

Home communities of active component enlisted accessions

In this section, we focus on the communities from which the FY 2008 active duty enlisted accessions were drawn. We first focus on the question of whether these accessions were drawn more disproportionately from certain regions of the country. We then turn our attention to specific characteristics of the communities in which the enlisted accessions lived prior to joining the military.

Regional differences

Figure 31 illustrates the variation in accession rates from each of the nine census divisions. The average nationwide accession rate was roughly 5.85 accessions per 1,000 individuals aged 18 to 24 years. All of the southern census divisions had accession rates of at least 6, and the West South Central division's accession rate was the highest at 7.4 accessions per 1,000 individuals. New England and the Middle Atlantic had accession rates that were much lower than the national average—4.6 and 4.4, respectively. The two North Central divisions had accession rates that were roughly on par with the national average. In the west, the Mountain division had a higher than average accession rate (6.4) and the Pacific division had a lower than average accession rate (5.3).

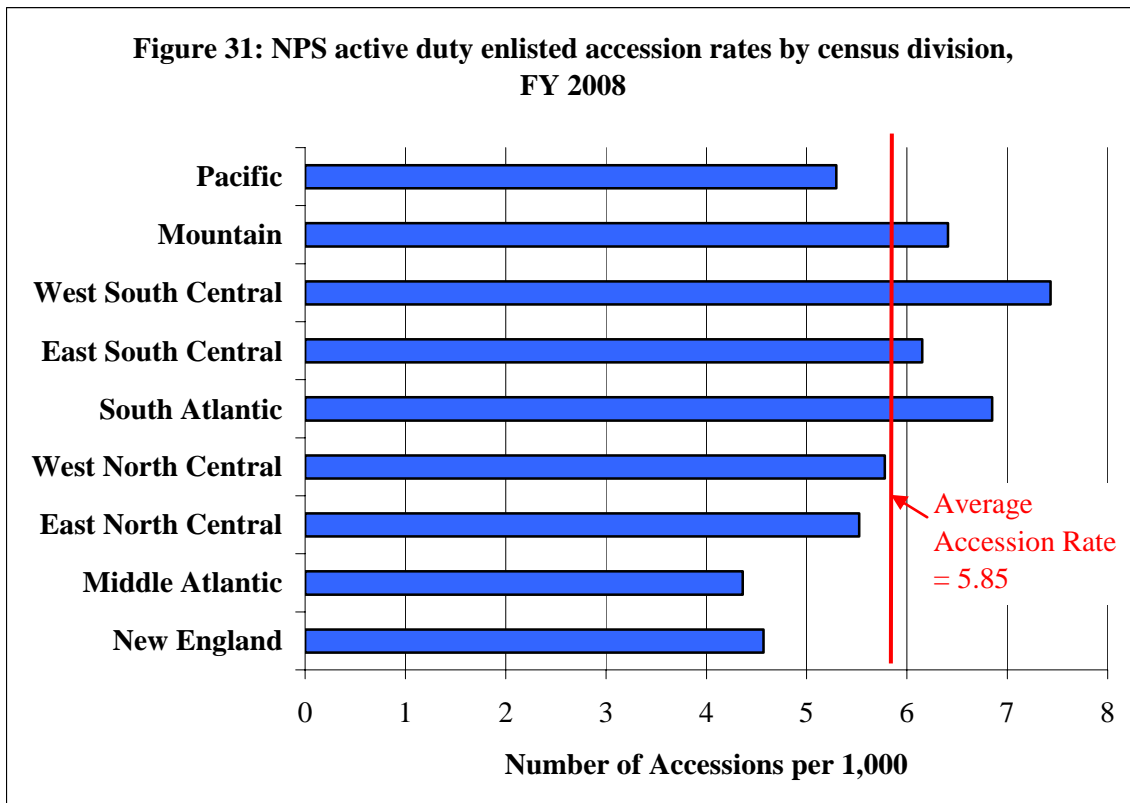
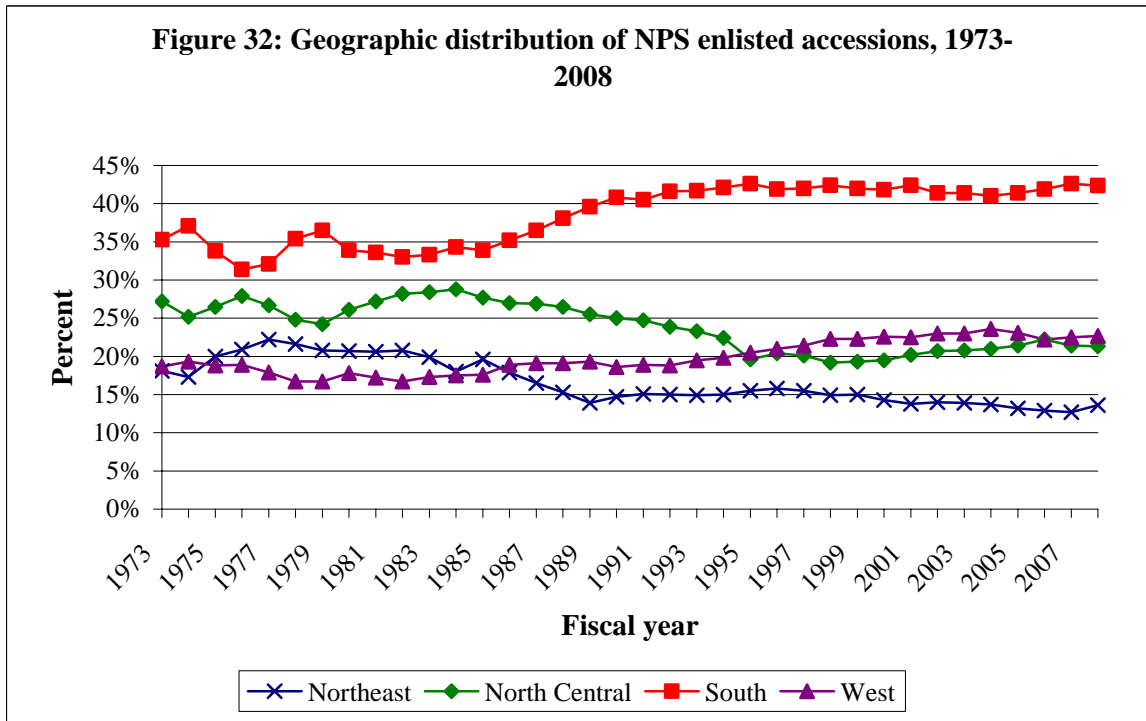


Figure 32 explores how each Census region’s share of total accessions has changed over the past 35 years.



The southern region has always provided the largest share of enlisted accessions, but its share has increased since the mid-1980s. Then, 35 percent of all accessions came from the south. Since the mid-1990s, roughly 42 percent of all accessions have come from there. Of course, the south’s share of total population has also grown, so the result may simply reflect this population shift. Also, since the mid-1980s, the percentage of accessions coming out of the west has grown, while the percentages of accessions coming out of the northeast and the north central regions have fallen. Again, this could be due to shifts in the civilian population over time.

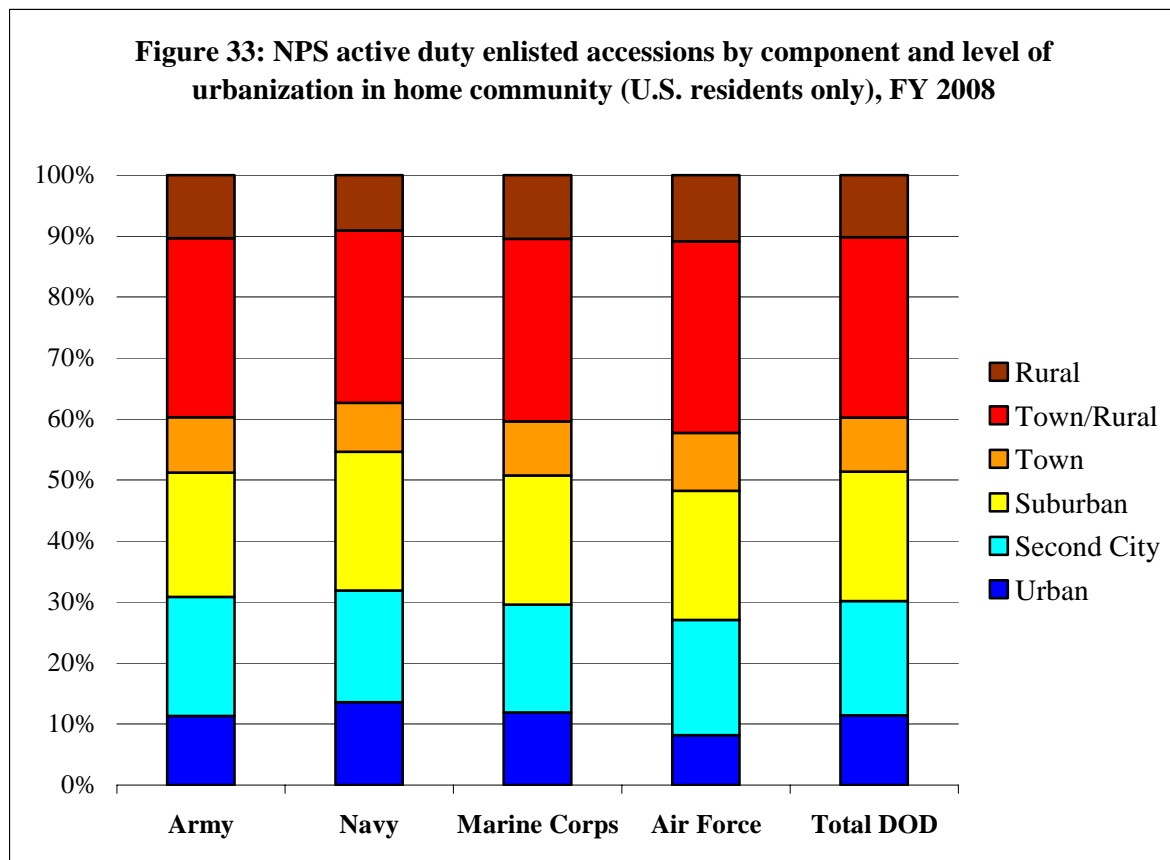
Home communities of enlisted accessions

To create tables B-41 through B-45 in appendix B and the charts that follow, we combined information on the home of record reported by each active duty enlisted accession with socioeconomic data on communities within the U.S. The home communities are defined at the 5-digit zip code level. Accessions residing outside of the U.S. at the time of enlistment are excluded from our population.

Level of urbanization. A proprietary model classifies locations within the U.S. by both population density and proximity to the downtown core in the nearest metropolitan area. The result places each community into one of the following six categories.

- Urban: high density population center; the downtown of a major city and its surrounding neighborhoods (example: Washington, DC)
- Second city: medium density area that serves as the population center for the surrounding community (example: Richmond, Virginia)
- Suburban: may have a population density comparable to that found in a second city, but is dependent on a neighboring population center (example: Fairfax County, Virginia)
- Town: smaller population center than a second city with a lower population density (example: Harrisonburg, Virginia)
- Town/Rural: areas near towns
- Rural: the remainder of the country

Figure 33 presents the distribution of NPS accessions' home communities across these levels of urbanization. Roughly 30 percent of the accessions came from relatively urban places (high and medium density population centers). Nearly half of the accessions came from relatively small towns or rural areas. We also see that there was little variation across the four active components in this regard.



Racial/ethnic diversity of the home communities. We also looked at the racial/ethnic diversity of the home communities of NPS enlisted accessions. The racial/ethnic diversity categories are defined in exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1: Definitions of the racial/ethnic diversity categories for home communities

Category	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
White (W)	>90%			<2%
White, Black, Hispanic Mix (W, B, H, Mix)		>10%	>10%	<2%
White, Black, Asian, Hispanic Mix (W, B, A, H, Mix)		>10%	>10%	>2%
White, Black Mix (W, B, Mix)	<90%			<2%
White, Asian Mix (W, A, Mix)		<10%	<10%	>2%
White, Black, Asian Mix (W, B, A, Mix)		>10%	<10%	>2%
White, Asian, Hispanic Mix (W, A, H, Mix)		<10%	>10%	>2%

To help understand the categories, consider a few of examples.

- Example 1: A community is 93 percent White, 4 percent Black, 2 percent Hispanic, and 1 percent Asian. In this case, the community would be categorized as “White” (W).
- Example 2: A community is 85 percent White, 7 percent Black, 7 percent Hispanic, and 1 percent Asian. In this case, the community would be categorized as “White, Black Mix” (W, B, Mix).
- Example 3: A community is 85 percent White, 6 percent Black, 6 percent Hispanic, and 3 percent Asian. In this case, the community would be categorized as “White, Asian Mix” (W, A, Mix).

Figure 34 illustrates the types of communities that the FY 2008 enlisted accessions came from with respect to racial and ethnic diversity. The majority of the accessions came from either fairly homogenously White communities (37 percent) or from extremely diverse (W, B, A, H, Mix) communities (23 percent). The other fairly common type of home community is like the one in example 2 above, with a minority population greater than 10 percent, but with no significantly large single minority group (W, B, Mix).

There is some variation across the components. Marine Corps and Air Force accessions were more likely (roughly 40 percent for each) than their counterparts in the Army or Navy (roughly 35 percent for each) to come from fairly homogenous White communities. Navy accessions were most likely (25 percent) to come from the most diverse communities, while Air Force accessions were the least likely (20 percent) to come from such communities.

Figure 34: NPS active duty enlisted accessions by component and racial/ethnic mix of home community (U.S. residents only), FY 2008

