

## Endstrength, accessions, and continuation rates

### *Basic numbers on FY 2008 endstrength and accessions*

In table 1 we provide basic information on the sizes of the enlisted and officer populations in the active and reserve components of the U.S. military and U.S. Coast Guard. The table also includes information on the numbers of accessions that were achieved in each component.

**Table 1: Endstrength and accessions for active duty and reserve components of the U.S. military and U.S. Coast Guard, FY 2008**

Component	Enlisted Personnel <sup>1</sup>		Officers		Warrant Officers	
	End-strength	Accessions	End-strength	Accessions	End-strength	Accessions
<b>Active duty</b>						
Army	452,065	80,506	72,928	7,494	14,682	1,632
Navy	275,296	38,467	49,735	4,024	1,653	187
Marine Corps	178,213	37,981	18,297	1,838	1,905	225
Air Force	258,095	27,848	64,805	4,101	0	0
<b>DOD total</b>	<b>1,163,669</b>	<b>184,802</b>	<b>205,765</b>	<b>17,457</b>	<b>18,240</b>	<b>2,044</b>
<b>Reserves<sup>2</sup></b>						
ARNG	321,605	66,612	31,685	4,053	7,061	993
USAR	161,003	40,455	33,184	3,992	2,837	396
USNR	53,222	15,737	14,780	1,814	134	10
USMCR	34,046	7,545	3,158	913	319	32
ANG	93,564	10,692	14,115	1,243	0	0
USAFR	52,396	7,559	15,169	1,514	0	0
<b>DOD total</b>	<b>715,836</b>	<b>148,600</b>	<b>112,091</b>	<b>13,529</b>	<b>10,351</b>	<b>1,431</b>
<b>Coast Guard</b>						
Active duty	33,228	3,895	6,548	446	1,586	195
Reserves	6,590	490	1,210	221	170	32

Notes:

1. Enlisted accessions for all components include non-prior service (NPS) and prior-service (PS) accessions.
2. The reserve components are the Army National Guard (ARNG), Army Reserves (USAR), Naval Reserves (USNR), Marine Corps Reserves (USMCR), the Air National Guard (ANG), and Air Force Reserves (USAFR).

**Endstrength.** The FY 2008 endstrength of the DOD active components included over 1.16 million enlisted personnel, nearly 206,000 commissioned officers, and over 18,000 warrant officers. These numbers are up slightly from FY 2007. The Army was the largest of the services with a total endstrength (enlisted plus commissioned and warrant officers) of roughly 540,000. The Marine Corps was the smallest of the services with a total endstrength of a little under 200,000.

The reserve components (consisting of the Army National Guard (ARNG), Army Reserve (USAR), Naval Reserve (USNR), Marine Corps Reserve (USMCR), Air

National Guard (ANG), and Air Force Reserve (USAFR)) totaled over 715,000 enlisted personnel, over 112,000 commissioned officers, and over 10,000 warrant officers. These numbers are also generally slightly higher or equal to what they were in FY 2007. The ARNG was by far the largest of the reserve components with a total endstrength of roughly 360,000. The USMCR was the smallest with a total endstrength of a little under 38,000.

In FY 2008, the Coast Guard included roughly 33,200 enlisted personnel, 6,500 commissioned officers, and 1,600 warrant officers, for a total endstrength of over 41,300. The Coast Guard Reserves consisted of roughly 6,600 enlisted personnel, 1,200 commissioned officers, and 170 warrant officers, for a total endstrength of nearly 8,000.

**Accessions.** Nearly 185,000 individuals joined the active duty enlisted ranks in FY 2008. Of these, roughly 172,000 were classified as non-prior service (NPS) while 13,000 prior-service (PS) recruits were returned to the ranks. At the same time, roughly 17,500 newly commissioned officers reported for active duty and 2,000 new warrant officers joined the ranks.

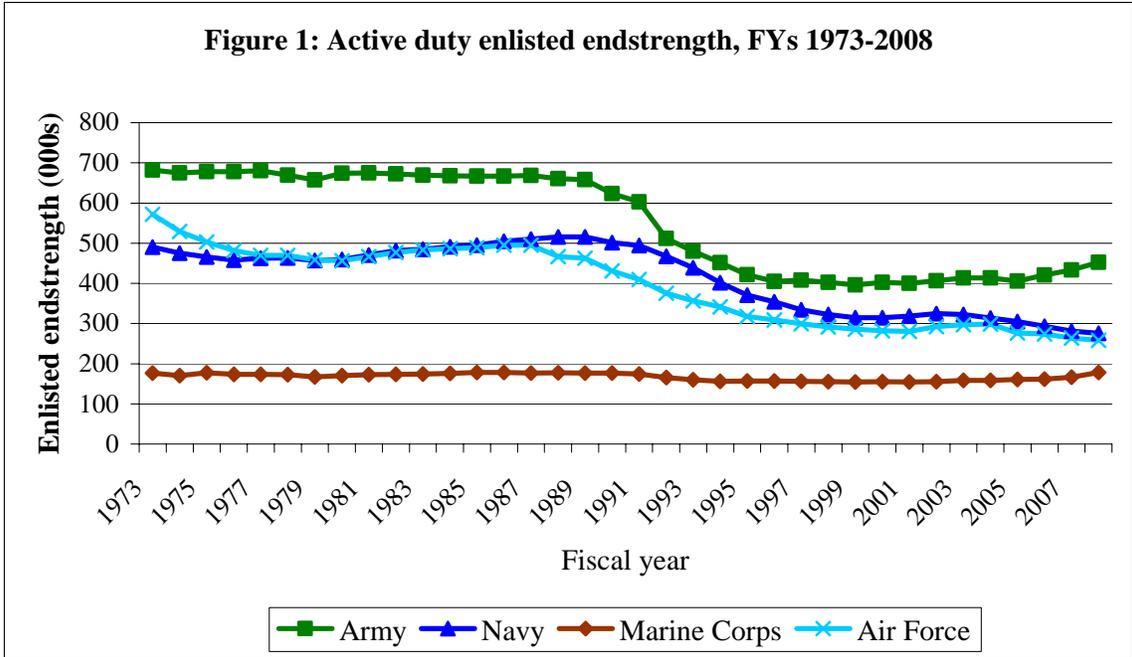
Among the reserve components, nearly 150,000 individuals joined the reserve enlisted ranks. Of these, approximately 81,000 were NPS, while nearly 68,000 were PS recruits. The reserve components also recruited roughly 13,500 new commissioned officers and nearly 1,500 new warrant officers in FY 2008.

In the Coast Guard, roughly 3,900 people joined the active duty enlisted ranks while an additional 490 joined the Coast Guard Reserve as enlisted personnel. The Coast Guard also recruited roughly 450 new commissioned officers and nearly 200 new warrant officers to its active component. Roughly 250 commissioned and warrant officers (combined) were added to the Coast Guard Reserve.

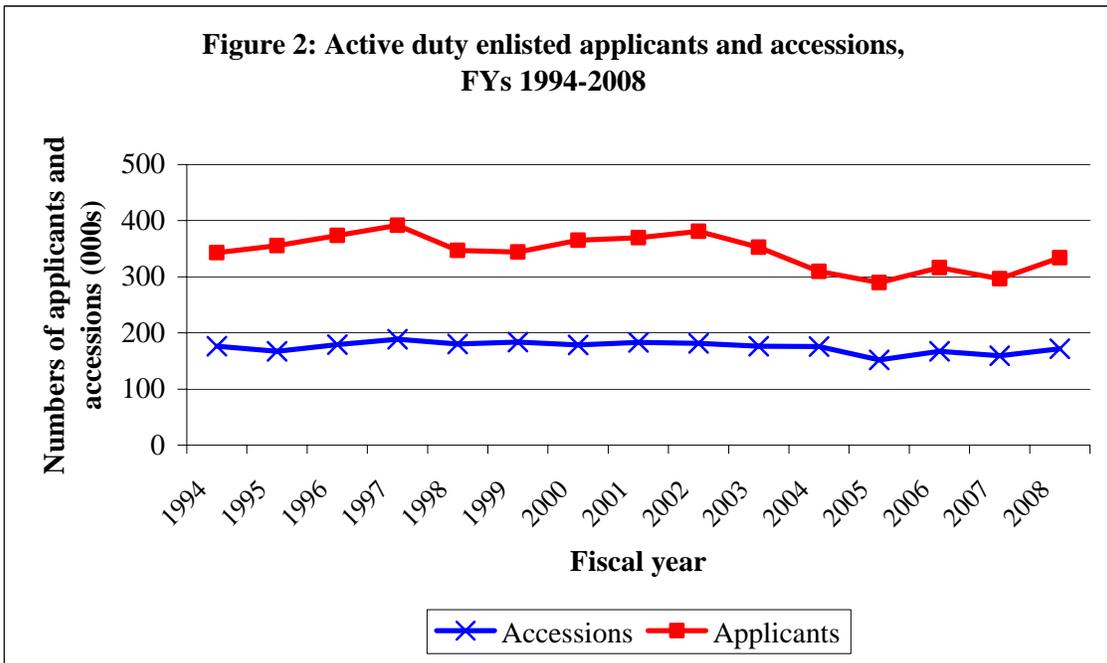
### ***Putting FY 2008 endstrength and accession numbers into historical perspective***

**Active duty enlisted endstrength.** Figure 1 illustrates how the enlisted endstrengths of the four active duty DOD components have changed over the past 35 years. In FY 2008 the DOD's four major branches accounted for slightly more than 1.16 million enlisted personnel. This number is down from the roughly 1.7 million enlisted personnel that were serving at the end of the Cold War.

Since FY 2003, the number of enlisted personnel in both the Navy and Air Force has fallen by 14 percent. During this same time, the number of enlisted personnel has grown by 9 percent in the Army and by 12 percent in the Marine Corps. Much of this growth can be attributed to the necessities of carrying out two simultaneous missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Combined, the size of the enlisted force has fallen by 2.5 percent over the past 5 years, although it is slightly larger (1.8 percent) than it was in FY 2007.



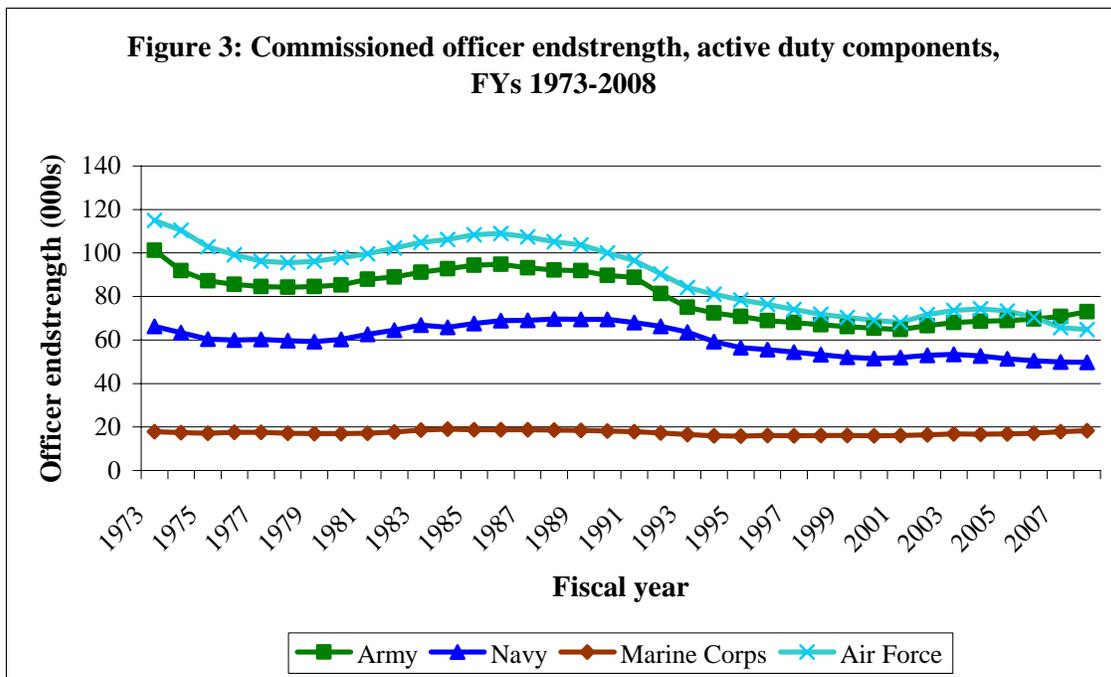
**Active duty enlisted applications and accessions.** Figure 2 illustrates how the numbers of applicants and accessions into the active enlisted ranks have changed since the mid-1990s. In recent years, the number of new applicants for enlisted accession has fallen dramatically. The average number of applicants for FY 2000 through FY 2002 was over 370,000. The average number of applicants for FY 2005 through FY 2007 was only 300,000. FY 2008 witnessed a strong surge in applications to 333,000, which represents an increase of 11 percent over the previous 3 years.



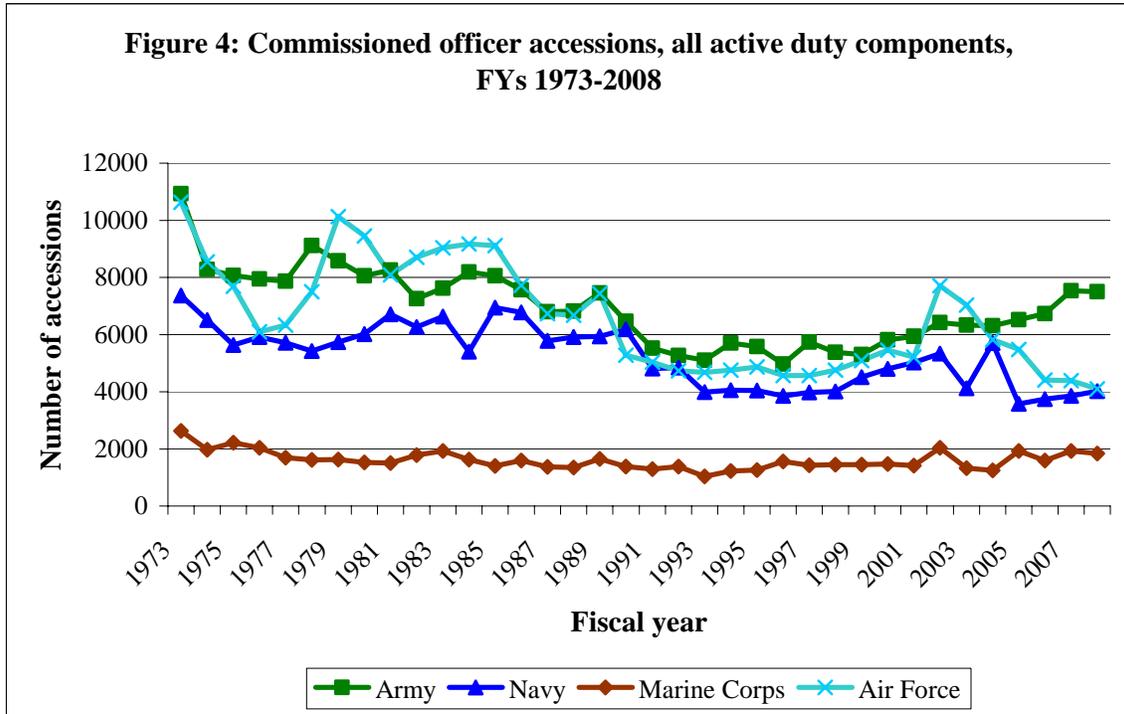
The middle part of this decade also saw a drop in enlisted accessions. Since FY 2005, however, accessions have increased to the point that they nearly equal the typical number of accessions over each of the past 15 fiscal years. In FY 2008, 51.6 percent of applicants were accessed, which is the smallest the ratio of accessions to applicants has been since FY 2004, when 50 percent of all applicants accessed.

**Active duty commissioned officer endstrength.** Figure 3 illustrates how the numbers of commissioned officers in the four active duty DOD components have changed over the past 35 years. The four components accounted for a total officer corps endstrength of roughly 206,000 in FY 2008. The Army had the largest officer corps, accounting for 35 percent of the total, while the number of officers in the Air Force was only slightly smaller, accounting for 32 percent of the total. The Navy and Marine Corps combined to account for the remaining 33 percent of all officers in the U.S. military services.

From an historical perspective, the number of officers across the four components is currently much smaller than it was 20 years ago during the final years of the Cold War. From FY 1985 though FY 1989 the number of officers averaged nearly 290,000. Since FY 2004, the size of the officer corps has average roughly 208,000. This is a drop of nearly 30 percent. The Air Force has experienced the steepest drop (35 percent), while the Marine Corps has seen the most gradual drop (7 percent). Since FY 2005, both the Army and Marine Corps have seen slight increases in the number of commissioned officers—6 and 8 percent respectively. During this same period, the numbers of commissioned officers in the Navy and Air Force have continued to fall.

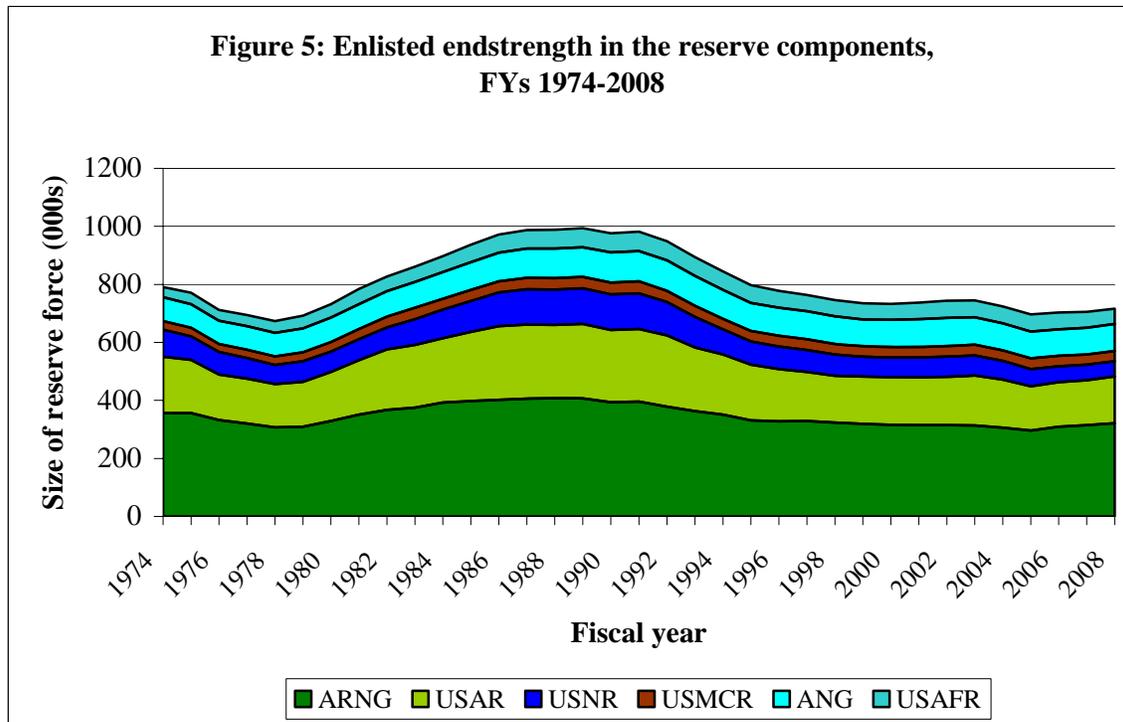


**Active duty commissioned officer accessions.** Figure 4 illustrates how the numbers of commissioned officer accessions have varied for each of the four active duty components since FY 1973.



Again, we see that accessions generally fell after the end of the Cold War. Interestingly, the Army has experienced a steady increase in the number of commissioned officers accessed over the past decade. Not only was the number of officers accessed into the Army in FY 2008 roughly 40 percent higher than it was in FY 1998, it is actually comparable to the numbers of officers the Army accessed in the late 1980s before the end of the Cold War. The Navy has also experienced significant growth in the numbers of accessions since FY 2005; accessions in FY 2008 were 12 percent higher than they were in FY 2005. Over the same period, Marine Corps accessions have remained flat, while Air Force accessions have fallen considerably.

**Enlisted endstrength in the reserves.** In Figure 5, we show how the number of enlisted personnel in the six reserve components has varied since FY 1974. The ARNG and USAR have always made up a majority of the total reserve enlisted force, with their combined share varying between 65 and 70 percent. The size of the reserves has fallen since it peaked in the late 1980s (there were nearly 1 million enlisted reservists in FY 1989). The most rapid part of the drawdown occurred in the early 1990s after the end of the Cold War. The size of the reserve force is roughly 96 percent of what it was in FY 1998, although it has increased slightly (2.5 percent) since reaching a recent low in FY 2005.

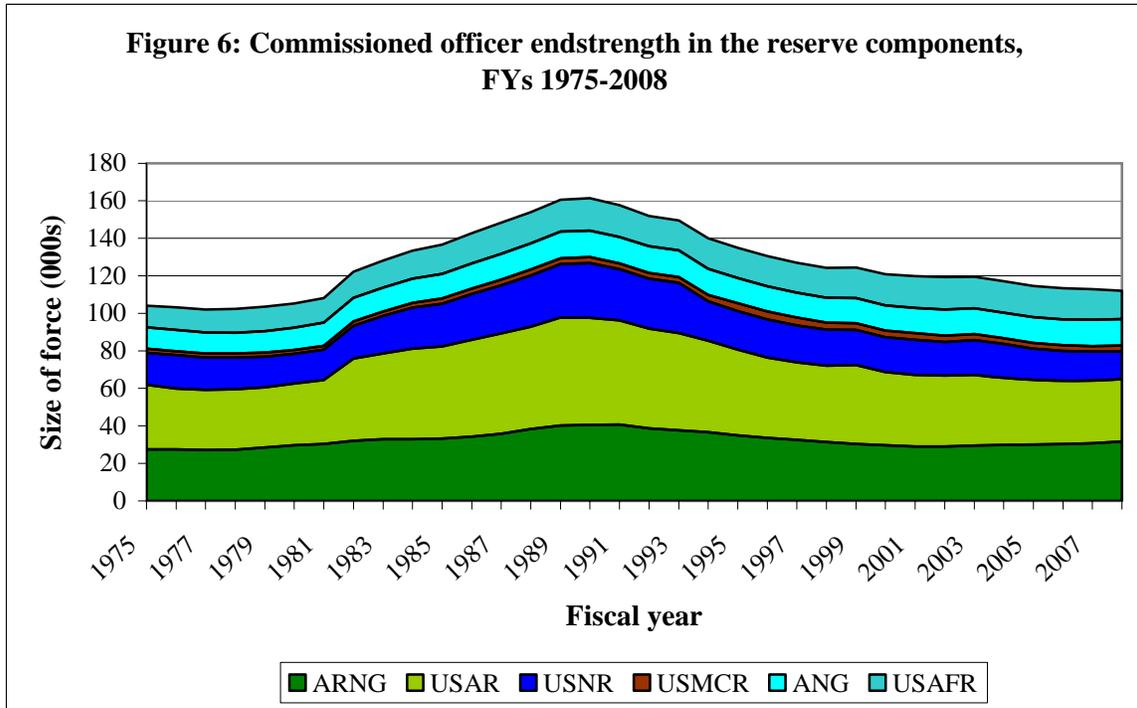


**Commissioned officer endstrength in the reserves.** Figure 6 depicts how the number of commissioned officers in the six reserve components has varied since the mid-1970s. In FY 2008, there were roughly 112,000 officers serving in the various National Guard and reserves branches. Roughly 58 percent of these officers served in the ARNG and USAR, 26 percent served in the ANG and USAFR, 13 percent served in the USNR, and 3 percent served in the USMCR. The current size of the reserves officer corps is small compared to its peak toward the end of the Cold War. From FY 1980 to FY 1990, the number of reserve officers grew 53 percent from 105,000 to 160,000. Since FY 1990, there has been a continuous drawdown of reserve officers to the point that there are fewer of them now than there have been in any year since FY 1981. Much of this drawdown occurred during the 1990s. Still, since FY 1998 the number of reserve officers has fallen by 10 percent.

*Continuation rates for active duty enlisted personnel*

Like the number of individuals who join the military each year, the number of personnel that the military retains each year can have an impact on overall endstrength. In this subsection we look at FY 2008 continuation rates for enlisted personnel in the four active duty components. We then compare these continuation rates to those from the distant past (FYs 1980 and 1990) and the more recent past (FYs 2000, 2003, and 2006).

To illustrate these continuation rates, we construct survival curves. These curves show us the percentage of all service members who enter a military component that we would expect to still be in that component at any given point of time in the future.



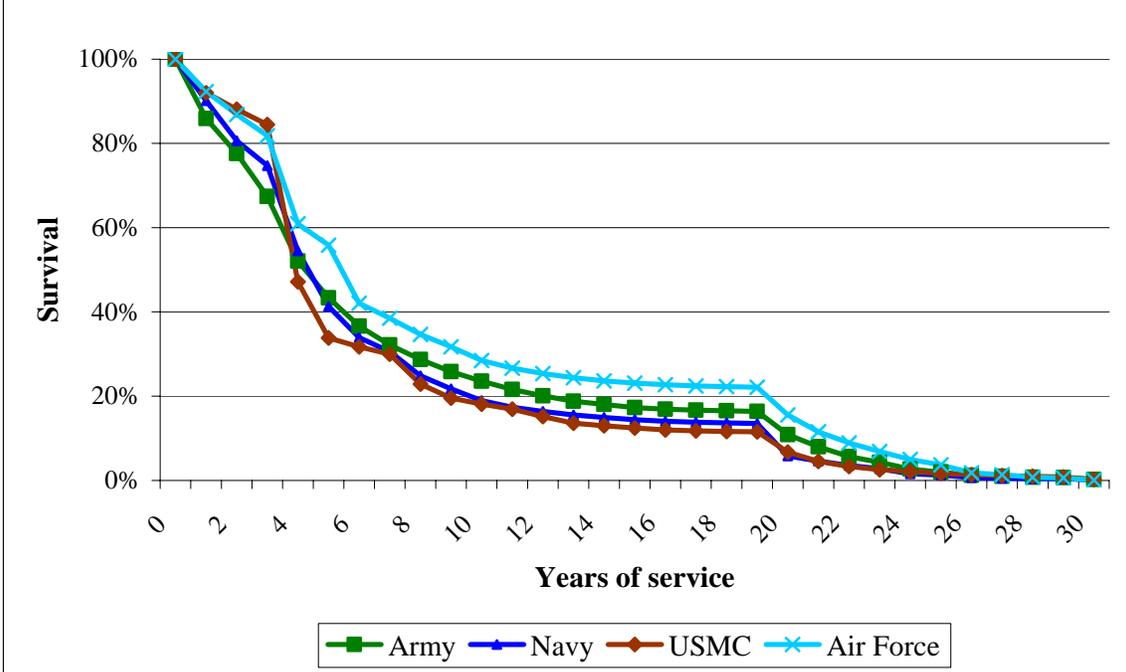
**Continuation rates for FY 2008.** In figure 7, we plot the survival curves for the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force for FY 2008.

The Air Force experienced the best retention among the four components, while retention in the Marine Corps was the lowest due to its specific force structure requirement of having a very large first-term force. Most of the differentiation among the services seemed to occur between 4 and 6 years of service. Retention of enlisted personnel with this amount of experience was much higher in the Air Force than in the other services.

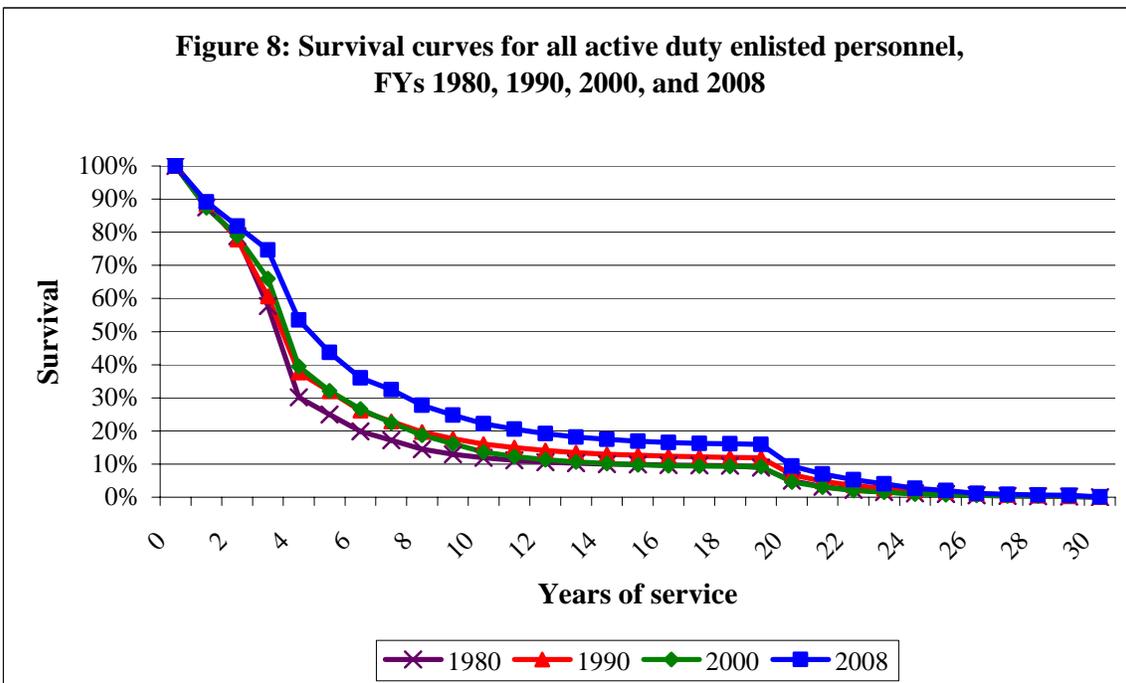
**Putting current continuation rates into historical perspective.** As illustrated in figure 8, current continuation rates for enlisted personnel are relatively high. Comparing enlisted retention in FY 2008 to retention in FYs 1980, 1990, and 2000, we see that overall retention was higher in FY 2008 at all years of service than it was in the earlier fiscal years.

The results presented in figure 9 indicate that retention of enlisted personnel in FY 2008 compared favorably to retention in other recent years. Overall retention is certainly higher than it was 8 years ago and is comparable to retention in both FY 2003 and FY 2006.

**Figure 7: Survival curves for active duty enlisted personnel in the four components, FY 2008**



**Figure 8: Survival curves for all active duty enlisted personnel, FYs 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2008**



**Figure 9: Survival curves for all active duty enlisted personnel, FYs 2000, 2003, 2006, and 2008**

