



ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1500 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1500

**MANPOWER AND
RESERVE AFFAIRS**

Colonel Seana M. Jardin
Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services
4800 Mark Center Drive
Suite 04J25-01
Alexandria, VA 22350

Dear COL Jardin:

Thank you for your January 18, 2023, email requesting information ahead of the Committee's March 21-22 meeting. Enclosed are responses to the two requests for information related to women's propensity to serve.

Thank you for your continued support for women in the Military Services. My point of contact for this matter is Ms. Stephanie Miller who may be reached by phone at (703) 697-8444 or by email at stephanie.p.miller.civ@mail.mil.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Constable", is written over a horizontal line.

Thomas A. Constable
Acting

Enclosure:
As stated

RFI #2:

In 2020, the Committee made the following recommendation: “The Secretary of Defense should increase oversight and assess the effectiveness and scale of outreach programs with the objective of directing new programs and/or adjusting the purpose of existing programs to positively impact adolescent women’s propensity for military service.” In December 2022, via RFI 1, the Committee received a briefing from the Defense Department’s Outreach, Policy & Programs (Civil-Military Programs) Office on youth outreach programs (e.g., DoD STARBASE); however, the Civil-Military Programs Office is not responsible for improving the propensity of adolescent women to serve.

The Committee requests a written response from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)) which identifies the office with primary responsibility to promote adolescent women’s propensity to serve in the military.

Response:

The JAMRS program tracks propensity of youth ages 16 to 24, currently propensity for military service among female youth ages 16 to 24 is 8% and 9% among female youth ages 16 to 19.

In so far as being responsible for improving the propensity of women (adolescent or otherwise), there is no one DoD office solely responsible for growing propensity among American youth. Analysis indicates positive youth programs at the OSD and Service level enhance the Department’s ability to connect with youth from all communities. Additionally, these programs help bridge the civil-military divide by sharing the positive experiences associated with the military with educators, families, and other influencer of today’s youth. Growing interest among the female market requires focusing on key drivers of propensity such as relatability, efficacy, and lifestyle associations. Generally, strong community outreach activities coupled with sustained marketing and advertising (broadly or with an emphasis on women) are expected to move consideration for service and in turn, propensity. However, the market as a whole is challenging and therefore growing propensity, for women or otherwise, is anticipated to take time.

RFI # 3:

The Committee is concerned about the inability of the Military Services to meet their annual recruiting goals and the continued underrepresentation of women in the Armed Forces. In March 2020, the Congressional National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service published a report, Inspired to Serve, which included a number of recommendations to help encourage a new generation of Americans to serve.

The Committee requests a written response from USD(P&R) on the following:

a. Has the Defense Department taken steps to implement any of the military specific recommendations contained in the "Military Service" section of the Commission’s report (pages 8-9)?

b. Please describe the steps taken to specifically inspire young women to serve, based on the Commission’s military recommendations.

The “Military Service” section of the report on pages 8-9 has five distinct recommendations. Below are the recommendations and our responses.

Recommendation 1: Improve military outreach around the country.

“Expanded community building efforts, including greater access to military bases and facilities via public tours, partnerships between National Guard and Reserve units and local schools, and enhanced promotion of military service by Members of Congress, will significantly increase engagement between the military and the broader American public, shatter myths, and provide a new generation of Americans with firsthand information about military life.”

Response:

The Services, and the Department, have worked to improve and expand military outreach efforts around the country. Each is designed to help dispel inaccurate myths and to share the numerous opportunities and benefits of Service. Unfortunately, the Department’s and Service outreach efforts were severely curtailed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Only recently, have the Department, and the Services, returned to more robust outreach programs. These programs foster and further good relations with communities at home and abroad, provide opportunities for the military to connect with the American people, highlight the missions and capabilities while also showcasing the talents of DoD people, both military and civilians.

The Department recognizes the value of these outreach programs and their ability to address the disconnected market that does not identify with the Military, reorienting the increasingly negative perceptions that the youth market has about military service, and overturning the general disinterest in the military. Grassroot efforts at base level has yielded positive outcomes. The Services are starting to reopen their bases to the community to showcase the training and capabilities of service members. For example, during a recent educator orientation visit of school officials and students at Fort Drum, the visitors all noted they were unaware of how extensive the experience, leadership and training was for all the soldiers they met.

Additionally, to help address the disconnect and misperceptions regarding the military, the Military Services continue to expand partnerships with specific organizations with a focus of providing greater visibility of the military across the Nation, including rural, isolated, and native communities. For example, many of the Services partner with organizations such as *Kiwanis, Boys & Girls Club of America, Women in Aviation, Girl Scouts, Society of Women Engineers, Society of Women Engineers, US Naval Sea Cadet Corps; Wonder Women Tech Foundation, Girls Who Code, STEM Connector*, to educate both influencers and female youth about the advantages of military service. Other key partnerships that support better community engagement include *Hispanic Heritage Foundation, Historical Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, League of United Latin American Citizens National Education Service Centers, 100 Black Men of America, NASSP (National Principals*

Conference), and National School Board Association, American Indian Science and Engineering Society, as well as women focused groups including Wonder Women Tech Foundation, Girls Who Code, STEM Connector, and Women in Aviation. The Department of the Air Force (DAF) utilizes partnership with industry and organizations to reach STEM-minded personnel. DAF currently has multiple STEM-specific partnerships that allows for strategic messaging to their target audience: FIRST Robotics, Major League Hacking, 4H, USA Science and Engineering, Skills USA, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals, Women in Aviation, American Institution of Aeronautics and Astronautics, and Space Camp. Additional efforts to reach diverse applicant pools includes advertising and marketing to other key partners including the University Partnership Program (UPP), premier College Intern Program (PCIP), and the first-ever DAF University Affiliated Research Center (UARC).

Recommendation 2: Increase opportunities for youth to explore service.

“Expanding Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (JROTC) and other youth programs, along with promoting administration of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) Career Exploration Program—currently taken by less than 5 percent of U.S. secondary students—will enable more students to learn about citizenship and service, gain familiarity with the military, and understand how their own strengths could translate into.”

Response:

The Services, and the Department, continue to work these programs to assist more students in learning about the military and how they could benefit from serving.

JROTC and other Department youth and community outreach efforts remain an essential part of the DoD effort to improve the quality of our nation’s youth. These programs instill in students the values of citizenship, service to country, personal responsibility and a sense of accomplishment. These collective efforts generate positive awareness of public service and ultimately contribute increasing high school graduation rates. Currently the Secretaries of the Military Departments have the authority to increase JROTC programs by another 285 partner schools before the statutory ceiling of 3700 is reached.

JROTC continues to have strong representation among schools with demographically diverse populations and is well represented among public high schools with minority populations and 42% female participation. JROTC is strongly represented in schools serving economically disadvantaged populations, whether measured by Title I eligibility or free and reduced-price lunch program participation.

Programs such as DOD STARBASE has seen significant growth across the country in recent years due to Congressional support ,serving 83 program locations currently. The DoD STARBASE curriculum is designed to increase the students’ involvement and interest in STEM activities, enhance their understanding of the role that STEM literacy plays in their lives, strengthen potential for future careers, and make the pursuit of STEM activities more attractive and

accessible. It also contains the presentation of accurate scientific information, which promotes the development of STEM skills, knowledge, and practices, thereby supporting the Federal goals of a learning investment.

In FY 2022, the DoD STARBASE program conducted 3,562 classes serving 1,558 schools in 611 school districts across the United States, Guam and Puerto Rico. During FY 2022, 79,618 students attended the 5-day program with an additional 9,235 students participating in supplemental programs during FY 2022 with 49% female participation. Since 1993, there have been 1,569,773 students served.

The ASVAB CEP (Career Exploration Program) is a free career planning program designed for students in grades 10-12, and first- and second-year post-secondary. Participation is voluntary. The program is designed to provide recruiting leads and support education and career counseling for students as they develop career decision-making skills and consider post-secondary education options. One of the main benefits to school participation in the ASVAB CEP is the ability to meet certain federal regulations free of charge. Specifically, schools are able to use ASVAB CEP to meet Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements by providing career awareness, exploration activities, and assess career readiness. In School Year (SY) 21/22, ASVAB CEP administered roughly 600,000 tests at almost 13,000 schools. Prior to COVID, program participation was almost 800,000 at approximately 14,000 schools. The program is on track to continue increased throughput in SY 22/23 and return to pre-COVID numbers.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen military recruiting and marketing.

“Greater investment of recruiting resources in underrepresented markets and hometown-recruiting programs, in combination with new funding mechanisms for marketing, will help the military in meeting its recruiting goals while improving the geographic and demographic balance of the Armed Forces to better reflect the diversity of the Nation.”

Response:

The Services, and the Department, have made substantial investments in recruiting. These investments enhance overall recruiting efforts but also have a significant impact on reaching underrepresented markets. These efforts have helped to ensure we recruit a diverse force.

In response to a December 2020 report, “DoD Board on Diversity and Inclusion Report: Recommendations to Improve Racial and Ethnic Diversity and Inclusion in the U.S. Military” published by the Department’s Department of Defense Board on Diversity and Inclusion Office, the Services evaluated campaign and media content in terms of reach based on race, ethnicity, gender, geography, and socio-economic background to ensure a broad audience was represented. This marketing content review was completed in June 2021. Considered a best practice, the Services continue to analyze their creative material ensuring the campaigns are inclusive and clearly reflect diversity in marketing images and videos, to include casting guidance for all major production. In addition to ensuring their advertising and marketing

programs are appropriately resourced, these ongoing assessments ensure Service messaging has optimized representation across all diverse communities.

With today's youth and influencers receiving less information from traditional sources due to the fragmented nature of communications, the Services are now messaging across a myriad of social media platforms as well as traditional sources. To maximize the impact of their marketing efforts and resources, the Services have shifted their marketing and advertising strategies with the expanded use of new technologies and media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram). Shifting messaging to be more tailored and focused enables the Services to better reach their intended audiences. These niche campaigns are executed for maximum reach and efficiency utilizing paid media (TV, digital), social media, direct marketing, earned media (public relations) and community events to generate awareness, engagement and recruiting leads among target populations.

The Army National Guard (ARNG) is particularly successful in marketing in local communities using a "cast a wide net" approach. This "wide net" media approach provides cost-efficient exposure to age-appropriate prospects in large numbers and who reflect a range of demographics (gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic, geography, etc.) while concurrently using a market-segment-based media approach to ensure the Guard's marketing is seen by people they want to reach. To date, this two-pronged approach has been effective in the ARNG reaching a wider-net among women and other diverse communities.

Technological advancements including using streaming platforms, podcasts, social media influencers, and expanded use of Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) support the Services efforts to drive higher awareness levels and consideration of military service among youth across diverse communities. For example, the Air Force deploys eight mobile tour assets for 45 weeks out of the year, providing over 90,000 interactive engagements to youth across the country. Collectively, these approaches are proving effective at presenting the vast opportunities the military can offer women and other diverse, and underrepresented groups.

The Services are also focused on maintaining a more representative recruiter force to better reach diverse communities. The Services recognize a representative recruiter force may be more impactful in reaching today's youth if there is a perceived personal connection through shared experiences or culture. This strategy is helping to counter common barriers to considering military service, as youth can see themselves as a military member. Other initiatives, including home-town recruiting, are proving successful in addressing how the community and general populace views the military.

Recommendation 4: Strengthen and expand educational pathways for military service.

"Additional support for students pursuing certain degrees, certificates, and certifications through technical or vocational programs—such as those offered by two-year colleges and trade schools—in return for an enlisted service commitment will help the military services attract

individuals with much-needed skillsets and enhance recruiting of Americans who seek to develop specific capabilities.”

Response:

The Services recruit and train their own to meet their specific Service requirements. It is beneficial to recognize the quality of military training by providing certificates and certification that will be recognized nationally. In some cases, the Services have been able to link military training to corresponding occupational certifications. In other cases, the legal implications and the logistics of deploying this type of program have been explored in the past and have proven to either be too challenging or the ROI was not expected to worth the investments.

Recommendation 5: Effectively manage military personnel.

“Enabling greater movement between all components of military service and between military service and the private sector—facilitated by recently enacted personnel management authorities and expanded use of warrant officers—will offer the services a more effective approach to continual access to individuals with key skills, such as digital talent or engineering.”

Response:

The Services have streamlined the process to allow transfers among components for qualified individuals. The approved authority to allow the Services to directly hire from the private sector has been explored and will be used where appropriate.

Prepared by: OASD(M&RA)
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