

# Strategy Research Project

## Recruiting the Future Enlisted Force of the All-Volunteer Army

by

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United States Army War College  
Class of 2014

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**REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE**

*Form Approved--OMB No. 0704-0188*

The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. **PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.**

<b>1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY)</b> 15-04-2014		<b>2. REPORT TYPE</b> STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT		<b>3. DATES COVERED (From - To)</b>	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b> Recruiting the Future Enlisted Force of the All-Volunteer Army				<b>5a. CONTRACT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5b. GRANT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER</b>	
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b> Colonel Frances A. Hardison United States Army				<b>5d. PROJECT NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5e. TASK NUMBER</b>	
				<b>5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER</b>	
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> Colonel Joseph P. Diminick Department of Command, Leadership, and Management				<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> U.S. Army War College, 122 Forbes Avenue, Carlisle, PA 17013				<b>10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)</b>	
				<b>11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)</b>	
<b>12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> Distribution A: Approved for Public Release. Distribution is Unlimited.					
<b>13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b> Word Count: 5000					
<b>14. ABSTRACT</b> The Army screens potential enlisted recruits against a baseline series of standards to assess their moral suitability for military service. Additionally, the Army claims it inculcates its soldiers with the Army values, thereby instilling high standards of moral character and personal conduct. However, recent cases suggest there has been a breakdown of moral character within the enlisted ranks. Does the Army need a better set of tools and standards to assess the moral suitability of its enlisted soldiers? This SRP first examines the current enlistment standards and assessment methods to determine if they are adequate screening tools for assessing candidates' moral suitability to serve in today's Army. The SRP then considers other tools that could be useful in the accession process along with the Army's Tailored Personality Assessment System. Next, it describes screening methods used in private industry. The SRP concludes with a recommendation for enhanced moral screening to ensure that our all-volunteer Army remains the best trained and most professional fighting force in the world.					
<b>15. SUBJECT TERMS</b> Army Accessions, Army Recruiting, Enlistment Standards, Moral Screening, Readiness					
<b>16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:</b>			<b>17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b>	<b>18. NUMBER OF PAGES</b> 36	<b>19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b>
<b>a. REPORT</b> UU	<b>b. ABSTRACT</b> UU	<b>c. THIS PAGE</b> UU			<b>19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (w/ area code)</b>



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**Recruiting the Future Enlisted Force of the All-Volunteer Army**

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## **Abstract**

Title: Recruiting the Future Enlisted Force of the All-Volunteer Army

Report Date: 15 April 2014

Page Count: 36

Word Count: 5000

Key Terms: Army Accessions, Army Recruiting, Enlistment Standards, Moral Screening, Readiness

Classification: Unclassified

The Army screens potential enlisted recruits against a baseline series of standards to assess their moral suitability for military service. Additionally, the Army claims it inculcates its soldiers with the Army values, thereby instilling high standards of moral character and personal conduct. However, recent cases suggest there has been a breakdown of moral character within the enlisted ranks. Does the Army need a better set of tools and standards to assess the moral suitability of its enlisted soldiers? This SRP first examines the current enlistment standards and assessment methods to determine if they are adequate screening tools for assessing candidates' moral suitability to serve in today's Army. The SRP then considers other tools that could be useful in the accession process along with the Army's Tailored Personality Assessment System. Next, it describes screening methods used in private industry. The SRP concludes with a recommendation for enhanced moral screening to ensure that our all-volunteer Army remains the best trained and most professional fighting force in the world.



## **Recruiting the Future Enlisted Force of the All-Volunteer Army**

Is there some sort of scientific measure or instrument we could test people on [as part of the selection process]?

—General Robert Cone<sup>1</sup>

Negative reports of our soldiers' ethical lapses or of their serious misconduct have become common in mainstream media, news networks, the internet, or social media. Soldiers' portrayed in this negative light have had an impact on how America views the trust and confidence of the military. The 16 December 2013 Gallup survey for how Americans rate the honesty and ethical standards of members of various professions ranks military officers in the top five of all occupations however military members have missed rankings since 2001.<sup>2</sup>

The Army has accessed more than 335,000 recruits over the past five years.<sup>3</sup> Among the soldiers who are discharged for honorable or dishonorable service each month, on average 20% are discharged for misconduct issues that are related to pre-existing conditions, such as poor entry level performance or for drug and alcohol issues.<sup>4</sup>

Nearly 1 in 5 U.S. soldiers had a common mental illness, such as depression, panic disorder or ADHD, before enlisting in the Army, according to a new study that raises questions about the military assessment and screening of recruits.<sup>5</sup>

Army recruits are subjected to aptitude testing, physical and mental examinations, and moral screening. The Army recruits and trains soldiers of high character, but the current reports of cases involving soldiers' criminal behavior, drug and alcohol abuse, sexual misconduct, and behavioral health disorders suggests that the current screening tools are inadequate. The Army needs better assessment tools to identify and screen out potential recruits with propensities to engage in unethical or

moral behavior. More importantly, at an average cost of \$75,000 per applicant to graduate from advanced individual training,<sup>6</sup> adopting better policies as the force downsizes over the next several years is fiscally responsible.

This SRP first examines the current enlistment standards and assessment methods to determine if they provide adequate screening tools for assessing candidates' moral suitability for Army service. The SRP then considers other tools that could be useful in the accession process along with the Army's Tailored Personality Assessment System (TAPAS). Next, it describes screening methods being used in private industry. The SRP concludes with a recommendation for enhanced moral screening to ensure that the all-volunteer Army remains the best trained and most professional fighting force in the world.

### Background

It is not surprising that after a decade of war the Army has shifted from a disciplined operational force to a force that struggles to consistently enforce basic standards of discipline. Disciplinary problems have surfaced in cases where soldiers are accused and subsequently convicted of serious crimes. Consider the case of Staff Sergeant Robert Bales: He went on a shooting spree in a small Afghan town, killing 16 civilians.<sup>7</sup> When asked to explain his actions, Sergeant Bales responded, "I've asked that question a million times since then. There's not a good reason in the world for the horrible things I did."<sup>8</sup>

Specialist Ricky Elder was involved in a murder-suicide.<sup>9</sup> Specialist Elder was recently court-martialed for his role in a ring of thefts involving Army equipment.<sup>10</sup> "On 28 June 2012, while Specialist Elder was attending a July 4<sup>th</sup> safety briefing at Fort Bragg, NC, he shot his battalion commander, wounded another soldier, and then killed

himself.”<sup>11</sup> The post-incident investigation also revealed that, unbeknownst to his command, Elder had civilian legal troubles: “He pled guilty to aggravated battery in November 2011 for a bar fight the year before in Kansas.”<sup>12</sup> Such cases are reported almost daily in the open source media. Senior Army leaders cannot ignore this bad news.

In response to an increase in violent behavior involving soldiers at Fort Carson, Major General Mark Graham, Fort Carson’s Senior Mission Commander, directed the creation of a task force with the following mission:<sup>13</sup>

- (1) “Examine rates and trends in violent death involving soldiers within tenant organizations of Fort Carson compared to others soldiers in the Army and Forces Command (FORSCOM).
- (2) Identify risk factors associated with the violent deaths.
- (3) Assess the adequacy of behavioral health programs, resources, and social support.
- (4) Recommend strategies to enhance current programs and reduce the installation’s numbers of violent deaths.”<sup>14</sup>

“The task force concluded that soldiers involved in crimes involving homicides were at risk for engaging in violent behavior based on a clustering of known risk factors for violence.”<sup>15</sup> The salient factors boiled down to prior criminal behavior and psychopathology.<sup>16</sup> The data from those brigade combat teams, as well as other Army studies, coincide with the increasing trend of moral waivers from 2004-2007,<sup>17</sup> when recruits were accepted despite their convictions for traffic offenses, public drunkenness, curfew violations, assault, and criminal trespass.<sup>18</sup> “But soldiers who were granted

waivers for alcohol or drug-related issues were approximately two to three times more likely to test positive for illicit drugs and were more likely to attrit from the Army due to misconduct or violations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice.”<sup>19</sup> Significantly, the task force concluded that:

Once in the military, individuals are potentially exposed to environmental factors (such as, combat exposure and stigma) which may increase risk for development of mental health (MH) problems (such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression) and substance abuse. The combination of multiple co-morbid risk factors may increase the potential for expression of violent behavior in some individuals.<sup>20</sup>

Another highly publicized disturbing trend has revealed a major flaw in the military’s policy for reporting rapes and the misconduct of individuals who are charged with executing the sexual assault and prevention programs.<sup>21</sup> In response to this issue, there is legislation pending to remove sexual assault cases from the Uniform Code of Military Justice and move them under the jurisdiction of the civilian court system.<sup>22</sup> High profile incidents, such as that of “A Fort Bragg sergeant who formerly worked in a sexual assault prevention unit is accused of molesting a 15-year-old girl,”<sup>23</sup> are continually highlighted in the press.

“The May release of the Defense Department’s report on sexual assault in the military for fiscal year 2012 continues to garner an understandably high level of attention and outrage from Congress and the American people.”<sup>24</sup> Due to the dramatic increase of alleged misconduct, the Secretary of Defense directed the services to screen soldiers who were assigned to positions that were coded as a position of trust.<sup>25</sup> “As a result of this screening, the Army recently disqualified 588 soldiers as sexual assault counselors, recruiters, and drill sergeants for infractions ranging from sexual assault to child abuse and drunken driving.”<sup>26</sup>

Overall, despite all these disturbing cases, first-term attrition data over the past seven years indicates that there is no spike in voluntary or involuntary separations.<sup>27</sup> Figure 1 on page 5, represents the overall enlisted (0-36 months of service) cumulative loss by fiscal year. It is quite possible that the separation approval authority change from battalion level to brigade level (Special Court Martial Convening Authority) in May 2005 may have led to a downward trend in attrition.<sup>28</sup> However, in March 2009, the separation authority returned to the battalion level, yet first-term attrition rates remained fairly stable.<sup>29</sup>

It is, however, difficult to pin attrition trends to only those two events; various historical factors directly and indirectly affect attrition rates upward and downward.

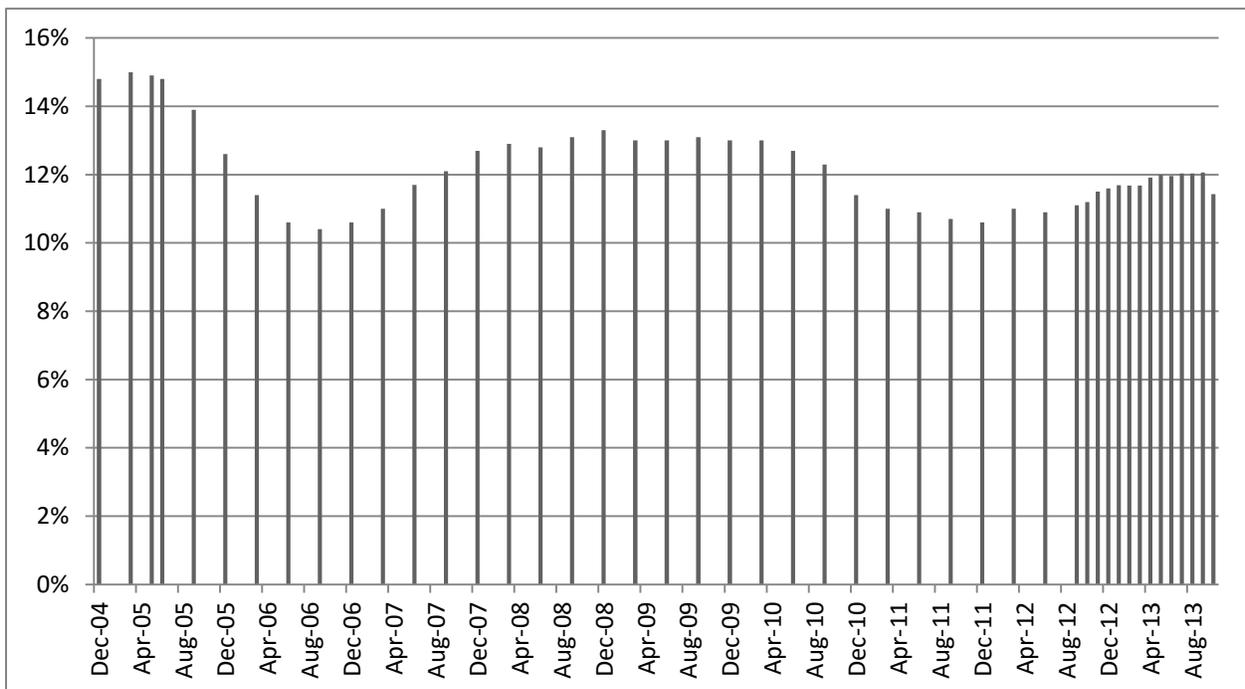


Figure 1. First-Term Enlisted Attrition 0-36 Months of Service-12 Month Rolling Average<sup>30</sup>

Humanitarian aid efforts, operations or crises, war, and drawdowns all contribute to such trends.<sup>31</sup> Conversely, The Associated Press reported that “the number of enlisted

soldiers forced out for issues involving drugs, alcohol, crimes, and other misconduct increased from about 5,600 in 2007, as the Iraq war peaked, to more than 11,000 last year.”<sup>32</sup> This coincides with the Army's rapid growth in the middle part of the decade, when Army leaders relaxed standards in order to recruit and retain tens of thousands of soldiers to fill the ranks as the Pentagon added troops in Iraq and continued the fight in Afghanistan.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, the data affirms that, while first-term attrition remained constant as a percentage, the total number of soldiers separated increased as soldiers were being discharged while the Army was at its peak troop strength following its buildup to fight the Iraq War.<sup>34</sup>

#### Army's Assessment Tools

Sustaining the All-Volunteer Force is critical for the world's best military force; however, this comes with many challenges. Army recruiters screen over 400,000 applicants each year.<sup>35</sup> “Fewer than one in four youths ages 17-24 years old are fully qualified for an Army enlistment for reasons such as failure to graduate from high school, a criminal record, or obesity, the rates of which are increasing among our Nation's youth.”<sup>36</sup>

“Current screening for psychological fitness in applicants for military service consists of three parts: educational achievement, math and verbal cognitive testing, and a medical examination for gross psychological pathology.”<sup>37</sup> The process for examining psychological pathology relies on applicants' self-reporting of symptoms and diagnoses that may be disqualifying for military service.<sup>38</sup> The standard process for screening applicants includes aptitude testing, medical examination, and screening for moral suitability.<sup>39</sup> But this process is not always sequential due to a variety of reasons.

## Aptitude Testing

Army recruits take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), which is a “multiple-aptitude battery that measures developed abilities and helps predict future academic and occupational success in the military.”<sup>40</sup> There are two primary uses of the ASVAB: first, it screens out recruits who seem unfit for Army service; second, it enables high school students to plan for Army service that may strengthen their employability.<sup>41</sup> This SRP will analyze ASVAB’s effectiveness’s for screening out unfit enlistees.

The ASVAB measures aptitudes in four areas: Verbal, Math, Science and Technical, and Spatial.<sup>42</sup> It consists of nine separate tests; candidates’ scores in four (word knowledge, paragraph comprehension, arithmetic reasoning, and mathematics knowledge) are combined to compute a score on what is referred as the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT).<sup>43</sup> The AFQT scores are used to determine eligibility for enlistment in the Army and determine the applicant’s qualifications for various military occupational specialties (MOS).<sup>44</sup> Scores on the AFQT reflect an applicant’s general cognitive aptitude; they provide one of the metrics, in addition to the applicant’s high school degree status, used to determine the applicant’s fitness for Army service.<sup>45</sup>

The other tests include: General Science, Electronics Information, Automotive and Shop Information, Mechanical Comprehension, Assembling Objects, and Verbal Expression.<sup>46</sup> The MOS score is a combination of scores from the nine tests that indicate an applicant’s qualifications for various MOS’. These are referred to as aptitude area scores, composite scores, or line scores.<sup>47</sup>

The decline in the nation’s high school graduation rates impacts the nation’s economy and the Army’s recruiting challenges.

The U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2011) reports that the median income of persons ages 18 through 67 who had not completed high school was roughly \$25,000 in 2009. At current rates, a significant segment of the population will remain entrenched in poverty while on a global scale the competitiveness of the American labor force will continue to lag behind.<sup>48</sup>

In response to this decline in high school graduation rates, the Army created the General Educational Development (GED) Plus Program.<sup>49</sup> Implemented in 2000, the GED Plus Program was designed for disadvantaged youths-- who did not have a high school diploma or GED.<sup>50</sup> This program provided an opportunity for those who were otherwise qualified for enlistment to obtain their GED. Candidates would attend classes held typically on Army installations to prepare them for the GED examination; the GED preparatory sessions and test were administered by certified civilian contractors. As a precursor to ensure the candidates' success rates, the Assessment of Individual Motivation (AIM) was developed by Army Research Institute (ARI) in the mid-1990s to reduce attrition from the program.<sup>51</sup>

The AIM test assessed candidates' behavioral patterns in six areas: work orientation, adjustment, agreeableness, dependability, leadership, and physical conditioning.<sup>52</sup> Candidates who scored within acceptable established standards of the AIM were granted conditional enlistments; then upon their successful completion of the GED program, they were enlisted in the Army. In 2009, the Army discontinued AIM testing and changed enlistment standards to require a high school diploma or GED.<sup>53</sup>

In another attempt to reduce attrition through use of test scores, on 1 May 2005 the Army commissioned the Army Research Institute (ARI) to conduct a five-year study called the Tier 2 Attrition Screen (TTAS).<sup>54</sup> Tier 1 includes soldiers who are high school graduates; Tier 2 includes soldiers who are non-high school graduates, but have other

qualifying education credentials for enlistment (i.e., those soldiers with GEDs). Test Score Categories (TSC) are derived from the AFQT scores; soldiers' scores place them in Category I, II, III, IIIa, IIIb, or IV.

The TTAS was a predictor of attrition rates for Tier 2 and TSC I-IIIa soldiers passing TTAS in comparison to those of Tier 1 soldiers.<sup>55</sup> Figure 2 compares 12-, 24-, 36-, 48-, and 60-month attrition rates of Tier 2, TSC I-IIIa soldiers passing or failing TTAS to those of Tier 1 soldiers.

Key findings demonstrate that the “TTAS is a valid predictor of attrition rates for Tier 2 and TSC I-IIIa soldiers who passed TTAS in comparison to those Tier 1 soldiers.”<sup>56</sup> Also, during this study, the Army expanded attrition screening measures with the use of the TAPAS.

“The TAPAS is a computer-administrated test designed to assess personal characteristics.”<sup>57</sup> The test was designed to improve military recruitment; it contains items measuring more than a dozen personal characteristics.<sup>58</sup> Army applicants are screened on cognitive factors; the ASVAB provides cognitive assessments (basically, what a person knows).<sup>59</sup> An applicant's ASVAB scores are used to determine their eligibility and qualification for specific Army jobs or military occupational specialty (MOS). “The TAPAS enhances the Army's ability to conduct a “whole person assessment” that includes both cognitive (ASVAB) and non-cognitive (TAPAS) aspects.”<sup>60</sup> The goal of the “whole person assessment” is to ensure that each individual selected into the Army possesses the ability as well as the temperament to succeed in the Army.<sup>61</sup>

Another test developed by the ARI was the Tier 1 Performance Screen (TOPS). On 3 April 2009, the Army G1 authorized an Initial Operational Test and Evaluation (IOT&E) of TOPS.<sup>62</sup> This screen was developed to enhance the selection of soldiers with Tier 1 credentials by screening out low motivated, high attrition risk applicants.<sup>63</sup> TOPS relies on the TAPAS findings; this non-cognitive measure provides a “can do” and “will do” score that predicts the likelihood of success across several outcomes, to

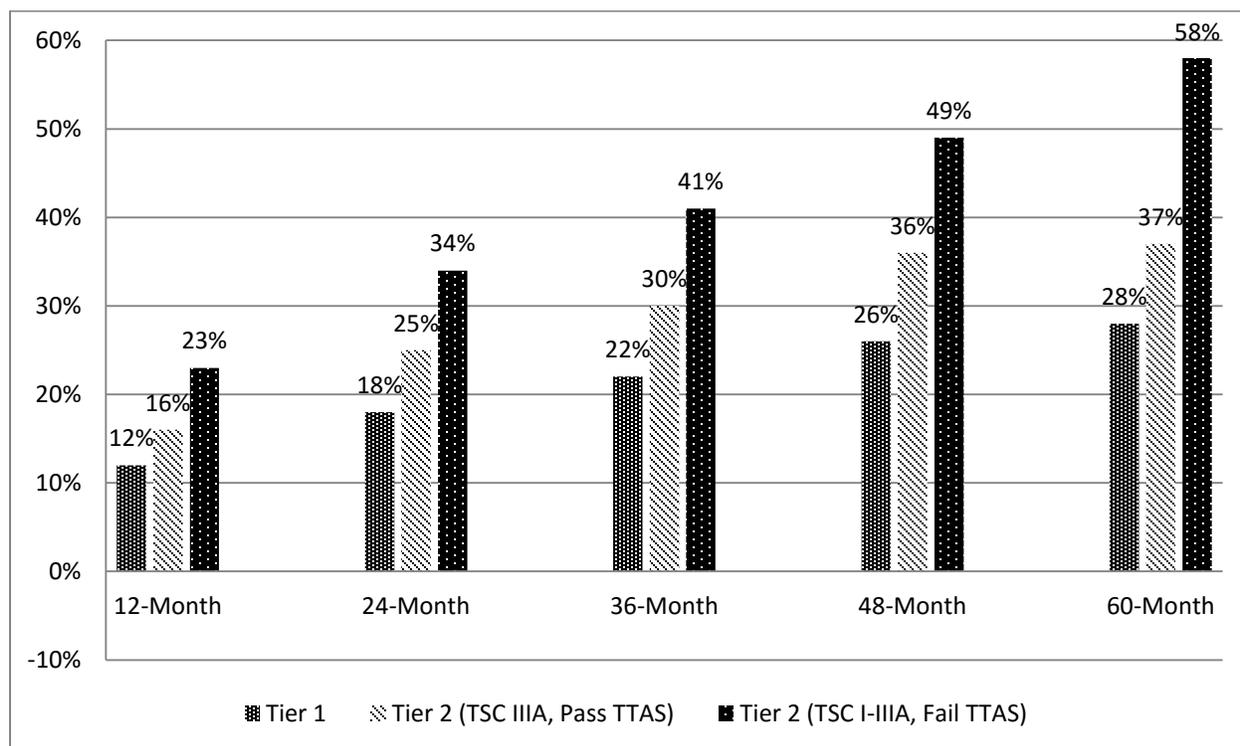


Figure 2. Attrition Rates to TSC I-III, Tier 2 Soldiers Passing or Failing TTAS Compared to Tier 1 Soldiers<sup>64</sup>

include MOS specific work knowledge, Advanced Individual Training course grades, physical fitness scores, leadership potential, Army life adjustment, and rates of 6-month attrition.<sup>65</sup>

“Preliminary results of the IOT&E evaluation indicated TAPAS is a valid predictor of valued Army outcomes.”<sup>66</sup> It also found that the TAPAS instrument performed well in

operational testing.<sup>67</sup> “The pattern of relationships between the TAPAS dimensions is similar to what was observed in research, which indicates that applicants are not able to game the assessment.”<sup>68</sup> Figure 3 (page 11) shows the potential of TAPAS to predict outcomes beyond the AFQT by itself. In summary, the TAPAS enhances prediction in both “can do,” “will do,” and retention outcomes.<sup>69</sup>

The current assessment tools developed by the ARI (TAPAS, TTAS) appear to be sufficient for predicting attrition of those scoring within the parameters. In addition,

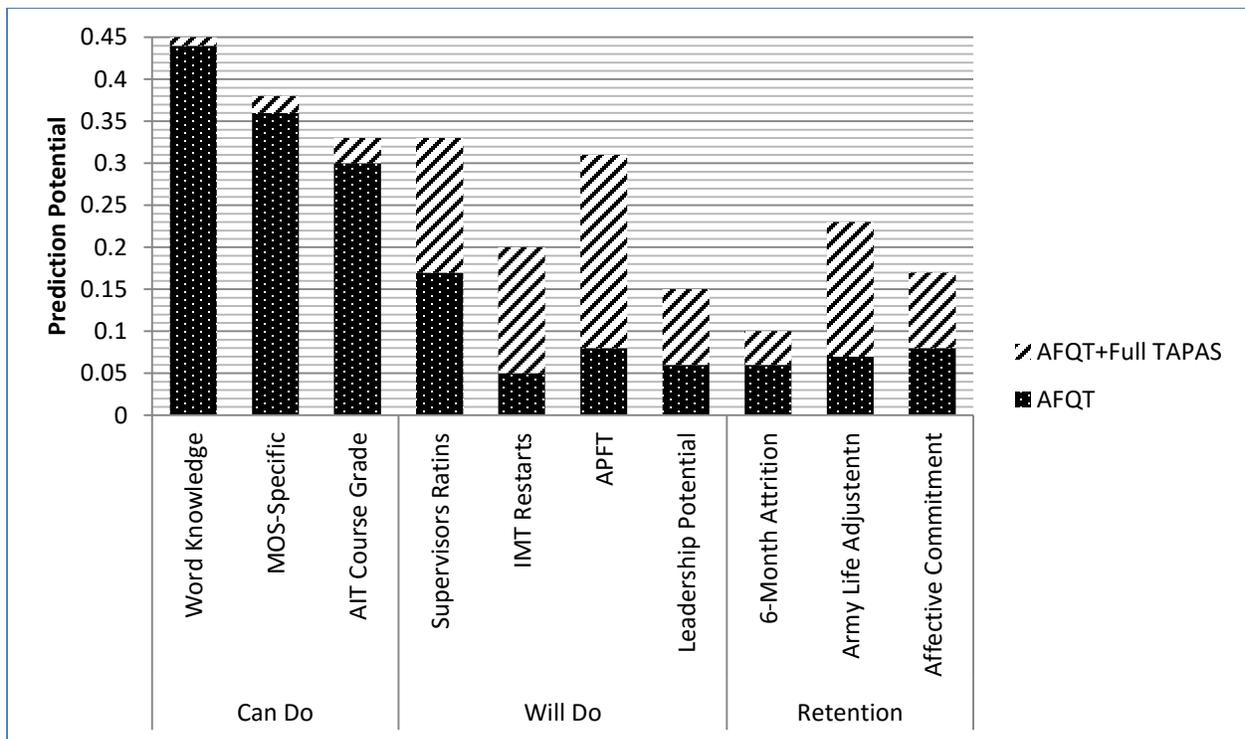


Figure 3. Potential of TAPAS to Predict Outcomes Beyond the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT)<sup>70</sup>

personality assessment tests have been studied as predictors of job performance and as tools for personnel selection in civilian and military work settings.<sup>71</sup> However, what appears to be lacking is the architect or plan for their full implementation as part of the

accession process along with a legal review for ethical considerations. Moreover, as the Army resets after more than a decade of war, recent cases of indiscipline within the ranks warrant a test that identifies applicants with a pre-disposition towards violence, immoral conduct, issues of character, etc., to complement the TAPAS.

ARI published that results indicated that TAPAS may have an important use as a mental health fitness screening tool for those who wish to serve in the military by identifying a limited high risk group of applicants for health diagnostic. TAPAS may augment current cognitive and educational screens and potentially reduce the burden of mental disorders and premature attrition.<sup>72</sup>

Further analysis of TAPAS is needed to develop a screen that targets applicants with a pre-disposition for behavioral problems. Such a screen could reduce the Army's burden of undiagnosed or concealed preexisting medical conditions.

### Medical Screening

Another part of enlistment screening is medical examinations. Medical examinations are conducted at the Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPS) located across the United States and Puerto Rico (65 facilities).<sup>73</sup> Army Regulation (AR) 601-270, Military Entrance Processing Station, and AR 40-501, Standards of Medical Fitness, govern conduct of medical examinations. Applicants are pre-screened on applicable forms in their own handwriting; then they undergo physical examinations at the MEPS.<sup>74</sup>

There are many disqualifying pre-existing medical conditions; however, medical screening is primarily based on applicants' "self-reported" medical history. Self-reported medical histories increase the probability that applicants can enlist in the Army with a disqualifying medical condition.

Compounding this issue, recruiters often do not aggressively weed applicants medical conditions because they have mandated monthly recruiting goals. Sympathetic recruiters often believe the Army will provide a better way of life for applicants; therefore, they rationalize their failure to pressure applications to disclose medical disqualifiers. Matthew Nock, a Harvard University Psychologist, has advised that the Army should improve its screening of recruits, not to exclude them but to provide treatment to those who acknowledge a history of mental illness.<sup>75</sup>

Physical examinations are vitally important. All potential recruits must be in good health to endure the challenges of basic training and military service.<sup>76</sup>

Physical examinations consist of:

- Height and weight measurements
- Hearing and vision examinations
- Urine and blood tests
- Drug and alcohol tests
- Muscle group and joint maneuvers
- Complete physical examination and interview
- Specialized test, if required <sup>77</sup>

### Moral Screening

The final major qualification for Army service is a determination that the applicant is morally suitable. Moral screening is conducted in accordance with AR 601-210, Active and Reserve Components Enlistment Program. As part of the enlistment process, “recruiters conduct interviews with applicants to determine if they have any records of arrest, charges, juvenile court adjudications, traffic violations, probation periods,

dismissed or pending charges or convictions (including those that have been expunged or sealed),”<sup>78</sup> and fingerprinting for a Federal Bureau of Investigation background check.

Applicants who fail to meet established enlistment standards in accord with AR 601-210 are not eligible for enlistment unless an appropriate waiver is authorized. The burden is on the applicant to prove to waiver authorities that they have overcome their disqualifications for enlistment and that their acceptance would be in the best interests of the Army.<sup>79</sup> “Waiver authorities apply the “whole person” concept when considering waiver applications.”<sup>80</sup> Applicants with a criminal history or questionable conduct or character issue must submit to a suitability review.<sup>81</sup> This review includes an audit of the applicant’s record by the appropriate authority for determination of enlistment.<sup>82</sup> Tables 1 and 2, on page 15, depict typical misconduct offenses that require waivers for enlistment.

Of the 84,723 enlisted accessions in fiscal year 13, none were accessed with major misconduct waivers.<sup>83</sup> However, 9,320 accessions (11%) required had some type of other waiver—either medical, moral, or dependency.<sup>84</sup> Data indicates that approximately 50% of those receiving waivers attrit from basic training. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that there is a high likelihood that those individuals who receive waivers will not graduate from basic training.

### Private Industry Assessments

Preventing unethical behavior and controlling workplace violence is a significant challenge for private industry. The Chinese were the first to implement a selection-testing system beginning in the second century BC.<sup>85</sup> “As civilization advanced, so did the need for a qualified and skilled workforce, but determining who was or was not qualified required exploring the characteristics that would make a high-quality

employee.”<sup>86</sup> Currently, the use of assessment tools in private industry for blue collar workers is more the exception than the rule. Private industry typically uses a behavior and/or scenario based interview approach, along with a background check, to determine if applicants have a history of violence, etc.

Table 1. Typical Misconduct offenses<sup>87</sup>

Assault, fighting, or battery (more than \$500 fine or restitution or confinement).
Carrying of weapon on school grounds (non-firearm).
Concealment of or failure to report a felony.
Contributing to delinquency of minor.
Domestic battery and/or violence
Looting.
Possession of marijuana or drug paraphernalia.
Prostitution or solicitation for prostitution.
Resisting arrest or eluding police.
Unlawful entry.
Vandalism (more than \$500 fine or restitution or confinement).

Table 2. Typical Major Offenses<sup>88</sup>

Aggravated assault; assault with dangerous weapon; maiming.
Arson.
Attempt to commit a felony.
Bribery.
Burglary.
Child abuse.
Conspiring to commit a felony.
Embezzlement.
Grand theft auto.
Hate crimes.

Indecent assault.
Manslaughter.
Murder.

“Testing that is scientifically developed and meets both professional and legal standards can effectively predict an applicant’s job success.”<sup>89</sup> “However, testing should not be the only determining factor for employment; rather, testing should be used along with several assessment methods and integrated into the entire selection process.”<sup>90</sup>

Paul Schammer, secretary and treasurer for Fairfield, Ohio is Finn Corporation, claims that “it’s important to our company to have people who will fit with the general population already here.”<sup>91</sup> This suggests that the success of the company is based on a certain personality type.<sup>92</sup> An example of this is illustrated in a case study on The Elliott Company, a producer of turbo machinery. It was undergoing a plant expansion in 1989 and had to increase its workforce significantly:

In the validation study, existing workers were tested in the areas of intellectual abilities, career interest patterns and behavioral attributes to establish benchmarks for the more successful machine operators within the company. This case showed how testing, when integrated into a recruitment program that included interview and background/reference checks, can yield an outstanding rate of hiring accuracy.<sup>93</sup>

Likewise, the Coca-Cola Consolidated Bottling Company; “where they emphasized the need for behavioral and personality testing as a tool that helps sharpen a staffing professional’s other skills.”<sup>94</sup> Similarly, “Rubbermaid incorporated a tool where to test upper middle-management candidates for three important qualities: capability, leadership, and suitability.”<sup>95</sup>

In regard to behavioral testing, Ocean Spray Cranberries’, Manager of Organizational Development, Mary Bianchini, asserted that “the method here is based

on a very simple principle . . . that principle is that past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior.”<sup>96</sup> Her company, worked with a developer of the Targeted Selection system to create a profile of the ideal candidate—“from that person’s skills base to his or her personality.”<sup>97</sup> “The profile is then used to create an interview guide that enables Ocean Spray human resources personnel to better understand past behaviors.”<sup>98</sup> Furthermore, “Ocean Spray believes testing has really increased the value of the whole selection process; it contributes to higher retention and productivity. So Ocean Spray’s HR staff directly impacts the company’s bottom line.”<sup>99</sup>

Another tool that employers may consider is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator instrument. This is one of the most widely used psychological instruments in the world.<sup>100</sup> “The mission of the Myers & Briggs Foundation is to continue the pioneering work of Katharine Cook Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers in the field of psychological type, especially the ethical and accurate use of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator instrument.”<sup>101</sup> These goals are achieved through the following methods:

- Extending the benefits of psychological type throughout the world.<sup>102</sup>
- Expanding the MBTI® theory to encompass new understanding and research.<sup>103</sup>
- Encouraging the development and use of tools appropriate to the understanding of psychological type as a complex dynamic system.<sup>104</sup>
- Educating through conferences, symposia, and the publication of monographs.<sup>105</sup>

Yet there are downsides to employment testing.<sup>106</sup> “It takes considerable time for testing; candidates who have jobs have to take a full day of absence.”<sup>107</sup> In addition, choosing a test can be a challenge.<sup>108</sup> Studies reflect that testers agree there is no right

answer and with the number of available tests, there is no reason a company cannot mix and match.<sup>109</sup>

Aaron Kennedy, founder of Noodles & Co., based in Boulder, Colorado, uses the Caliper and Birkman to help maintain its original, customer-driven culture. Instead of using one uniform management and communication style, he is able to customize his approach with each of the people on the team.<sup>110</sup>

“The Birkman Method relies on empirical research to measure typical behavior styles, underlying needs and expectations, stress behaviors, and occupational interests.”<sup>111</sup>

Even when an approved test is used, employers must still ensure the test is valid, reliable, and legally sufficient.<sup>112</sup> Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument actually captures or measures what it purports to examine.<sup>113</sup> Techniques for examining validity include:

- Face – Face validity looks to the naïve, casual test-taker to see if the test measures what it appears to measure. Face validity pertains to where the test looks valid on the surface to the examinees who take it and the administrative personnel who decide on its use.<sup>114</sup>
- Content – Content validity focuses on the extent to which an employment test samples the work domain. For example, a typing test would be content valid when testing applicants for the position of typist or executive assistant.<sup>115</sup>
- Construct – A construct is a mental definition or abstraction such as intelligence, job satisfaction, customer satisfaction, or organizational commitment. Construct validity refers to the measure of behavioral characteristics, qualities, or physiological traits. To demonstrate construct validity, an employer must know that a specific trait is critical to performing a particular job, and then develop or choose a test to measure that specific behavior quality.<sup>116</sup>

“Reliability and validity are synonymous in employment tests. Reliability sets an upper limit to the validity of the test, and without acceptable reliability, an employer is using an invalid test. Without a valid test, the employer has no legal defensibility when challenged in a court of law.”<sup>117</sup>

As demonstrated, the ARI testing methods include all validation measures and critical techniques to ensure that applicant testing is reliable, valid, and, most importantly, compliant with Federal Law. The U.S. military is under the control of civilian leadership; it is bound by rules and regulations (laws) legislated by Congress. As such, current and/or future applicant testing should be reviewed by Pentagon lawyers to determine their legal sufficiency.

### Way Ahead

Typically, those who enter the military have recently graduated from high school; however, new enlistees are often unprepared to handle stressful situations, especially the unique stressors of military duty. In addition, many people join the Army in order to escape a bad personal or family situation. Then some discover that their problems get worse, not better, in the Army. Others find after enlisting that their situation at home improves or that they do not want to be in the military after all.<sup>118</sup>

As the military downsizes over the next several years, the Army should consider how it acquires and manages talent as it recruits the future enlisted force of the all-volunteer Army. This is especially important with ongoing budgetary constraints and curtailment on defense spending. The Army's investments at the front end of the accessions process to acquire quality applicants require the Army to relook the recruiting processes and incorporate behavioral testing for all applicants.

Moreover, testing should not be the only criteria used for enlistment decisions; rather testing should serve as one of the selected tools for an integrated approach to enlisting new soldiers. Our nation's leaders should adopt a national level enterprise system to capture data for health history, education credentials, moral issues (law enforcement), etc. Consider the example of Estonia:

Estonia has probably the most joined up digital government in the world. Its citizens can complete just about every municipal or state service online and in minutes. You can formally register a company and start trading within 18 minutes, all of it from a coffee shop in the town square. You can view your educational record, medical record, address, employment history and traffic offences.<sup>119</sup>

The Army incorporated TAPAS into applicant testing in 2009. However, it was used only for those applicants scoring in test category IV. TAPAS scores have been used to determine if the applicant is eligible to enter the Army.<sup>120</sup> This SRP recommends for full implementation of TAPAS as part of applicant testing regardless of education credentials and AFQT scores. This SRP further recommends consideration for development and assessing the utility of a non-cognitive screening tool that will ethically stress potential applicants in order to screen out those with an undiagnosed or concealed medical condition and/or expose those with a propensity to engage in unethical or immoral behavior.

Our Army serves in a period of dynamic uncertainty. International threats by both state and non-state actors to America's national interests and those of our Allies and partners are in the headlines every day. The unpredictable so prominent in the contemporary security environment will almost certainly remain a characteristic of the future.<sup>121</sup>

"The American people and many of our allies look to the U.S. Army to guarantee a civilized peace."<sup>122</sup> Assessing and testing our soldiers' moral suitability should enable Army recruiters to identify individuals who can resiliently overcome the stresses of military life. More importantly, as better screening tools are being developed, policy must be updated to mandate the implementation of these screening and assessment tools to better ensure the success of those who enlist into the Army.

## Conclusion

This SRP first examined the current enlistment standards and assessment methods to determine if they are adequate screening tools for assessing candidates' moral suitability to serve in today's Army. Also, the SRP examined and evaluated other tools that could be useful in the accession process along with the TAPAS. The SRP then discussed screening methods used in private industry and recommended a way ahead for enhanced moral screening. In conclusion, this SRP found that the Army's current entrance standards assessing moral suitability are no longer adequate; inadequate screening exposes the Army to the risk that a few have a pre-disposition toward violence, immoral conduct, and problematic issues of character.

It is evident that the Army needs a better set of tools and standards to assess moral suitability. The Army would benefit from adopting private sector methods, such as behavioral testing, as part of the entrance process—thereby ensuring that the all-volunteer Army remains the best trained and most professional fighting force in the world.

Recruiting for the Army of 2020 is about standards, leadership, doing the right thing, soldiers, and building a strong Army. In the end, we will only get better because of our soldiers--men and women--continue proving themselves as highly capable warriors on a daily basis.<sup>123</sup>

It is essential that American's have trust and confidence in members of the military to sustain the nation's prosperity and security. In the end, the Army must focus on the most efficient means to recruit and retain our nation's most precious resource, the soldier.

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