic grade reports and send them to the battalion (Army), district (Navy), and station (Marine Corps) level for review. This is a key part of monitoring the stability of accession plans that include prospective high school graduates. The Air Force monitors grade reports at the individual recruiter level.

## DEP activities

### DEP meeting topics

The topics covered in DEP meetings are fairly similar across the services. In the Army, a DEP activity lasts 1 to 1.5 hours, including travel time. Often, recruiters or Future Soldier Leaders must provide transportation. Attendance is mandatory, though some excuses for absences are accepted, and alternative DEP meeting times can be arranged. At these meetings, Future Soldiers learn about many aspects of the Army, such as the command and rank structure, Army values and history, formation, drill and ceremonies, and what to expect in basic training. In addition, they learn the phonetic military alphabet and land navigation, and they engage in physical training. Other topics include rudimentary financial planning, equal opportunity, sexual harassment prevention, and first aid. Training in these and other areas is mandatory with standardized programs of instruction by the Future Soldier Leader.

In the Navy, DEP activities typically include mandatory instruction in general military subjects, as well as guest speakers, ranging from representatives from the Navy Federal Credit Union and the Red Cross to new sailors who share basic training experiences.

Air Force DEP functions are structured around four basic activities: (1) motivate, (2) validate, (3) inform, and (4) perpetuate. These functions are fairly structured and follow a 12-meeting (24-week) agenda. The typical agenda includes a screening check, discussion of an aspect of life in the post-entry-level-training Air Force (e.g., leave), discussion of and preparation for an aspect of entry-level training (e.g., physical training), drill and Air Force institutional knowledge, encouragement to provide enlistment referrals, and time for a question-and-answer session.

In the Marine Corps, DEP functions serve a number of purposes, including the opportunity for continuous screening, orientations on general military subjects (including ethics and core values), DEP

member recognition, and team-building activities.<sup>28</sup> As their centerpiece, these DEP functions place an emphasis on organized physical training to improve physical conditioning, and they strongly encourage individual exercise. For example, to support this focus, MCRS Frederick provides its local recruiting offices with weight training and other physical conditioning equipment, as well as DVDs with conditioning programs (such as P90X) for core strengthening. We discuss this more in the next section.

## Physical training in DEP

The Marine Corps and the Navy represent opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of intensity of physical training (PT). The Marine Corps encourages PT and gives its recruiters the most latitude in deciding on the amount of PT in DEP activities. Furthermore, the Marine Corps allows activities that are typically prohibited by other services (e.g., tire flipping). A possible driver of this level of freedom is that poolees must pass an IST before shipping to bootcamp, and are then retested before being allowed to start bootcamp. The Marine Corps has remained fairly successful at preventing serious injuries during DEP PT and, thus, has not become risk averse in allowing these DEP activities.

By contrast, the Navy gives its recruiters very little freedom in designing PT plans. Following several DEP member deaths during PT, the Navy issued a moratorium on DEP PT. When the prohibition was lifted, recruiters were given very structured PT plans for their DEP functions, with much of the “remedial” PT now taking place at bootcamp.

An important note is that recruiters seemed content with their respective systems. On one hand, the Marine Corps’ discretion helps to ensure that DEP members pass the IST and gives them the kind of intense workouts that they expect from the Marine Corps. Navy recruiters, on the other hand, pointed out that their training background is not in designing PT programs and, as such, they

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28. High-risk team-building activities, such as white-water rafting, rappelling, and paintball shooting, require that higher headquarters conduct and approve an operational risk management assessment.

support the Navy's desire to have experts conduct necessary PT at bootcamp.

The Army and the Air Force also have fairly regimented DEP PT guidelines. Future Soldiers are required to pass a physical fitness assessment prior to accession. Males must complete 17 sit-ups in one minute, 13 push-ups in one minute, and a mile run in less than 8:30. Females must complete 17 sit-ups in one minute, 3 push-ups in one minute, and a mile run in less than 10:30.

## **Facilities support**

Many local recruiting offices do not have immediate access to facilities that can accommodate mass DEP gatherings or PT activities, and each of the recruiting organizations we visited discussed the importance of having local facilities in which to conduct their DEP activities, particularly in inclement weather. Recruiters typically gain access to reserve facilities, active-duty installations, local parks, YMCAs, or other gymnasium facilities through relationships that they have built in the local area. Good community relations create these opportunities and allow for variety in, and improved safety of, DEP activities. This is important for the preparation and motivation of DEP members, but it is also an important recruiting tool, as DEP members will frequently bring friends/referrals to DEP activities. Going to a local military installation, seeing military equipment or training, and interacting with servicemembers are all ways to motivate DEP members and attract new applicants.

## **DEP referrals**

The Navy, Army, and Marine Corps offer promotion opportunities to DEP members who refer a prospect who ultimately enlists (contracts) in their service. Air Force DEP members are not offered direct incentives for referrals, but they are expected to generate referrals as part of their DEP membership. Table 5 provides current examples of referral incentives to DEP members in each service, with the incentives grouped into three levels. Note that these incentives change frequently.

Table 5. Enlistment referral incentives

Service	Level I	Level II	Level III
Army	Baseball cap for 1 referral of any type	Promotion to E-2 for 3 referrals of any type or 2 HSDG/ senior referrals or 1 "high-quality" referral	Promotion to E-3 for 6 referrals of any type or 4 HSDG/senior referrals or 2 "high-quality" referrals
Navy	Letter of appreciation for 1 referral of any type	Advancement to E-2, Certificate of Promotion, and Commanding Officer letter of commendation for 2 referrals of any type or 1 Nuclear Field/Special Forces referral or 1 officer referral	Advancement to E-3, Certificate of Promotion, and Flag letter of commendation for 4 referrals of any type or 2 Nuclear Field/Special Forces referrals or 2 officer referrals
Marine Corps	Barrel bag for 1 referral of any type	Promotion to E-2 for 2 referrals	Dress Blue uniform for 3 referrals
Air Force	The Air Force does not currently offer official incentives for referrals.		

At present, the Navy and Army both offer promotion by as many as two paygrades, whereas the Marine Corps offers a one-paygrade promotion opportunity.<sup>29</sup>

In the Air Force, all DEP members are responsible for generating at least two referrals. In fact, this duty is listed among the responsibilities accepted by a new DEP member upon agreeing to enlist. DEP members are expected to generate referrals for two main reasons:

- They are supposed to be excited about joining the Air Force. A natural response to being enthusiastic about something is telling others about it.
- They are expected to help the Air Force. Given that recruiting is the primary way that a DEP member can do so, and that the DEP member has agreed to that responsibility, the recruit

29. Of note, incentives (Level I incentives, in particular) and policies are subject to change, particularly as recruiting conditions change.

should generate referrals without the need for additional incentives.

Note, however, that Air Force DEP members who generate referrals before accession are eligible to be selected for the Recruiting Assistance Program, in which airmen return home to visit their former high schools after technical training school. The Air Force and the airmen both view this as a perk. The Air Force benefits from the airman's existing social network, and the airman enjoys the visit home (for 15 days) without using leave. Other services have similar programs.

## **Changes to accession dates**

DEP members sometimes need to change accession dates. The primary reasons are injury or other health issues, legal difficulties, or a desire to ship sooner than planned.

Each service treats these cases slightly differently. The Air Force is the strictest service in terms of its consequences for temporary disqualifications. If a DEP member is ineligible to ship for more than 30 days, he or she must be discharged. The Marine Corps takes a less strict approach: if a DEP member becomes temporarily disqualified, the accession date is postponed until he or she regains eligibility (as long as that does not result in the member remaining in the DEP longer than the legally allowed maximum). Our discussion with Marine Corps field recruiting officials revealed that one of its DEP practices is to move the accession date of temporarily disqualified DEP members to as late as possible under current regulations. Once the DEP member regains eligibility, his or her accession date is moved forward again. This is done to prevent DEP members from facing a series of changing accession dates based on guesses about when their eligibility will be regained.

The Navy's policy is similar to the Marine Corps'. DEP members who are injured have their accession dates postponed until they are rehabilitated. If a DEP member in the Army is (or will be) temporarily ineligible on his or her accession date, the Future Soldier's contract is either renegotiated (which involves a dual renegotiation of accession date and Army job), or he or she is discharged.

The Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps all maintain a philosophy and practice of DEP losses being replaced by the recruiter, if possible. In the Army, however, the onus is *not* on the recruiter to replace those who attrite close to their shipping dates. In fact, recruiting centers cannot replace such losses by moving another DEP member into that accession slot. Instead, 15 minutes after the DEP loss is reported, that accession slot enters the Army recruiting reservation system and becomes available for new recruits nationwide. By opening the job nationwide, it increases the probability that the slot will be filled.

## Gender differences in DEP activities

None of the services routinely differentiates DEP activities by gender. Navy and Marine Corps recruiters did mention, however, that local commanders in their services have conducted additional DEP functions solely for women. In fact, recruiters in some NRDs explained that they typically have a female-only pool function about quarterly. These are conducted at the discretion of the local recruiting commander and provide opportunities for female recruiters to answer DEP member questions related to feminine hygiene, grooming standards, and other aspects of entry-level training and military life.

One emerging DEP issue is the Marine Corps' transition from the flexed-arm hang to dead-hang pull-ups for female recruits. The Commandant of the Marine Corps has announced that, starting January 1, 2014, women will be required to do dead-hang pull-ups for the Physical Fitness Test (PFT).<sup>30</sup> Like men, women will be required to do a minimum of 3 pull-ups; however, to achieve a maximum score, women will be required to do 8 pull-ups instead of the 20 required by men. Although recruiting and training officials are still working out the details, the current intent is for women to continue doing the flexed-arm hang for the IST (conducted in the DEP, as well as at the beginning of bootcamp), but to do pull-ups for the PFT, which is a recruit graduation requirement starting January 1, 2014. Recruiting officials are currently collecting information on female DEP member pull-up performance to understand the training

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30. See <http://www.marines.mil/News/Messages/MessagesDisplay/tabid/13286/Article/134672/change-to-the-physical-fitness-test.aspx>.



challenges that must be met for women to successfully meet this new standard.

An additional practice that we discuss here affects female recruiting more broadly. In 2006, DOD increased its visibility on recruiting irregularities by creating a recruiter irregularity report that the services update semiannually. This report captures, among other indiscretions, incidents of inappropriate relationships between recruiters and applicants/DEP members. This reporting mechanism and the increasing pressure on the services to address sexual assault concerns have caused commanders to reconsider their policies and practices, particularly as they relate to the interaction of male recruiters with female applicants and DEP members.

## **Interaction with the entry-level training establishment**

In each service, the entry-level training establishments provide quality control information to the recruiting commands. These reports contain, for example, information on entry-level training attrition, disqualifications discovered at entry-level training, or any allegations of inappropriate recruiter behavior. The services vary widely in how far down the recruiting chain of command they provide this information. During our interviews, some Army recruiters at the recruiting center level indicated that they have little visibility of this information, whereas Marine Corps recruiters, at the other extreme, routinely receive feedback on any quality issues with their recruits.

This flow of information perhaps reflects the broader relationship between the recruiting commands and the entry-level training establishments in each service. Traditionally, recruiting and entry-level training commands have two distinctly different chains of command. This arrangement presents certain challenges and a struggle over who should be held accountable for recruit deficiencies, namely whether the deficiency is caused by recruit quality (recruiting command) or by the effectiveness of entry-level training (training command).

Each service's recruiting commander and recruit training commander have a common superior. For the Army, Navy, and Air Force, the common commander is at the three- or four-star level. In the Marine Corps, the common commander is at the one-star level.

The commanding generals for each of the two Marine Corps recruit training depots are also the commanding generals of their respective recruiting regions. This command relationship has forced cooperation between drill instructors and recruiters. Drill instructors are frequently on hand at DEP family days to introduce applicants to the stresses of bootcamp and to answer questions from parents and influencers. Recruiters are required to write three letters (one during each phase of bootcamp) to their recruits, help coordinate family attendance at recruit graduations, and attend recruit graduations themselves when one of their recruits is an honor graduate. Drill instructors and recruiters routinely call each other to discuss particular recruit challenges.

## **Oversight and supervision**

Higher headquarters recruiting leaders at the battalion (Army), district (Navy), station (Marine Corps), and squadron (Air Force) levels are actively involved in DEP leadership and management. They influence the DEP by providing high-quality recruiter training and by:

- Enforcing enlistment standards;
- Welcoming new DEP members and their parents;
- Observing DEP activities; and
- Tracking quality-control indicators to improve the DEP and overall recruiting operations.

Field commanders and other leaders are usually not involved with the enlistment details of applicants who are well qualified and have no enlistment barriers. Recruiters prepare the enlistment package, recruiter supervisors ensure that all is in order, and MEPS processors manage the applicant's processing. However, when an applicant is not well qualified or has an enlistment barrier, field command leaders frequently are involved. They typically adjudicate enlistment waivers that can be approved at their level or make recommendations to higher-level commanders in the case of more serious waivers. In particular, these field command leaders interview the applicant, review recommendations from teachers and other character references, and consider all of the disqualification circumstances. In a case in which an enlistment waiver is approved, for example, these

leaders will often follow up with the new DEP member to ensure that his or her behavior in DEP continues to justify the waiver.

Commanders also frequently review enlistment requests from DEP members who were previously discharged. In many cases, the discharge was through no fault of the applicant (e.g., a temporary medical problem); however, in cases where the discharge resulted from misconduct or refusal to access, commanders will render a higher level of scrutiny to ensure that the applicant is now ready to meet his or her obligation.

Leaders of field recruiting commands also are frequently involved in the welcome-aboard process. This often involves MEPS visits to meet applicants who are processing for enlistment or congratulating new DEP members who have just taken their oaths of enlistment. When visiting local recruiting offices, recruiting leaders frequently accompany recruiters to the homes of new DEP members to meet families and to help impress on DEP members and families the importance of the enlistment obligation. This involvement is important because it helps to counteract negative recruiter perceptions. Parents are particularly appreciative when they see senior leaders supervising recruiters; it heightens their confidence in the professionalism of the recruiting process.

DEP functions provide a particularly convenient opportunity for field leaders to interact with DEP members, spot check their qualifications, and gauge their continued motivation to ship to entry-level training. These functions also give leaders the opportunity to monitor DEP function attendance, the safety of DEP activities, improvements in DEP member fitness, and interactions between DEP members and recruiters. They also can talk to DEP members who are requesting discharge. Recruiters frequently will mention these planned key leader visits to influencers who might be interested in coming to a DEP function to speak with the local recruiting commander.

Finally, one of the most important ways that field recruiting leaders stay abreast of the DEP is by tracking quality control indicators. Tracking and analyzing DEP attrition, DEP function attendance, recruiter contact with DEP members, entry-level training attrition, and undisclosed disqualifications discovered at the training centers provide these leaders with information to continually train and

mentor their recruiting forces. Each service has information systems that allow field leaders to view these quality control indicators and use them to improve DEP and overall recruiting operations.

## **The dynamics of DEP discharge**

Over 20 percent of applicants who contract into the DEP during challenging recruiting conditions are discharged before attending entry-level training. Many DEP discharge situations are routine and result in the unquestioned release of DEP members from their commitments. For example, DEP members may have been selected to attend service academies or receive reserve officer training corps scholarships. Alternatively, they may have serious legal predicaments or medical conditions that render them unqualified for military service. In these circumstances, recruiters are able to present supporting documentation to their commanders who can release DEP members from their commitments.

Other DEP discharge situations are much less clear. Each service reports that as many as half of its DEP discharges are for apathy—an unwillingness to follow through with the enlistment. These situations must be managed carefully. On one hand, recruiting commanders do not want to create ill will in their local communities by making it difficult for the DEP member to be released from his or her commitment, thereby adding to the negative recruiter perceptions. On the other hand, recruiting commanders must ensure that they understand why the DEP member wants to be released. Most DEP members experience some level of “buyer’s remorse” during their enlistment process and, if recruiting officials were to quickly react to each of these situations by releasing DEP members from their commitments, the DEP would shrink and jeopardize accession mission success.

Recruiters can counter most instances of buyers’ remorse, but, when their efforts fail, their chain of command often has a process by which the request for DEP discharge is considered. These processes can range from the DEP member simply meeting with the recruiter’s supervisor to explain his or her reasons for wanting to be discharged, to more elaborate processes involving formal board interviews chaired by the recruiting commander.

Recruiting commanders must understand why DEP members want to be discharged. Frequently, the reasons are that the DEP member wants a different job guarantee, a different ship date, or a chance to ship with a friend. It could also be a minor misunderstanding about entry-level training or military life. These are all situations that the commander can usually resolve. In other cases, however, the DEP member's loss of commitment could point to serious shortcomings in recruiter training or conduct, the knowledge of which is critically important to the commander.

A simple way to address this tension is to make DEP discharge procedures clearer during the welcome-aboard meeting. Recruiters, however, know that they will deal with some level of ebb and flow in nearly every DEP member's level of commitment, so they are quite reluctant to introduce DEP members to DEP discharge procedures. Right or wrong, many DEP members believe that once they contract, there is no turning back; disabusing them of this impression is not typically in the recruiter's best interest.

Minimizing this tension starts before an applicant enters the DEP. Good recruiter-applicant relations that include key influencer involvement can pave the way for the open and professional communication needed to resolve potential DEP discharge situations. When a recruiter explains to a DEP member and his or her parents that the recruiter's supervisor wants to speak with each DEP member requesting discharge (for the purposes of quality control and improving the recruiting process), much acrimony can be avoided. Furthermore, this kind of professionalism can maintain influencer support of military recruiters, even if a particular enlistment ends in discharge.

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## Managing time in DEP

Recruiting officials need to better understand the relationship between the time a DEP member spends in the DEP and the probability of his or her attrition. In this section, we examine the number of months a person spends in the DEP and its effect on both DEP attrition and active-duty in-service attrition. We used Defense Manpower Data Center data on DEP entry and separation, together with accession data, to create a dataset that begins in FY04 and ends in FY12.<sup>31</sup>

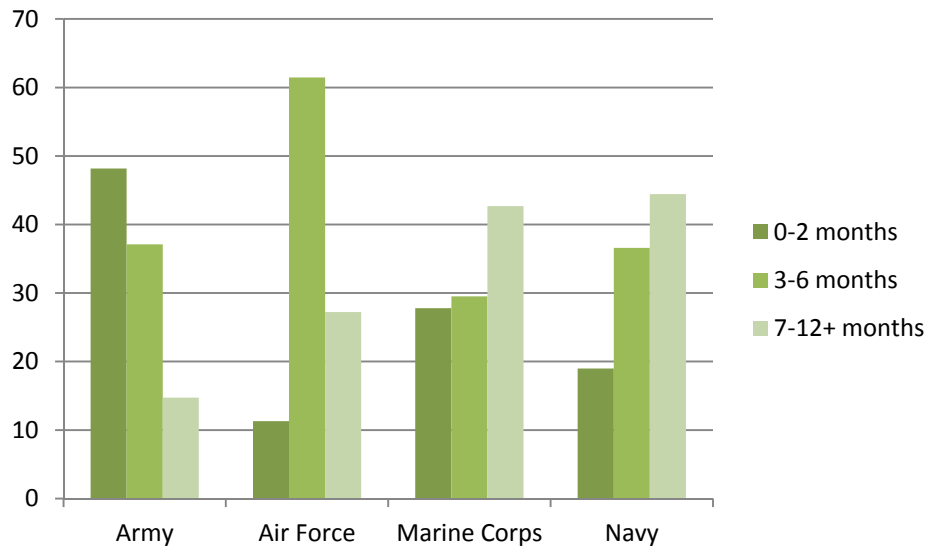
How the services use the DEP results in systematic differences in the length of the average DEP stay. Figure 5 shows the distribution of DEP months by service.<sup>32</sup> Almost half of those in the Army's Future Soldier program are in DEP for 2 or fewer months; only 15 percent stay 7 or more months. The Army has the shortest average DEP length (3.5 months) and the lowest DEP attrition rate (11.0 percent). In contrast, over 40 percent of Marine Corps and Navy DEP members stay 7 or more months; these two services have the longest average months in DEP (6.1 and 5.8 months, respectively) and average DEP attrition rates of 17.8 and 20.8 percent, respectively. The Air Force, with over 60 percent of its DEP lengths between 3 and 6 months, averaged a 12.7-percent attrition rate.

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31. We had hoped to obtain more detailed MEPS data, but they were unavailable. We used Defense Manpower Data Center data for this study, which lacked the level of detail we had hoped to obtain from the MEPS data.

32. Generally, the services limit DEP time to 365 days, as evidenced by the fact that only 1.6 percent of DEP stays exceed 12 months. However, each service has, over time, provided programs that allow rising high school seniors to enlist with planned DEP stays that are longer than 12 months. The Army and Navy allow up to 15 months, the Air Force up to 18 months, and the Marine Corps up to 410 days (although the Marine Corps has currently suspended this program).

Figure 5. Distribution of months in DEP prior to DEP discharge or service entry



We divided educational backgrounds for those in DEP into four categories: college, HSDGs, other (primarily Tier II credentials), and potential HSDGs.<sup>33</sup> The last category is overwhelmingly composed of high school seniors, who, with few exceptions, will not be accessed if they drop out of school. The Marine Corps is the only service that has a large proportion of potential HSDGs (mainly high school seniors) in its DEP; high school seniors make up almost half of its poolees (see figure 6).

Recruiters in all services reported that high school seniors have the highest DEP attrition, and the tabulations in table 6 confirm this.

33. “College” covers associate’s, bachelor’s, master’s, post-master’s, first professional, and doctorate degrees, as well as the professional nursing diploma. “HSDG” also includes those who completed high school but did not pass the exit exam. “Other” is self-explanatory, and “potential HSDGs” are high school students, high school seniors, and those nearing credential completion.



Figure 6. Educational background of those in DEP, by service

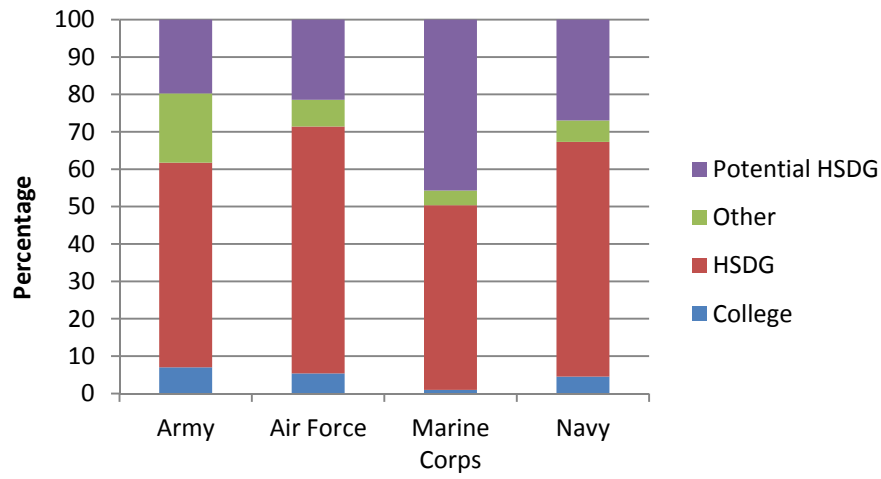


Table 6. DEP attrition rates by educational background and service

Educational background	Army	Air Force	Marine Corps	Navy
College	7.9%	10.7%	15.0%	16.2%
HSDGs	8.7%	12.2%	16.3%	15.9%
Other background	10.0%	12.4%	16.1%	19.4%
Potential HSDGs	19.4%	14.8%	26.2%	22.2%

## Estimating DEP attrition

We analyzed data on over 1.3 million DEP participants from FY05 to FY12 to examine whether attrition tends to increase the longer a DEP member is in the DEP. Estimating separate DEP attrition logistic regressions by gender and service, and controlling for educational attainment, AFQT scores, race/ethnicity, marital status, age, civilian unemployment, and DEP months, we found the answer to be “yes”—attrition rates do increase the longer a DEP member stays in the program.

## Effect of months in DEP

Table 7 provides the effects of months in DEP on male DEP attrition rates for each service.<sup>34</sup>

Table 7. Male DEP attrition rates and ship percentages by DEP months and service

DEP months	Army		Air Force		Marine Corps		Navy	
	% attrite	% ship	% attrite	% ship	% attrite	% ship	% attrite	% ship
0	2.4	97.6	15.4	84.6	3.0	97.0	12.7	87.3
1	5.0	95.0	20.5	79.5	10.2	89.8	12.9	87.1
2	7.3	92.7	13.1	86.9	6.4	93.6	7.1	92.9
3	9.7	90.3	8.6	91.4	9.5	90.5	9.6	90.4
4	10.7	89.3	5.8	94.2	13.4	86.6	11.1	88.9
5	12.0	88.0	7.2	92.8	17.3	82.7	13.2	86.8
6	11.4	88.6	8.6	91.4	20.8	79.2	14.4	85.6
7	16.3	83.7	10.2	89.8	23.7	76.3	15.5	84.5
8	22.9	77.1	12.4	87.6	24.9	75.1	15.3	84.7
9	25.8	74.2	13.8	86.2	28.0	72.0	19.2	80.8
10	28.4	71.6	16.8	83.2	32.7	67.3	24.1	75.9
11	26.4	73.6	20.2	79.8	32.7	67.3	24.0	76.0
12	47.2	52.8	27.9	72.1	53.8	46.2	31.6	68.4

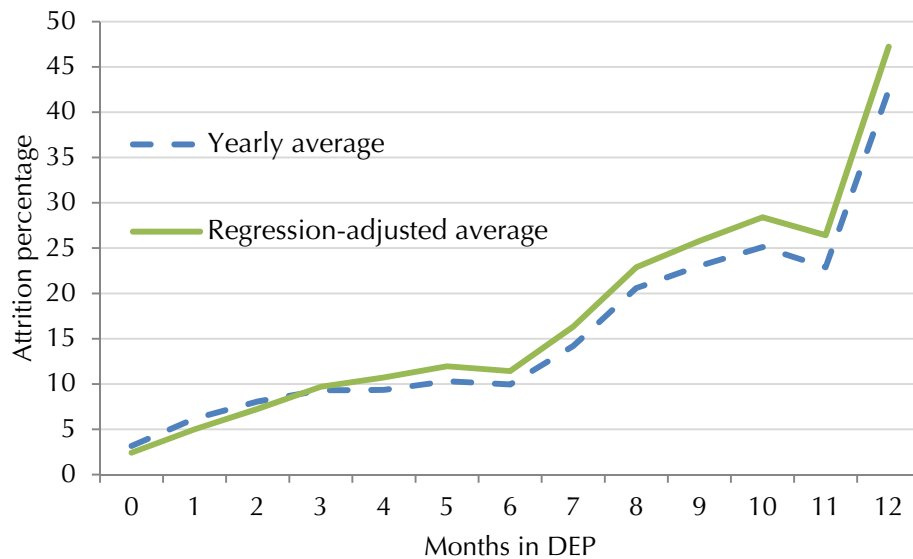
Note: These attrition and ship percentages are regression adjusted using the regressions presented in appendix A. A similar table for female attrition rates and ship percentages by DEP months and service is available from the authors.

With few exceptions, table 7 and the regressions in appendix A show that longer DEP times are associated with higher DEP attrition rates. The results are substantively similar for women, although DEP attrition rates for women are significantly higher than those for men. These results support recruiters' observations.

For example, figure 7 illustrates these results for men in the Army's Future Soldier program.

34. Appendix A shows complete regression results for men and women.

Figure 7. Army male DEP attrition by months in DEP



Note: The regression-adjusted average is calculated from the logistic regression in appendix A, table 10.

As is clear from figure 7, Army male DEP attrition is lowest for direct shippers (those with 0 months in the DEP) and rises as months in the DEP increase.

### Effect of other factors

The impact of the economy and the labor market is particularly important to DEP attrition. When the civilian unemployment rate is low and job opportunities are relatively abundant, such as in the FY05–FY07 period, DEP attrition rates are higher because those in the DEP are easily able to find civilian sector employment. When the unemployment rate is high (FY08 to the present) and civilian employment prospects are bleak, DEP attrition rates are low. This relationship is clear from regression analysis.

Increases in the 16- to 24-year-old civilian unemployment rate generally have large, negative, and statistically significant effects. During our sample period, the youth unemployment rate varied from a little over 9 percent to more than 20 percent. The estimates indicate that a 5-percentage-point increase in this unemployment rate was associated with the following percentage-point decreases in DEP attrition rates:

- 3.5 for Army men and 6.0 for Army women
- 1.2 for Air Force women
- 2.1 for Marine Corps men and 3.0 for Marine Corps women
- 4.3 for Navy men and 7.0 for Navy women

We find that DEP attrition differs by race. Relative to whites, Asian DEP participants generally had lower DEP attrition rates. Results for black DEP members were more mixed: black women had lower attrition relative to white women, but black men generally had higher attrition rates relative to white men. The results for Hispanics also were mixed.

Looking at other individual characteristics, single men without dependents had attrition rates 2 to 4 percentage points higher than those who were married or had dependents. The effect of being a single woman with no dependents was much smaller and statistically insignificant in all analysis. The age results also differed for men and women. In fact, the results were opposite by gender, with women age 22 and older having lower attrition rates than younger women, and men age 22 and older having higher attrition rates than younger men. Other things equal, men and women in all four services with AFQT scores in the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile and above had attrition rates that were 1 to 5 percentage points below those with lower AFQT scores.

With respect to educational background, potential HSDGs had the highest DEP attrition rates, as noted in table 6 and in our interviews with recruiting professionals. However, our regression examines the impact of educational background, holding constant other characteristics, including months in DEP. The effect of educational background is estimated relative to those who are HSDGs. Relative to HSDGs:

- Those with college credentials had statistically lower DEP attrition rates in all services but the Navy.

- Those with other educational credentials (primarily Tier II credentials) had higher DEP attrition rates in the Army and Navy.<sup>35</sup>
- Potential HSDGs had statistically significant and lower DEP attrition rates in all services. The estimated effects on DEP attrition were generally between 1 and 2 percentage points.<sup>36</sup>

The latter result is particularly interesting. It indicates that, once other characteristics are held constant (with the most important one being time in the DEP), those who were HSDGs at the time they signed an enlistment contract have DEP attrition rates that are 1 to 2 percentage points higher than the rates for high school seniors.

## **DEP duration and the unemployment rate**

We have discussed both:

- the positive relationship between the length of time in DEP and DEP attrition rates as well as
- the negative relationship between the unemployment rate and DEP attrition rates.

What, though, is the relationship between unemployment rates and how long people stay in DEP? Are there differences in the length of DEP stays between the low unemployment years of the FY05-FY06 and the high unemployment years from FY09-FY11?

Figure 8 shows this relationship for those who access into active duty. When the unemployment rate is low and recruiting is difficult, DEP stays are shorter. As unemployment rises and civilian jobs become more difficult to find, DEP participants are willing to remain longer in DEP. The number of DEP participants is also larger in periods of

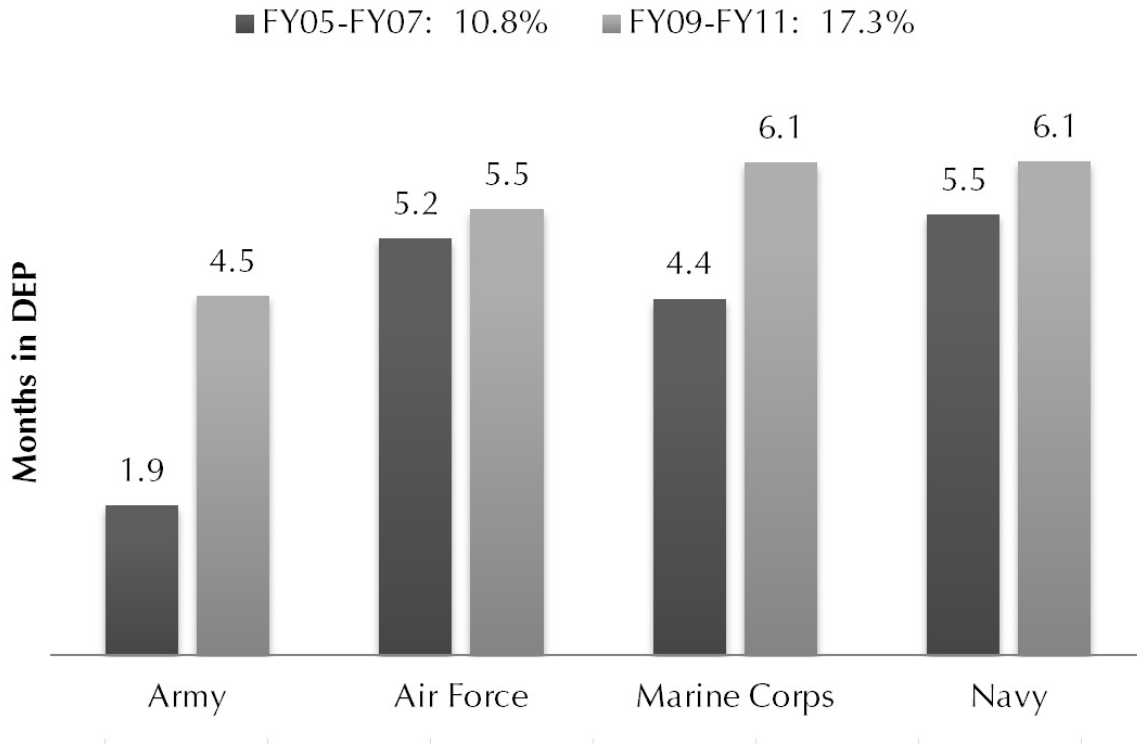
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35. Results for the Air Force and Marine Corps were generally statistically insignificant.

36. To satisfy concerns about multicollinearity between DEP months and potential HSDGs, we checked the distribution of educational credentials for those with long DEP stays. Although potential HSDGs are over-represented, there are sufficient numbers of other educational backgrounds represented among those with long DEP stays to allay our concerns.

high unemployment, making it necessary to wait longer before shipping to active duty.<sup>37</sup>

Figure 8. Higher unemployment rates and longer DEP durations



### DEP discharge reasons

Although there are 25 official DEP discharge reasons, many are rarely used. Virtually all DEP discharges (97 percent) in the FY05–FY12 period were for one of the 13 reasons displayed in table 8.

By far, the most frequent DEP discharge reason is “refused to enlist,” although there are some interesting service differences. The Marine Corps uses this code more sparingly, preferring the label of “apathy/personal problem.”

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37. This relationship is even stronger when we omit high school seniors who cannot ship until they graduate from high school.

It is interesting that the reason for less than 0.1 percent of DEP discharges was “enlisted in another service.” It is possible that discharges for this reason are underreported, either because of hesitancy from the DEP member to disclose such a reason to his or her recruiter or because of hesitancy from the recruiter to disclose such a reason to his or her supervisor.

Table 8. Top reasons for separation from the DEP, FY05–FY12

	Army	Air Force	Marine Corps	Navy
Refused to enlist – separation action initiated	35.0%	47.5%	22.6%	51.9%
Apathy/personal problem	8.5%	1.0%	20.0%	1.8%
Moral disqualification – existing prior to service	8.9%	10.5%	3.5%	5.7%
Medical disqualification – not existing prior to service	7.3%	2.4%	6.3%	6.8%
Drug and Alcohol Testing positive results – enlistment data removed (USMEPCOM use only)	9.4%	3.1%	5.8%	3.7%
Failure to graduate from high school	8.1%	2.2%	7.5%	3.5%
Moral disqualification – not existing prior to service	4.4%	1.8%	6.2%	6.6%
Pursuit of higher education	2.2%	1.1%	2.5 %	2.0%
Exceeded time in DEP (USMEPCOM use only)	5.0%	4.5%	2.6%	4.2%
Medical disqualification – existing prior to service	2.2%	8.8%	2.2%	2.9%
Transfer to Ready Reserve or enlisted into another component of the same service	0.1%	0.2%	9.0%	2.2%
Pregnancy	3.1%	3.9%	1.1%	2.9%
Other reason	2.0%	9.0%	6.9%	3.3%

## Estimating the effect on active-duty attrition

Another important issue is the effect of DEP months on *active-duty* attrition. We estimated 6-month attrition for accessions from FY05 to FY11 and 24-month attrition rates for accessions from FY05 to FY09. To identify service differences, we estimated the regressions separately by service. Because women have substantially higher in-service attrition rates than men, we also estimated the regressions separately by gender. Between FY05 and FY09, 24-month attrition rates were as follows:

- 18.5 percent for Army men and 34.8 percent for Army women
- 14.5 percent for Air Force men and 23.0 percent for Air Force women

- 17.6 percent for Navy men and 23.0 percent for Navy women
- 15.3 percent for Marine Corps men and 24.5 percent for Marine Corps women

We grouped time in DEP in categories of 0, 1–2, 3–6, 7–9, and 10–12 months.<sup>38</sup> Control variables are similar to those used in estimating DEP attrition, except that education is specified by educational tier.<sup>39</sup>

### **Effect of DEP months on 6- and 24-month attrition rates**

A consistent finding is that the effect of longer DEP stays on active-duty attrition rates is consistently higher for 24-month rates than for early-training attrition rates (proxied by 6-month attrition rates).<sup>40</sup> Virtually all estimates of the impact of DEP length on 24-month attrition rates are at least double those of the impact on attrition rates in the first 6 months of service. For this reason, we focused on 24-month attrition rates.

Another consistent finding is that the effects of DEP length on attrition are considerably higher for women than for men. DEP provides information to prepare recruits for military service; one could speculate that this information is even more useful to women than men if women, on average, know less than men about military service. For those with DEP stays of 3 to 6 months, 24-month attrition rates (relative to those with 1 to 2 months in the DEP) are:

- 1.7 percentage points lower for Army men and 3.9 percentage points lower for Army women;
- 3.3 percentage points lower for Air Force men and 5.9 percentage points lower for Air Force women;
- 2.6 percentage points lower for Marine Corps men and 4.0 percentage points lower for Marine Corps women; and

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38. We omitted 1 to 2 months from the regressions, so the results for DEP months are all relative to those with 1 to 2 months in DEP.

39. Appendix B provides the full regression results for 24-month attrition; the results for 6-month attrition are available from the authors.

40. Buddin (2005), however, does not find such a result for the Army (see p. 73 in [6]).



- 3.1 percentage points lower for Navy men and 4.0 percentage points lower for Navy women.

For men and women in the Air Force and Navy, the impact of direct shipping on attrition is generally not different from that of short DEP stays of 1 to 2 months. However, Marine Corps male direct shippers (those who spend less than a month in DEP) have 3.0 percentage points higher 24-month attrition rates than do those with 1 to 2 months in the DEP. The Army also sees an effect of direct shippers on 24-month attrition rates (for men, they are 1.1 percentage points higher; for women, they are 1.7 percentage points higher than for those with 1 to 2 months in the DEP.) Table 9 presents these results.

Table 9. Regression-adjusted 24-month active-duty attrition rates, by DEP months and service

		DEP months				
		0	1-2	3-6	7-9	10-12
<b>Army</b>						
	Men	1.1	†	-1.7	-2.6	-4.2
	Women	1.7	†	-3.9	-6.2	-4.0
<b>Air Force</b>						
	Men	‡	†	-3.3	-4.4	-4.0
	Women	‡	†	-5.9	-7.1	-8.6
<b>Marine Corps</b>						
	Men	3.0	†	-2.6	-4.1	-3.7
	Women	‡	†	-4.0	-7.9	-6.5
<b>Navy</b>						
	Men	‡	†	-3.1	-4.7	-4.8
	Women	‡	†	-4.0	-5.0	-6.6

† Identifies reference group.

‡ Not statistically different from zero.

Except for Army men, the largest attrition reduction occurs for those in the DEP for 7 to 9 months. Overall, we find that longer DEP stays are associated with lower active-duty attrition rates. This result holds for all services and for both genders.

### Effect of other factors

Holding other characteristics constant, recruits with Tier II (generally GEDs) and Tier III educational credentials (high school dropouts) had 24-month attrition rates that were about 10 percentage points higher than Tier I recruits (primarily HSDGs).

In terms of racial/ethnic background, minorities (relative to whites) generally had lower attrition rates. Hispanics and Asians, particularly women, had low attrition rates relative to whites. For example, in the Army, Hispanic and Asian men had 24-month attrition rates that were 5 percentage points lower than their white counterparts, while the rates for Hispanic and Asian women were 10 and 13 percentage points lower, respectively, than those for white women.

The effects of other independent variables are smaller:

- Servicemembers entering over 21 years of age generally have somewhat lower attrition rates (except in the Marine Corps);
- Servicemembers entering single and without dependents have lower attrition rates in the Army, but mixed rate results in the other services;
- Servicemembers entering with an enlistment waiver have somewhat higher attrition in the Marine Corps and Navy, but mixed or insignificant results in the other services; and
- Servicemembers with AFQT scores at or above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile have attrition rates 2 to 4 percentage points lower than those with AFQT scores below the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile.

## **Managing time in DEP: Trade-offs between DEP and in-service attrition**

Our findings reveal that:

- DEP attrition rates *increase* as DEP months increase; and
- Active-duty attrition rates *decrease* as DEP months increase.

Recruiters are primarily responsible for shipping recruits and have every incentive to keep DEP attrition rates as low as possible. Furthermore, since recruiters are well aware of the relationship between DEP time and DEP attrition rates (but may be unaware of any relationship between DEP time and active-duty attrition rates), they can be expected to try to keep DEP time as short as possible. It is in each service's interest, however, to reduce both DEP and active-duty attrition rates. Reducing active-duty attrition rates calls for

longer DEP stays. The question remains, is there an optimal DEP length?

To begin to answer this question, we have estimated relationships between the length of time in DEP, DEP attrition rates, and active-duty attrition rates. In general, DEP attrition is much cheaper than active-duty attrition,<sup>41</sup> but exact costs depend on when in the training pipeline attrition occurs.

Even without knowing the monetary costs of attrition, it may be possible to roughly evaluate relative costs. For example, our estimates for Marine Corps men suggest that, if the cost of Marine Corps active-duty attrition is more than 1.9 times the cost of a DEP attrite, it would be cost-effective to increase DEP from 0 to 4 months.<sup>42</sup>

Our numerical estimates lack the precision required to calculate the optimal time in DEP; as such, these results are only suggestive. The confidence intervals around our estimates are large, and the balance between active-duty attrition rates and DEP attrition rates seems to vary across the services. Furthermore, a single optimal time in DEP may not exist. Optimal length of time in DEP is likely related to the overall state of the economy, with optimal DEP stays being shorter when the civilian unemployment rate is lower, and longer when the unemployment rate is higher. Additional work on this topic would be a worthy subject for further research.

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41. A DEP loss must be replaced by obtaining an additional enlistment contract and primarily involves recruiting costs. An active-duty loss must be replaced by an additional contracted individual who does not attrite from the DEP but accesses to active duty.

42. Increasing the DEP stay from 0 to 4 months increases Marine Corps DEP attrition by 10.4 percentage points and reduces 24-month active-duty attrition by 5.6 percentage points ( $10.4/5.6 = 1.9$ ).

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## Summary and policy recommendations

As discussed in the introductory portion of this report, little legislative or regulatory guidance exists for the DEP above the field command level. Although one could argue that this creates training and standardization challenges, we should not overlook the value it creates in terms of allowing for creativity and the testing of new practices and procedures.

Moreover, despite this lack of higher level regulatory guidance, the services have more commonalities than differences in how they manage their DEPs. The differences that exist provide an opportunity for recruiters from different services to “compare notes” and share practices that they have found to be effective.

Below, we highlight six areas that we believe could result in fruitful exchanges between the services. We believe that the appropriate forum for this exchange is the USMEPCOM/Services Stakeholders’ Conference that USMEPCOM hosts annually.

### Assignment of quality personnel to recruiting duty

The services all have competing demands for the assignment of their “best and brightest” personnel. There are two factors, however, that the services should consider when evaluating the priority they place on recruiting assignments. First, assignments to independent duty present unique personal and professional challenges for servicemembers and their families. Servicemembers with proven performance and stable personal affairs can be expected to excel in the recruiting environment. Second, recruiting forces represent the services to the American public. They are the military’s spokespersons and ambassadors. Unfortunately, surveys of prospective applicants and influencers continue to reveal little public trust in recruiters. This situation creates something of a strategic imperative to ensure that the services are represented by their very best soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines. Those selected for (and assigned to) recruiting duty need not have the highest aptitude or be the most educated, but they should possess attributes that help them

to best portray their service and to effectively and honestly interact with young people and their influencers.

In addition, some recruiting officials we spoke with felt that the services were not always sending the “right” people to recruiting duty. Furthermore, some recruiters were not satisfied with their assignments; they felt that the assignments were not career-enhancing and that their services did not place a high value on a successful recruiting assignment. To address these issues, we offer three recommendations for service leadership:

- Further emphasize the importance of recruiting duty on the success of the AVF and the defense of the nation.
- Highlight the successful career progression of officers and enlisted members assigned to recruiting.
- Sharing recruiter assignment policies and screening methods across services would benefit all services.

## **Pre-enlistment screening protocols**

In addition to standard applicant screening protocols that USMEPCOM and the services have agreed upon, each service has adopted screening processes that could be helpful in improving applicant quality across all services. Below are four of the more important ones that services have implemented:

- The Army, Navy, and Air Force are using credit reports to detect any financial problems that applicants may have that could negatively affect security clearance eligibility.
- The Army is using Live Scan fingerprint technology with the FBI to more quickly discover applicants with police records.
- The Army, Navy, and Marine Corps are using a field-administered drug test to avoid further processing of applicants who would fail the official drug and alcohol test administered at the MEPSs.

- The Marine Corps is administering an IST to better gauge the physical ability of applicants so that remedial conditioning can be done, if needed, before an applicant ships to bootcamp.

Each of these screening protocols has the potential to improve the efficiency with which the services process applicants for enlistment. Widespread adoption has the potential to save significant recruiting resources and processing time.

## **Recruiter-applicant-influencer relationship management**

Because breakdowns in the recruiter-applicant-influencer relationship are a significant cause of DEP attrition, the services have used varying tactics and technologies to maintain relationships. Although face-to-face and telephone contact are still fundamentally important, social networking capabilities now allow recruiters to stay connected in a space where DEP members feel more comfortable and are most likely to communicate.

Recruiters in all services continue to experiment with ways to effectively and ethically use new technologies, and the lessons that they have learned should be shared. For example, the Army's Small Unit Recruiting initiative stands in contrast to traditional recruiting constructs and provides an opportunity for the other services to understand the costs and benefits of this new model as they relate to recruiter-applicant relationships. We recommend that the Army share its findings on this new paradigm with the other services.

Ultimately, regular contact between the recruiter and the DEP member and his or her influencers is fundamental. This contact needs to be frequent, genuine, honest, and forthright.

## **Relationship between the recruiting and entry-level training establishments**

The services vary considerably in how their recruiting and entry-level training establishments interact—particularly in the area of feedback to recruiters on the quality and performance of their recruits. The Marine Corps systematically extends its feedback process to the individual recruiter level, whereas the other services typically do not. To the extent that this feedback reduces entry-level training attrition,

which in turn reduces contracting goals, recruiting commands could benefit if they consistently received and disseminated this feedback down to the individual recruiter level. We recommend that all services consider incorporating a formal feedback system on entry-level training success to inform field recruiting commands.

## **Risks and rewards of pre-DEP and in-DEP physical training**

The services vary widely in their emphasis on physical training (PT) and the discretion they afford recruiters in conducting it. This variation seems to be driven to some extent by how frequently DEP members have been injured in DEP-related activities. Some services have been exposed to legal challenges from injured DEP members and have responded with stricter PT protocols. Other services have had less exposure to such legal challenges and continue to afford their recruiters greater discretion to conduct physical training. Collectively, the services have experimented with many different practices to manage the risks and rewards of physical training. We recommend that the services share these experiences.

## **Time in DEP, DEP attrition, and in-service attrition**

Our statistical analyses confirmed the strong positive relationship between DEP months and DEP attrition, as noted by recruiters. The longer a DEP member is in DEP, the higher the attrition rate. Our interviews and discussions also suggested that high school seniors have particularly high DEP attrition rates. We verified these insights, first by simple tabulations.

Interestingly, however, when in our regressions we control for the time in DEP, we find that those contracted as high school seniors have lower DEP attrition rates than those contracted as graduates. In short, when we compare high school seniors and high school graduates with similar times in DEP, we find high school seniors have lower DEP attrition.

We found a relatively strong negative relationship between the unemployment rate and DEP attrition (as the unemployment rate increased, DEP attrition fell.) Thus, we should expect a rise in DEP attrition as the unemployment rate falls and returns to more typical levels.



Our analyses also confirmed a strong negative relationship between DEP months and active-duty attrition at both the 6-month and 24-month points. Because DEP time had the most effect at the 24-month point, we focused our analyses on it. Relative to those with 1 to 2 DEP months, 24-month attrition rates were

- 1 to 2 percentage points higher for direct ships in the Army and Marine Corps;<sup>43</sup>
- 3 to 5 percentage points lower for male Air Force and Navy recruits with at least 3 DEP months (6 to 9 percentage points lower for female recruits); and
- 2 to 4 percentage points lower for male Army and Marine Corps recruits with at least 3 DEP months (4 to 8 percentage points lower for female recruits).

Estimating the cost savings that would occur if 24-month attrition rates were reduced by 1 or 2 percentage points is outside of the scope of this study. It is safe to say, however, that such savings would be substantial.

In summary, the longer the DEP stay, the *higher the DEP attrition rate*. But, the longer the DEP stay, the *lower the in-service attrition rate*. Both findings are empirically robust. The services have chosen to balance these two forces in different ways: the Navy and Marine Corps accept longer DEP stays, and the Army focuses on shorter DEP stays.

Ensuring that the services' recruiting leadership better understand not only of the impact of DEP length on completing DEP, but also of the impact of DEP length on active-duty attrition is important. Only then can they make informed tradeoffs between DEP length and DEP/in-service attrition. These trade-offs may be service-specific and certainly depend on the recruiting environment and budgetary constraints.

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43. These are recruits with 0 months in DEP (they shipped in the same month that they signed their contracts).

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## Appendix A: Delayed Entry Program (DEP) attrition logistic regression results

In tables 10 through 13, we present the estimates from logistic regressions for DEP attrition. The tables also present the means, coefficient estimates and their associated  $z$  statistics, and the derivative of the conditional mean function. The regressions were run separately by service and gender.

Table 10. Attrition from the DEP: Army Future Soldiers

	Army men, 9.8% attrition rate			Army women, 16.9% attrition rate		
	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative
Unemployment rate (16- to 24-year-olds)	14.296	-0.062** [33.19]	-0.007	14.218	-0.077** [23.53]	-0.012
College	0.066	-0.255** [9.75]	-0.019	0.086	-0.327** [7.40]	-0.037
Potential HSDG <sup>b</sup>	0.192	-0.196** [11.72]	-0.015	0.221	-0.315** [11.33]	-0.036
Tier II <sup>c</sup>	0.195	0.291** [19.45]	0.027	0.139	0.109** [3.43]	0.014
Asian	0.024	-0.060+ [1.66]	-0.005	0.026	-0.367** [5.50]	-0.042
Black	0.133	-0.001 [0.05]	Not sig.	0.257	-0.302** [12.15]	-0.035
Other race	0.086	0.117** [6.41]	0.010	0.090	0.033 [0.98]	Not sig.
Hispanic	0.120	-0.004 [0.26]	Not sig.	0.137	-0.142** [4.99]	-0.017
Age $\geq$ 22 years	0.303	0.207** [14.49]	0.018	0.301	-0.138** [4.75]	-0.016
Single, no dependents	0.856	0.285** [15.39]	0.022	0.789	-0.038 [1.29]	Not sig.
AFQT <sup>d</sup> $\geq$ 50	0.646	-0.163** [14.42]	-0.014	0.554	-0.044* [2.19]	-0.005

Table 10. Attrition from the DEP: Army Future Soldiers

	Army men, 9.8% attrition rate			Army women, 16.9% attrition rate		
	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative
0 DEP months	0.150	-1.468** [49.75]	-0.076	0.129	-2.292** [35.31]	-0.162
1 DEP month	0.245	-0.714** [31.31]	-0.049	0.233	-1.414** [32.39]	-0.131
2 DEP months	0.092	-0.316** [12.19]	-0.025	0.089	-0.566** [12.08]	-0.070
4 DEP months	0.101	0.111** [4.55]	0.010	0.105	0.159** [3.78]	0.025
5 DEP months	0.098	0.235** [9.70]	0.023	0.123	0.208** [5.04]	0.033
6 DEP months	0.082	0.183** [7.21]	0.018	0.081	0.364** [8.33]	0.060
7 DEP months	0.044	0.597** [21.42]	0.068	0.042	0.790** [16.04]	0.144
8 DEP months	0.023	1.016** [31.93]	0.133	0.027	1.097** [20.00]	0.213
9 DEP months	0.017	1.174** [34.23]	0.162	0.021	1.295** [21.87]	0.259
10 DEP months	0.015	1.306** [36.48]	0.188	0.019	1.307** [21.17]	0.262
11 DEP months	0.016	1.207** [33.99]	0.169	0.017	1.238** [19.38]	0.246
12 DEP months	0.030	2.120** [77.43]	0.373	0.035	2.318** [44.63]	0.498
Constant		-1.556** [38.97]			-0.147* [2.21]	
Number of observations		434,345			89,724	

a. Absolute values of z statistics are in brackets.

b. "Potential HSDG" represents primarily high school seniors.

c. Tier II consists primarily of GED holders.

d. "AFQT" stands for Armed Forces Qualification Test.

+ significant at 10%; \* significant at 5%; \*\* significant at 1%

The omitted category is 3 DEP months.

Table 11. Attrition from the DEP: Navy Future Sailors

	Navy men, 16.0% attrition rate			Navy women, 24.0% attrition rate		
	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative
Unemployment rate (16-24)	13.787	-0.072** [38.68]	-0.009	14.144	-0.088** [30.50]	-0.014
College	0.043	0.041 [1.34]	0.005	0.053	0.011 [0.22]	0.002
Potential HSDG <sup>b</sup>	0.264	-0.048** [3.31]	-0.006	0.289	-0.119** [5.27]	-0.020
Tier II <sup>c</sup>	0.061	0.213** [9.16]	0.029	0.047	0.152** [3.48]	0.027
Asian	0.042	-0.202** [6.71]	-0.02	0.041	-0.282** [5.67]	-0.045
Black	0.166	0.039* [2.47]	0.005	0.249	-0.140** [6.07]	-0.023
Other race	0.139	0.025 [1.49]	0.003	0.152	-0.005 [0.18]	-0.000
Hispanic	0.165	0.055** [3.67]	0.007	0.190	0.003 [0.11]	0.000
Age ≥ 22 years	0.225	0.164** [10.41]	0.022	0.206	-0.054+ [1.89]	-0.009
Single, no dependents	0.9417	0.268** [9.73]	0.0326	0.920	-0.006 [0.16]	-0.001
AFQT <sup>d</sup> ≥ 50	0.793	-0.167** [12.12]	-0.022	0.738	-0.100** [4.68]	-0.017
0 DEP months	0.021	0.307** [6.54]	0.031	0.023	-0.380** [4.28]	-0.040
1 DEP month	0.086	0.332** [10.45]	0.034	0.109	-0.496** [9.23]	-0.050
2 DEP months	0.071	-0.333** [8.74]	-0.026	0.097	-0.378** [6.89]	-0.040
4 DEP months	0.089	0.159** [4.90]	0.015	0.091	0.357** [7.32]	0.048
5 DEP months	0.101	0.350** [11.35]	0.036	0.091	0.647** [13.69]	0.096
6 DEP months	0.103	0.456**	0.048	0.089	0.747**	0.114

Table 11. Attrition from the DEP: Navy Future Sailors

	Navy men, 16.0% attrition rate			Navy women, 24.0% attrition rate		
	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative
7 DEP months	0.102	0.544** [15.03]	0.060	0.081	1.004** [15.89]	0.165
8 DEP months	0.099	0.529** [17.83]	0.058	0.086	0.928** [21.26]	0.149
9 DEP months	0.078	0.802** [17.11]	0.097	0.070	1.121** [19.67]	0.190
10 DEP months	0.053	1.090** [25.56]	0.146	0.054	1.312** [23.04]	0.232
11 DEP months	0.048	1.083** [33.40]	0.144	0.046	1.348** [25.86]	0.241
12 DEP months	0.073	1.465** [32.37]	0.220	0.074	1.684** [25.66]	0.320
Constant		-1.414** [48.14]			-0.430** [35.54]	
Number of observations		244,383 [31.33]			70,040 [6.47]	

a. Absolute values of z statistics are in brackets.

b. "Potential HSDG" represents primarily high school seniors.

c. Tier II consists primarily of GED holders.

d. "AFQT" stands for Armed Forces Qualification Test.

+ significant at 10%; \* significant at 5%; \*\* significant at 1%

The omitted category is 3 DEP months.

Table 12. Attrition from the DEP: Air Force (AF) DEPer

	AF men, 10.7% attrition rate			AF women, 19.2% attrition rate		
	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative
Unemployment rate (16-24)	14.240	0.001 [0.37]	.000	13.763	-0.016** [4.49]	-0.002
College	0.053	-0.198** [4.97]	-0.018	0.057	-0.237** [4.04]	-0.034
Potential HSDG <sup>b</sup>	0.208	-0.235** [10.93]	-0.021	0.237	-0.190** [6.56]	-0.028
Tier II <sup>c</sup>	0.071	0.046 [1.51]	0.005	0.074	-0.022 [0.49]	-0.003
Asian	0.029	-0.189** [3.84]	-0.017	0.033	-0.212** [3.25]	-0.031
Black	0.142	-0.049* [2.16]	-0.004	0.207	-0.296** [9.99]	-0.042
Other race	0.036	-0.091* [2.17]	-0.008	0.049	-0.195** [3.64]	-0.029
Hispanic	0.123	0.007 [0.30]	0.001	0.139	-0.152** [4.55]	-0.022
Age ≥ 22 years	0.195	0.050* [2.22]	0.005	0.167	-0.084* [2.31]	-0.012
Single, no dependents	0.923	0.522** [14.62]	0.041	0.909	0.059 [1.40]	0.009
AFQT <sup>d</sup> ≥ 50	0.861	-0.350** [16.61]	-0.035	0.797	-0.312** [11.37]	-0.049
0 DEP months	0.013	0.664** [10.67]	0.069	0.010	-0.495** [3.54]	-0.057
1 DEP month	0.050	1.013** [28.10]	0.120	0.045	0.047 [0.72]	0.006
2 DEP months	0.052	0.478** [12.19]	0.046	0.051	0.262** [4.40]	0.039
4 DEP months	0.200	-0.420** [12.48]	-0.028	0.188	-0.350** [7.36]	-0.042
5 DEP months	0.187	-0.194** [5.91]	-0.014	0.180	-0.118* [2.54]	-0.015
6 DEP months	0.128	-0.001	-0.000	0.133	0.117* [2.54]	0.017

Table 12. Attrition from the DEP: Air Force (AF) DEPers

	AF men, 10.7% attrition rate			AF women, 19.2% attrition rate		
	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative
7 DEP months	0.082	0.197** [0.04]	0.017	0.088	0.299** [2.43]	0.045
8 DEP months	0.052	0.412** [5.28]	0.039	0.058	0.468** [5.79]	0.074
9 DEP months	0.034	0.533** [10.15]	0.052	0.038	0.608** [8.28]	0.100
10 DEP months	0.023	0.766** [11.78]	0.083	0.026	0.646** [9.67]	0.107
11 DEP months	0.017	0.992** [15.56]	0.117	0.019	1.193** [9.00]	0.226
12 DEP months	0.058	1.418** [18.83]	0.194	0.065	1.347** [16.03]	0.263
Constant		-2.501** [39.19]			-1.065** [25.48]	
Number of observations		184,143			54,449	

a. Absolute values of z statistics are in brackets.

b. "Potential HSDG" represents primarily high school seniors.

c. Tier II consists primarily of GED holders.

d. "AFQT" stands for Armed Forces Qualification Test.

+ significant at 10%; \* significant at 5%; \*\* significant at 1%

The omitted category is 3 DEP months.



Table 13. Attrition from the DEP: Marine Corps (MC) poolees

	MC men, 20.1% attrition rate			MC women, 28.6% attrition rate		
	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative
Unemployment rate (16-24)	13.946	-0.033** [20.80]	-0.005	14.124	-0.037** [7.99]	-0.006
College	0.009	-0.189** [3.03]	-0.028	0.016	-0.135 [0.90]	-0.023
Potential HSDG <sup>b</sup>	0.459	-0.323** [24.17]	-0.047	0.435	-0.466** [11.90]	-0.076
Tier II <sup>c</sup>	0.041	0.032 [1.10]	0.005	0.0277	-0.086 [0.79]	-0.015
Asian	0.023	0.127** [3.84]	0.019	0.024	-0.197+ [1.93]	-0.032
Black	0.089	0.167** [9.28]	0.025	0.149	-0.053 [1.18]	-0.009
Other race	0.037	0.011 [0.40]	0.002	0.053	-0.213** [3.05]	-0.035
Hispanic	0.174	0.112** [8.46]	0.017	0.220	-0.267** [6.90]	-0.04
Age ≥ 22 years	0.107	0.199** [10.46]	0.030	0.095	-0.034 [0.51]	-0.006
Single, no dependents	0.978	0.283** [6.77]	0.039	0.962	0.07 [0.74]	0.012
AFQT <sup>d</sup> ≥ 50	0.692	-0.131** [11.84]	-0.01942	0.659	-0.101** [3.04]	-0.017
0 DEP months	0.055	-1.238** [24.98]	-0.067	0.055	-1.935** [11.96]	-0.133
1 DEP month	0.131	0.077** [2.77]	0.007	0.135	-0.991** [11.59]	-0.094
2 DEP months	0.091	-0.431** [12.94]	-0.032	0.111	-0.751** [8.70]	-0.077
4 DEP months	0.074	0.383** [12.59]	0.039	0.086	0.425** [5.59]	0.065
5 DEP months	0.070	0.687** [23.03]	0.078	0.080	0.752** [9.97]	0.126
6 DEP months	0.068	0.911**	0.113	0.072	1.024**	0.184

Table 13. Attrition from the DEP: Marine Corps (MC) poolees

	MC men, 20.1% attrition rate			MC women, 28.6% attrition rate		
	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative
7 DEP months	0.071	1.081** [30.92]	0.142	0.065	1.267** [13.38]	0.239
8 DEP months	0.071	1.146** [37.15]	0.154	0.063	1.511** [16.23]	0.298
9 DEP months	0.068	1.308** [39.34]	0.185	0.055	1.635** [19.24]	0.328
10 DEP months	0.065	1.527** [44.85]	0.231	0.054	1.782** [20.11]	0.364
11 DEP months	0.076	1.530** [52.30]	0.231	0.058	1.794** [21.75]	0.367
12 DEP months	0.081	2.402** [53.11]	0.440	0.075	2.621** [22.07]	0.555
Constant		-1.887** [86.29]			-0.873** [33.05]	
Number of observations		266,170 [36.02]			25,004 [6.90]	

a. Absolute values of z statistics are in brackets.

b. "Potential HSDG" represents primarily high school seniors.

c. Tier II consists primarily of GED holders.

d. "AFQT" stands for Armed Forces Qualification Test.

+ significant at 10%; \* significant at 5%; \*\* significant at 1%

The omitted category is 3 DEP months.

## Appendix B: Active-duty attrition logistic regression results

Tables 14-17 present the estimates from eight logistic regressions for 24-month active-duty attrition. The tables also present the means, coefficient estimates and their associated  $z$  statistics, and the derivative of the conditional mean function. The regressions were run separately by service and gender.

Table 14. 24-month attrition rates for Army accessions, FY05-FY09

	Army men, 18.5% attrition rate			Army women, 34.8% attrition rate		
	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative
FY05	0.191	0.054** [3.13]	0.008	0.203	0.244** [7.52]	0.054
FY06	0.216	-0.236** [13.8]	-0.034	0.221	0.067* [2.12]	0.014
FY07	0.199	-0.097** [5.67]	-0.015	0.195	0.061 [1.87]	0.013
FY08	0.195	-0.048** [2.78]	-0.007	0.192	0.055 [1.67]	0.012
Tier II <sup>b</sup>	0.234	0.579** [48.63]	0.093	0.153	0.590** [22.11]	0.136
Tier III <sup>c</sup>	0.022	0.661** [20.2]	0.109	0.010	0.566** [5.97]	0.131
Asian	0.020	-0.376** [8.72]	-0.051	0.023	-0.633** [8.7]	-0.131
Black	0.113	-0.163** [9.3]	-0.023	0.230	-0.533** [20.66]	-0.113
Other race	0.099	-0.092** [5.08]	-0.014	0.104	-0.170** [5.21]	-0.038
Hispanic	0.112	-0.358** [19.49]	-0.049	0.133	-0.475** [15.41]	-0.098
Age ≥ 22 years	0.317	-0.188** [14.73]	-0.027	0.321	-0.336** [13.58]	-0.072
Single, no	0.849	-0.064**	-0.010	0.766	-0.294**	-0.065

Table 14. 24-month attrition rates for Army accessions, FY05-FY09

	Army men, 18.5% attrition rate			Army women, 34.8% attrition rate		
	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative
dependents						
AFQT <sup>d</sup> ≥ 50	0.652	-0.190** [4.09]	-0.029	0.563	-0.029 [11.15]	-0.006
Enlistment waiver	0.221	0.069** [17]	0.010	0.179	-0.015 [1.43]	-0.003
0 DEP months	0.250	0.071** [5.32]	0.011	0.227	0.075** [0.57]	0.017
3-6 DEP months	0.154	-0.115** [5.57]	-0.017	0.169	-0.184** [3.04]	-0.039
7-9 DEP months	0.044	-0.182** [7.17]	-0.026	0.046	-0.295** [6.45]	-0.062
10-12 DEP months	0.041	-0.312** [6.37]	-0.042	0.036	-0.187** [5.89]	-0.040
Constant		-1.278** [10.07]			-0.229** [3.39]	
Number of observations		244,663			47,780	

a. Absolute values of z statistics are in parentheses. The regressions also control for unknown education.

b. Tier II consists primarily of GED holders.

c. Tier III consists of high school dropouts.

d. "AFQT" stands for Armed Forces Qualification Test.

\* significant at 5%; \*\* significant at 1%

The omitted categories are 1-2 DEP months and FY09.

Table 15. 24-month attrition rates for Air Force (AF) accessions, FY05-FY09

	AF men, 14.5% attrition rate			AF women, 23.0% attrition rate		
	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative
FY05	0.140	0.279** [8.82]	0.033	0.138	0.242** [4.93]	0.041
FY06	0.220	0.218** [7.89]	0.025	0.236	0.184** [4.33]	0.031
FY07	0.201	0.399** [14.63]	0.049	0.210	0.340** [7.95]	0.059
FY08	0.203	0.173**	0.020	0.201	0.152**	0.025

Table 15. 24-month attrition rates for Air Force (AF) accessions, FY05-FY09

	AF men, 14.5% attrition rate			AF women, 23.0% attrition rate		
	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative
Tier II <sup>b</sup>	0.008	0.396** [6.17]	0.055	0.006	0.343* [3.46]	0.065
Tier III <sup>c</sup>	0.001	0.121 [4.52]	0.015	0.001	-0.346 [2.09]	-0.055
Asian	0.029	-0.537** [0.4]	-0.055	0.032	-0.708** [0.63]	-0.108
Black	0.142	-0.023 [8.43]	-0.003	0.213	-0.364** [7.47]	-0.061
Other race	0.037	-0.202** [0.89]	-0.024	0.051	-0.331** [10.08]	-0.056
Hispanic	0.109	-0.296** [9.48]	-0.033	0.128	-0.328** [7.43]	-0.053
Age ≥ 22 years	0.213	-0.347** [14.1]	-0.039	0.191	-0.301** [7.72]	-0.050
Single, no dependents	0.920	0.309** [8.01]	0.034	0.903	-0.007 [0.15]	-0.001
AFQT <sup>d</sup> ≥ 50	0.807	-0.238** [10.95]	-0.031	0.739	-0.243** [7.77]	-0.044
Enlistment waiver	0.126	0.054* [1.99]	0.007	0.095	-0.04 [0.84]	-0.007
0 DEP months	0.014	0.047 [0.65]	0.007	0.013	-0.135 [1.11]	-0.026
3-6 DEP months	0.636	-0.247** [9.14]	-0.033	0.629	-0.316** [7.52]	-0.059
7-9 DEP months	0.150	-0.346** [10.01]	-0.044	0.164	-0.385** [7.39]	-0.071
10-12 DEP months	0.086	-0.312** [7.89]	-0.040	0.080	-0.479** [7.52]	-0.086
Constant		-1.744** [34.15]			-0.706** [9.82]	
Number of observations		103,696			30,261	

a. Absolute values of z statistics are in parentheses. The regressions also control for unknown education.

b. Tier II consists primarily of GED holders.

c. Tier III consists of high school dropouts.

d. "AFQT" stands for Armed Forces Qualification Test.

\* significant at 5%; \*\* significant at 1%

The omitted categories are 1-2 DEP months and FY09.

Table 16. 24-month attrition rates for Marine Corps (MC) accessions, FY05-FY09

	MC men, 15.3% attrition rate			MC women, 24.5% attrition rate		
	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative
FY05	0.195	0.075** [3.06]	0.010	0.191	0.02 [0.28]	0.004
FY06	0.192	0.102** [4.21]	0.013	0.193	0.074 [1.05]	0.014
FY07	0.206	-0.011 [0.46]	-0.001	0.209	-0.024 [0.34]	-0.004
FY08	0.222	-0.090** [3.74]	-0.011	0.202	0.001 [0.01]	0.000
Tier IIb	0.068	0.399** [15.34]	0.057	0.039	0.598** [5.85]	0.121
Tier III <sup>c</sup>	0.001	0.663** [4.21]	0.103	0.001	1.587** [2.67]	0.357
Asian	0.021	-0.344** [6.11]	-0.040	0.024	-0.372* [2.42]	-0.063
Black	0.083	-0.099** [3.7]	-0.012	0.145	-0.241** [3.66]	-0.042
Other race	0.043	-0.113** [3]	-0.014	0.061	-0.278** [2.82]	-0.048
Hispanic	0.161	-0.367** [16.72]	-0.043	0.213	-0.580** [9.49]	-0.096
Age ≥ 22 years	0.125	0.061** [2.76]	0.008	0.114	0.083 [1.18]	0.015
Single, no dependents	0.974	-0.02 [0.45]	-0.003	0.951	-0.053 [0.52]	-0.010
AFQT <sup>d</sup> ≥ 50	0.672	-0.241** [15.44]	-0.032	0.647	-0.129** [2.72]	-0.024
Enlistment waiver	0.491	0.196** [12.91]	0.025	0.434	0.227** [4.92]	0.041
0 DEP months	0.088	0.201** [7.96]	0.030	0.093	-0.04 [0.51]	-0.008
3-6 DEP months	0.299	-0.198** [10.55]	-0.026	0.319	-0.214** [3.94]	-0.040
7-9 DEP months	0.140	-0.325** [12.94]	-0.041	0.137	-0.447** [5.89]	-0.079
10-12 DEP months	0.162	-0.296** [12.34]	-0.037	0.120	-0.358** [4.57]	-0.065

Table 16. 24-month attrition rates for Marine Corps (MC) accessions, FY05-FY09

	MC men, 15.3% attrition rate			MC women, 24.5% attrition rate		
	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative
Constant		-1.489** [29.22]			-0.813** [6.56]	
Number of observations		145,274			11,253	

a. Absolute values of z statistics are in parentheses. The regressions also control for unknown education.

b. Tier II consists primarily of GED holders.

c. Tier III consists of high school dropouts.

d. "AFQT" stands for Armed Forces Qualification Test.

\* significant at 5%; \*\* significant at 1%

The omitted categories are 1-2 DEP months and FY09.

Table 17. 24-month attrition rates for Navy accessions, FY05-FY09

	Navy men, 17.6% attrition rate			Navy women, 23.0% attrition rate		
	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative
FY05	0.210	0.082** [3.58]	0.012	0.178	0.113** [2.61]	0.019
FY06	0.196	0.083** [3.56]	0.012	0.199	0.157** [3.78]	0.027
FY07	0.206	0.053* [2.31]	0.007	0.205	0.018 [0.43]	0.003
FY08	0.200	0.135** [5.88]	0.019	0.203	0.123** [2.97]	0.021
Tier II <sup>b</sup>	0.053	0.541** [18.99]	0.089	0.034	0.550** [8.16]	0.108
Tier III <sup>c</sup>	0.012	0.598** [10.63]	0.100	0.006	0.587** [3.83]	0.116
Asian	0.044	-0.568** [13.54]	-0.068	0.043	-0.713** [8.99]	-0.108
Black	0.168	-0.037 [1.88]	-0.005	0.256	-0.254** [7.77]	-0.044
Other race	0.118	0.043 [1.95]	0.006	0.128	-0.087* [2.13]	-0.016
Hispanic	0.165	-0.209** [10.45]	-0.029	0.192	-0.339** [9.44]	-0.056
Age ≥ 22 years	0.228	-0.189** [10.32]	-0.026	0.215	-0.265** [7.33]	-0.044
Single, no dependents	0.943	0.181** [5.42]	0.025	0.916	-0.161** [3.17]	-0.029

Table 17. 24-month attrition rates for Navy accessions, FY05-FY09

	Navy men, 17.6% attrition rate			Navy women, 23.0% attrition rate		
	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative	Mean	Coeff. [z] <sup>a</sup>	Derivative
AFQT <sup>d</sup> ≥ 50	0.744	-0.286** [17.63]	-0.043	0.686	-0.181** [6.19]	-0.032
Enlistment waiver	0.308	0.185** [11.69]	0.027	0.246	0.103** [3.19]	0.018
0 DEP months	0.027	0.044 [1.02]	0.007	0.034	0.042 [0.58]	0.008
3-6 DEP months	0.387	-0.200** [10.18]	-0.031	0.356	-0.220** [6.5]	-0.040
7-9 DEP months	0.255	-0.320** [14.66]	-0.047	0.185	-0.280** [6.89]	-0.050
10-12 DEP months	0.155	-0.323** [12.97]	-0.048	0.165	-0.380** [8.75]	-0.066
Constant		-1.385** [32.64]			-0.668** [9.84]	
Number of observations		142,455			32,780	

a. Absolute values of z statistics are in parentheses. The regressions also control for unknown education.

b. Tier II consists primarily of GED holders.

c. Tier III consists of high school dropouts.

d. "AFQT" stands for Armed Forces Qualification Test.

\* significant at 5%; \*\* significant at 1%

The omitted categories are 1-2 DEP months and FY09.



# Glossary

AFQT	Armed Forces Qualification Test
AFSC	Air Force Specialty Code
AI	Aptitude Index
AP	Accession Policy
ASVAB	Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery
AVF	All-Volunteer Force
CNP	Chief of Naval Personnel
DAT	Drug and Alcohol Test
DEP	Delayed Entry Program
DLCPO	Division Leading Chief Petty Officer
DOD	Department of Defense
DODI	DOD Instruction
ERR	Eastern Recruiting Region (Marine Corps)
EST	Enlistment Screening Test
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FSR2S	Future Soldier Remote Reservation System
FY	Fiscal Year
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GTEP	Guaranteed Training Enlistment Program
HSDG	High School Diploma Graduate

ING	Inactive National Guard
IRR	Individual Ready Reserve
IST	Initial Strength Test
JAMRS	Joint Advertising Market Research Studies
MCD	Marine Corps District
MCRC	Marine Corps Recruiting Command
MCRISS	Marine Corps Recruiting Information Support System
MCRS	Marine Corps Recruiting Station
MEPS	Military Entrance Processing Station
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty
MPP	Military Personnel Policy
MSO	Military Service Obligation
NRC	Navy Recruiting Command
NRD	Navy Recruiting District
NRR	Navy Recruiting Region
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
OUSD	Office of the Under Secretary of Defense
PFT	Physical Fitness Test
PT	Physical Training
RABA	Recruiter Aptitude Battery Assessment
RG	Recruiting Group
RS	Recruiting Squadron
RSS	Recruiting Substation

SLPO	Station Leading Petty Officer
SUR	Small Unit Recruiting
TRADOC	Training and Doctrine Command
USAREC	U.S. Army Recruiting Command
USMEPCOM	U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command
WRR	Western Recruiting Region (Marine Corps)

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