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# The Prior Service Recruiting Pool for National Guard and Reserve Selected Reserve (SelRes) Enlisted Personnel

## Abstract

In the active-duty military, racial/ethnic and gender diversity starts at recruitment. This also holds true for the National Guard and Reserve. As a part of a series of issue papers (IP) that examine demographic representation in the National Guard and Reserve, this issue paper looks at the racial/ethnic and gender composition of the prior service enlisted recruitment pool and of prior service enlisted accessions for the Selected Reserve (SelRes) across all National Guard and Reserve Components. Our research shows that nearly 36 percent of SelRes enlisted accessions had prior service experience, and the vast majority of these accessions affiliated with the SelRes in pay grades above E-4. Thus, a nontrivial portion of the SelRes enlisted recruiting pool comes from the military itself rather than from the civilian population. The results also show that the recruiting pool for the National Guard and Reserve was less diverse than that of the Active Component (AC) in terms of gender and race/ethnicity. Among those in the prior service pool, women and minorities were more likely than men and whites, respectively, to join the SelRes. This indicates that the net effect, including institutional and other factors that determine whether departing active-duty members join the SelRes, was positive for women and racial/ethnic minorities. Compared with the relevant age-eligible portion of the U.S. population, women were underrepresented among prior service accessions, but racial/ethnic minorities had near representational parity. And, compared with shares of current midlevel and senior enlisted personnel, all racial/ethnic minorities except blacks were overrepresented

among accessions. Thus, DoD-wide, the pool of future midgrade enlisted personnel is likely to be more diverse than the midgrade and senior personnel from FY 2008.

In the military's closed personnel system, at any given time, the demographic profiles of the overall force and of leadership are largely dependent on the demographic composition of past accessions. The demographic profiles of accessions at any given time are, in turn, dependent on the demographic composition of the existing pool of potential recruits and on how the Services draw from that pool.

With this in mind, this issue paper (IP) looks at the demographic profiles of both prior service enlisted accessions (i.e., gains from enlisted members with prior military service) and the prior service enlisted accession pool for the Selective Reserve (SelRes) in all seven Reserve and National Guard Components.<sup>1</sup> Four sets of research questions are addressed:

- 1) How important were prior service accessions for the SelRes, and at what pay grade did most prior service accessions join?
- 2) What were the racial/ethnic and gender profiles of the prior service pool, and how did they compare with the profiles of the recruiting pool for the active component (AC)?
- 3) At what rate did servicemembers who left active duty affiliate with the SelRes, and did affiliation rates differ by race/ethnicity or gender?
- 4) What were the demographic profiles of prior service SelRes accessions for each component, and how did the component-specific accession profiles compare with the profiles of the relevant age-eligible civilian population of more senior members of the SelRes?

This IP focuses on the SelRes because, as the largest category of Reserve personnel, its members are the primary source for augmentation during times of conflict and because, at all times, they regularly train and prepare for service (Military Leadership Diversity Commission, 2010b). This IP focuses on prior service accessions for two reasons. First, as one answer to the first set of research questions will show, they are an important source of enlisted accessions for the SelRes. Second, because prior service personnel are trained and experienced in their jobs, the National Guard and Reserve get substantial monetary savings from prior service accessions compared with accessing new members who require costly training.

A companion IP addresses the same issues for officers in the Reserve Component (RC): See IP #57, *The prior service recruiting pool for National Guard and Reserve Selected Reserve (SelRes) officers* (Military Leadership Diversity Commission, 2010c).

## Data and Definitions

### The Prior Service Pool and Prior Service Accessions

For the purposes of this IP, the prior service enlisted accession pool is defined as the pool of all enlisted personnel who leave active duty within a particular fiscal year (FY).<sup>2</sup> A SelRes prior service enlisted accession is defined as an enlisted member who joins the SelRes within six months of leaving active-duty service. Based on this definition, this IP uses the words *accessions* and *gains* interchangeably.

The data sets for this IP were created from two data sources provided by the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) for FY 2004 through FY 2009. The prior service accession pool was created from loss transactions (i.e., number of separations) from DMDC's Active Duty Transaction File. Prior service enlisted accessions were identified by merging the data on active-duty losses with data on SelRes gains from monthly extracts of DMDC's Reserve Components Common Personnel Data System.

### The Civilian Population Benchmarks

To show how the racial/ethnic and gender profiles of the prior service enlisted accession pools for the SelRes differ from those of the civilian recruiting pool for enlisted personnel, this IP uses the external, or civilian, benchmark for junior enlisted personnel (i.e., pay grades E-1 through E-4) that was presented in IP #26 (Military Leadership Diversity Commission, 2010a). This proxy for the civilian recruiting pool is defined as active labor-force participants (i.e., currently working or seeking employment), with high school education or equivalent, and between ages 19 and 30. Citizenship was not used to define this benchmark because noncitizens can enlist and subsequently gain citizenship through military service.

To show how the racial/ethnic and gender profiles of actual SelRes prior service accessions compare with the profiles of the same-age civilian population, the midlevel enlisted (E-5 through E-6) external benchmark from IP #26 (Military

Leadership Diversity Commission, 2010a) is used. The mid-level benchmark reflects the likely older age range of prior service accessions and is defined as active labor-force participants, with high school education or equivalent and citizenship, and between ages 23 and 39.

The data for these civilian benchmarks come from the March 2008 Current Population Survey (CPS).

### Race and Ethnicity

This IP uses the following race/ethnicity categories:<sup>3</sup>

- white non-Hispanic
- black non-Hispanic
- Asian and Pacific Islander (Asian/PI) non-Hispanic
- other non-Hispanic (which includes American Indians, native Alaskans, and individuals of more than one race)
- Hispanic.

For convenience, we refer to white non-Hispanic as *white*, black non-Hispanic as *black*, etc.

### Prior Service SelRes Accessions

Table 1 shows that just over one-third of enlisted SelRes accessions in FY 2008 were prior service accessions. This means that a nontrivial portion (though not a large majority as with officers) of the enlisted SelRes recruiting pool comes from the military itself rather than from the public at large. This is a key difference between the RC and the AC and has two important implications for the potential racial/ethnic and gender diversity of the RC. First, eligibility issues that affect the diversity of the AC will *indirectly* affect the RC via their effect on the pool of prior service accessions that are available to join a SelRes unit. Second, the racial/ethnic and gender compositions of RC accessions are constrained by the demographics of the AC population.

**Table 1. Percentage of All SelRes Gains, by Prior Service Experience and Component, FY 2004 through FY 2009**

	Prior Service	No Prior Service
Air Force Reserve	65.8%	34.2%
Air National Guard	44.0%	56.0%
Army National Guard	25.7%	74.3%
Army Reserve	35.7%	64.3%
Coast Guard Reserve	49.4%	50.6%
Marine Corps Reserve	35.3%	64.7%
Navy Reserve	69.3%	30.7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35.7%</b>	<b>64.3%</b>

SOURCE: DMDC Active Duty Transition File, FY 2004–FY 2009.

NOTE: Prior service SelRes accessions for each fiscal year are shown in the appendix in Table A1.

For each component, Table 2 shows the pay-grade distribution of prior service enlisted accessions for FY 2008. The majority (over 80 percent) joined the SelRes at pay grades E-4 or E-5, which correspond to the ranks of

- Corporal and sergeant in the Army and the Marine Corps
- Petty officer 3rd and 2nd Class in the Navy and Coast Guard
- Senior airman and staff sergeant in the Air Force.

This pattern is consistent across components. One implication is that prior service accessions are likely to be, on average, older than non-prior service accessions in both the RC and the AC.

### Demographic Profiles of the Prior Service Pool

Table 3 presents the female and racial/ethnic minority shares of the prior service pool compared with the shares of the active-duty recruiting pool proxy. This comparison shows not only how the prior service pool differs from the national enlisted recruiting pool for the AC, but also how it differs from the recruiting pool from which the other two-thirds of SelRes accessions are drawn.

Overall and for each Service, women were underrepresented in the prior service pool relative to the active-duty pool proxy. The story is a bit more complicated for race/ethnicity because it varies by component. Asian/Pacific Islanders were underrepresented in the Air Force, the Coast Guard, and the Marine Corps, but overrepresented in the Navy. Blacks were overrepresented in the Air Force, Army, and Navy, but underrepresented in the Coast Guard and Marine Corps. Hispanics were underrepresented in all five prior service pools, and other race/ethnicities were overrepresented in all but the Marine Corps pool. Overall, this means that the RC pool has relatively fewer women and, in some cases, fewer minorities than the AC pool.

### Affiliation Rates by Gender and Race/Ethnicity

Table 4 presents the male and female percentages of the overall prior service pool that joined a SelRes unit within six months of leaving active duty. Each percentage is calculated *within group* such that the denominator for women is the pool of prior service women and the denominator for men is the pool of prior service men. Therefore, the percentages can be thought of as a crude affiliation rate. The data show that,

**Table 2. Percentage of SelRes Gains, by Pay Grade and Component, FY 2004 through FY 2009**

	E-1	E-2	E-3	E-4	E-5	E-6	E-7	E-8	E-9
Air Force Reserve	0.5%	0.1%	5.0%	40.9%	47.1%	6.3%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Air National Guard	0.5%	0.2%	6.9%	31.7%	49.7%	10.6%	0.5%	0.1%	0.0%
Army National Guard	2.7%	1.5%	5.8%	48.7%	35.1%	5.5%	0.6%	0.1%	0.0%
Army Reserve	0.8%	2.4%	6.8%	48.6%	34.1%	6.2%	1.0%	0.1%	0.0%
Coast Guard Reserve	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%	37.0%	40.3%	16.5%	2.3%	1.0%	0.7%
Marine Corps Reserve	1.9%	2.2%	34.5%	26.6%	24.3%	9.7%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Navy Reserve	0.1%	0.3%	3.4%	30.0%	44.8%	19.9%	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%
TOTAL	1.3%	1.3%	6.4%	43.7%	38.5%	7.9%	0.8%	0.1%	0.0%

SOURCE: DMDC Active Duty Transition File, FY 2004–2009.

NOTE: Prior service accessions by pay grade for each fiscal year are shown in the appendix in Table A2.

**Table 3. Demographic Profile of the Prior Service Pool, by Service versus an External Benchmark, FY 2008**

	Female <sup>a</sup>	API <sup>a</sup>	B <sup>a</sup>	H <sup>a</sup>	O <sup>a</sup>
Air Force	22.7%	2.1%	15.5%	5.0%	3.1%
Army	18.4%	3.0%	18.3%	10.6%	16.6%
Coast Guard	15.1%	0.6%	7.0%	10.9%	11.0%
Marine Corps	7.3%	2.1%	9.1%	11.6%	2.3%
Navy	16.4%	4.5%	18.0%	14.4%	7.1%
TOTAL	16.8%	3.0%	16.0%	10.7%	9.2%
Active-duty recruiting pool proxy <sup>b</sup>	45.6%	3.3%	13.6%	18.0%	2.4%

SOURCE: DMDC Active Duty Transition File, FY 2008; March 2008 CPS.

NOTES: API = Asian and Pacific Islander, B = Black, H = Hispanic, O = Other, W = White. “Unknown” is not included in the table. The female share of the accession pool by pay grade can be found in the appendix in Table A3. The minority share of the accession pool by pay grade can be found in the appendix in Table A4.

<sup>a</sup> Male and white shares are not included but can be calculated by subtracting the female share and the sum of the minority shares from 100.

<sup>b</sup> Defined by four characteristics: citizen, active labor-force participant, high school education or equivalent, and between the ages of 23 and 40.

across the Services, women joined at a slightly higher rate than men—8 percent versus 7 percent—thus indicating that, relative to their share of the prior service pool, women were slightly overrepresented among FY 2008 accessions. This pattern is consistent across pay grades.

Results for race/ethnicity groups are presented in Table 5. Again, the percentages reflect the *within group* rate of joining the SelRes. As shown in the table, 6.6 percent of whites in the prior service pool joined the SelRes. Overall, all of the other race/ethnicity groups had higher affiliation rates than whites. Although there was some variation by pay grade, the pattern was generally consistent from E-1 to E-6.

#### Demographic Profile of Prior Service SelRes Accessions

Table 6 shows the female and minority shares of actual SelRes gains from the prior service pool for FY 2008. These accessions can be thought of as the baseline for future

leaders in the RC. Table 6 also provides external and internal benchmarks against which to make comparisons. Comparing prior service accessions with the external benchmark shows the extent to which these accessions are representative of the relevant age-eligible civilian population. Comparing prior service accessions with the internal benchmarks provides an indicator of how future leadership may compare to FY 2008 leadership.

Compared with the relevant age external benchmark, overall and in every Service, women were underrepresented among actual service accessions. Turning to race/ethnicity, for all the Services combined, Asian/Pacific Islanders, blacks, and Hispanics are well represented relative to the benchmark. There is, however, substantial variation across Services: Asian/Pacific Islanders were overrepresented among the Navy and Army accessions, but underrepresented among Coast Guard and Marine Corps accessions. Blacks were overrepresented among Navy accessions, underrepresented among Coast Guard accessions, and had approximate representational parity among accessions in the other three Services. The representation pattern was similar for Hispanic accessions, except that they were underrepresented among Air Force accessions. And finally, other race/ethnicities were generally overrepresented.

Compared with the internal RC benchmarks based on the profiles of midlevel and senior enlisted personnel for FY 2008, the data show that for all Services combined, women and all racial/ethnic minorities except blacks were overrepresented among accessions relative to their shares of more senior personnel.

#### Summary

Using FY 2008 data to illustrate recent patterns, the data presented in this IP showed six key features of the enlisted SelRes prior service recruiting pool and of enlisted prior service accessions, each with its own implications:

- Roughly one-third of SelRes accessions had prior service experience. Thus, a non trivial portion of the SelRes recruiting pool comes from the military rather than from the civilian population at large.

**Table 4. Share of Prior Service Pool Who Joined a SelRes Unit by Gender and Pay Grade, FY 2008**

	Male	Female
E-1	0.6%	0.7%
E-2	1.1%	2.6%
E-3	3.8%	6.3%
E-4	11.8%	12.1%
E-5	13.1%	15.3%
E-6	6.4%	8.0%
E-7	0.7%	1.0%
E-8	0.2%	0.5%
E-9	0.1%	0.0%
TOTAL	7.0%	8.2%

SOURCE: DMDC Active Duty Transition File, FY 2008.

NOTE: Some individuals who do not join the SelRes do join the IRR or other Reserve category.

**Table 5. Share of Prior Service Pool Who Joined a SelRes Unit, by Racial/Ethnic Group and Pay Grade, FY 2008**

	API	B	H	O	W
E-1	1.2%	0.9%	0.6%	1.3%	0.4%
E-2	0.4%	2.3%	1.3%	1.4%	1.3%
E-3	3.1%	5.1%	4.0%	4.8%	4.2%
E-4	15.9%	13.7%	13.1%	15.0%	10.5%
E-5	18.1%	16.2%	15.6%	17.6%	11.7%
E-6	5.5%	4.7%	8.5%	10.1%	6.6%
E-7	0.3%	0.4%	1.6%	1.1%	0.8%
E-8	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.5%	0.2%
E-9	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
TOTAL	10.5%	7.1%	8.9%	9.0%	6.6%

SOURCE: DMDC Active Duty Transition File, FY 2008.

NOTES: API = Asian and Pacific Islander, B = Black, H = Hispanic, O = Other, W = White. "Unknown" is not included in the table. Some individuals who do not join the SelRes do join the IRR or other Reserve Category.

- Ninety percent of SelRes prior service accessions affiliated with the SelRes at pay grades E-4 and above, which means that prior service accessions are older, on average, than both AC accessions and non-prior service RC accessions.
- Compared with the AC recruiting pool proxy, the pool of prior service accessions had fewer women, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics. This means that the effective RC recruiting pool is less diverse than the AC pool in terms of race/ethnicity and gender.
- Among those in the prior service pool, women and all minorities were more likely than men and whites, respectively, to join the SelRes. This indicates that the net effect, including institutional and other factors that determine whether departing active-duty members join the SelRes, was positive for women and racial/ethnic minorities.
- Compared with the relevant age-eligible portion of the U.S. population, women were underrepresented among prior service accessions, but racial/ethnic minorities had near representational parity. The finding for minorities reflects the differences between the population comprising the E-5 to E-6 benchmark and the population comprising the recruiting pool proxy.
- Compared with the midlevel and senior members of the RC, for all Services combined, women and all racial/ethnic minorities except blacks were overrepresented among accessions. This means that, all else being equal, the future leadership of the RC should be more diverse in terms of race/ethnicity and gender than the leadership of FY 2008. If, however, the members of these groups have lower career progression rates (i.e., lower retention and/or lower promotion rates) than their majority counterparts, this prediction may not be borne out.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>The seven components are the Army National Guard, the Air National Guard, the U.S. Army Reserve, the U.S. Navy Reserve, the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, the U.S. Air Force Reserve, and the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve.

<sup>2</sup>Not all active-duty losses are included in the sample. We disregarded all those we considered ineligible. Specifically, the DoD Separation Program Designator (SPD) codes were used to identify retirements, deaths, and other losses (e.g., personality disorder, misconduct, unsatisfactory performance) that would make an individual ineligible for service in the RC. We also dropped those who had at least 16 years of service at the time of loss.

<sup>3</sup>See Military Leadership Diversity Commission (2009). For this analysis, Asian and Pacific Islander are combined into a single category because data collected before 2003 do not separate the two. Even though this IP does not use data collected prior to 2003, in order to be consistent with MLDC publications that do use earlier data, we opted to combine the two race groups.

## References

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**Table 6. Demographic Profile of SelRes Gains, by Service versus External and Internal Benchmarks, FY 2008**

	Percent of SelRes Gains				
	Female <sup>a</sup>	API <sup>a</sup>	B <sup>a</sup>	H <sup>a</sup>	O <sup>a</sup>
Air Force	26.9%	2.7%	14.8%	6.9%	3.4%
Army	17.1%	4.7%	15.4%	14.5%	15.2%
Coast Guard	21.9%	0.0%	2.9%	11.9%	26.5%
Marine Corps	7.5%	2.1%	13.3%	13.8%	2.3%
Navy	19.0%	7.7%	22.2%	18.5%	5.1%
TOTAL	19.2%	4.4%	15.6%	13.2%	11.5%
E-5 to E-6 External Benchmark <sup>b</sup>	45.1%	2.6%	15.1%	14.1%	2.2%
E-5 to E-6 Internal RC Benchmark <sup>c</sup>	16.5%	3.1%	15.7%	10.1%	0.6%
E-7 to E-9 Internal RC Benchmark <sup>c</sup>	16.0%	2.0%	16.7%	7.4%	0.3%

SOURCE: DMDC Active Duty Transition File, FY 2008; March 2008 CPS.

NOTES: API = Asian and Pacific Islander, B = Black, H = Hispanic, O = Other, W = White. "Unknown" is not included in the table. The female share of prior service accessions by pay grade can be found in the appendix in Table A3. The minority share of prior service accessions by pay grade can be found in the appendix in Table A4.

<sup>a</sup> Male and white shares are not included but can be calculated by subtracting the female share and the sum of the minority shares from 100.

<sup>b</sup> Defined by four characteristics: active labor-force participant, high school education or equivalent, citizenship, and between ages of 23 and 39.

<sup>c</sup> The group shares of enlisted personnel in these pay grades in FY 2008.