



Dædalus

Journal of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences

Summer 2011

The
Modern
American
Military

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Manning & Financing the Twenty-First-Century All-Volunteer Force

Lawrence J. Korb & David R. Segal

Abstract: The transition from a conscription-based to a volunteer force after 1973 required a force of reduced size that could compete financially with the civilian labor market. To compensate for these changes, the Department of Defense took three steps: developing the Total Force, which integrated the reserve component with active duty; maintaining the Selective Service System, which could be activated in case of prolonged and manpower-intensive conflict; and civilianizing as many support functions as possible. Despite this original blueprint, political pressures prevented military and civilian leadership from activating the Selective Service after it became apparent that the Bush administration's national security strategy in Iraq and Afghanistan required prolonged, large-scale deployments. The result has been enormous physical and psychological strain on personnel, especially in the Army and reserve components; diminishing standards for the quality of recruits; and severe financial strain related to pay raises, retention bonuses, retirement, and health care benefits.

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In 1973, in the wake of the Vietnam War, the United States transitioned from a conscription-based military to an all-volunteer force (AVF).¹ Faced with new challenges of cost and recruitment, the military substantially reduced the size of its active forces, particularly the Army. Previously, the Selective Service System had made accessing the required number of entry-level military personnel relatively easy. The system drafted young men who frequently served simply to comply with the law and motivated others to volunteer for service to avoid being drafted. Once the draft ended, attracting the requisite number of qualified recruits each year became much more difficult. Now subject to the dynamics of the labor market, the military confronted competition from other employers, especially in times of low unemployment, and from institutions of higher education, as increasing numbers of young men and women attended college. Thus, the force had to be downsized.

Except for brief periods during the twenty-five years of Cold War conscription, the Army was the

only service that had to rely on the draft to fill its ranks. The other three services met their quotas with draft-induced volunteers; indeed, many men “volunteered” for the Air Force, Navy, or Marines to avoid being drafted into the Army. By volunteering, they gained some control over when they served, in what service, and, frequently, in what occupational specialty they would be trained. In the absence of conscription, the services lost both draftees and draft-motivated volunteers.

As the military began to downsize after the end of conscription and the Cold War in Europe, the demography of the force also started to change, in both composition and patterns of utilization. The young, predominantly unmarried male conscription force was replaced by an older, more professional, more likely to be married force. It became more diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation.² President Nixon’s Commission on an All-Volunteer Force (the Gates Commission), which drafted the initial blueprint for the volunteer force, had assumed that the end of the draft would not alter racial composition and made virtually no mention of women in uniform.³ In fact, with the end of conscription, the military immediately began to recruit disproportionately from the African American community. In the early years of the AVF, more than one-quarter of new recruits, and in some years, as many as one-third of new recruits in the Army, were black. Moreover, black service members have been more likely than white soldiers to reenlist; thus, the proportion of African Americans in the force increased. In 2006, 12.6 percent of the civilian labor force aged eighteen to forty-four was African American, compared to 19.3 percent of active-duty enlisted personnel.⁴

Although Hispanics were too few to be regarded as a significant recruitment pool in 1973, changes in the past two decades

in the percentage of Hispanic men and women in the U.S. military have been dramatic, with rates more than doubling in the last twenty years. Not only is the Hispanic population larger, but the fraction of Hispanics who meet entrance exam and education requirements for military service has increased. In 1985, less than 4 percent of the enlisted force was Hispanic, compared to almost 7 percent of the civilian labor force, aged eighteen to forty-four, that identified as Hispanic.

By 1994, less than 6 percent of enlisted personnel were Hispanic, while the civilian proportion of Hispanics had grown to more than 10 percent of the total U.S. population. As of FY 2000, Hispanics made up 13 percent of the military-age civilian labor force but only 9 percent of enlisted personnel. In 2006, though the civilian labor force was 17.1 percent Hispanic, only 12.8 percent of the enlisted force identified as Hispanic. (Table 1 shows the shares of black and Hispanic military personnel in recent years.)⁵

Representation of Hispanics in the military has not kept pace with the rise in Hispanic eighteen to forty-four year olds in the civilian labor force. However, the civilian figure includes men and women who do not meet requirements for enlistment based on education and immigration status. Until recently, enlistees had to have a high school degree; almost all enlisted personnel (99 percent) in FY 2001 were either high school graduates or had earned a comparable credential, such as a General Education Development certificate (GED), with the services considering graduation more favorable than a GED. Until recently, enlistment also required that immigrants be citizens or legal permanent residents. Using these qualifications to determine the eligible Hispanic population, Hispanics may have actually been overrepresented among enlisted personnel. For instance, in 2006, the share of

Table 1

Percent of Black and Hispanic Representation among Nonprior-Service Military Accessions, 2003 to 2008

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	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Black	15.0	13.5	13.1	13.0	13.6	15.0
Hispanic	11.5	13.2	13.9	13.3	13.5	14.3

Source: David J. Armor and Curtis L. Gilroy, "Changing Minority Representation in the U.S. Military," *Armed Forces & Society* 36 (2) (2010): 242.

Hispanics in the civilian labor force aged eighteen to forty-four with at least a high school degree was 10.9 percent, compared to 11.2 percent of active-duty enlisted personnel. Given that not all high school graduates are citizens or even legal immigrants, Hispanics most likely are enlisting and remaining in the military at rates greater than their share of those in the labor force who meet the minimum qualifications for service.

With regard to gender, military service in most countries and throughout much of history has been viewed as a masculine occupation. Women have been excluded entirely, or have served with an auxiliary status or in segregated branches. They have faced restrictions on the highest rank they can achieve and the military occupations they can pursue.⁶ The culture of the American military is still predominantly masculine, and although women compose half of the American labor force, they remain a minority in the military. However, as has been the case in other countries that have substituted volunteer forces for conscription, as the size of the military has contracted, the proportion women represent has increased.⁷ At the beginning of the current volunteer force, women composed about 2 percent of military personnel; they now make up 14 percent.

Legal and regulatory changes have also opened new occupations to women. In 1991, Congress repealed the provisions of a 1948 law that prohibited women from flying combat aircraft; since 1994, women have been allowed to serve on Navy surface combatant ships. Moreover, the Navy is now training the first cohort of women officers who will serve on submarines. Although occupations and positions that involve direct offensive ground combat have remained closed to women, in both Iraq and Afghanistan, military women have been attached (but not assigned) to ground combat units. Given that male American soldiers cannot search or interrogate Muslim women without greatly offending cultural and religious sensitivities, women have filled an important role in a population whose support we are trying to win.

Thus, the transition from conscription to a volunteer force shaped by the dynamics of the labor market led to a reduction in the size of the force as well as increased recruitment among segments of the population that were relatively disadvantaged in the civilian market.

To compensate for the smaller size of the active force, the Department of Defense (DOD) took three steps. First, it developed

the Total Force concept to integrate the reserve component (the state-based National Guard and the federal reserves) with the active-duty component in those areas where the reserves had unique capabilities that were not needed on a full-time basis, such as civil affairs. During the draft period, reservists were only marginally involved in contingency planning and did not receive the equipment and training necessary to maintain the proper level of readiness for deployment. Thus, the reserve components played a very minor part in the Vietnam War.

This arrangement also minimized the role of Congress, which must authorize long-term or large-scale reserve mobilizations, in Vietnam. But when the DOD transitioned to the AVF, the reserves were fully integrated into the Pentagon's war plans and, for the most part, were given the training and equipment necessary to carry out their new responsibilities. Beginning in 1973, the DOD no longer planned for separate active-duty and reserve components. Instead, it stipulated that a Total Force would be maintained at an appropriate level of readiness so that its reserve component could be mobilized quickly and effectively. In the context of the Cold War, the AVF was intended to be a deterrent force, albeit one that was prepared to address small-scale military contingencies. During the first, relatively short Gulf War, for example, the Army had to mobilize some National Guard combat brigades and some reserve combat support units to carry out its mission, although none of these units served more than six months on active duty.

While some analysts have argued that having to mobilize some reserve components (as part of what is mistakenly called the Abrams Doctrine) would weaken the president's ability to engage in a large or extended conflict, this potential outcome was not the major impetus for the creators

of the AVF or the Total Force. Moreover, once conscription was ended, men and women who joined the reserve component were also volunteers. Therefore, mobilizing the reserve has not had a significant impact on the willingness of Congress or the American people to raise the threshold for going to war, as was the case during Vietnam, when many men, including future leaders of the country, joined the reserves to avoid the draft.

Second, to prepare for a long war or an extended or major conflict, the country still required men to register with the Selective Service when they turned eighteen. Thus, if the Total Force could not handle a particular contingency by itself or without putting undue stress on the Total Force, the president and Congress could quickly activate the Selective Service. Put differently, in case of a significant conflict, the Guard and reserve would be a bridge to conscription. The reserve components would serve as pre-trained citizen-soldiers, to be mobilized in order to buy time while the conscripts who would join the other components of the Total Force on the battlefield were being trained. Thus, if the nation became involved in a war resembling Korea or Vietnam, which would require maintaining a significant number of troops on the ground for a prolonged period in a war or combat zone, the Selective Service would be engaged so that the active-duty volunteers would be able to spend at least two months at home for every month they spent in a combat zone (as was the case during the ten-year war in Vietnam). Moreover, the National Guard and reserve personnel would not have to be mobilized more than one year out of every six. Not only would this arrangement ease the strain on the troops, but it would prevent the ground forces from having to lower their standards to meet recruiting and retention goals in prolonged conflicts – a necessary step, given that

Americans tend to become impatient and less supportive when wars drag on.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) made the point forcefully in 1981 when the Reagan administration was on the verge of reversing President Carter's action to reinstitute draft registration, which had been temporarily suspended between 1975 and 1980. In a memo to the secretary of defense, the JCS stated, "The AVF provides peacetime manpower." In their view, "Selective Service registration supports mobilization for war."⁸

Third, to allow the now more costly military personnel to focus on their core missions and competencies, the Pentagon would privatize, civilianize, or contract out as many support functions as possible. New recruits would no longer be required to perform such nonmilitary tasks as cooking and cleaning (KP, or "kitchen police," as it was then known). The use of civilians has been part of the American way of waging war since before the Civil War.⁹ However, the downsizing of the military, coupled with the increase in the number of U.S. missions and deployments in the wake of the Cold War resolution in Europe, has resulted in an unprecedented number of civilians supporting the active-duty military, including in the battle space.¹⁰

After 1973, if the Pentagon had a task to be performed, it would look first to private contractors, as long as doing so did not compromise national security. If the job was an inherently governmental function, the DOD would assign it to a civilian government employee. If it required a military person, the DOD would recruit a member of the reserve component. Using active-duty military personnel would be a last resort; indeed, recruiting and retaining AVF members were much more costly and difficult than outsourcing tasks to members of the private sector, civilians, or the reserve component.

After a bumpy start that led many civilian and military leaders to call for a return to the draft, the AVF came into its own in the mid-1980s. The force performed so well in the first Persian Gulf War in 1991 that many who had been skeptical about ending the draft became convinced that the AVF was the best model for the United States. Moreover, when the Cold War ended in Europe in the early 1990s, the military was able to reduce the size of the active force from 2.2 million to 1.3 million, or by 40 percent, and thus meet its recruitment and retention goals at a comparatively low cost during a period of low unemployment and an economic boom in the private sector. Between FY 1990 and FY 1999, the cost of maintaining military personnel declined by \$31 billion, or 26 percent, in real dollars.

The second reason for the reduction in active-duty forces was that, in order to compete in the marketplace for personnel, the military had to substantially raise basic pay, particularly for new recruits. From 1948 to 1973, when the draft was in existence, the Pentagon could pay those individuals it compelled to serve only subsistence wages. In FY 1968, the average pay of an individual on active duty was \$5,780. With 3.4 million people on active duty in that year (the peak year for the size of the force), the total cost of military personnel for military annual compensation (basic pay and benefits) was \$19.9 billion. By 1974, the number of people on active duty had been slashed to 2.2 million, a 35 percent reduction. Yet military personnel costs had gone up. By 1974, expenses had risen to \$24.2 billion, a 22 percent jump from 1968, and the personnel portion of the budget grew from 28 to 35 percent. The cost per individual had risen to \$10,895, a 90 percent increase compared with the days of the draft. The services could not simply raise the pay of new

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service members to attract volunteers. To maintain pay equity and avoid pay compression among the ranks, basic pay was increased across the board.

However, the civilian leadership failed to use the period from the end of the Cold War to 9/11 to bring military pay and benefits under control. In fact, senior officials took steps or allowed policies to be adopted that made the force more expensive. One of the major military personnel expenses, the military retirement system, was designed in an era when active-duty pay was comparatively low, very few people served on active duty until retirement, and Social Security and Medicare did not exist. Nor was life expectancy very high. Until 1986, the system allowed a person who spent twenty years on active duty to receive an immediate annuity of 50 percent of his or her base pay, indexed to inflation, and free medical care (including for dependents) for life. A member who served for at least thirty years would receive 75 percent. Most military personnel did not serve long enough to earn retirement. In the 1980s and early 1990s, fewer than 10 percent of separations were retirements, with most people leaving because they had completed contractual periods of service, or for disciplinary, medical, or other reasons. However, in 1993, after twenty years of the AVF, the retirement figure reached 15 percent of separations, showing that while most people did not serve for a full career, the size of the career force had grown significantly. And with increased longevity, the people who served for a career were likely to draw retirement pay for more years than they served active duty. Enlisted personnel who joined at age eighteen could start drawing retirement pay at thirty-eight, while officers, who were likely to have been commissioned upon graduation from college at age twenty-two, could draw retired pay at age forty-two. Moreover, retirements are

not equally distributed among the services. The Marine Corps, which places a premium on youth, prefers the great majority of its personnel to serve for less than ten years. The Air Force, which invests heavily in technical training, seeks to retain personnel to realize a return on its investment. Between 20 percent and 30 percent of Air Force separations have been retirements since the 1980s, and fewer than 30 percent have been simply fulfillment of enlistment contracts.

Given that neither the Pentagon nor individual service members put money into a trust fund to pay for the cost of retirement, the DOD paid these benefits off the top of each year's budget. By the 1980s, the unfunded liability of the military retirement system had grown to almost \$1 trillion, while retirement funds for civilian federal employees and social security were running surpluses because workers had to contribute to these plans. To bring this situation under control, Congress directed the DOD to switch to an accrual system and reduce benefits after twenty years of service to 40 percent, for those joining the military after August 1, 1986.

However, in 1999, under pressure from lobbyists for military retirees, the DOD reversed the decision and went back to allowing those who completed twenty years once again to receive 50 percent. At about the same time, the DOD also permitted retirees and their dependents who turned 65 to retain their medical benefits even after they became eligible for Medicare. Finally, after 1995, the DOD and Congress stopped raising premiums for the military health care program, TRICARE,¹¹ and allowed individuals to pay \$19 a month, or \$38 for a family, a rate that is still in effect.

After the attacks of 9/11, the Bush administration made preventive war the cornerstone of its national security strat-

egy to win what it labeled the “war on terror.” It invaded Afghanistan in October 2001 and Iraq in March 2003. Although the administration declared the “mission accomplished” in both theaters in Spring 2003, it became clear that the United States would have to keep hundreds of thousands of troops on the ground in both countries for a significant period of time.

How would the military provide vast ground forces within the confines of the AVF? If the Joint Chiefs had followed the original blueprint for the AVF, they would have demanded that the secretary of defense and the president activate the Selective Service, which, by 2000, had on file some twenty million men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four. But they lacked the political will to challenge their civilian superiors. Moreover, when General Eric Shinseki, the Army chief of staff, told Congress that the administration seriously underestimated the number of troops that would be needed to stabilize Iraq after the invasion, he was marginalized by his civilian superiors.

Similarly, the Bush administration’s national security team did not want to raise the issue of Selective Service with Congress and the American people for fear that they might ask more questions about the necessity and cost of regime change and nation-building in Iraq. And Congress did not want to broach the subject without support from the military or the administration.

Thus, the American military began to rely on the reserve forces to a degree not seen since World War II, but in this case without the support of conscription. It deployed both reserve and active forces more frequently, and for longer periods of time, than it knew was optimal for combat performance. It accepted more recruits at the lowest mental and moral standards deemed acceptable since the advent of the volunteer force.

The services also found that the racial and ethnic composition of the force was changing. Recruitment among African Americans, who had high propensities to serve and had been overrepresented in the volunteer force since its inception, declined. Recruitment among Hispanic Americans, who form the most rapidly growing sector of the population (but were not recognized as numerically important in 1973), increased. Women in the military, who are barred by law from assignment to small ground combat units, found that the nonlinear battle spaces of Iraq and Afghanistan placed them in combat: the highways on which they operated military vehicles became the most dangerous places to be; and they have accompanied infantry units conducting patrols in hostile territory because, unlike male soldiers, they can both search and interrogate Muslim women without offending the local population.

As a result of waging these two large ground wars, which required the deployment of about two hundred thousand troops to Iraq and Afghanistan on a continuous basis from 2003 to 2009, the civilian and military leaders overstretched and abused the active and reserve components of the AVF, particularly the ground forces. Not only did this overextension undermine the readiness of the Army and Marines, but it was a moral outrage perpetrated against the troops and their families.

To understand how much strain the failure to activate the Selective Service has put on the troops, consider the horrendous situation of the Army, which bore the brunt of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Army has reorganized so that the brigade combat team (BCT), rather than the division, has become its major maneuver unit in ground combat. A BCT consists of a combat arms brigade along with its artillery and support units and

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contains about two thousand soldiers, with some variation based on the type of combat unit at its core. In Spring 2007, at the height of the so-called surge in Iraq, the Army had twenty of its forty-four combat brigades on the ground in either Iraq or Afghanistan.

Of these twenty brigades, nine were already on second tours, seven were serving a third tour, and two were on a fourth deployment of at least twelve months. Moreover, of the twenty-four brigades not deployed in Spring 2007, ten had already been deployed for two tours, and three had been deployed three times in the previous five years.¹²

Of the twenty brigades in Iraq or Afghanistan in Spring 2007, none had been back home for a full two years between deployments – the time period regarded as optimal for recovery from combat – and four had one year or less at home between combat tours. Of the twenty-four brigades not in theater, eleven had less than two years between deployments, and five had less than one year. Moreover, ten of the brigades had served longer than one year in theater. All told, by Spring 2007, forty-three of the Army's forty-four brigades had served at least one tour (see Table 2; only the brigade in Korea was not deployed to one of the combat zones).¹³

The reserve component, which includes the National Guard and the service or federal reserves, was also severely overstretched. Fifty-three percent of the Army's combat forces are in the National Guard¹⁴; by early 2007, about 600,000 reservists had been mobilized and about 420,000, or 80 percent of the Guard and reserve, had been deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan, with an average of eighteen months per mobilization. Of these service members, about 85,000, or 20 percent, had been deployed more than once. Every one of the Army National Guard's sixteen enhanced brigades had been de-

ployed overseas at least once, and two were deployed twice. Moreover, by the end of 2007, four more enhanced brigades were sent to Iraq even though none of them had been demobilized for less than three years.¹⁵ The members of the Guard had signed up to serve as part of a strategic reserve, training one weekend a month and two weeks each summer to maintain their skills. They expected to serve primarily if needed for domestic contingencies such as natural disasters. Like their colleagues in the federal reserves, they could also serve as a strategic reserve for the active component until the Selective Service could be activated, or they could serve short tours in peacekeeping operations in places like the Balkans, or in short conflicts, such as the first Gulf War. But now they had effectively become an operational expeditionary force.

This abuse of the Total Force's Army component had severe repercussions on the service, the effects of which can be grouped into four categories. First, in order to meet its recruiting goals, the Army had to raise its recruiting budget as well as the bonuses paid to new recruits. It also had to increase the proportion of personnel it recruited at the lowest acceptable mental and moral standards for incoming soldiers. In the early years of the volunteer force, recruits were drawn largely from the middle range of the socioeconomic structure. That is, the bottom quartile was underrepresented because its members disproportionately did not qualify for service based on educational, aptitude, or legal grounds, and the upper strata disproportionately elected not to serve.¹⁶ This pattern held throughout the remainder of the twentieth century,¹⁷ a period in which the services recruited above the minimum standards set by the DOD.

From FY 2005 through FY 2008, the Army did not achieve its goal of bringing

Table 2

Deployment History of Currently Deployed U.S. Army Combat Brigades, as of Spring 2007

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Combat Brigades Serving 1st Tour	Combat Brigades Serving 2nd Tour	Combat Brigades Serving 3rd Tour	Combat Brigades Serving 4th Tour
1st Cavalry Division, 4th Brigade 2nd Infantry Division, 4th Brigade	1st Cavalry Division, 1st Brigade 1st Cavalry Division, 2nd Brigade 1st Cavalry Division, 3rd Brigade 1st Infantry Division, 2nd Brigade 1st Infantry Division, 4th Brigade 2nd Infantry Division, 2nd Brigade 2nd Infantry Division, 3rd Brigade 25th Infantry Division, 3rd Brigade 25th Infantry Division, 4th Brigade	3rd Infantry Division, 1st Brigade 3rd Infantry Division, 2nd Brigade 3rd Infantry Division, 3rd Brigade 82nd Airborne Division, 1st Brigade 82nd Airborne Division, 3rd Brigade 82nd Airborne Division, 4th Brigade 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team	10th Mountain Division, 2nd Brigade 82nd Airborne Division, 2nd Brigade

Source: Lawrence J. Korb, Peter Juul, Laura Conley, Myles Caggins, and Sean Duggan, "Building a Military for the 21st Century: New Realities, New Priorities" (Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress, 2008).

in 90 percent Tier I recruits (those with high school diplomas and who scored at least average on the Armed Forces Qualification Test). In fact, in FY 2007, it did not even reach 80 percent.¹⁸ The percentage of high school graduates recruited by the Army dropped from 92 percent in FY 2004 to 87 percent in FY 2005, and this downward trend continued.¹⁹ The Army also reported a decline in recruits scoring high on its aptitude tests, from 72 percent in FY 2004 to 67 percent in FY 2005; at the same time, it accepted more recruits in the lowest acceptable mental category.

The Army compounded the problem by increasing the number of moral waivers that it issued. In FY 2004, about 12 percent of the recruits received waivers, including for criminal convictions and even felonies. In FY 2006, the Army approved waivers for 8,219 recruits; in FY 2007, the number rose to 10,258. Waivers for felony convictions for serious crimes, such as theft and assault, increased from 249 to 511.²⁰

By FY 2008, the number of waivers exceeded 25 percent. All told, the Army gave eighty thousand moral waivers in the FY 2005 to FY 2008 period. Even though it

lowered its standards and increased waivers, the Army had to increase its maximum enlistment bonus from \$6,000 in FY 2003 to \$40,000 by FY 2008.²¹ Recruit quality improved toward the end of the decade, as unemployment, particularly among young people, increased dramatically with the economic recession. As the economy improves, and as unemployment decreases, recruit quality may once again decline.

Second, to meet its retention goals, the Army increased promotion rates for officers and enlisted personnel as well as retention bonuses. By 2008, virtually all first lieutenants and captains not only were promoted to captain and major, respectively, but also were promoted early and with significant bonuses. Typically, only 75 percent of captains are promoted to major and 90 percent of first lieutenants to captain, but by 2008, close to 100 percent of captains and first lieutenants were promoted to major and captain, respectively. Thus, the Army lost a decision point that it had used to weed out low performers among junior officers. For most of the volunteer-force era, company officers (lieutenants and captains) competed for promotion. Some who would have preferred to remain in service were passed over for promotion and had to leave under an up-or-out management policy. With a 100 percent promotion rate, the criterion for retention became simply a desire to remain in service. Rates of promotion to lieutenant colonel and colonel increased as well. For majors promoted to lieutenant colonels, the rate jumped from 60 percent to 90 percent. For lieutenant colonels promoted to colonel, the rate rose from 40 to 60 percent.²²

Third, in 2007, to compensate for the failure to activate the draft, the Army and Marines increased their permanent end-strength by 92,500, or 15 percent. The Army also added another 22,000 on a temporary basis in 2009.

Fourth, repeated tours to combat zones without sufficient dwell time, or time between deployments, also took a toll on the individual men and women serving and their families. Close to five hundred thousand soldiers developed mental problems, and divorce and suicide rates skyrocketed.²³ For the first time since the advent of the AVF, the Army suicide rate surpassed that of the comparable civilian population. Prior to 2001, the military suicide rate rarely reached ten per one hundred thousand personnel. By 2009, a year in which more than three hundred soldiers took their own lives, the rate had doubled to more than twenty per one hundred thousand personnel.

Finally, beyond repercussions for the force, failure to activate the Selective Service substantially increased military manpower costs. Partly motivated by guilt over what they were doing to the troops, the administration and Congress gave military personnel raises larger than required by the Employment Cost Index, and neither branch wanted to raise TRICARE premiums. As a result, the DOD's budget for military personnel rose from \$77 billion in FY 2001 to almost \$160 billion by FY 2009, and health care costs jumped from \$19 billion to \$50 billion. These costs are projected to rise by at least 8 percent each year.

Both the secretary of defense and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff recognize that neither the Pentagon nor the country can afford these exploding personnel costs. The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review Independent Panel, a board composed of military and civilian personnel experts and approved by the secretary of defense, recommended establishing a commission to evaluate these costs. But there is no need for elaborate study. To bring personnel costs under control, the following actions must be taken:

- First, require that military retirees who have access to health insurance through their job or the job of a family member use that system rather than TRICARE. Of about 4.5 million military retirees and their families, roughly three-quarters are estimated to have access to health insurance through civilian employers. However, half of them remain on TRICARE because of its dramatically lower cost. As private health insurance costs increase, this percentage is likely to go up as well.²⁴
- Second, apply a means test for deciding whether retirees and their family members older than sixty-five are eligible for TRICARE for life as opposed to sole reliance on Medicare.
- Third, raise TRICARE premiums from \$460 a year to \$1,000 for a military family, and then adjust that figure annually to reflect the rising costs of health care.
- Fourth, use military annual compensation (the combination of base pay, housing and subsistence allowances, and the tax advantage of the two), rather than just base pay, as a basis for deciding the size of the annual pay raise.
- Fifth, after the United States withdraws from Iraq and Afghanistan, reduce the size of the ground forces to pre-9/11 levels and commit to using the Selective Service if America is again required to engage in a large-scale and protracted war.

In the twentieth century, citizens of the United States believed that when America's army went to war, America went to war. Thus, when we engaged in significant conflicts, like the two World Wars, or even more limited conflicts like Korea and Vietnam, we drafted men to augment the standing force. But because our civilian and military leaders misled us about Vietnam, and because many of the politi-

cal elites – including the current and former vice presidents and the forty-second and forty-third presidents – avoided combat service, conscription was ended in 1973.

To ensure that America could go to war but would not take the decision to do so lightly, the creators of the AVF kept the Selective Service in place. In their view, draftees would augment the volunteers in the active and reserve component, who would handle small contingencies or the opening days of significant conflicts. Not only would activating the Selective Service compel citizen involvement in war making, but it would prevent the country from putting undue strain on volunteers.

Despite the fact that the George W. Bush administration deployed more than two hundred thousand people on a continuous basis in Iraq and Afghanistan, and although Congress approved these conflicts, our political and military leaders did not have the courage to activate the draft. Many of the volunteers in the active and reserve ground forces were abused, physically and psychologically, while Americans went shopping. The military and the nation will pay the costs of this moral failure for a long time. Let us hope that the next time we engage in large campaigns, political and military leaders will not again forget their obligations to the country and those who serve it.

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- ¹ For an excellent analysis on this topic, see Beth Bailey, *America's Army: Making the All-Volunteer Force* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009).
- ² David R. Segal and Mady W. Segal, "America's Military Population," *Population Bulletin* 59 (2004): 1–40.
- ³ David R. Segal, *Recruiting for Uncle Sam: Citizenship and Military Manpower Policy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989), 36–38.
- ⁴ Mady W. Segal, Meridith Hill Thanner, and David R. Segal, "Hispanics and African Americans in the U.S. Military: Trends in Representation," *Race, Gender & Class* 14 (3–4) (2007): 48–64.
- ⁵ Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007.
- ⁶ Mady W. Segal, "Women's Military Roles Cross-Nationally: Past, Present, and Future," *Gender & Society* 9 (6) (1995): 757–775.
- ⁷ Michelle Sandhoff, Mady W. Segal, and David R. Segal, "Gender Issues in the Transformation of an All-Volunteer Force: A Transnational Perspective," in *The Decline of Citizen Armies in Democratic States*, ed. Stuart Cohen (New York: Routledge, 2010), 111–131.
- ⁸ Bailey, *America's Army*, 227.
- ⁹ Deborah D. Avant, "Selling Security: Post-Cold War Security Services in Historical Perspective," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, 2001.
- ¹⁰ Deborah D. Avant, "From Mercenary to Citizen Armies: Explaining Change in the Practice of War," *International Organization* 54 (2000): 41–72.
- ¹¹ TRICARE is the current health care program of the DOD military health care system. It was formerly known as CHAMPUS (Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services), which was established in 1966 as part of the legislation that established Medicare.
- ¹² Lawrence J. Korb, Peter Rundlet, Max Bergmann, Sean Duggan, and Peter Juul, "Beyond the Call of Duty: Report Reviews Army's Overuse" (Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress, 2007).
- ¹³ Lawrence J. Korb, Peter Juul, Laura Conley, Myles Caggins, and Sean Duggan, "Building a Military for the 21st Century: New Realities, New Priorities" (Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress, 2008).
- ¹⁴ The National Guard consists of units that evolved from state militias and that therefore have responsibilities to state governments. Guardsmen in peacetime generally train for one weekend each month and two weeks during the summer and can be mobilized by the governors of their states in the event of natural disasters or civil unrest. They also are members of the armed forces mobilization base and can be activated and called to federal service by the president. Members of the federal reserve forces, by contrast, have no state responsibilities.

- ¹⁵ Lawrence J. Korb and Sean Duggan, "Caught Off Guard: The Link Between Our National Security and Our National Guard" (Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress, 2007). *Lawrence J. Korb & David R. Segal*
- ¹⁶ Thomas J. Burns, David R. Segal, Michael P. Silver, William W. Falk, and Bam Dev Sharda, "The All-Volunteer Force in the 1970s," *Social Science Quarterly* 79 (1998): 390–411.
- ¹⁷ Jerald G. Bachman, David R. Segal, Peter Freedman-Doan, and Patrick O'Malley, "Who Chooses Military Service? Correlates of Propensity and Enlistment in the United States Armed Forces," *Military Psychology* 12 (1998): 1–30. Cf. Robert L. Goldich, "American Military Culture from Colony to Empire," in this issue. Drawing on data reported by the Heritage Foundation, which uses census tract data where available to estimate the socioeconomic status of volunteers, Goldich suggests that the highest strata of society are overrepresented in the American military. However, while census tracts exist for the most part in urban or high-population-density areas, the military recruits primarily in rural or low-density areas. Only six states and the District of Columbia are fully tracted. Existing tracts range from about 2,500 to 8,000 people, and while they are initially designed to be relatively homogeneous demographically, there is still considerable internal variance. Moreover, there has been great resistance to changing tract boundaries, which would eliminate the ability to make comparisons across decennial censuses. Thus, the homogeneity of tracts might well decrease with increasing population diversity.
- Methodologists refer to imputing geographical measures to estimate individual characteristics as the "ecological fallacy." The Heritage Foundation reports that recruits who cannot be located in a census tract are randomly assigned to one based on zip code data. Other survey-based research agrees that recruits from the bottom of the socioeconomic scale are underrepresented because of the military's education-based selectivity, but it disagrees with the interpretation at the top of the scale. Census-tract estimates of individual status require an assumption that recruits' income is at the mean for their tract or is randomly distributed around that mean. We find these assumptions problematic. See Shanea J. Watkins and James Sherk, *Who Serves in the U.S. Military? Demographic Characteristics of Enlisted Troops and Officers* (Washington, D.C.: Heritage Foundation Center for Data Analysis, August 21, 2008).
- ¹⁸ Korb, Juul, Conley, Caggins, and Duggan, "Building a Military for the 21st Century."
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ See Karin K. De Angelis and David R. Segal, "Building and Maintaining a Post-9/11 All-Volunteer Military Force," in *The Impact of 9/11 on Politics and War: The Day that Changed Everything*, ed. Matthew J. Morgan (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 43–60.
- ²¹ Korb, Juul, Conley, Caggins, and Duggan, "Building a Military for the 21st Century."
- ²² *Ibid.*
- ²³ Korb, Rundlet, Bergmann, Duggan, and Juul, "Beyond the Call of Duty."
- ²⁴ Elisabeth Bumiller and Thom Shanker, "Gates Seeking to Contain Military Health Costs," *The New York Times*, November 28, 2010.