

# **Population Representation in the Military Services**

**Fiscal Year 2002**

*March 2004*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the 29<sup>th</sup> annual Department of Defense (DoD) report on social representation in the U.S. Military Services, including the Coast Guard. The seven chapters and accompanying technical appendices provide data and comments on demographic, educational, and aptitude characteristics of applicants, new recruits, and enlisted and officer members of the Active and Reserve Components. Except where otherwise noted, data are provided by Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC). Due to differences in data flow and definitions, values provided will not always match official figures reported by the Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, other Department of Defense agencies, or the military services. This report covers fiscal year (FY) 2002, from October 1, 2001, to September 30, 2002. The report is also available on the worldwide web at <http://www.dod.mil/prhome/poprep2002>.

The FY 2002 end-strength of the Active Components was slightly less than 1.4 million and the Selected Reserve (comprising the Army National Guard, Army Reserve, Naval Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserve) totaled more than 874,000. Additionally, there were more than 312,000 people in the Individual Ready Reserve/Inactive National Guard. In FY 2002, approximately 182,000 non-prior service (NPS) recruits were enlisted and nearly 13,000 prior service recruits were returned to the ranks. Almost 22,000 newly commissioned officers reported for active duty. Furthermore, about 73,000 recruits without and about 81,000 with prior military experience were enlisted in the Selected Reserve. Close to 15,000 commissioned officers entered the National Guard or Reserves this past fiscal year as well. The salient characteristics of these personnel are described in this summary.

### **FY 2002 Highlights**

**Age.** The active duty military comprises a younger workforce than the civilian sector. Service policies and legal restrictions account for the relative youthfulness of the military. In FY 2002 86 percent of new active duty recruits were 18 through 24 years of age compared to 38 percent of comparable civilians. The mean age of new active duty recruits was nearly 20. Almost half (49 percent) of the active duty enlisted force was 17-24 years old, in contrast to about 15 percent of the civilian labor force. Officers were older than those in the enlisted ranks (mean ages 34 and 27, respectively), but they too were younger than their civilian counterparts, college graduates in the workforce 21-49 years old (mean age 36).

The data for enlisted personnel in the Selected Reserve similarly showed a more youthful composition than that of the civilian labor force. Among enlisted Reserve Components members, 57 percent of NPS accessions were between the ages of 17 and 19, but only 17 percent of civilians within the 17-35 year age range fell within this age subgroup. Of course, prior service Reserve Components enlisted accessions were older than those without prior service, but still younger than the civilian workforce (e.g., 57 percent versus 46 percent were under 30 years of age).

**Race/Ethnicity.** In FY 2002, African Americans were equitably represented in the military overall. In the enlisted force, African Americans were slightly overrepresented among NPS active duty accessions (16 percent) relative to the 18-24 year-old civilian population (14 percent). Hispanics, on the other hand, continued to be underrepresented, with 11 percent among

NPS accessions compared with nearly 16 percent for comparable civilians. FY 2002 representation of “Other” minority enlisted accessions (Native Americans, Asians, and Pacific Islanders) stood at approximately 6 percent, slightly more than in the civilian population (5 percent). Though there was a significant decrease in African American enlistment during FY 2002 African Americans are still overrepresented when compared to their civilian cohorts. Higher retention rates among African Americans continue to boost their representation among Active Components enlisted members – 22 percent in contrast to the 13 percent of African Americans among 18-44 year-old civilians in the workforce. With 10 percent of active duty enlisted members counted as Hispanic, this ethnic minority remained underrepresented relative to the comparable civilian population (14 percent).

Over the years African Americans have been overrepresented, whereas Hispanics and “Other” minorities have been underrepresented. However, the proportion of active duty accessions with Hispanic and “Other” backgrounds has increased during the past 18 years. Marine Corps and Navy have generally recruited greater proportions of Hispanics than the Army and Air Force. The Marine Corps has retained more Hispanics, as evidenced by larger percentages of Hispanic Marines in the enlisted force.

Minorities appear to be proportionately represented and not on the decline within the commissioned officer corps. Although African Americans comprised a much smaller proportion of officers (8 percent) than of enlistees (22 percent), when compared to college graduates in the civilian workforce 21-49 years old (8 percent African American), African Americans are equitably represented in the officer ranks. Hispanic officers, at 4 percent, are comparable to the civilian comparison group (5 percent Hispanic). Those of “Other” minority subgroups are underrepresented, with 5 percent of the officer corps and 8 percent of 21-49 year-old employed, college graduates.

Warrant officers account for 9 percent of active duty officer accessions and 7 percent of the officer corps. The Air Force does not have warrant officers. Warrant officers on active duty have greater representation of African Americans and Hispanics than among commissioned officers (17 and 5 percent warrant officers versus 8 and 4 percent commissioned officers, respectively). African American warrant officers are overrepresented and Hispanic warrant officers are underrepresented in comparison with the civilian labor force.

Racial/ethnic findings for the Reserve Components were similar. African Americans were overrepresented and Hispanics were underrepresented at population benchmark levels among NPS and prior service Selected Reserve accessions. The “Others” ethnic groups were equitably represented among NPS and slightly overrepresented among prior service Selected Reserve accessions. As with the Active Components, the proportions of minorities among Selected Reserve officers were smaller than for enlisted personnel. The percentages of Hispanic and “Other” Reserve officers demonstrate continued underrepresentation, while African American Reserve officers are more on par with their cohorts in the comparable civilian labor force.

Warrant officers account for 5 percent of Selected Reserve officer accessions and 8 percent of the officer corps. The Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve do not have warrant officers. There are fewer minorities in the National Guard and Reserve warrant ranks as

compared to commissioned officers. As with the Active Components, minority warrant officers in the Selected Reserve are underrepresented compared with the civilian labor force.

**Gender.** Women comprised about 17 percent of NPS active duty accessions and 24 percent of NPS accessions to the Selected Reserve compared to 50 percent of 18- to 24- year-old civilians. Among enlisted members on active duty, 15 percent were women. For enlisted members in the Selected Reserves, the female composition was 17 percent. Among the Reserve Components, the National Guard components were less female at 13 percent. This is generally due to the Army National Guard's heavier combat arms mix, which precludes women from many of the positions in those units. The representation of women among active duty officer accessions and within the officer corps was 19 and 16 percent, respectively. Similar percentages were seen among Selected Reserve officers (19 percent for each).

Military women, across the enlisted force and officer corps in both the Active and Reserve Components, are more likely to be members of a racial/ethnic minority group than are military men. In fact, slightly more than half of the women in the Active Components enlisted force are members of minority groups.

Women are still a minority of the Total Force. However, their representation has grown greatly since the inception of the All Volunteer Force. In FY 1994, when the direct ground combat rule replaced the risk rule, new jobs were opened to women. Since the introduction of that policy, nearly all career fields (92 percent) have been opened to women. Accordingly, the percentage of Active Component women increased by nearly 3 percentage points since the implementation of the direct combat rule. For FY 2002, however, there was almost no change in the percentage of Active Component women compared to FY 2001.

**Marital Status.** In addition to the growing presence of women in the military, the occurrence of marriage among Servicemembers has also increased. However, unlike the growing percentages of women, the rise in marriage among Servicemembers has not maintained a steady growth. In FY 1973, approximately 40 percent of enlisted members were married. That statistic hit its high point in 1994 at 57 percent married, but has decreased steadily to the FY 2002 rate of 49 percent. In fact, the proportion of married Servicemembers in FY 2002 is virtually identical to the proportion in 1977 when just over 49 percent of enlisted members were also married. Nevertheless, in FY 2002 nearly half of all soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen are married, an increase of approximately 10 percentage points since the early 1970s.

Newcomers to the military are less likely than their civilian age counterparts to be married. Similarly, military members are less likely to be married than those in the civilian sector; however, the difference is less pronounced in the total active force than it is with accessions. Among enlisted members, 48 percent of those on active duty and in the Reserve Components were married as of the end of FY 2002. In the military, men were more likely to be married than women.

As one might expect, owing to their being older and financially more secure on average, officers were more likely to be married (68 percent of the Active Component and 73 percent of the Reserve Component officer corps were married) than enlisted personnel. Again, women officers were less likely than their male colleagues to be married.

**Education Level.** The Military Services value and support the education of their members. The emphasis on education was evident in the data for FY 2002. Practically all active duty and Selected Reserve enlisted accessions had a high school diploma or equivalent, well above civilian youth proportions (79 percent of 18-24 year-olds). More important, excluding accessions enlisting in the Army or Army Reserve under the GED+ program (an experimental program of individuals with a GED or no credential who have met special screening criteria for enlisting), 92 percent of NPS active duty and 87 percent of NPS Selected Reserve enlisted recruits were high school diploma graduates.

Given that most officers are required to possess at least a baccalaureate college degree upon or soon after commissioning and that colleges and universities are among the Services' main commissioning sources (i.e., Service academies and ROTC), the academic standing of officers is not surprising. The fact that 87 percent of active duty officer accessions and 95 percent of the officer corps (both excluding those with unknown education credentials) were degree holders (approximately 17 and 38 percent advanced degrees) is in keeping with policy and the professional status and expectations of officers. Likewise, 81 percent of Reserve Component officer accessions and 91 percent of the total Reserve Component officer corps held at least a bachelor's degree, with 23 and 34 percent possessing advanced degrees, respectively.

**Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) Scores.** Enlisted members tend to have higher cognitive aptitude than the civilian youth population, as measured by scores on the military's enlistment test. Persons who score in Categories I and II (65<sup>th</sup> to 99<sup>th</sup> percentiles) tend to be above average in trainability; those in Category III (31<sup>st</sup> to 64<sup>th</sup> percentiles), average; those in Category IV (10<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> percentiles), below average; and those in Category V (1<sup>st</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> percentiles), markedly below average. The percentage of new recruits in Categories I and II (41 percent) was slightly higher than for their civilian counterparts (36 percent). Category III new accessions (58 percent) greatly exceeded—in fact, were nearly double the proportion of—the civilian group (34 percent), while the percentage of recruits in Category IV (1 percent) was much lower than in the civilian population (21 percent). No enlistees were in Category V, whereas 9 percent of the civilian population scored in this category.

Test score data were not reported for officers because of test variation by Service and commissioning source. Tough entry requirements (e.g., SAT scores) for the commissioning programs as well as the college degree hurdle ensure quality among officers.

**High-Quality Recruits.** To predict recruit quality in areas such as persistence, training outcome, and job performance in the enlisted ranks, the Services use level of education and AFQT scores. Because high school diploma graduates are more likely to complete their contracted enlistment terms and higher AFQT-scoring recruits perform better in training and on the job, the Services strive to enlist AFQT Category I-III A (50<sup>th</sup> percentile and above on the AFQT) high school diploma graduates.

The drawdown in the 1990s led the Services to redesign jobs so that Servicemembers assume more diverse workloads and greater responsibilities. Incumbents must perform more tasks and tasks of greater complexity. The Services need more personnel of high-quality levels to meet these job demands. In FY 2002, the proportion of NPS high-quality recruits ranged from 57 percent in the Army and Navy to 75 percent in the Air Force.

**Reading Ability.** Like aptitude levels, reading levels were higher in the enlisted military than in the non-military sector. FY 2002 NPS active duty enlisted accessions had a mean reading level typical of an 11<sup>th</sup> grade student whereas the mean for civilian youth was within the 10<sup>th</sup> grade range.

**Geographic Representation.** During the past several years, the percentage of new recruits from the Northeast region has decreased with a corresponding increase in the percentage of recruits from the West region. The geographic distribution of enlisted active accessions for FY 2002 shows that the South, and in particular the West South Central and South Atlantic Divisions of this region, continued to have the greatest representation. More than 40 percent of NPS accessions hailed from the South. In fact, this was the only region to be slightly overrepresented among enlisted accessions compared to its proportion of 18-24 year-olds. The representation ratio (percentage of accessions divided by percentage of 18-24 year-olds from the region) for NPS active accessions from the South was 1.2, compared to 0.8 for the Northeast and 0.9 for the North Central and West.

**Representation in Occupations.** The Services need a steady supply of combat and combat support personnel; they rely heavily on mechanics and infantrymen and guncrew specialists. In addition, the Services require technicians, health care specialists, and other support personnel. Assignment to and training in one of the military's many occupational specialties, which carry varying cognitive and noncognitive demands, is part of the enlistment or commissioning package. Less than one-third (29 percent) of FY 2002 active duty enlisted personnel were in occupations such as infantry, craftsmen, and service and supply handling. A plurality of enlisted members (43 percent) served in mid-level skill jobs in medical and dental, functional support and administration, and electrical/mechanical equipment repair. The remainder were in high-skill areas (22 percent), including electronic equipment repair, communications and intelligence, and other allied specialties, or in non-occupational categories (6 percent).

During the last two decades, assignment patterns for women have shifted to increase their presence in "non-traditional" jobs. Previously, most enlisted women were in either functional support and administration or medical and dental jobs. By FY 2002, smaller proportions (33 and 15 percent, respectively) served in these jobs. Women were more than two and a half times more likely than men to serve in the "traditional" female occupations, functional support and administration and medical/dental specialties. Women are excluded from infantry and other assignments in which the primary mission is to physically engage the enemy. However, the direct ground combat rule allows women to serve on aircraft and ships engaged in combat. The proportion of women serving in such operational positions (i.e., gun crews and seamanship specialties) in FY 2002 was 5 percent. In contrast, the percentage of men in these occupations was approximately 19 percent.

In FY 2002, the proportions of African Americans and Whites were similar in four of the nine occupational areas (communications and intelligence, medical and dental, other allied specialists, and craftsmen). In three areas (infantry, electronic equipment repairers, and electrical/mechanical equipment repair) the proportions of Whites were higher. African Americans were still more heavily represented in the functional support and administration and the service and supply areas.

The most common occupational area for active duty officers was tactical operations (e.g., fighter pilots, combat commanders; 36 percent) with health care a distant second (18 percent). Assignment patterns differed between men and women. Greater percentages of men were in tactical operations (41 percent), whereas greater percentages of women were in health care (39 percent) and administration (11 percent). In FY 2002, racial and ethnic groups of officers generally had similar assignment patterns across occupational areas although there was a lower percentage of African Americans in tactical operations, a lower percentage of Hispanics in health care, and a greater percentage of African Americans in administration.

The occupational distributions among Active and Reserve Components varied somewhat. In FY 2002, 9 percent of enlisted Active Component members were in electronic equipment repair occupations in contrast to 5 percent of enlisted Selected Reserve members. The Reserve Components are somewhat “lighter” in technical occupational areas such as electronic and electrical/mechanical equipment repair, and communications and intelligence, and somewhat “heavier” in functional support and administration, craftsmen, and supply. There were also some occupational differences between Active and Reserve officers; the Reserve Components had slightly smaller proportions in tactical operations but slightly larger proportions in the supply, procurement, and allied occupations. However, differences were greater between Services than between Active and Reserve members.

**U.S. Coast Guard.** The Coast Guard is the smallest of the Armed Forces. It is a part of the Department of Homeland Security during peacetime, but during times of war it becomes a part of the Department of Defense. Compared to the other Services, the Coast Guard is very similar on demographic variables, with slightly greater proportions of males and Whites.

## **Conclusions**

The FY 2002 *Population Representation* report shows both the diversity and the quality of the Total Force. Men and women of various racial and ethnic groups of divergent backgrounds, from every state in our country, serve as Active and Selected Reserve enlisted members and officers of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard. The mean cognitive ability and educational levels of these soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen are above the average of comparably-aged U.S. citizens.

Although the force is diverse, it is not an exact replica of society as a whole. The military way of life is more attractive to some members of society than to others. Among the enlisted ranks, the proportion of African Americans continues to exceed population counts of the civilian labor force. Hispanics are underrepresented in the military, but their percentages have increased over the years. Minorities comprise proportionally less of the officer corps; however, their representation levels are in keeping with minority statistics among the pool of college graduates from which second lieutenants and ensigns are drawn. Women continue to be underrepresented in the military, compared to their proportion in civilian society. However, accession statistics show that women continue to gain in both numerical and proportional strength.

The All Volunteer Force is now facing increased recruiting goals amid changing and expanding roles, with greater competition from colleges, universities, and private employers

(compared to the early 1990s). Population representation can be affected by such external events. Thus, there is a continuing need to track demographic changes and to monitor the balance of military benefits and burdens across the varied segments of society. Attention to human resource issues beyond numerical representation is necessary to manage recruiting and to promote readiness.





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