

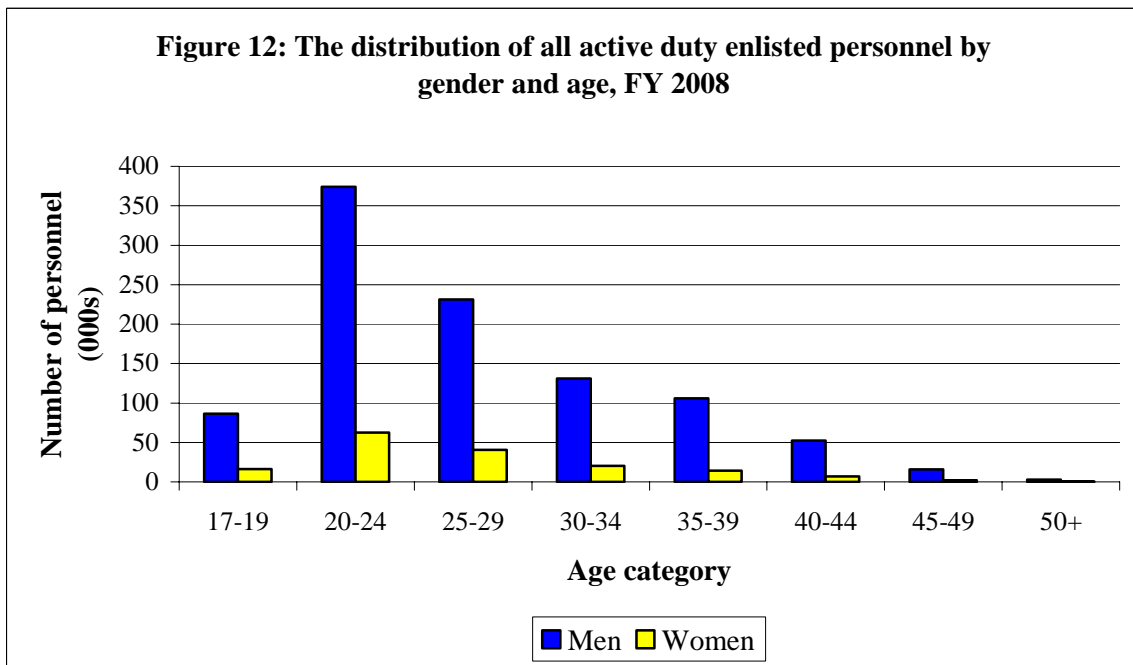
## Representation of women in the U.S. military

In this section, we look at the representation of women in both the enlisted and officer ranks of the active duty and reserve components. We provide information on their representation not only in the current forces, but also in the enlisted and officer accession cohorts in FY 2008. Finally, we discuss whether women who join the military take on different occupations from those taken on by their male counterparts. To the extent possible, we provide historical perspective by looking at the representation of women in the military services over the past 30 years.

### *Representation of women in the active duty components*

**Current enlisted members.** Figure 12 presents the distribution of the active duty enlisted force, which numbers 1.16 million, by gender and age. There are two facts:

- Enlisted personnel are overwhelmingly men. Only 14 percent of enlisted personnel in FY 2008 were women.
- The enlisted ranks are made up primarily of young people. Seventy percent of enlisted members were under the age of 30 in FY 2008.



The representation of women varies across the active duty components. Women are most represented in the Air Force (20 percent of the total enlisted force) and least represented in the Marine Corps (a little over 6 percent of the enlisted force). The percentages of women in the enlisted ranks of the Army (13 percent) and Navy (15 percent) are both very close to the overall average (14 percent) across the four DOD active components.

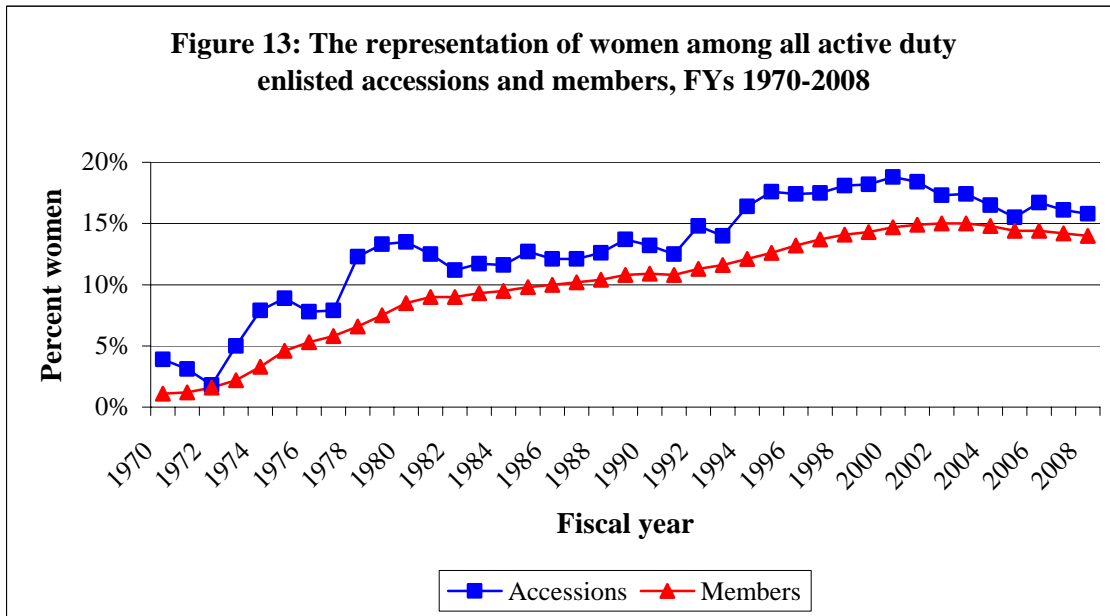
**Enlisted applicants and accessions.** In table 4, we provide numbers on the men and women who applied for enlistment and who eventually enlisted. Across the active components, roughly 19 percent of all applicants in FY 2008 were women, while women made up 16 percent of all accessions. The highest female application and accession rates were found in the Air Force, and the lowest were found in the Marine Corps. Within each active component, female applicants were less likely to access than their male counterparts. DOD-wide, roughly 54 percent of male applicants accessed, while a little over 42 percent of female applicants did the same.

**Table 4: Applicants and NPS enlisted accessions broken out by gender, FY 2008**

		<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% Women</b>
<b>Army</b>	<i>Applicants</i>	111,019	25,014	136,033	18.4%
	<i>Accessions</i>	58,060	11,285	69,345	16.3%
	<i>% who accessed</i>	52.3%	45.1%	51.0%	
<b>Navy</b>	<i>Applicants</i>	65,397	20,266	85,663	23.7%
	<i>Accessions</i>	30,772	7,179	37,941	18.9%
	<i>% who accessed</i>	47.1%	35.4%	44.3%	
<b>Marine Corps</b>	<i>Applicants</i>	56,482	4,739	61,221	7.7%
	<i>Accessions</i>	34,545	2,465	37,010	6.7%
	<i>% who accessed</i>	61.2%	52.0%	60.5%	
<b>Air Force</b>	<i>Applicants</i>	36,676	14,070	50,746	27.7%
	<i>Accessions</i>	21,476	6,262	27,738	22.6%
	<i>% who accessed</i>	58.6%	44.5%	54.7%	
<b>DOD</b>	<i>Applicants</i>	269,574	64,089	333,663	19.2%
	<i>Accessions</i>	144,853	27,191	172,044	15.8%
	<i>% who accessed</i>	53.7%	42.4%	51.6%	

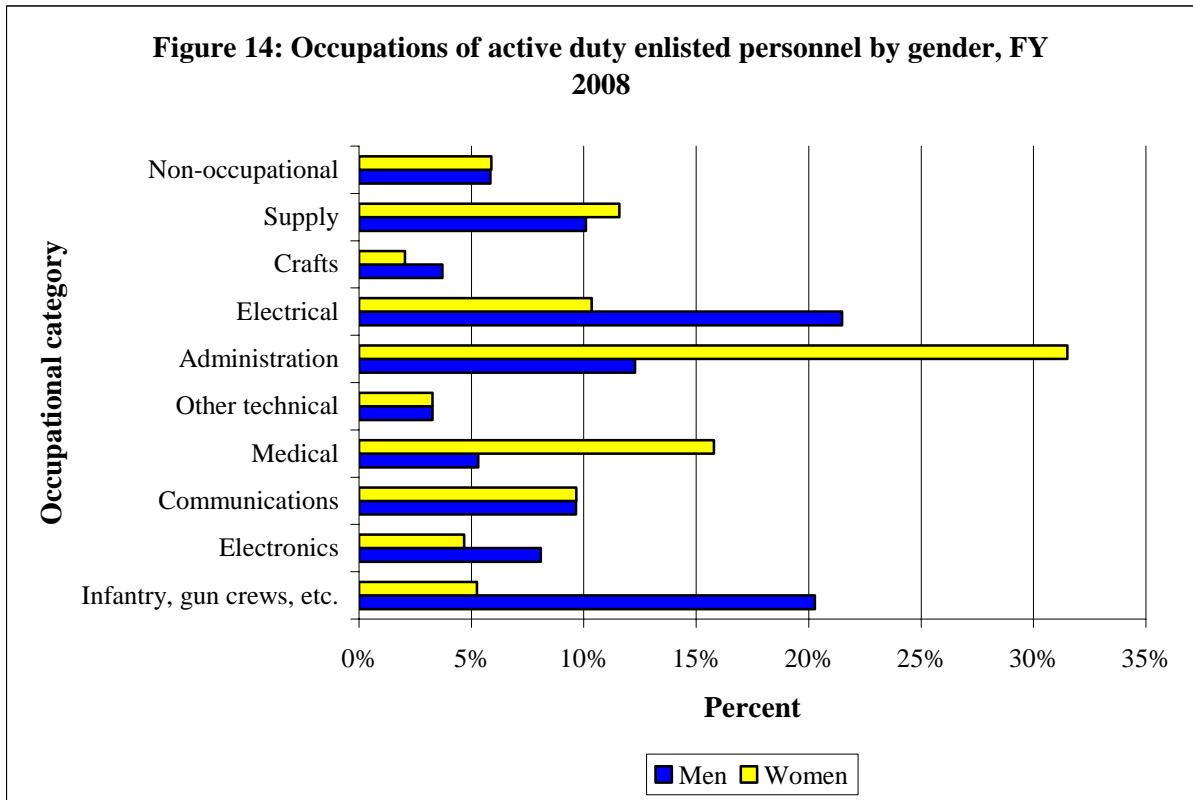
**Putting the representation of women among enlisted personnel in historical perspective.** While women make up a little more than half of the U.S. civilian population, the fact that they make up only 14 percent of active duty military enlisted members is not surprising given historical numbers. As figure 13 illustrates, women made up only about 1 percent of the total enlisted ranks in FY 1970 and the representation of women has grown considerably over the past four decades. By FY 1980 women made up 8.5 percent of all enlisted personnel and by FY 2000 they made up nearly 15 percent of the total. The representation of women in the enlisted ranks reached a peak in FYs 2002 and 2003, when 15 percent of enlisted personnel were women.

One reason for this increase in the number of women in the enlisted ranks is that they have grown to make up a greater percentage of all enlisted accessions. Before the late 1970s, women never accounted for more than 10 percent of all enlisted accessions. This changed dramatically starting in the late 1970s and by FY 2000, women accounted for nearly 19 percent of all accessions. Over the past few years, the percentage of women among enlisted members and accessions has fallen slightly, but it still remains high compared to the period prior to the late 1990s. The increases in the numbers of both accessions and current enlisted personnel reflect DOD policy to increase the number of jobs for women. Nearly 260,000 positions were opened to women in the early 1990s including positions in combat aviation and on board combatant Navy vessels, among others. Currently, over 80 percent of all positions are open to women.



**Gender differences in jobs performed while in the enlisted ranks.** As figure 14 illustrates, men and women typically take on different occupations while serving in the active duty enlisted ranks. The most common jobs for women are in administration (32 percent), health care (16 percent), and supply operations (12 percent). The most common

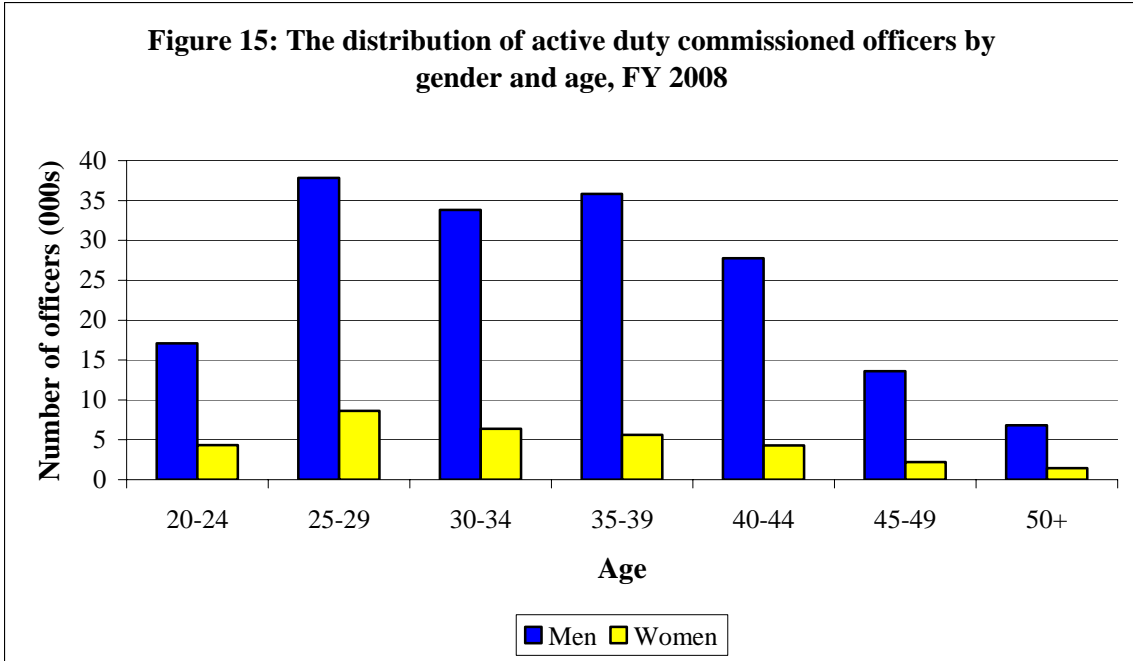
occupations for men are in electrical (22 percent), combat operations (20 percent), and administration (12 percent).



**Current commissioned officers.** Figure 15 presents the distribution of active duty officers by gender and age. Commissioned officers, as a group, tend to be older than their enlisted counterparts. Roughly one-third of officers are in their twenties, 40 percent are in their thirties, and a little over one-quarter of them are aged forty and older. Women make up 16 percent of the total officer corps, and they are more heavily represented in the younger cohorts. For instance, women account for 19 percent of all officers under the age of 30, 14.7 percent of all officers aged 30 to 39, and 14 percent of all officers aged 40 and older.

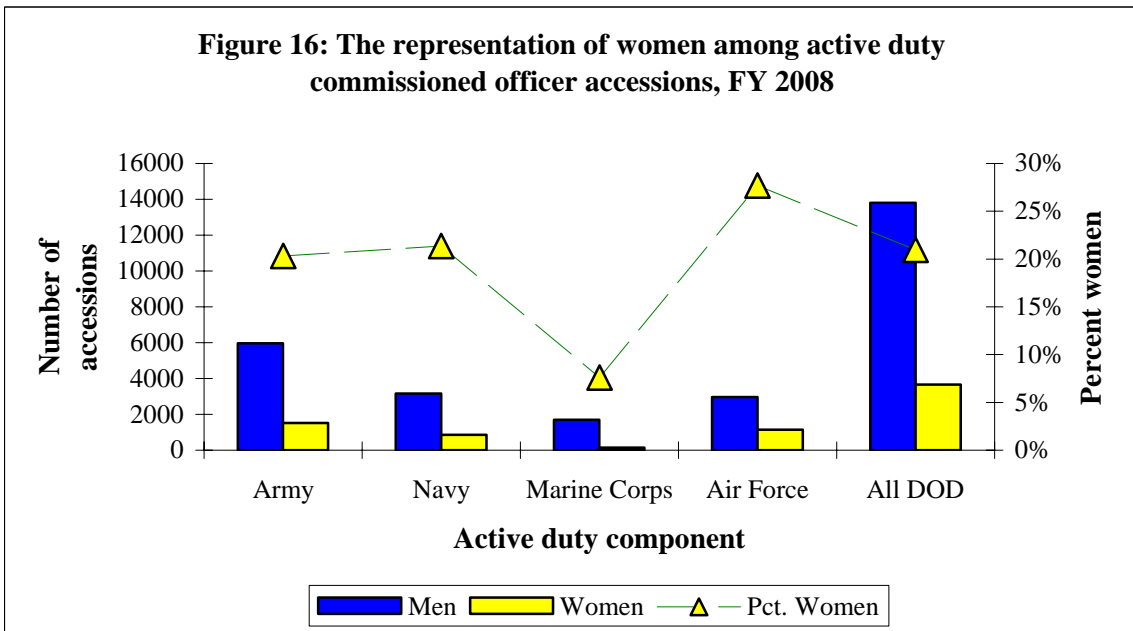
There is a good deal of variation in the representation of women across the active components. The component with the most women on a percentage basis is the Air Force, where women account for 18.3 percent of all commissioned officers. The component with the fewest women on a percentage basis is the Marine Corps, where women account for 5.9 percent of all commissioned officers. In the Army, women account for nearly 17 percent of officers, and in the Navy, women account for roughly 15.5 percent.

**Figure 15: The distribution of active duty commissioned officers by gender and age, FY 2008**

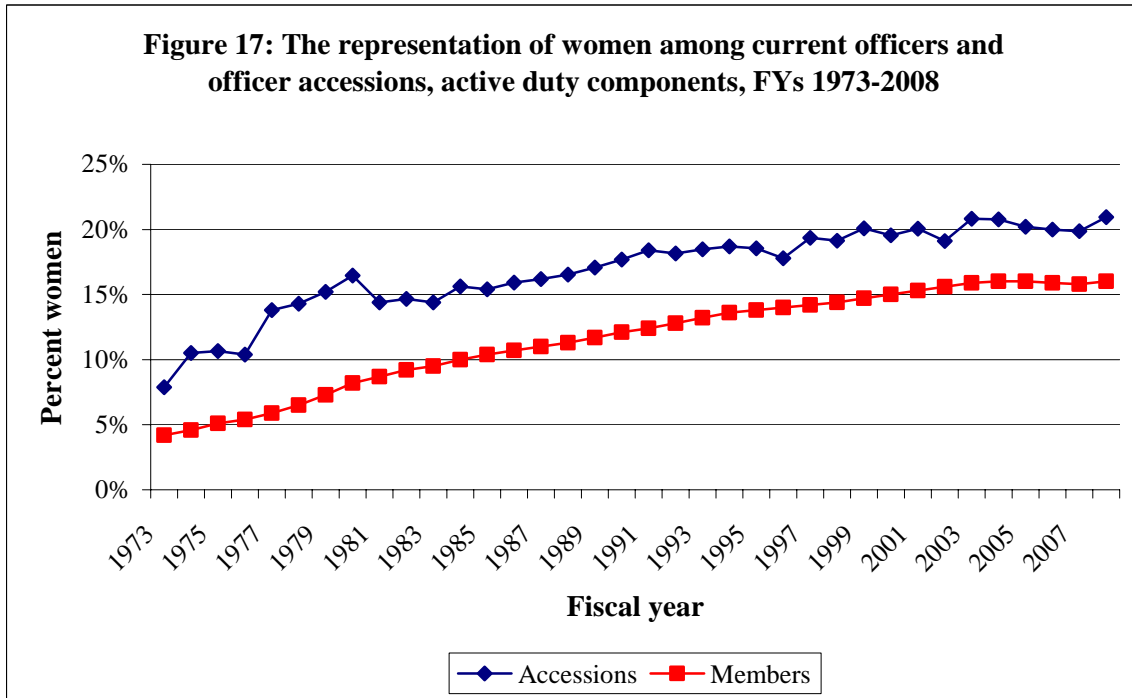


**Officer accessions.** Figure 16 depicts the numbers of accessions for each of the four active components broken out by gender. Roughly 21 percent of all active duty officer accessions in FY 2008 were women. Again there is a fair amount of variation in the representation of women across the components. Women account for over one-quarter of all officer accessions in the Air Force, but fewer than 8 percent of all officer accessions in the Marine Corps. The numbers for the Army and the Navy were very close to the DOD-wide average of 21 percent.

**Figure 16: The representation of women among active duty commissioned officer accessions, FY 2008**

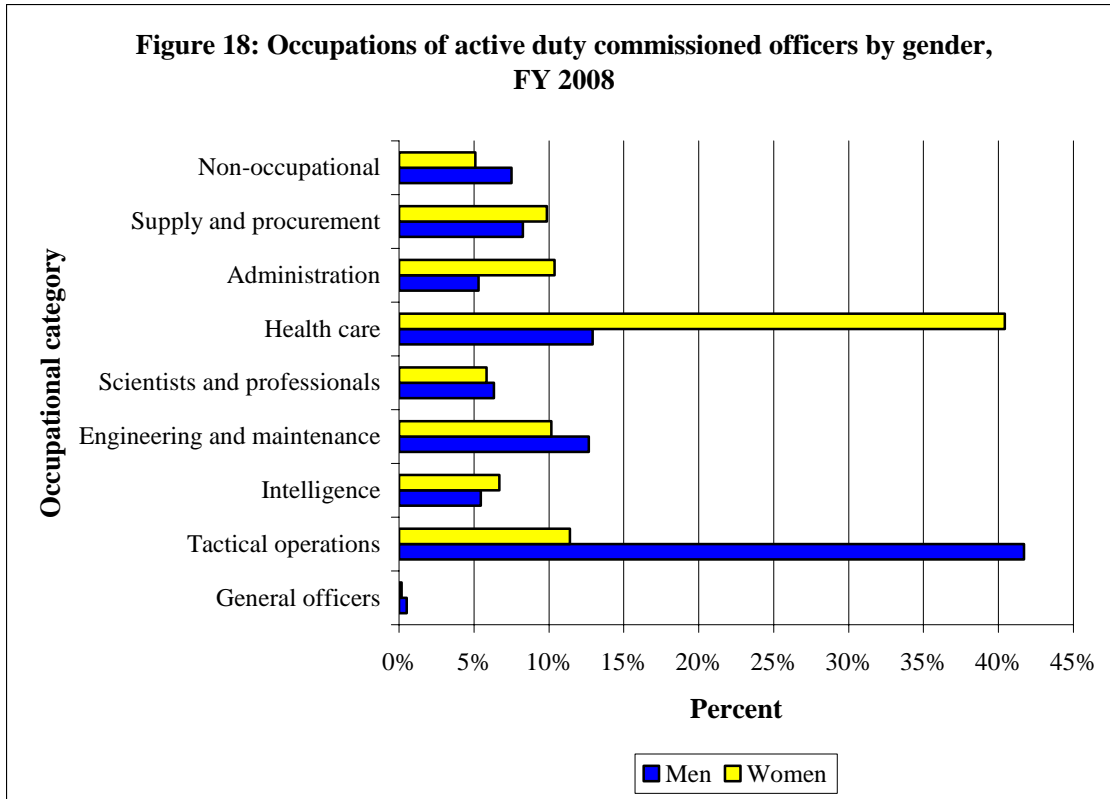


**Putting the representation of women among commissioned officers in historical perspective.** If we look at how the representation of women has evolved over the past 35 years, we see that the active duty components have made significant progress in attracting women and employing them as productive members of their officer corps. Figure 17 illustrates how the representation of women has grown since FY 1973 among both current officers and officer accessions.



In the early 1970s, women made up less than 5 percent of the total population of active duty commissioned officers. Since then, the number has grown steadily to the point where women now make up 16 percent of all officers. This is the highest it has ever been. As far as accessions are concerned, the general trend is toward a greater representation of women in the future officer corps.

**Gender differences in jobs performed while in the officer corps.** As figure 18 illustrates, men and women typically take on different roles while they are serving as active duty commissioned officers. Women are most heavily represented in health care services (40 percent), while men are most heavily represented in tactical operations or war fighting (42 percent). Otherwise, women are more likely than men to work as administrators or in procurement activities and less likely to work in engineering and maintenance operations.



***Representation of women in the reserve components***

**Enlisted members and gains.** Figure 19 presents the distribution of reserve enlisted members by gender and age for FY 2008. Across the six selected reserve components, women made up approximately 18 percent of all enlisted personnel. As in the active components, there was a good deal of variation across the reserve components. Women made up roughly one-quarter of all enlisted members in the USAR and USAFR, while they made up 5 percent of all such members in the USMCR. Compared to the active components, a greater percentage of enlisted personnel in the reserve components are over the age of 30 (45 percent compared to 30 percent).

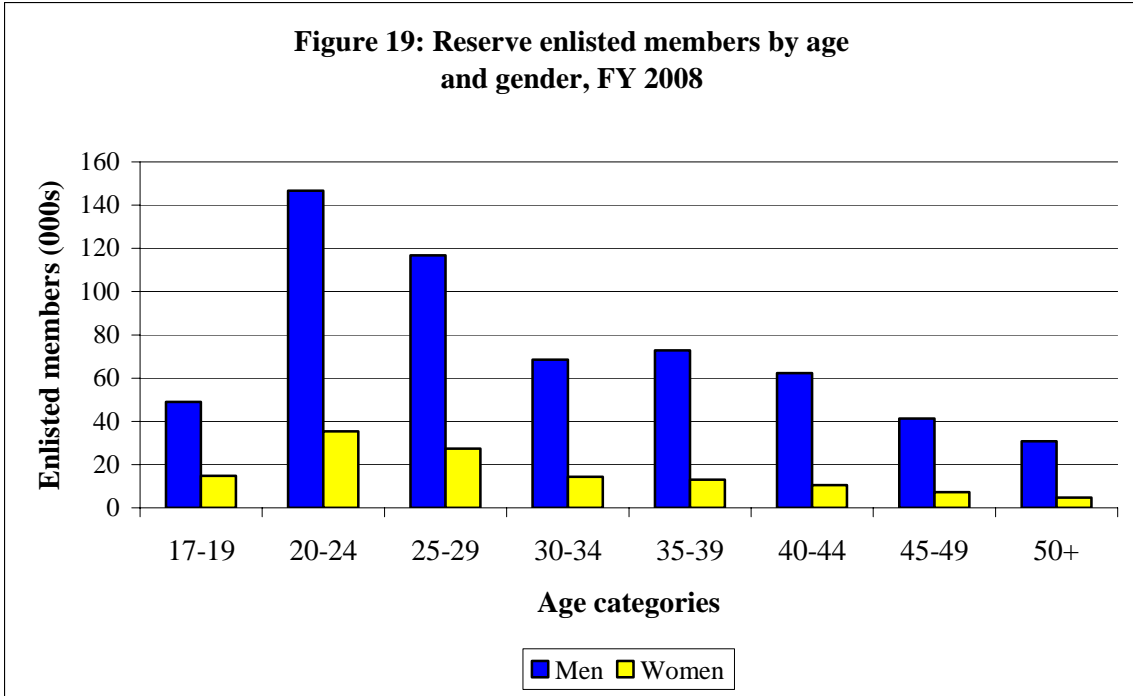
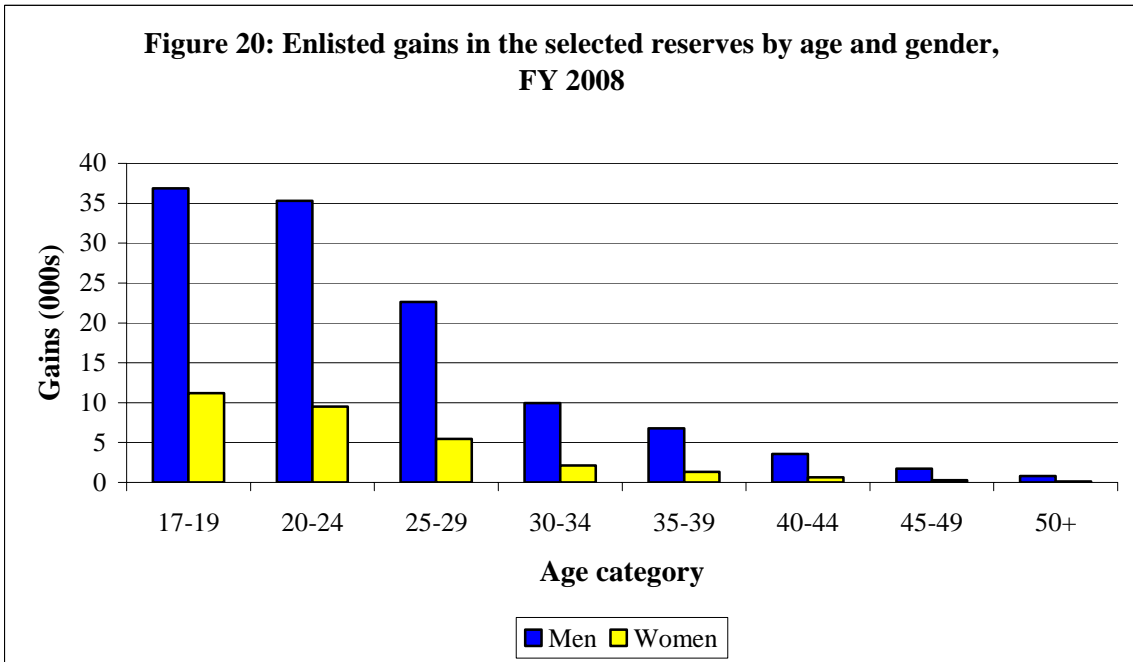


Figure 20 presents the distribution of reserve enlisted gains by gender and age for FY 2008. These gains include both NPS and PS recruits. Not surprisingly, the enlisted gains were generally very young; nearly two-thirds of them were under 25 years of age. Across the reserve components, women comprised 22.8 percent of the NPS gains, 18.1 percent of the PS gains, and 20.7 percent of all enlisted gains combined.





There was variation across the different reserve components. Women accounted for 30 percent of all enlisted gains in the USAFR and one-quarter of all gains in the USAR, while they made up 5.5 percent of all gains in the USMCR.

**Commissioned officers and gains.** Figure 21 illustrates the representation of women in the current officer corps and among officer gains for each of six select reserve components in FY 2008. These numbers are very similar to those for the enlisted ranks. Women account for 18.6 percent of all reserve officers and they are most heavily represented in the USAFR and USAR and least heavily represented in the USMCR. Women also accounted for 20.6 percent of all reserve officer gains in FY 2008. Again, the USAFR had the most women as a percentage of all officer gains, while the USMCR had the fewest women as a percentage of all officer gains.

