

Section II: The DoD AC

Enlisted accessions and force

In FY 2009, the DoD AC enlisted force stood at 1,176,145 soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines. Enlisted accessions during the year totaled 168,953 personnel, which includes both non-prior service (NPS) and prior service (PS) accessions. NPS accessions accounted for the bulk of the total—the NPS/PS split was 161,588 and 7,365, respectively.

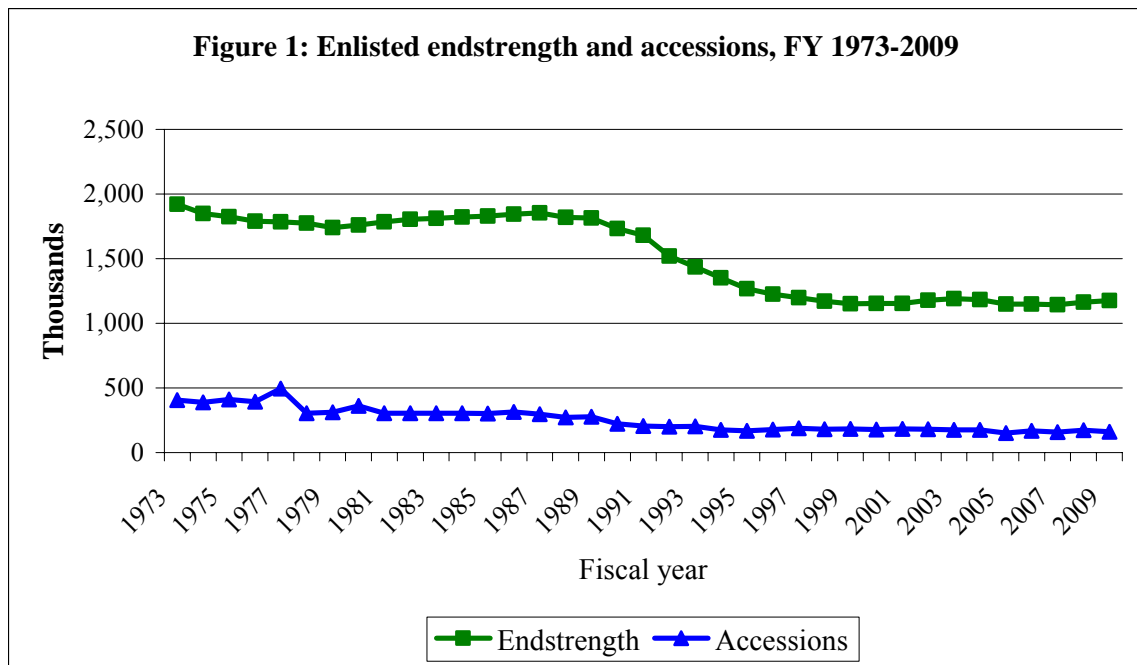


Figure 1 shows how enlisted endstrength and accessions have fluctuated since the institution of the all-volunteer force (AVF) in 1973.⁵ Both accessions and endstrength were much larger then than they are today. Accessions in FY 1973 were more than double their level in FY 2009, while endstrength then was not quite double what it is today. The relatively greater decline in accessions has contributed to the enlisted force becoming more senior (more heavily weighted toward the senior pay grades). The FY 1977 blip in accessions is attributable to the extra quarter—the so-called “transition quarter”—that resulted from the redefinition of a fiscal year.⁶ There was no such blip for endstrength because endstrength is a snapshot of a point in time and accessions are a flow over time.

⁵ Only NPS accessions are displayed in Figure 1.

⁶ For FY 1976 and earlier, the fiscal year ran from July 1 through June 30. Starting with FY 1977, the fiscal year ran from October 1 through September 30.

Of the services, the Army had the most NPS accessions in FY 2009—63,667 soldiers. Army accessions in FY 2009 were nearly twice that of the next service, the Navy, which accessed 35,216 sailors. The Army's larger accessions total reflects the push to expand the active-duty Army to an endstrength of 569,000 soldiers. The FY 2009 accessions totals were similar for the Air Force and Marine Corps—31,780 and 30,925, respectively.⁷ The Marines accessed nearly as many as the Air Force and Navy despite having a considerably smaller service because the Marines are a more junior force (more heavily weighted toward the lower enlisted pay grades), and the Marines are growing while the Navy and Air Force are both downsizing.

Enlisted applicants and accessions. Not everyone who applies to serve in the U.S. military is permitted to serve or ends up serving. The U.S. military defines an applicant as someone who expresses interest in military service by taking the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). There can be a number of reasons why an applicant may wash out rather than entering basic training: a low ASVAB score, failure to meet physical/psychological standards, prior drug use or criminal activity, or simply a change of heart on the recruit's part about serving in the military. Table 2 provides a comparison of FY 2009 applicants (those who took the ASVAB) and enlisted NPS accessions (those who entered basic training).

A key metric for evaluating prospective recruits is the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) score. A recruit's AFQT score is calculated from his or her score on the ASVAB. All recruits must take the ASVAB, which is a series of tests that indicate one's aptitude for military service and potential occupational placement within the military. ASVAB scores are sorted into six categories, which correspond to the following percentile ranges:

- Category I: 93rd to 99th percentile
- Category II: 65th to 92nd percentile
- Category IIIA: 50th to 64th percentile
- Category IIIB: 31st to 49th percentile
- Category IV: 10th to 30th percentile
- Category V: Below the 10th percentile

Recruits who score in categories I through IIIA—the 50th percentile and above—are considered to be the best candidates for enlistment. The DoD goal is that at least 60 percent of NPS accessions be drawn from those categories.

As table 2 shows, the military is selective about those accepted for service. The pool of those accessed into the military is more heavily weighted toward the higher AFQT score categories than is the pool of recruits who took the ASVAB. AFQT categories I, II, and IIIA each provided a higher share of accessions than those who took the exam. Together, those three categories provided 72.2 percent of accessions while representing 59.3

⁷ These numbers differ from those in table 1 because we included both NPS and PS accessions in that table.

percent of exam takers.⁸ Less than 1.0 percent of accessions came from category IV and none came from category V.

Table 2: Profile of enlisted applicants and accessions, FY 2009

Measure	Applicants (percent)	Accessions (percent)
AFQT category		
I	5.73	6.67
II	31.70	38.72
IIIA	21.85	26.81
IIIB	24.43	27.05
IV	11.43	0.75
V	2.02	0.00
Other/Unknown	2.85	0.00
Gender		
Male	80.61	83.54
Female	19.39	16.46
Race/Ethnicity		
White	67.05	71.44
Black	18.51	15.36
AIAN ¹	2.13	2.50
Asian	2.99	2.68
NHPI ¹	1.96	1.31
Two or more	2.21	3.97
Unknown	5.15	2.74
Ethnicity		
Hispanic	15.76	15.23
Non-Hispanic	84.24	84.77

1. AIAN stands for American Indian/Alaska Native. NHPI stands for Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

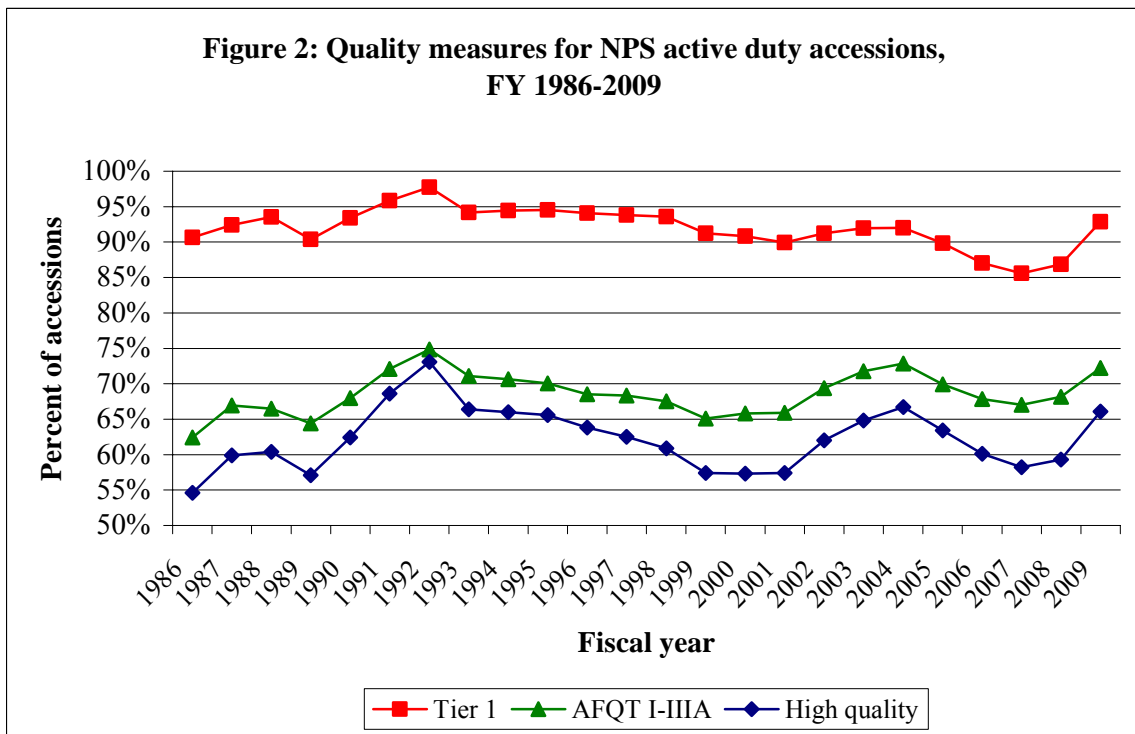
In terms of the male/female breakdown, females represented 19.4 percent of those who applied for military service and 16.5 percent of those who entered military service.

By race and ethnicity, whites provided the largest share of applicants and accessions, with blacks yielding the second-largest share of both. The unknown race category accounted for 5.2 percent of applicants and 2.7 percent of accessions. None of the other race categories exceeded 5.0 percent of either applicants or accessions. The Hispanic shares of applicants and accessions were very close: 15.8 percent of applicants and 15.2 percent of accessions.

The interpretation of Table 2 is that the military was selective FY 2009 from the standpoint of vocational aptitude, but its accessions were otherwise broadly reflective of the pool of those who were interested and applied to serve.

⁸ The AFQT category I through IIIA share of 59.3 percent of exam takers is another indication of the selectivity of today's military: more than half of those who took the ASVAB scored in the upper 50th percentile.

The quality of enlisted accessions. AFQT category is one indicator of recruit quality. Possession of a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) certificate is another.⁹ It is captured by a three-tier system: a Tier I recruit is one who graduated from high school and possesses a diploma, Tier II recruits possess a GED in lieu of graduating with a diploma, and Tier III recruits failed to graduate or obtain a GED. AFQT scores and educational tiers are combined into a third quality measure. By that measure, a “high-quality” recruit is one from both Tier I and AFQT category I through IIIA. Trends in those three quality measures for NPS accessions from FY 1986 to FY 2009 are displayed in figure 2.



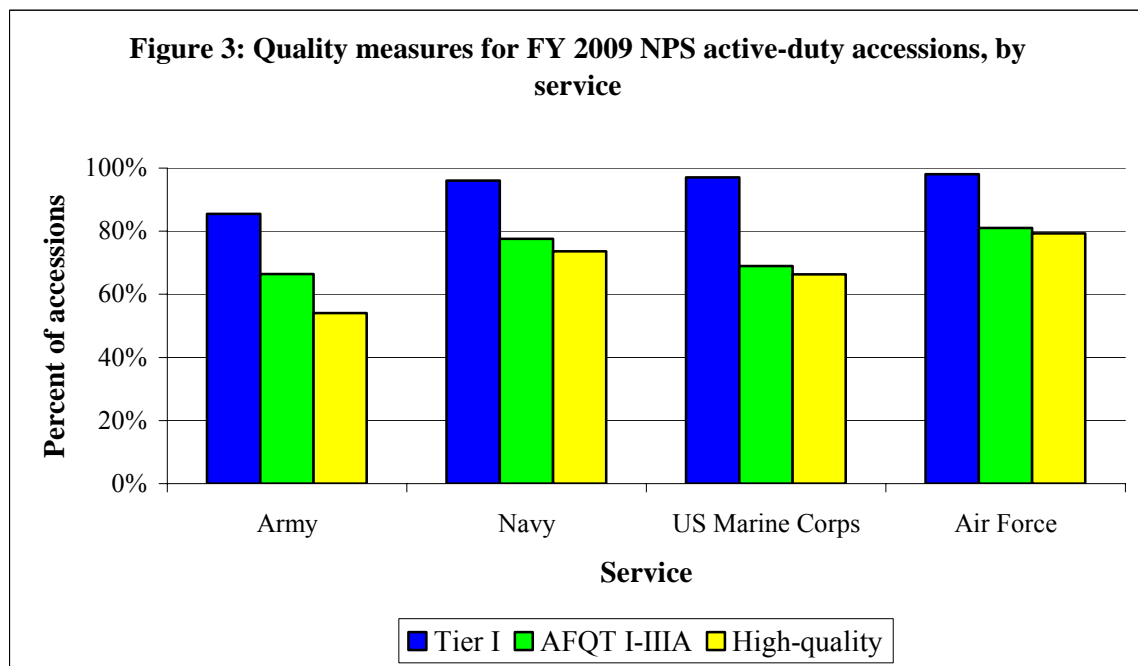
As seen in figure 2, recruit quality has improved since the mid-1980s. Most of the improvement occurred during the late 1980s and early 1990s, a period corresponding to the tail end of the Reagan Administration defense buildup and the lead-up to Gulf War I. From 1992 (the year following the Gulf War I cease-fire) to 2009, there was little net change in quality.

All three measures of recruit quality registered substantial improvement in FY 2009. The fraction of Tier I accessions jumped six percentage points, to 92.9 percent. The share of AFQT I-III A accessions rose four points, to 72.2 percent. High-quality accessions—the most selective of the three quality measures—increased in share by seven points, to 66.1

⁹ Studies by the Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) for the Navy and Marine Corps have found that recruits who finish high school are more likely to finish boot camp and go on to have successful enlistments.

percent. The FY 2009 improvement in recruit quality coincided with the full force of the economic recession that began in late 2007. FY 2009 saw the nationwide unemployment rate rise from 6.6 percent at the start of the year (October 2008) to 9.8 percent at the end of the year (September 2009). The rate averaged 9.3 percent for that twelve-month period—the highest in over a quarter-century. (More on the recession and its impact on DoD recruiting will be provided in a later section.)

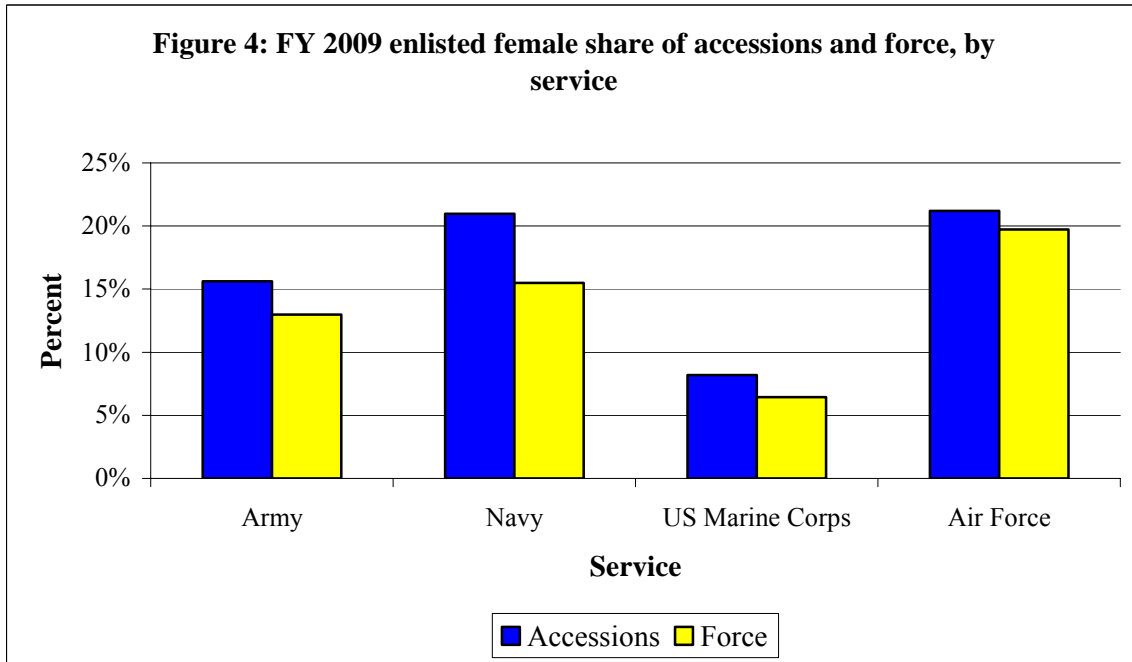
FY 2009 recruit quality was not uniform across the four DoD services. The breakdowns for the three quality metrics are presented in figure 3.



For all three recruit quality measures in figure 3, the Army was the service that posted the lowest shares—85.5 percent in Tier I, 66.4 percent in AFQT I through IIIA, and 54.1 percent high quality. The Air Force edged out the Navy and Marine Corps as the service with the highest shares for the three quality measures—98.1, 81.0, and 79.3 percent, respectively. The Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps were very close in terms of their Tier I shares; each was at 95 percent or higher.¹⁰ The share difference between the Air Force and the other services was greater for AFQT I through IIIA and greater still for high-quality recruits. The latter is the most selective of the three quality measures. The lower recruit quality shares for the Army (and to a lesser extent for the Marine Corps) reflect the push to expand the service and the more challenging recruiting environment that the ground-based services face with the continuing need to rotate ground-based forces through Iraq and Afghanistan.

¹⁰ The DoD standard for the services is at least 90 percent Tier I recruits; however, any service can petition for a waiver.

The representation of women in the active duty enlisted force. As the military services have opened up more opportunities for women to serve, women have comprised an increasing share of accessions and the force. The female share of enlisted NPS accessions and the enlisted force in FY 2009, by service, is displayed in figure 4.



Women made up 16.5 percent of enlisted NPS accessions and 14.1 percent of the enlisted force for the four services in FY 2009. The 2.4 percent difference between the two meant that the female share of FY 2009 accessions contributed to a rise in the female share of the FY 2009 force. That was the case DoD-wide; it was also the case at the service level. In each service, women accounted for a larger share of NPS accessions in FY 2009 than their share of the force in FY 2009. The Air Force had the largest female shares—21.2 percent of accessions and 19.7 percent of the force. The Marine Corps had the smallest shares, at 8.2 percent and 6.5 percent, respectively. All four services are continuing to make headway in their efforts to boost the female share of the enlisted force.

The representation of racial and ethnic groups in the active duty enlisted force. The military services have also been intensifying their efforts to recruit and retain a more diverse force. Figure 5 provides a racial and ethnic breakdown of enlisted NPS accessions and the force in FY 2009.

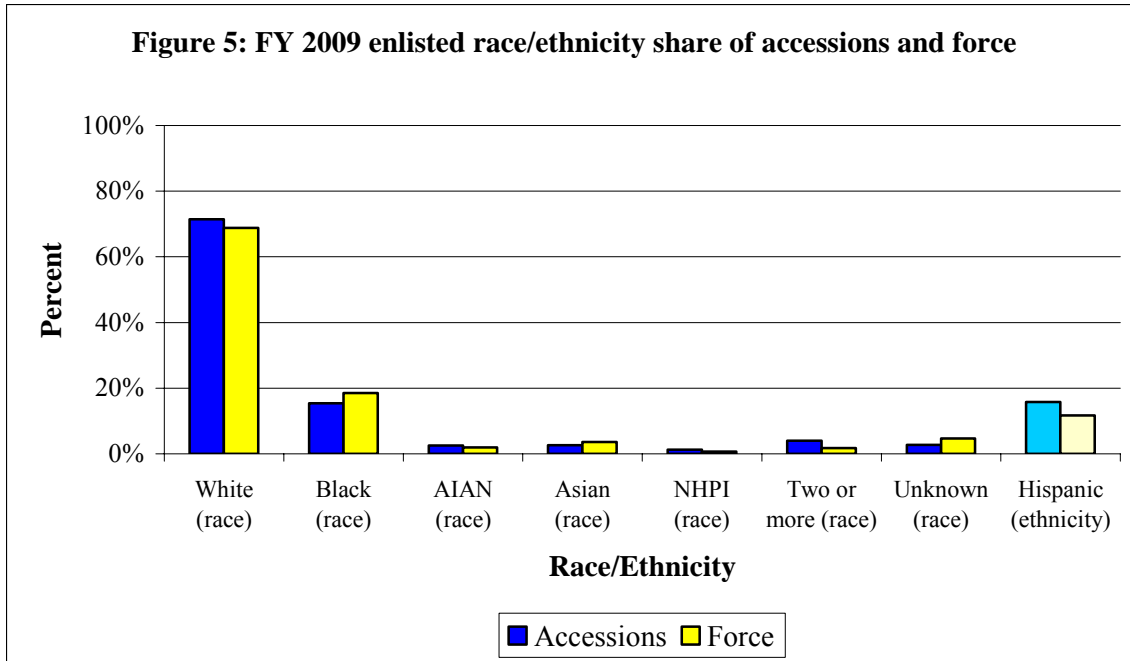


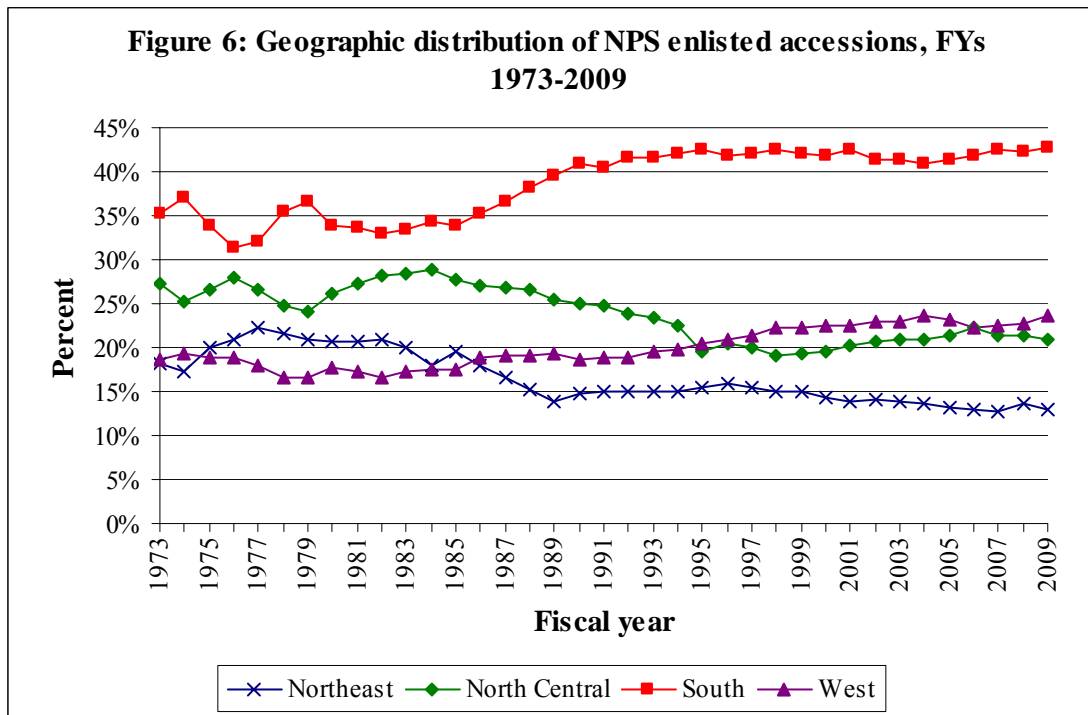
Figure 5 indicates that more than two-thirds of the FY 2009 enlisted NPS accessions and force was white. Blacks were the next-largest category, with 15.4 percent of accessions and 18.5 percent of the force. The white share of the force was slightly smaller than the white share of accessions. For blacks, it was reversed. None of the other racial categories accounted for more than 5 percent of either accessions or the force. Aside from whites, the categories of Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander (NHPI) and Two or More saw their share of gains exceed their share of the force, meaning that their gains in FY 2009 boosted their share of the force. The similarity of each racial group's share of accessions with its share of the force suggests that FY 2009 saw a leveling off of the services' advances in attracting a more racially diverse force.

Hispanics are not broken out as a racial category, but rather, as a separate ethnic category. That category accounted for 15.8 percent of FY 2009 accessions and 11.7 percent of the FY 2009 force.

Non-whites comprised a larger share of the Navy enlisted force, 40.1 percent, than they did for the enlisted force of any of the other DoD services in FY 2009. For the other services, the nonwhite shares of the FY 2009 enlisted force were 31.0 percent in the Army, 28.5 percent in the Air Force, and 22.1 percent in the Marine Corps. The FY 2009 accessions in the Navy increased its nonwhite share of the force. It was the only service to do so. The Navy data indicated that 13.4 percent of that service's FY 2009 enlisted NPS accessions fell into the Two or More category; none of the other services reported that category's share as more than 3.0 percent. It is unclear why the data suggest that the Navy might be attracting more recruits who self-identify as being of multiple races. The magnitude of the difference between the Navy and the other services suggests that it may be a case of service-level reporting differences. A clear-cut case of service-level reporting

differences is that neither the NHPI nor the Two or More fields were included in the Army’s reporting for its enlisted force. The exclusion of those two fields has the effect of skewing the service-level comparisons where the Army is involved.¹¹ Those fields were included in the Army’s reporting for its enlisted accessions.

Where do active duty enlisted accessions come from? The services recruit throughout the country; however, their recruiting mission can be more challenging in some parts of the country than in others. The regional distribution of enlisted NPS accessions from FY 1973 through FY 2009 is displayed in figure 6.



The major story here is the growing relative importance of the South and West in providing recruits. Together, those two regions provided more than 65 percent of enlisted NPS accessions in FY 2009. Their share in FY 1973 was 54.0 percent. In FY 2009, the South provided the largest share of accessions (43 percent), followed by the West (24 percent), the North (roughly 20 percent), and the Northeast (13 percent).

At the same time that the South and West have provided an increasing share of recruits, they have also accounted for a growing share of the U.S. population. Much of the recent U.S. population growth has been concentrated in the “Sun Belt” states of the South and

¹¹ Those fields were missing from the Army’s reporting of enlisted accessions in the FY 2008 PopRep report as well. DMDC and the Army are working to improve the fidelity of the Army’s reporting so that those fields will be included in the future.

West.¹² Between 1972 and 2002, the states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and Washington gained seats in the U.S. House of Representatives (and Electoral College votes) due to population gains.¹³ Atop the list were California and Florida, which both registered ten seat gains. Those states that lost U.S. House seats (and Electoral College votes) over the same period were Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. New York posted a double-digit loss of ten seats. The shifting U.S. population means that the regional shifts in recruiting that were highlighted in Figure 6 may reflect different propensities to enlist or may be simply be a function of a shifting population base. Figure 6 does not control for population. Figures 7 and 8 do, at the level of individual states.

A new feature in the PopRep report for FY 2009 is table B-46 in appendix B, which provides state-level breakdowns for recruit shares and quality measures. Also included in the table is each state's share of the age 18-24 civilian population from which most recruits are drawn. Dividing each state's percentage share of recruits by its percentage share of the civilian population yields a ratio that indicates whether that state is contributing more or less than its share. A ratio of one means that a state is contributing recruits in exact proportion to its share of the population. States that contribute more recruits relative to their population will be marked by higher ratios; states providing fewer recruits will have lower ratios. An ordering of the states by ratio, from highest to lowest, for FY 2009 enlisted NPS accessions is provided in figure 7.

Figure 7 shows the considerable variation among states in their contributions to the FY 2009 enlisted NPS accession pool. The median state, with a ratio of 1.00, was Louisiana. That state's share of enlisted NPS accessions was essentially identical to its share of the 18 to 24 year old civilian population. Montana was the state that contributed the most relative to its population. It accounted for 0.30 percent of the population, but contributed 0.47 percent of accessions, for a ratio of 1.57. The last of the 50 states was Massachusetts, which contributed 1.34 percent of accessions against 2.26 percent of the civilian population, for a ratio of 0.59. After Massachusetts was the District of Columbia, with a ratio of 0.32.

¹² That Sun Belt growth has slowed due to the recent recession, though, according to the updated U.S. Census Bureau population estimates for 2009. The updated population estimates are available at the U.S. Census Bureau website <http://www.census.gov/popest/states/states.html>.

¹³ According to the U.S. Electoral College website <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/>.

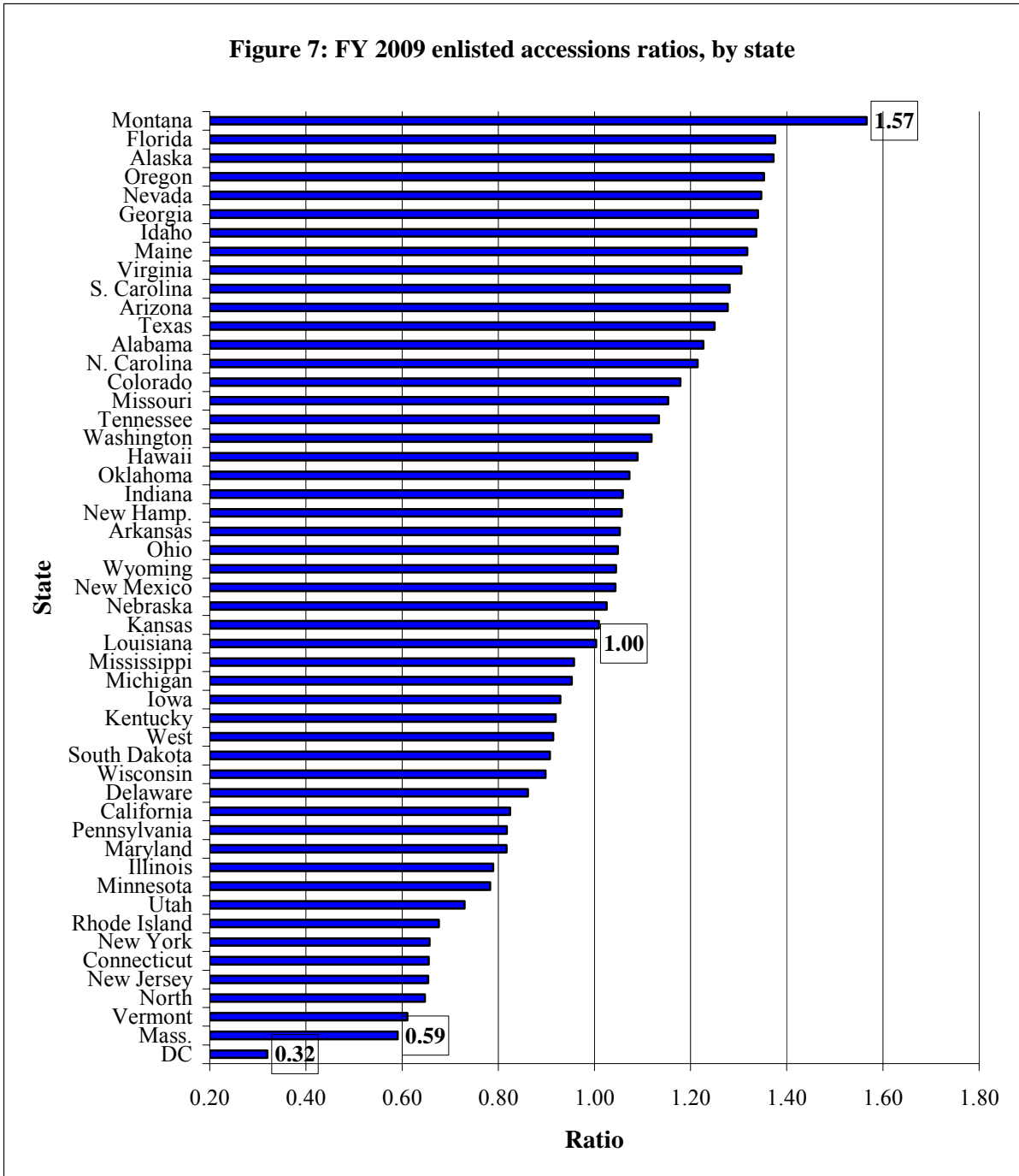
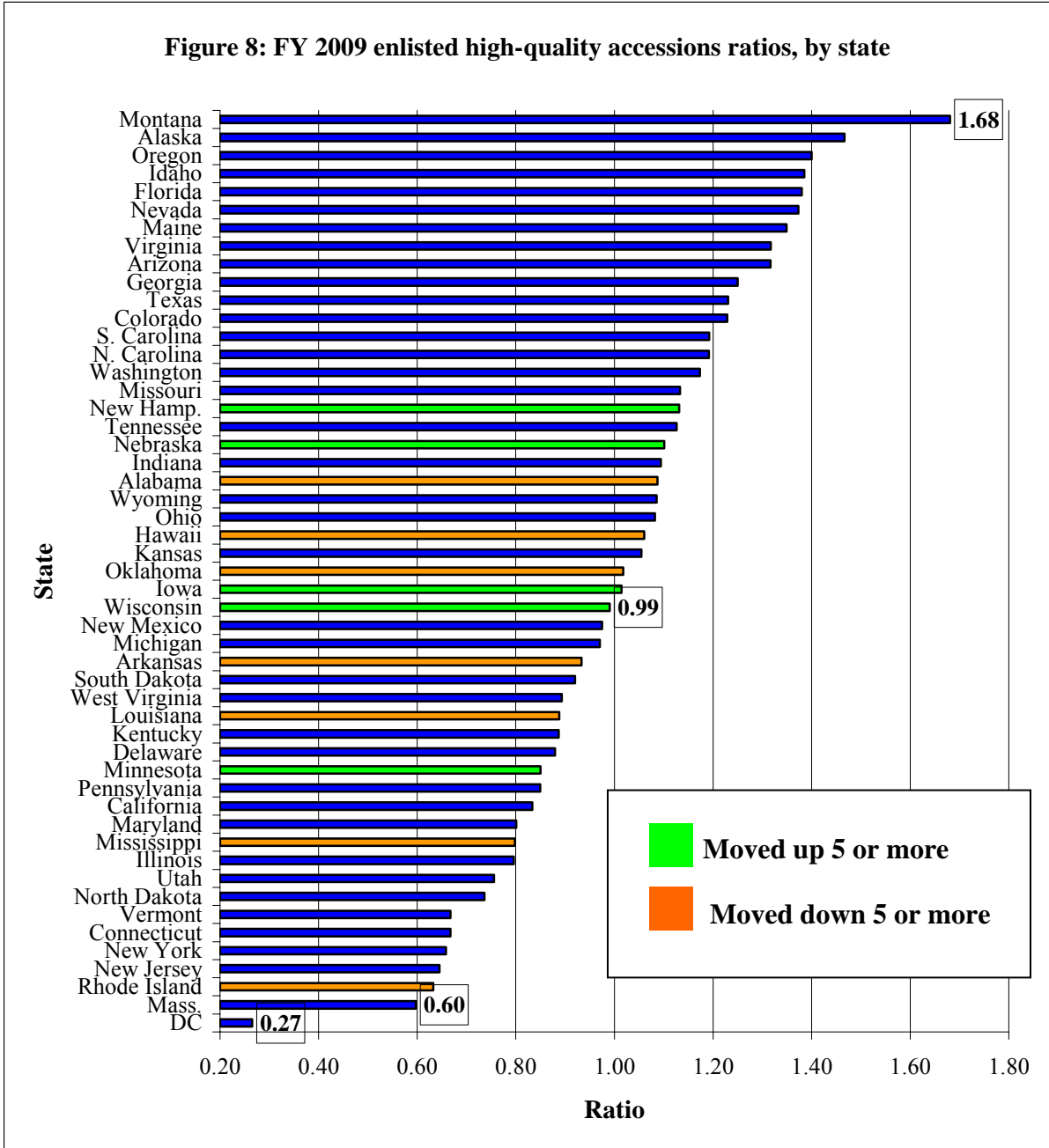


Figure 8 provides a ranking for the subset of FY 2009 accessions that met the more strict criteria of being high-quality, possessing a high school diploma and an AFQT score in Category I through IIIA.

Figure 8: FY 2009 enlisted high-quality accessions ratios, by state



The key difference between figure 7 and figure 8 is that the numerator in calculating each state's ratio is now that state's share of high-quality accessions (as opposed to its share of all accessions). Montana again tops the list. Montana's ratio in figure 8 rose slightly from that in figure 7, to 1.68. The state provided 0.50 percent of high-quality accessions, against its 0.30 percent share of the civilian population. For the rest of the states, there was some movement up and down in the rankings. The median states were Iowa and Wisconsin, with ratios of 1.01 and 0.99, respectively. Each provided a share of high-

quality accessions that was nearly equal to its share of the population. Massachusetts, with a ratio of 0.60, was still the last state, followed by the District of Columbia with 0.27.

Few states (fewer than ten) did not move at all in the rankings. Upward movement in the rankings means that a state's accessions are weighted toward meeting the high-quality criteria; downward movement means that a state's accessions are less likely to satisfy the criteria. Color codes have been added to figure 8 to designate those states that displayed the most movement. Those that rose by five or more (colored green) were New Hampshire, Nebraska, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. Those that fell by five or more (colored orange) were Alabama, Hawaii, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Rhode Island. Mississippi moved the most of any state, dropping by eleven in the rankings from 30th to 41st. Four of the five states that rose the most were from the Midwest, while four of the seven states that fell the most were from the South. High-school graduation rates tend to be higher in the Midwest than in the South, so, all else being equal, accessions from the Midwest will be more likely to meet the DoD high-quality criteria than those from the South.

Marital status of active duty enlisted personnel. With the advent of the all-volunteer force (AVF), the services have adopted “family-friendly” policies to lessen the perception of a trade-off between serving in the military and raising a family. Figures 9 and 10 present some evidence of the services' success in becoming more family-friendly. Figure 9 provides a comparison of the marital status of the FY 2009 male AC enlisted force with that of its male civilian counterparts 17 through 44 years of age.¹⁴ Figure 10 provides the same comparison for females.

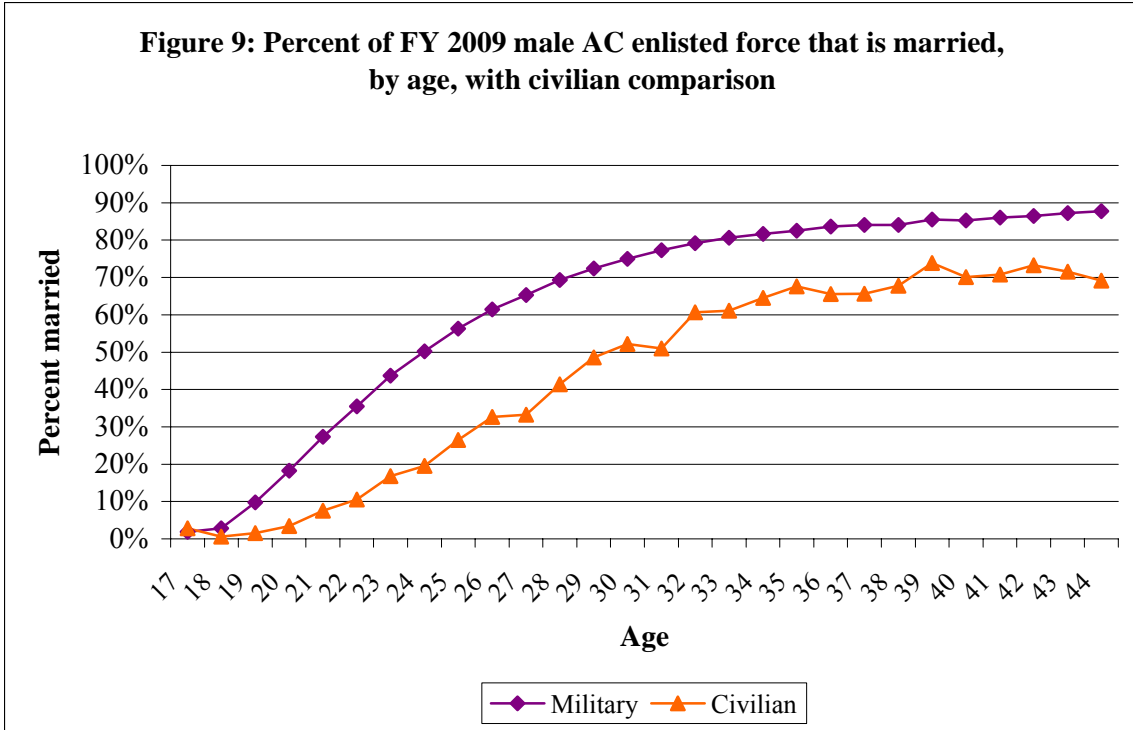
A comparison of the two curves in the figure reveals that enlisted males on active-duty in FY 2009 were more likely to be married than their male civilian counterparts. Only at age 17 were enlisted males less likely to be married than male civilians. For 17-year-old men, 2.8 percent of civilians were married, against 1.8 percent of those who were enlisted on active-duty.¹⁵ Starting at age 18, males in the military were more likely to be married. Both curves display an upward slope, showing that the likelihood of marriage increases with age. The difference between the two curves was greatest at age 27, where 65.3 percent of enlisted AC males were married, as against 33.3 percent of male civilians—a 32.0-point gap. After that, the gap began to shrink as the military curve flattened out. By age 44, the gap had narrowed to 19.7 points—the difference between the 87.8 percent of enlisted AC males who were married and the 69.1 percent of civilians who were married.

For enlisted males, then, the FY 2009 data show that active-duty service is not incompatible with marriage. In fact, the data suggest that for enlisted AC males military service may be more compatible with marriage than is civilian life. The link is suggestive rather than conclusive: an alternative explanation for the data is that men who are drawn to military service may possess certain traits that render them more likely to marry.

¹⁴ The explanation for the age-45 cutoff in figure 10 is that less than 2 percent of the 1.2 million members of the AC enlisted force in FY 2009 were aged 45 or older.

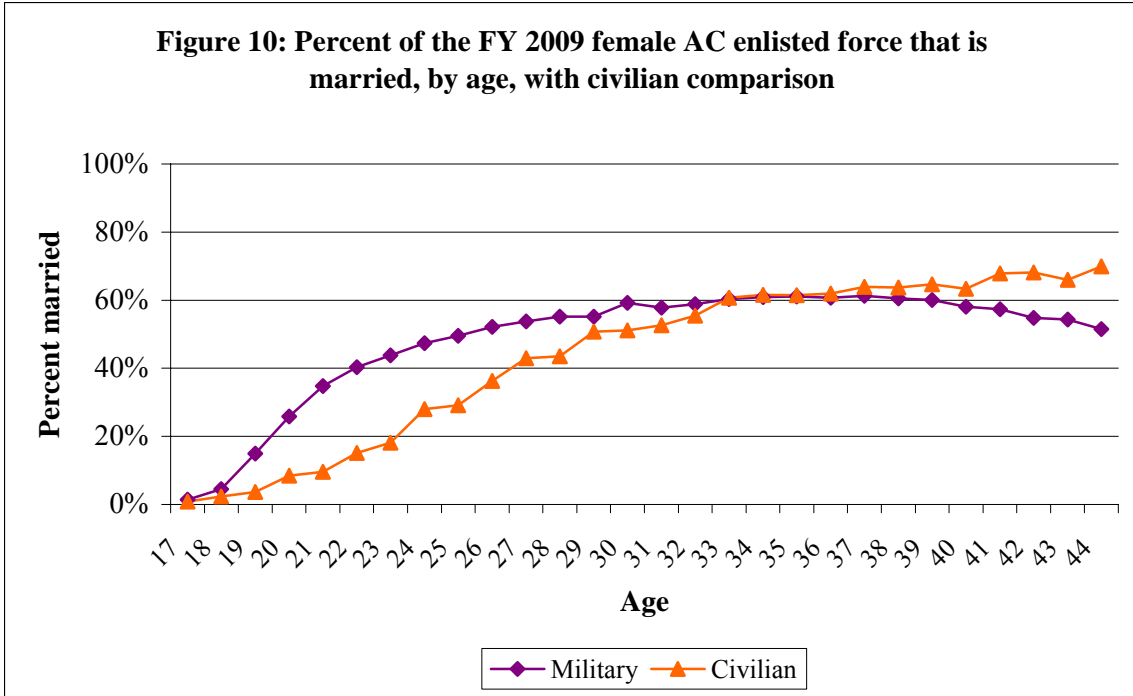
¹⁵ It should be noted that 17-year-old men were a tiny fraction of the enlisted AC force, accounting for less than one-tenth of 1 percent of the force in FY 2009.

Figure 9: Percent of FY 2009 male AC enlisted force that is married, by age, with civilian comparison



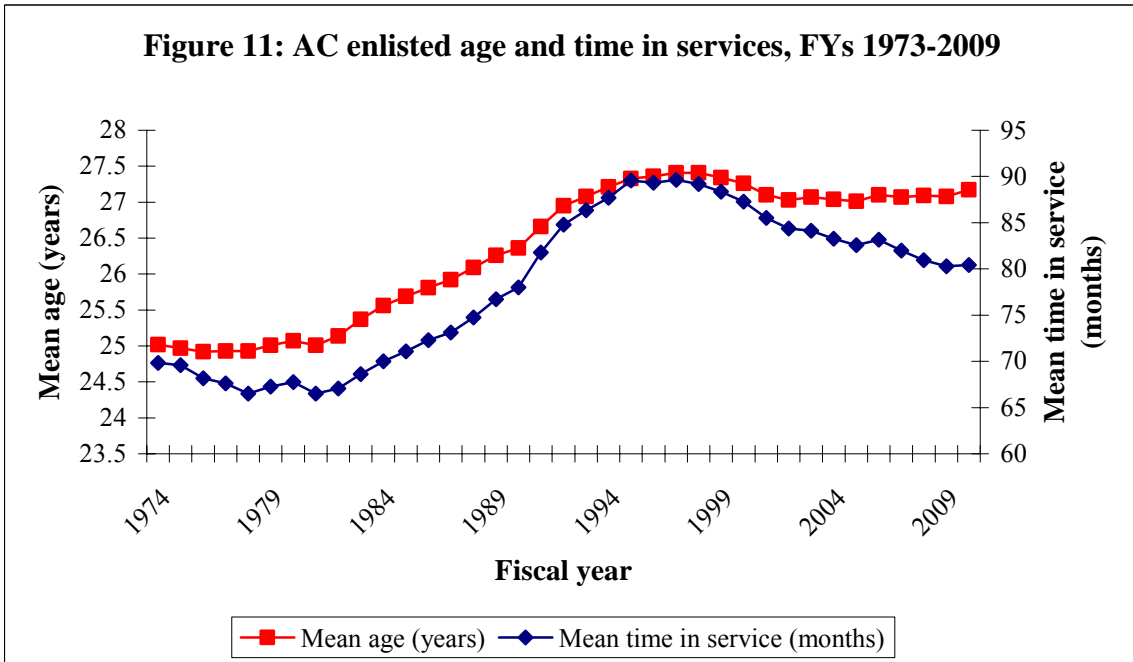
It was a somewhat different story for enlisted AC women, as figure 10 shows. Once again, both the military and civilian curves trend generally upward, indicating a higher likelihood of marriage with age. From age 17 through their twenties, enlisted AC women are more likely to be married than their female civilian counterparts. There is a crossover point where the curves intersect, at age 33. From age 33 on, enlisted AC females are less likely to be married than female civilians. The military curve levels off for the rest of the thirties and registers a slight decline in the early forties. By age 44, 69.9 percent of civilians were married versus 51.5 percent of enlisted AC females. The FY 2009 data suggest that the services may still have some work to do to make active-duty service fully compatible with marriage, at least on the female enlisted side.

Figure 10: Percent of the FY 2009 female AC enlisted force that is married, by age, with civilian comparison



Seniority of the active duty enlisted force. Today’s enlisted force is a more senior force than it has been in the past. Recruits are more likely to have spent time attending college after graduating from high school. Upon joining the military, they tend to serve longer, due to an intensified focus by the services on retention. Figure 11 tracks the mean age and time in service for the AC enlisted force from FY 1973 through FY 2009.

Figure 11: AC enlisted age and time in services, FYs 1973-2009



The average member of the AC enlisted force in FY 2009 was 27.2 years old and had served 80.4 months on active-duty. Both metrics have moved together since FY 1973 (see figure 11), although the movement in service time has been more pronounced than the movement in age because the numbers are larger. They both rose during the Reagan-era defense buildup, peaked during the mid-1990s, and declined with the post-Cold War drawdown.

The Marine Corps was the youngest of the DoD services in terms of the age of its AC enlisted force: 66.6 percent was under age 25 in FY 2009. The corresponding under-25 age shares of the other services were 42.0 percent in the Army, 43.0 percent in the Navy, and 38.9 percent in the Air Force. The Marine Corps was also the most junior DoD service in FY 2009, as the three most junior enlisted pay grades (E1, E2, and E3) accounted for 46.8 percent of its AC enlisted force. The Army, Navy, and Air Force were clustered together, with the bottom 3 pay grades accounting for 25 to 26 percent of their AC enlisted force in FY 2009. What causes the Marine Corps to be younger and more junior than the other services is its expectation of higher turnover in its junior enlisted ranks. Because of that higher turnover, a larger share of the Marine Corps consists of brand-new (or recent) accessions that are younger and occupy the lowest enlisted pay grades.

Seniority measures such as these are of interest because research has shown that the so-called “hollow force” of the late 1970s and early 1980s¹⁶ was linked to declines in seniority in terms of time in service and time in grade.¹⁷ Those seniority declines forced the services to rely more heavily upon more junior personnel who failed to possess the necessary skills. A “hollow force” is one that lacks the trained personnel and equipment support to enable it to perform its assigned missions. The relative seniority of today’s force portends against a return to the “hollow force” days.

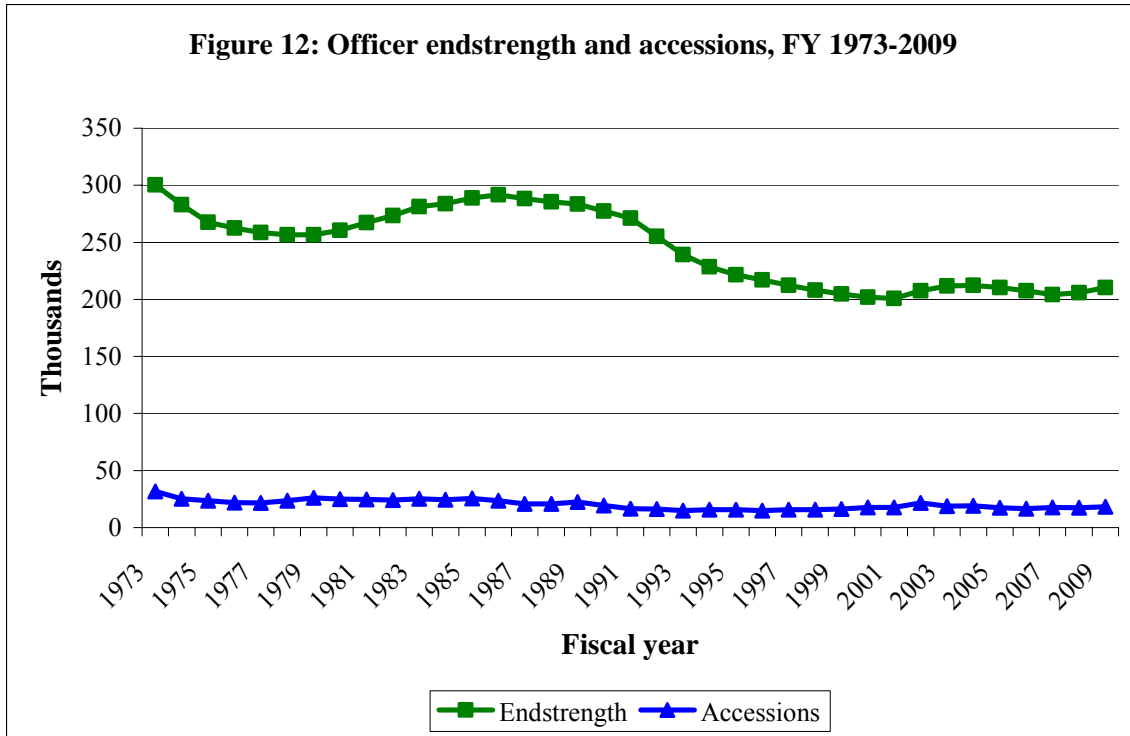
Officer accessions and force

In FY 2009, the AC officer force stood at an endstrength of 210,233. During the year, 18,332 officers were added to the active-duty rolls.¹⁸ Of the services, the Army had the most officers, 75,619, and added the most officers, 7,875. The Army’s 43.0 percent share of officer accessions exceeded its 36.0 percent share of the officer force, which reflects the recent growth of that service relative to the other services. The historic officer endstrength and accessions since the 1973 institution of the AVF are shown in figure 12.

¹⁶ The term “hollow force” dates to 1980 congressional testimony by General Edward “Shy” Meyer, who was at the time the U.S. Army Chief of Staff.

¹⁷ One such study was [2].

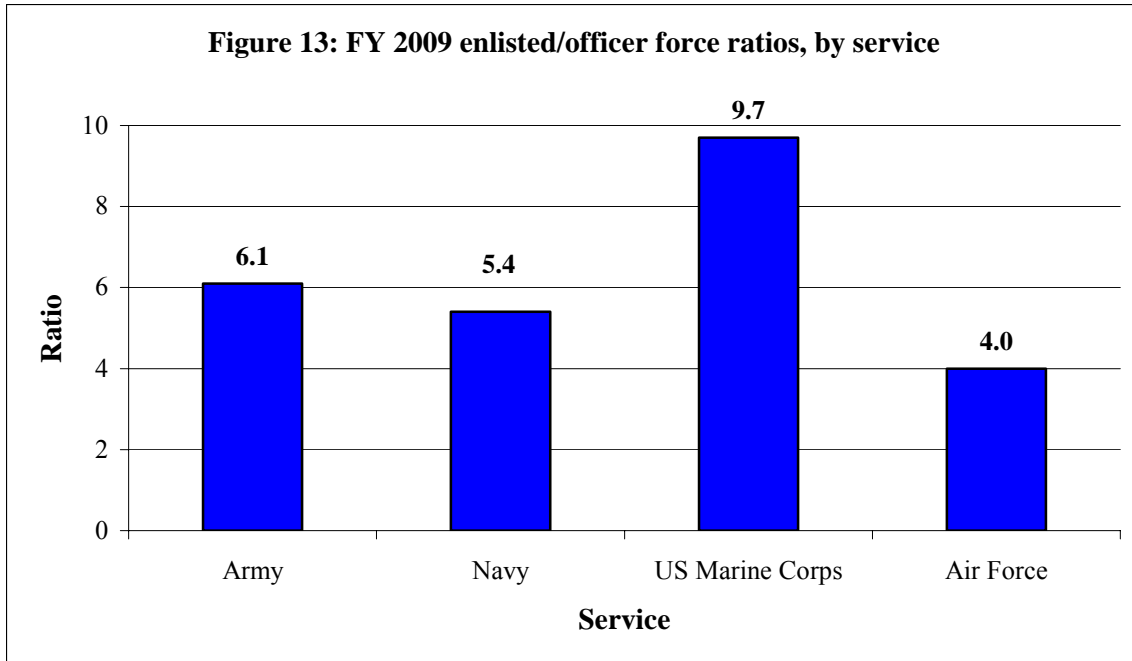
¹⁸ The officer endstrength and accessions figures in this section do not include warrant officers serving in the Army, Navy, or Marine Corps. No warrant officer program exists for the Air Force.



As we see in figure 12, officer endstrength and accessions have registered net declines since the early 1970s. The declines have not been steady, though. Steep declines in the late 1970s and early 1990s reflected the draw downs from the Vietnam War and the Cold War. The overall downward trend was interrupted by increases from the Reagan Administration buildup of the mid-1980s and the George W. Bush Administration response to the 9/11 attacks. Neither of the increases fully offset the decline that had preceded it, so the overall downward trend in the size of the officer force continued.

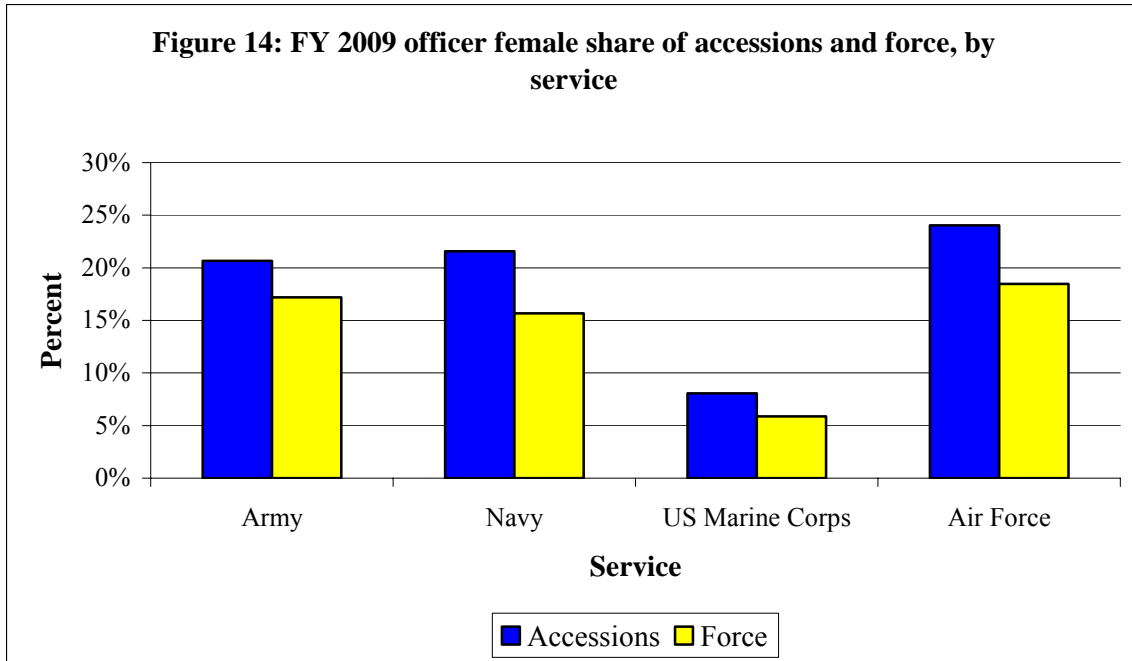
As we said earlier, the Army’s officer corps was the largest of the services in FY 2009, accounting for more than one-third of all officers across the four services. The Army also had the most officer *accessions* in FY 2009, accounting for more than 40 percent of all officer accessions. The Army’s larger share of accessions reflects the recent push to expand the service. For the other services, the Marines held steady at just under 10.0 percent of the officer force in FY 2009, while the Navy and Air Force saw their share of the officer force decline.

Each of the services has far fewer officers than enlisted personnel in its active-duty ranks. The different ratios of enlisted personnel to officers for the services reflect the services’ different roles and missions. The active-duty FY 2009 enlisted/officer force ratios for the services are displayed in figure 13.



In FY 2009, the Air Force was the most officer-heavy of the services, with the lowest ratio of enlisted personnel to officers (4.0). The Marine Corps was the least officer-heavy service, with the highest enlisted/officer ratio (9.7). The enlisted/officer ratios for the Army and Navy were close together (6.1 and 5.4, respectively). The relatively officer-heavy nature of the Air Force reflects that service's special responsibility for satellites and space systems. The Marine Corps is the least officer-heavy of the services due to its higher turnover in the most junior enlisted ranks. The Marines' higher rates of turnover in the junior enlisted ranks mean that relatively more brand-new enlisted personnel must be brought in each year, which elevates that service's enlisted/officer ratio with respect to the other services that have less turnover.

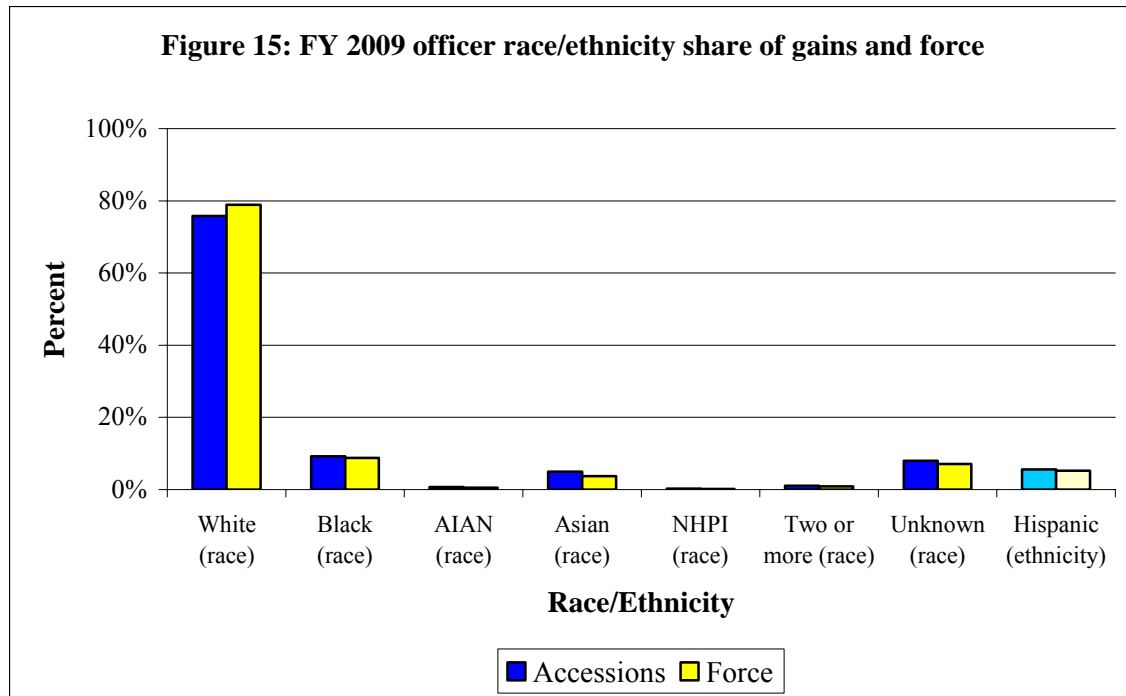
The representation of women among the active duty officer corps. For all the services, women make up an increasing share of the enlisted force; they also make up an increasing share of the officer force. The female share of active-component officer gains and the force in FY 2009, by service, is displayed in figure 14.



Overall, women comprised 20.6 percent of AC officer gains and 16.2 percent of the AC officer force in FY 2009. The 4.4 percent gap between the two indicated that the female share of FY 2009 accessions boosted the female share of the force. FY 2009 saw all four services make progress in their efforts to boost the female share of the officer force. The Air Force was the service with the largest female shares of the gains and the force—24.1 percent of gains and 18.5 percent of the force. The Marine Corps had the smallest female shares—8.1 percent of gains and 5.9 percent of the force.

The representation of racial and ethnic groups in the active duty officer corps.

Looking to attract a more diverse officer corps, the military services have strengthened their recruitment efforts at historically black colleges and universities and those with large Hispanic student bodies. Figure 15 provides a racial and ethnic breakdown of AC officer gains and the force in FY 2009.

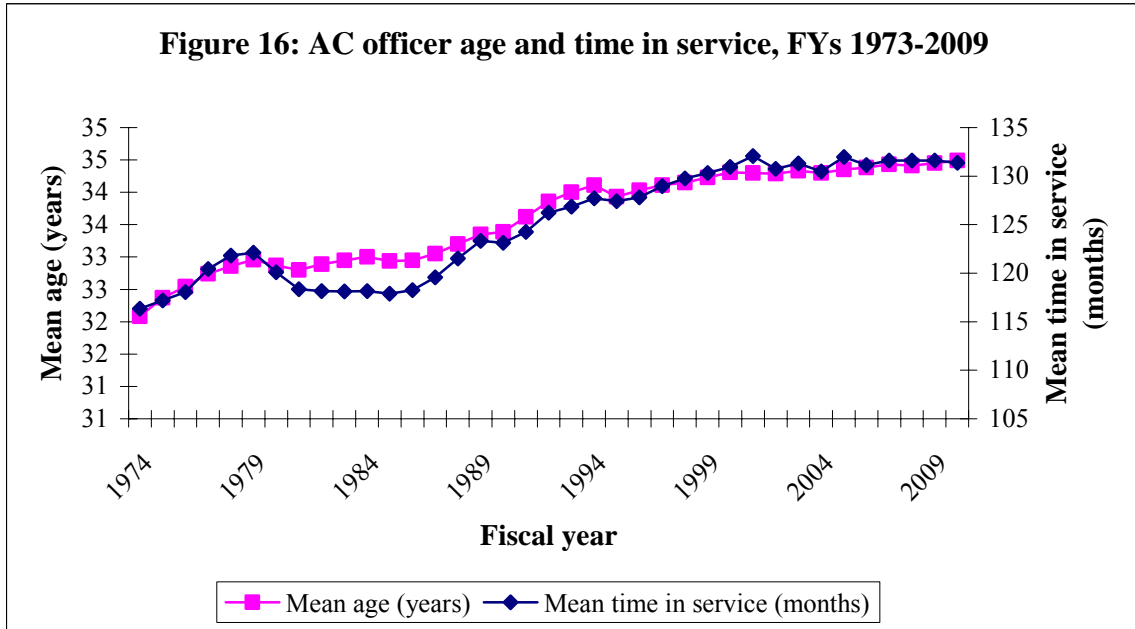


Whites comprised 78.9 percent of the officer corps in FY 2009; the corresponding figure for the enlisted force was 68.8 percent (see figure 5). The ten-point difference was mirrored by a ten-point difference in the share of blacks: blacks accounted for 8.7 percent of the officer force and 18.5 percent of the enlisted force. Unknowns represented 7.1 percent of the officer force, while none of the other racial categories represented more than 5 percent. With regard to ethnicity, Hispanics accounted for 5.2 percent of the officer force – less than their 11.7 percent share of the enlisted force. Hispanic made up 5.6 percent of officer accessions in FY 2009, a figure which slightly exceeded their share of the force. Excluding the whites, each of the racial and ethnic groups had a share of gains which was near its share of the force—within one percentage point, which suggests that the services’ advances in attracting a more diverse officer force may have slowed.

Of the services, the Army had the highest non-white share of the officer force in FY 2009—25.6 percent. The other services were clustered closely together in terms of their non-white force shares, with the Air Force at 19.3 percent, the Navy at 18.2 percent, and the Marine Corps at 17.4 percent. The Army, Navy, and Air Force all saw their FY 2009 accessions increase their non-white force shares. The increase in the non-white share of the force was marginal for the Army—a 0.5 percentage-point difference between the non-white share of gains and the non-white share of the force. It was greater for the Navy (a difference of 2.8 percentage points) and Air Force (6.9 percentage points). For the Marine Corps, the non-white share of FY 2009 officer gains was no different from the non-white share of the force. Because the Army accounted for the largest share (43.0 percent) of the FY 2009 officer gains, it had the greatest impact in terms of slowing the overall rate of increase in the non-white share of the AC officer corps. A data caveat is that the Army’s FY 2009 reporting for both officer gains and the force was missing the NHPI and Two or More fields. Any service-level comparisons involving the Army are skewed by the exclusion of those fields. (As noted earlier, those racial categories were also missing from

the Army’s FY 2009 reporting for the NPS enlisted force, but not from the NPS enlisted accessions.)

Seniority of the active duty officer corps. In terms of seniority, today’s AC officer corps is the most senior since the advent of the AVF. Two seniority measures for the AC officer corps, age and time in service, are displayed in figure 16. The data go back to FY 1973.



Both seniority measures have risen slowly but steadily since the mid-1970s. In FY 2009, the officer corps averaged 34.5 years in age. Time in service averaged 131.4 months. The FY 1973 averages for both metrics were 32.1 years and 116.3 months, respectively. The greater seniority of today’s AC officer force in figure 16 mirrors the greater seniority of today’s AC enlisted force in figure 11. Together they suggest that a return to the “hollow force” is unlikely in the near future.

It was shown earlier that the Marine Corps is the youngest and most junior of the DoD services in terms of its AC enlisted force in FY 2009. The Marine Corps is also the youngest and most junior of the services in terms of its AC officer force in FY 2009. The other DoD services were clustered together in terms of their officers’ age and seniority. By age, 41.3 percent of the Marine Corps’ AC officer force was under 30 in FY 2009. The under-30 shares for the other services ranged between 31 percent and 34 percent. By pay grade, 65.9 percent of Marine Corps officers were in the three most junior officer pay grades. The other services’ shares in these pay grades ranged between 57 percent and 60 percent. What drives the difference between the Marine Corps and the other services for these age and seniority measures is the Marines’ expectation of higher turnover in the lower pay grades.