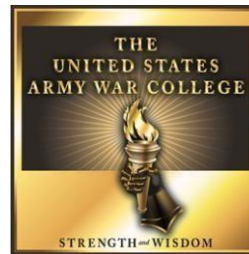


## Recruiting the Best and Brightest Soldiers

by

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United States Army War College  
Class of 2015

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**Recruiting the Best and Brightest Soldiers**

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## **Abstract**

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The Army is downsizing. It is critical that we recruit and retain the best and brightest, ensuring our ability to meet complex, unpredictable missions in more effective and efficient methods. The United States Army relies on an all-volunteer force to execute its assigned missions while simultaneously maintaining its congressionally mandated end-strength. The number of Soldiers and their ability to conduct full-spectrum operations directly impacts the Army's ability to execute the National Military Strategy. As the Army continues to procure and use technologically advanced equipment to help counterbalance reduction in forces, it will need to recruit those individuals that demonstrate the capability to quickly learn and apply new skill sets. This paper will outline a strategy and provide recommendations for ensuring the United States Army Recruiting Command can best compete for and acquire the talent the Army requires between now and 2025.





## **Recruiting the Best and Brightest Soldiers**

On February 27, 2009, President Obama announced that the United States (U.S.) would end its combat mission in Iraq on August 31, 2010, and retain a transitional force of up to 50,000 U.S. troops to train and advise Iraqi Security Forces.<sup>1</sup> As it became apparent in early 2010 that a status of forces agreement between the U.S. and Iraq would be unattainable, and all U.S. forces would leave Iraq, the need for “quick-ship” recruits lessened and the United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) began developing a new strategy. During the April 2010 USAREC battalion commanders pre-command course, Lieutenant General Donald M. Campbell, Jr., the USAREC commanding general at that time, stated that the command was heading in a new direction beginning October 1, 2010. Lieutenant General Campbell stated that the command’s primary mission would be to reestablish relationships in the high schools, improve civilian-military (CIV-MIL) relations, and accomplish 100% or greater of the command’s Senior Alpha (SA) mission. He also stated that the waning economy had helped the USAREC achieve its missions, but the economy would eventually get better, and those looking for jobs would not be as inclined to join the Army.<sup>2</sup>

Since 2001, the USAREC has met or exceeded its active duty volume mission during each fiscal year (FY) with the exception of FY05.<sup>3</sup> However, the command has failed to achieve its SA mission, a subcategory of its volume mission, every FY since 2010. The most concerning statistic is the steadily decreasing SA production, from a high of 71.3% in FY11, to 35.9% in FY14.<sup>4</sup> A Senior Alpha is classified as a senior in high school that scores 50 points or higher, out of a maximum of 99 points, on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). Seniors scoring 50 points or higher are regarded by the USAREC as the “most qualified” or “best and brightest”

future soldiers. In essence, the USAREC, and the Army as a whole, is failing in its strategy to penetrate the SA market and obtain the most qualified recruits. The purpose of this paper is to examine factors contributing to declining SA enlistments and recommend a modified strategy in terms of ends, ways, and means, with supporting lines of effort (LOE), to assist the USAREC and the Army in achieving its SA mission. This paper also incorporates cultural change recommendations for ensuring the USAREC effectively competes for and acquires the talent the Army requires between now and 2025.

The LOEs outlined in the modified strategy include: whole-of-government support for the Army's recruiting efforts; improving CIV-MIL relations; and focusing on the SA market. The objectives within the LOEs include, but are not limited to: educating school administrators, guidance counselors, and teachers on Army career opportunities and enlistment requirements; educating civilian leaders, influential groups, parents, and students on enlistment prerequisites, importance of service, and associated benefits; connecting the Army with the civilian population through Total Army Involvement in Recruiting (TAIR) efforts and army service to communities initiatives; and focusing Department of the Army (DA) and USAREC resources on the SA market by improving current practices to educate the public on enlistment prerequisites, importance of service, and associated benefits. The LOEs are supported by embedding and reinforcing mechanisms that perpetuate organizational culture changes.<sup>5</sup>

Ends: Accomplish or Exceed Designated SA Mission

The challenge facing the USAREC is to execute the guidance provided by the Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA), General Raymond T. Odierno: "The Army is downsizing . . . it is critical that we recruit and retain the best and brightest ensuring our

ability to meet unpredictable missions in more effective and efficient methods.”<sup>6</sup> The Army must continue to recruit volunteers, unless a major change occurs that requires reinstating the draft (conscription),<sup>7</sup> even though it is reducing the numbers in its ranks. As senior personnel retire, mid to junior-level personnel decide to leave the Army, the Army reduces end-strength, and other natural attrition occurs, the Army must continue to recruit, train, and integrate new soldiers into its formations to ensure it is capable of accomplishing strategic, operational, and tactical-level missions. The USAREC can meet its volume mission by focusing its efforts on other markets. However, technologically advanced equipment and the ever-changing volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment argues for increased quality. The Army needs smart and adaptable recruits to succeed in this environment. As the number of personnel in the Army gets smaller, the USAREC must intensify its efforts to recruit the most qualified.

#### Ways and Means: Whole-of-Government Support

The first line of effort to recruiting the most qualified is a whole-of-government approach. This approach requires support from the President of the United States, the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF), Secretary of Education, other cabinet members, state governors and their secretaries of education, and school district superintendents. The Department of Defense (DoD) must educate our federal, state, and local leaders on the strategic importance of manning our Army with the most qualified young men and women in order to effectively protect and defend U.S. national interests. Elected and appointed officials must consistently and enthusiastically speak with one voice on the importance of service in the Army as often as possible. By applying deliberate role-

modeling, teaching, and coaching on the value of the Army as an embedding mechanism, leaders will regularly communicate the importance of service in the Army.

Government officials must promote service in the Army as equally important and advantageous as post-secondary education and not demean the Army as a place where underachieving high school students can find work after graduation. In October 2006, Senator John Kerry (the current U.S. Secretary of State) told students at Pasadena City College, “You know education, if you make the most of it, you study hard, you do your homework, and you make an effort to be smart, you can do well, and if you don’t, you get stuck in Iraq.”<sup>8</sup> Disparaging comments such as these are based on the memories of a conscript Army and reflect a lack of education on today’s Army. Uninformed political leaders can undermine recruiting efforts and perpetuate negative myths and connotations about service in the Army.

To help dispel these misinterpretations, the Department of Education (DoE) should require high school administrators, guidance counselors, and teachers to receive annual training on Army career opportunities and enlistment requirements prior to the first day of school. Educators are required to work and participate in training and planning activities each year before schools begin; this usually occurs the week before the first day of school. The DoE should require all school districts receiving federal funding to provide training on Army career opportunities and prerequisites for enlistment during the above mentioned period of time. Most educators are well-versed on the requirements for applying to post-secondary schools and completing job application forms. They should also be acquainted with the opportunities the Army provides and the

minimum standards for service. Army recruiters are more than capable of conducting this annual training.

Strengthening and clearly defining partnerships between DoD and executive level departments, particularly the DoE, will help dissipate stereotypes that surround service in the Army. The current policy regarding recruiter access to high schools (outlined in a memorandum of understanding between DoD and DoE) was approved in April 2005--almost 10 years ago.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, the memorandum was signed by the Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Military Personnel Policy and the DoE Director for Family Policy Compliance Office. This memorandum of understanding (MOU) should be reviewed biannually (at a minimum) and signed by the SECDEF and Secretary of Education. Subordinates pay attention to those things that their bosses deem are important. Having the MOU signed at the Secretariat level provides the emphasis necessary to embed cultural change in how people pay attention to, measure, and control the policies within the MOU. Leaders can reinforce cultural change to the stereotypes by making formal statements in support of the MOU and service in the Army.

The language in the now decade-old MOU is ambiguous and subject to interpretation by education officials, administrators, and recruiters alike.

High schools [will] allow military recruiters the same access to campuses as that provided to university recruiters or other prospective employers' representatives and to provide student directory information (name, address, and telephone listing) to military recruiters upon request for the purpose of military recruiting.<sup>10</sup>

This broad guidance allows education officials and administrators who are ambivalent or inimical towards the Army to severely restrict recruiter access to students. The guidance is frustrating to recruiters since many recruiting centers are responsible for executing

operations in more than one school district and multiple high schools. Access policies occasionally differ from one district to another and may even differ from one school to another in the same district. Major General Allen Batschelet, the USAREC Commanding General, recently stated, “All military services, not just the Army, have seen an ‘erosion of willingness’ from schools to let military recruiters in to talk to young people.”<sup>11</sup>

To alleviate confusion and level the field for all recruiters, DoD must work with DoE to establish quantifiable minimum access standards in the MOU. This will allow both departments to measure and control recruiter access to high schools in accordance with the MOU. At a minimum, recruiters must be allowed access to high schools once per month. Additionally, recruiters must be granted access to advanced placement (AP) science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) classes as well as AP English and foreign language classes to conduct presentations. These presentations would highlight the parallels between those classes and Army career opportunities and provide time for students to ask questions. Far too often, recruiters are limited to setting up a table in the cafeteria, or other common areas, once or twice each semester. Furthermore, recruiters are sometimes limited to speaking with a student only if the student initiates conversation. Establishing clear standards will help to provide recruiters with increased access to students, time to conduct professional presentations in classes composed of the best and brightest, and opportunities to build trust and confidence with administrators, guidance counselors, and teachers.

The DoD and DoE must also come to an agreement on the release date of student directory information to recruiters. The MOU states that high schools will provide this information upon request from recruiters, but getting the data isn’t always

easy or timely. Recruiting center commanders usually wait until the first month of school is completed before requesting junior and senior class lists. Most students are enrolled by the end of the first month of school, and this provides schools with sufficient time to compile accurate information. As the former Jacksonville, Florida Recruiting Battalion Commander, several of my unit's 34 recruiting stations were stonewalled by administrators when asked to provide student directory information after the first month of school. These violations of the MOU occurred in historically military-friendly areas where the propensity for service in the Army is higher than average and recruiting centers, companies, and battalions regularly exceed their assigned missions.

Unfortunately, MOU violations occur more frequently in other areas of the country. The reporting process from the recruiting center through the USAREC to DoD and DoE is time consuming and must be streamlined. More concerning is the written notification from DoD and DoE to state-level senior education officers of MOU non-compliance. The notification is a form letter, dated July 2, 2003, from the DoE Family Policy Compliance Office and it fails to clearly identify penalties for non-compliance.

While the Department of Education is committed to working with Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to achieve a voluntary compliance with the law, a number of options are available to help ensure that State Educational Agencies (SEAs) monitor LEAs and ensure compliance. Those options include the ability to withhold payments, issue cease and desist orders, and recover funds.<sup>12</sup>

This ambiguous language should be changed to clearly identify the amount of money that will be withheld and/or the amount of funds (means) that will be recovered if another non-compliance report is submitted by the USAREC. The notification should also state that non-compliance will cease upon receipt of the letter and the SEA will immediately contact the Secretary of Education to acknowledge receipt of the letter.

Currently, the letter contains the signature blocks of the Deputy Secretary of Education and Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness--with no signatures.

These non-compliance notifications must also be signed by the SECDEF and Secretary of Education. This action is not only an attention, measurement, and control embedding mechanism, but also a reward embedding mechanism by unequivocally defining and enforcing what behavior or performance is rewarded or punished.

In addition to establishing recruiter access standards, DoE must aggressively address the physical condition and nutrition habits of America's high school students. Obesity is quickly becoming an epidemic with adverse strategic implications for the U.S. The number of young men and women qualified to enlist in the Army is shrinking as youth waistlines expand. Obesity and other medical conditions disqualify about 35% of enlistment candidates,<sup>13</sup> but the problem is greater than that. One-third of American children and teens are now obese or overweight and nearly one-quarter of Americans ages 17-to-24 are too overweight to serve in the military.<sup>14</sup> DoE should require all physically able high school students to participate in rigorous and challenging physical education classes during the last three years of school. This policy will help to combat obesity and provide civilian employers, post-secondary education institutions, and the Army with healthy and physically fit young men and women upon graduation from high school. Additionally, DoE should require all high school freshman students to enroll in a year-long nutrition and healthy lifestyle class to educate young teenagers on the benefits of proper diet and exercise. This class, and three years of physical education classes, should be mandatory requirements for graduation.



## Ways and Means: Improving CIV-MIL Relations

To complement the whole-of-government line of effort, the Army must become more visible and accessible to the public. Improving CIV-MIL relations will help to accomplish two important missions: it will help bridge a widening gap between the civilian population and its Army; and it will allow soldiers to tell their army story thereby assisting recruiters with prospecting for the best and brightest. The continuous deployment and redeployment of soldiers through airports around the country, and subsequent homecoming celebrations, provided opportunities for soldiers and the public to interact extensively over the last 13 years. The American public has been incredibly supportive of the Army since 9/11, and countless Americans went out of their way to embrace the Army even as support for Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) waned. As troop deployments reduce, it is time for the Army to say thank you and give back to the public.

Lieutenant General Campbell advocated recurring interaction with local, state, and national centers of influence (COIs) and those civilians willing to help the USAREC in accomplishing its missions. Lieutenant General Campbell understood the importance of positive CIV-MIL relations and closing the gap between the civilian populace and the Army. He recognized that recruiters are the “face of the Army” in many communities and charged his soldiers to not only represent the Army in a positive manner at all times, but to also interact with the public as often as possible. Additionally, Lieutenant General Campbell directed recruiters to establish habitual relationships with active duty and reserve component (RC) leadership in overlapping areas of operation to maximize interaction opportunities with the civilian population.

Post commanders need to actively engage community leaders to determine how they can help, but they can't limit themselves to communities just outside the main gate of an Army post. Those communities know their soldiers and receive recurring support for multiple events. Post commanders must actively work with recruiters to connect with towns and communities 100-200 miles from their installations. Army Regulation 601-2, Army Promotional Recruiting Support Programs, provides specific guidance for

Army Commands (ACOMs) for Total Army Involvement in Recruiting (TAIR) operations. ACOMs are required to furnish equipment and personnel as requested by USAREC and the United States Army Cadet Command to support recruiting efforts. Additionally, ACOMs are required to participate in recurring and continued promotional activities that enhance attainment of the Total Army recruiting mission.<sup>15</sup>

Post commanders must be willing to meet with local recruiting leadership and enthusiastically support their initiatives – even if it means providing funding for soldiers to travel on temporary duty orders for a few days. The CSA should issue formal TAIR statements and reward senior leaders for supporting area-wide recruiting efforts. When post commanders allocate resources (means) to TAIR operations during periods of fiscal austerity, it will embed cultural change in the Army by clearly showing the importance of building positive CIV-MIL relations to support recruiting.

The Army's presence in communities that are unfamiliar with the military will help to close the increasing gap between the civilian population and the Army. Bridging this gap is important to maintaining open lines of communication and trust between two segments of society whose cultures differ in many areas. This gap is a result of fewer Americans serving in the military. During the past decade, as the military has been engaged in the longest period of sustained conflict in the nation's history, just one-half of one percent of American adults has served on active duty at any given time.

According to a Pew Research Center report, “As the size of the military shrinks, the connections between military personnel and the broader civilian population appear to be growing more distant.”<sup>16</sup> Soldiers participating in community outreach events will have the opportunity to tell their story and help dissolve myths and rumors about service in the Army. This direct communication is effective in recruiting. Pew Research Center information indicates that half (51%) of those with a family member who served say they would advise a young person close to them to join the military. This compares with 43% of those who do not have a military relative.<sup>17</sup>

On the local front, post and RC commanders must encourage subordinate units (means) to support civic and charitable organizations such as the United Way, Boys and Girls Clubs, and Habitat for Humanity. To embed the importance of community service in Army culture, commanders should reward subordinate unit leaders and emphasize community outreach accomplishments on officer evaluation report (OER) support forms. The Army uses this embedding mechanism on OERs to emphasize the importance of leader involvement in equal opportunity and sexual harassment assault response and prevention. Commanders at all levels must encourage units to support these organizations during the duty day to maximize participation and keep soldiers from feeling they are being “volun-told” to help on their weekend or evening time off. The Army has done an admirable job in these areas, as well as sponsoring local schools, but there is always room for improvement. The reduction in deployments will allow sponsoring units to devote more time to these important endeavors. Additionally, senior Army leaders (officers, noncommissioned officers, and civilians) need to carry the water

for the USAREC during public engagements. They must identify COIs in their communities and utilize them as conduits with the local population.

Active duty and RC units can be tremendous combat multipliers in bridging the gap between the Army and the civilian population and assisting recruiters with prospecting for the best and brightest. However, the onus is on the recruiters to ensure these strategic-level missions are accomplished. The key to success is establishing positive and lasting relationships with COIs, particularly school administrators and faculty members. Maintaining these relationships can be difficult since recruiters generally spend three years assigned to a recruiting center before returning to traditional duties. To mitigate the problems associated with consistent personnel turnover, the USAREC should assign a minimum of one-half of the recruiting force (means) to recruiting centers near their home towns. The U.S. is the most demographically diverse country in the world, but people readily identify with those that are from the same geographic area. Recruiters assigned to units near their hometowns are familiar with the area, understand the cultural dynamics, and “speak the language.” Additionally, they may already have relationships with COIs in their area and can assist greatly in cultivating additional influencers.

One group of COIs that must be garnered are middle school administrators and faculty members. The CSA’s guidance to the USAREC is:

Today’s middle school students will man the Army of 2020. We must begin the work today to help shape their perceptions, values, understanding of life decisions and awareness of Army opportunities to support the goals of our Army and our Nation. We must plan and resource for success . . . . now, and in the future.<sup>18</sup>

Recruiters must establish relationships at the middle school level in order to educate pre-teens and young teenagers on the standards for enlistment and Army values. To

reciprocate access, recruiters must be willing to volunteer, participate in tutoring programs, and assist as often as possible.

In addition to supporting TAIR operations, executing community outreach events, and developing COIs, the Army should develop advertisements directed toward educating civilian leaders, parents, and influencers on Army benefits. These advertisements should feature: the Army's diverse duty stations; affordable medical and dental benefits; affordable life insurance; on-post family housing and basic housing allowances; free room and board (barracks and dining facilities) for single soldiers; education centers; post exchanges and commissaries; and physical fitness facilities. This campaign should highlight the Army lifestyle as well as the multitude of veterans' programs and benefits available to those who have served.

The Army consistently advertises that it provides valuable training and skills, but it fails to inform the public how those skills can be used after a soldier leaves the army and transitions back to civilian life. One such program the Army should aggressively promote is the Partnership for Youth Success (PaYS) program. The PaYS program is designed to help soldiers prepare for a career after the Army by connecting them with employers who understand the skill, discipline and work ethic that military service members bring to a business.<sup>19</sup> The Army has partnered with over 500 corporations and businesses such as Amazon.com, General Motors, Norwegian Cruise Line, and Texas Instruments, but it does very little to publicize this outstanding benefit.

The USAREC must also promote March 2 Success to their COIs to solidify their commitment to high schools. "March 2 Success" is a self-paced online test preparation program sponsored by the Army with content developed by Peterson's Education

Resource Center. The program provides materials, videos and competency building in verbal, math and science to help high school students prepare for state required exams and college entrance tests, including Scholastic Aptitude Test, American College Test, and ASVAB.<sup>20</sup> "March 2 Success" is free for anyone to use and requires a standard user name and password for access. Unfortunately, this Army sponsored program is as poorly advertised as the PaYS program. Since 2003, more than 57,000 parents, educators, and mentors, and 1.2 million students have registered in "March 2 Success."<sup>21</sup> However, this number pales in comparison to the 14.7 million students enrolled in U.S. high schools in 2014 alone.<sup>22</sup> Aggressive promotion of this free and valuable tool will also demonstrate the Army's commitment to education and help dispel the notion that recruiters are only interested in finding future soldiers.

#### Ways and Means: Focusing on the SA Market

From 2002 through most of 2010, the USAREC focused its efforts on recruiting men and women who had graduated from high school or possessed a general education diploma. This was due to the needs of the Army to provide troops as quickly as possible for OEF and OIF. The Army required the USAREC to rapidly recruit, process for enlistment, and "ship" men and women to basic training. The USAREC continued to conduct traditional recruiting operations in high schools, but those efforts were significantly curtailed. This shift in priorities resulted in the decay of recruiter and school relationships and institutional knowledge about the Army due to a lack of recurring presence and communication. During this period, many civilian criminal offenses and a few preexisting medical conditions became waiverable in order to expand the pool of those eligible for service. This paper does not explore the

ramifications of those actions, but it is worth mentioning that enlistment standards were lowered for almost eight years.

Educating the U.S. population, particularly high school students, on the current enlistment prerequisites (minimum qualification standards), importance of service, and military benefits is critical to recruiting the most qualified. Unfortunately, the USAREC chooses to provide very little information regarding the minimum enlistment standards and the information provided is ambiguous. The goarmy.com website lists the following general qualifications for enlistment: a U.S. citizen or permanent resident alien; 17-35 years old; in good physical condition; in good moral standing; and a high school graduate or equivalent. The website also states, "Some positions may have additional qualifications."<sup>23</sup> Needless to say, these broad criteria provide little substance and are open to interpretation by those who know little or nothing about enlistment prerequisites.

During a teleconference with reporters on December 4, 2014, Major General Batschelet stated, "Army recruiting is facing significant challenges in the current economic climate in its mission to find young Americans qualified for service."<sup>24</sup> Major General Batschelet also cited increasing obesity rates and declining academic qualifications among young people as contributing factors driving down the number of Americans eligible for service. He also stated, "We've been trying to get the word out here that the all-volunteer force and the great service it has provided the country over the last 40-something years is at some risk, due to multiple factors, many of them being societal."<sup>25</sup> If the USAREC has identified systemic issues preventing young men and women from enlisting, it needs to take appropriate steps to educate the public as early and often as possible.

The USAREC must be willing to provide the actual minimum standards for enlistment in television and radio advertisements, pamphlets, brochures, and the goarmy.com website. The command encourages people to contact local recruiters to find out how to become a soldier, but it does very little in its advertising and marketing efforts to educate people prior to walking through the doors of a recruiting center. By that time it may be too late.

The number of Americans in the 17-to-24 age group that are currently eligible to serve in the Army is approximately 3 out of 10.<sup>26</sup> This limited candidate pool makes recruiting missions tougher to achieve. Declining high school graduation rates, previous criminal behavior, and obesity continue to drive the eligibility number down, but no concerted effort is being made by the DoD, DA, or USAREC to inform the public of minimum enlistment standards. The USAREC must aggressively advertise the high school graduation or equivalent requirements, previous criminal offense policies, and height/weight and Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) standards in its advertising and marketing campaigns. Transparency, as opposed to ambiguity, will help eliminate misconceptions such as “go to war or go to jail” or “you can always join the Army if you cannot find anything else.” Providing clear and easy to understand prerequisites will, at a minimum, accomplish two things: it will inform the public that the Army only recruits those that meet its standards; and it will help recruiters spend more time prospecting for qualified individuals instead of wasting valuable time with ineligible applicants.

The Army spends approximately 200 million dollars (means) each year on marketing and advertising. This amount includes 11 million dollars provided to the USAREC for its marketing and advertising efforts which are managed by the USAREC



G-7/9 section (Marketing, Education and Outreach Directorate). The mission of the USAREC G-7/9 is to “execute public affairs, marketing, local advertising, education, and outreach programs to support all U.S. Army recruiting objectives.”<sup>27</sup> The directorate is also responsible for providing the link between the USAREC and the public and serving as the command’s point of contact for news media representatives. Additionally, the staff directs programs in the areas of public and command information, education outreach and community relations, and provides policy and guidance to 38 subordinate advertising and public affairs offices and education services specialists that support more than 1,600 recruiting stations nationwide.<sup>28</sup> The G-7/9 is a cornerstone of the USAREC operations and maximizes its budget, as evidenced by the command’s volume production rates, but it is woefully underfunded. The section’s budget requirement for FY15 is 18.3 million dollars, but it only received 11 million dollars in budget authority. The USAREC needs additional resources (means) to embed cultural change and market efficiency.

The USAREC must focus more of its marketing and advertising efforts on attracting the SA market, and the DA must be willing to financially support (means) this line of effort. Historically, the Army provided monetary enlistment bonuses to recruits willing and/or qualified to serve in military occupation specialties (MOSs) that the Army needed to fill. The Army also provided bonuses to recruits willing to enlist for longer periods of time than the minimum enlistment period assigned to each MOS. The USAREC advertisements touted the bonuses, in addition to other benefits such as the Army College Fund and G.I.<sup>29</sup> Bill, and these media campaigns contributed greatly to filling the ranks even during a period of prolonged conflict. Currently there are no

enlistment bonuses for any MOS, and the only monetary incentive available to recruits is after they become future soldiers.<sup>30</sup> A future soldier is a recruit that is fully qualified to serve in the Army, has successfully completed all enlistment requirements at the Military Entrance Processing Station, and is waiting for his/her date to report to Army Basic Combat Training (ABCT). Future soldiers can be promoted one rank by accomplishing the following actions no later than 30 days prior to reporting to ABCT: completion of the online basic training task list; score 180 points or higher on the APFT with a minimum score of 60 points per event; and provide a minimum of one referral that results in a successful enlistment. The promotion incentive means more pay once a future soldier begins ABCT, but there are no monetary enlistment incentives for any pre-enlistment accomplishments.

The CSA's guidance to the USAREC, and the Army as a whole, is to recruit and retain the best and brightest soldiers. The recommended policies and procedures (ways) to most effectively achieve the CSA's directive (ends) require additional resources (means). The primary recommendation is to institute a policy that provides monetary enlistment bonuses or increased initial enlistment rank incentives (means) for future soldiers that score 50 points or higher on the ASVAB. The policy should also include monetary enlistment bonuses or increased initial enlistment rank incentives for future soldiers achieving a minimum of a 3.0 grade point average (on a 4.0 scale) in AP, or the equivalent of, STEM classes in high school. As the Army continues to rely on technology to maintain a strategic and operational advantage over potential adversaries, it will also have to rely on soldiers that are capable of operating, maintaining, and repairing technologically advanced equipment. One example that

highlights the need for tech-savvy soldiers is the prevalent threat of cyberspace attacks on Army communications networks. The Army should invest early in young men and women that have proven themselves to be capable in this ever-changing and dynamic environment. Providing sufficient resources to effectively recruit these types of specialists must become a priority for the DoD and the Army.

Similarly, the Army should adopt a policy to provide monetary enlistment bonuses or increased initial enlistment rank incentives (means) for high school seniors that meet the following criteria: valedictorian, salutatorian, senior class president, varsity sport team captain, drum major/majorette, and contribute to their community through volunteering. The Army needs smart soldiers but it also needs soldiers that have demonstrated leadership qualities. The best and brightest includes soldiers that are “prepared to assume responsibility, maintain unity of effort, take prudent action, and act resourcefully within the commander’s intent.”<sup>31</sup> High school seniors selected by their peers, coaches, or teachers for leadership positions, and those that selflessly volunteer their time and talents, have demonstrated a propensity to lead and should be rewarded for it upon enlistment. The Army’s professional military education system is unmatched at developing leaders, but the DA must provide the necessary resources to further assist the USAREC in recruiting young, proven leaders to get a head-start on the leadership development process.

There are many debates over the pros and cons of maintaining an all-volunteer Army or manning the Army through conscription by reinstating the draft. Most senior military leaders and experts firmly believe volunteers provide the Army with the most effective and dedicated force, but two questions remain. Should the Army pay for

people to “volunteer” to join its ranks in the form of enlistment bonuses and increased rank incentives? Shouldn’t service to the nation and the opportunity to learn lifelong skills be motivation enough to enlist in the Army? Colleges and universities pay for the best and brightest and most qualified students to attend their institutions in the form of scholarships. Additionally, many civilian employers provide signing bonuses to those with specialized skills or pay for employees’ continuing education. The Army should also be willing to allocate sufficient resources to accomplish the ends of the strategy. The Army wants enlistment candidates to possess a spirit of service and prefers this attitude be the driving force behind volunteering to serve in the Army. However, it is short-sighted and unrealistic to assume that service to the nation is motivation enough for those in the SA market to enlist when comparable opportunities exist. The Army is competing with colleges, universities, and civilian employment opportunities for the best and brightest. If the Army wants the best, it should provide the USAREC with the resources (means) so it can provide the incentives needed to get the best.

Recognizing high school students for their academic and/or leadership performance through enlistment bonuses or increased rank is an example of the reward criteria embedding mechanism. Promoting these incentives through policy changes may encourage students to work harder in the classroom, participate in extracurricular activities, or volunteer in their communities. Additionally, many of the best and brightest can’t afford to pay for post-secondary education, and some may feel that they aren’t prepared to move on to college. In either case, providing Army enlistment incentives provides a viable, first choice option. From 2010 to 2014, the combined the USAREC active duty volume enlistment mission was 352,417. The SA mission total for the same

period of time was 91,984, or 26.1% of the volume mission.<sup>32</sup> Allocating funds (means) as enlistment incentives to approximately one-quarter of all future soldiers, during periods of fiscal austerity, reinforces the Army's commitment to education (ways) and demonstrates the Army's commitment to filling its ranks with the best and brightest young men and women.

The Army does a poor job of presenting itself as a first choice for career opportunities, and it does an even worse job at projecting itself as an elite organization-- an organization with outstanding benefits comprised of educated, morally sound, and physically and mentally fit men and women who are proud to serve their country. Instead, USAREC commercials present fairly generic images and state, "See what it's like at goarmy.com."<sup>33</sup> The goarmy.com website provides a great deal of information, but this approach is reactive and fails to reach and relate to the current most qualified market known as "Generation Z." This segment of the population was born between 1990 and 1999 and, as a whole, it thinks, interacts, and behaves differently than its predecessors of Generation Y, Generation X, and the Baby-Boomer Generation. "The members of Generation Z are already more than 11 million strong (nearly 7%) in the North American workforce, and their numbers will grow dramatically over the next few years. They will be 20 million by 2015, 25 million by 2017, and 30 million by 2019."<sup>34</sup>

Generation Z (Gen Zers) tend to prefer early career stage roles that provide narrow specialization and a system of ranks with corresponding criteria, testing protocols, and rewards/responsibilities attached to each rank.<sup>35</sup> Gen Zers are digital natives and quickly master the intricacies and nuances of working with technologically challenging systems. "They are most effective in the workplace when led by a strong

peer leader, have a tight, well defined, and observed chain of command, and receive teaching style leadership.”<sup>36</sup> Additionally, 60% of 900 people in the 14-to-18 year-olds surveyed in April 2013, said that “having an impact on the world” is going to be important to them in their jobs.<sup>37</sup> The Army and the USAREC must understand what drives and motivates this group and focus its advertising and marketing efforts on attracting the best and brightest of this population segment. An effective tool for reaching Gen Zers is the role modeling and coaching embedding mechanism. The USAREC should develop television, radio, and social media advertisements using current and former soldiers. These advertisements should be vignettes about career opportunities in the Army and the resulting civilian sector job opportunities available to veterans.

Lieutenant General Campbell was prophetic when he stated that the U.S. economy would eventually get better, and those looking for jobs would not be as inclined to join the Army. Major General Batschelet recently noted, "As the economy is beginning to improve, youth unemployment is going down and we are finding ourselves in a competition for high-quality talent.”<sup>38</sup> The unemployment rate for young men and women has been slowly declining since 2010, and the current combined percentage of men and women ages 17-24 years old out of work is 11.33%. This is 1.2% less than the same time last year.<sup>39</sup> To better compete with civilian employers, the USAREC must highlight the benefits associated with serving in its advertising campaigns to educate the public and make a career in the Army more attractive.

#### Meeting the Senior Alpha Mission

The Army’s goal is to capture a minimum of 100% of the USAREC SA mission in order to fill its ranks with the best and brightest soldiers. To achieve this end, the Army

must be willing to implement a comprehensive strategy with clearly defined supporting LOEs. Each LOE must have complementary goals and objectives that are supported by culture-embedding and reinforcing mechanisms. The LOEs that the Army and the USAREC must execute to recruit the most qualified are: whole-of-government support; improving CIV-MIL relations; and focusing on the SA market.

The DoD, DA, and USAREC must garner support from elected and appointed public officials from the executive branch to local school superintendents. The Army and the USAREC must capitalize on this support to improve CIV-MIL relations by bridging the gap between the Army and the civilian population through TAIR operations and community outreach programs. These efforts can't be limited to cities and towns close to army posts. The ACOMs must be willing to support TAIR operations in communities and areas unaccustomed to seeing soldiers on a regular basis. Frequent interaction with the public will allow soldiers the opportunity to tell their army story, help break down barriers, and dispel negative myths about service. Educating COIs and parents on enlistment standards, career opportunities, and Army benefits is paramount to success.

The DA must be willing to provide the USAREC with the resources (means) it needs to capture the SA market. This includes enlistment bonuses for students excelling in the classroom, extracurricular activities, and their communities. To compete with employers and post-secondary schools for the best and brightest, the Army must promote itself as a viable first choice for career opportunities. The Army must also refocus its advertising and marketing campaigns and provide specifics as opposed to over-arching information.

The USAREC continues to meet its overall mission and provide the Army with the requisite quantity of soldiers. However, underlying factors are threatening the Army's ability to recruit and train the quality of soldiers it needs to operate and maintain the ever-increasing, technologically advanced inventory of equipment used in garrison and on the battlefield. The Army has an opportunity, as it reduces the number of soldiers, to further improve its quality with a more effective recruiting strategy. Failure to implement a new strategy will significantly hinder the Army's ability to maintain readiness levels and its capacity to execute the National Military Strategy in the VUCA environment.

#### Endnotes

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<sup>3</sup> Support Army Recruiting, "Frequently Asked Questions about Recruiting," <http://www.usarec.army.mil/support/faqs.htm#mission2> (accessed December 15, 2014).

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<sup>5</sup> Edgar H. Schein, "Organizational Culture & Leadership," ed. Ted Nellen, October, 1997, <http://www.tnellen.com/ted/tc/schein.html> (accessed January 24, 2015). Edgar Schein, a social psychologist and Society of Sloan Fellows Professor of Management Emeritus and a Professor Emeritus at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Sloan School of Management, identifies six culture-embedding mechanisms for leaders to use to shape and influence culture change to improve organizations. These mechanisms are: attention, measurement and control; reaction to critical incidents; allocation of resources; role modeling and coaching; reward criteria, and selection/recruitment criteria.

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<sup>11</sup> U.S. Army, "Recruiting Command optimistic amid 'significant challenges,'" December 4, 2014, [http://www.army.mil/article/139429/rmy\\_Recruiting\\_Command\\_optimistic\\_amid\\_significant\\_challenges/](http://www.army.mil/article/139429/rmy_Recruiting_Command_optimistic_amid_significant_challenges/) (accessed December 29, 2014).

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