Demographic Profile of the Active-Duty Enlisted Force
September 2008 Snapshot

Abstract
In this issue paper, we present a consistent demographic profile of the active-duty enlisted corps across the five Services. We separate personnel in ranks E1–E6 from those in ranks E7–E9, and we display the data in charts and tables by gender and race/ethnicity categories. Data are reported as percentages and as raw counts to facilitate comparisons and illustrate differences in magnitude. Although the data presented here are in the form of 2008 snapshots, we also provide an appendix with yearly data starting in 2000.

During the September 2009 meeting of the MLDC, each of the Services presented a briefing with basic demographic statistics. However, because each Service gave slightly different information in a different format, it proved difficult to make comparisons across Services. Therefore, we have developed a series of issue papers (IPs) to present consistent profiles of gender and race/ethnicity across all the Services, focusing on five specific groups:

- active-duty officers
- active-duty enlisted
- active-duty warrant officers
- Reserve
- National Guard

This IP looks at the active-duty enlisted population.

Data
In the main text of this IP, we provide demographic snapshots of the active-duty enlisted population from September 2008; the appendix contains yearly snapshots from 2000–2008. To ensure consistency, we use a common dataset from the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) for all five Services.

To give a complete picture, we report both percentages and their underlying counts. Percentages allow the reader to make comparisons across the Services despite their differences in size. The counts show how much the Services vary in size.

Interpreting the Data: Care Is Required
This IP is primarily descriptive in nature, and the information presented limits the conclusions that can be drawn from it. We do not attempt to determine why differences or similarities across the Services may exist. Therefore, it would be incorrect to interpret the results presented here as evidence of the presence or lack of discrimination in any Service. Other IPs will consider factors that may have created differences across the Services. Any variations in percentages and counts reflect the combined impact of institutional and structural differences across the Services, such as differences in

- the career-field mix and demographic distributions across career fields
- the application of the combat-exclusion laws
- accession profiles over time
- differences in average individual preferences to serve in one Service rather than another
- policies
- diversity climate.

Female Enlisted Personnel
Figure 1 compares the percentages of female enlisted personnel in ranks E1–E6 with those in ranks E7–E9. Table 1 shows raw counts, including the total number of enlisted personnel and the breakdown of men and women.
Points to Take Away from Figure 1

- Regarding the E1–E6 female shares,
  - The Air Force, with 20.9 percent women, and the Marine Corps, with 6.3 percent women, stand out, with the highest and lowest female shares.
  - The Army, with 13.5 percent women, and the Coast Guard, with 12.5 percent women, have similar gender profiles. The Navy has slightly higher female representation, with 16.0 percent women.

- Regarding the E7–E9 female shares,
  - There is less variation among the Services’ senior ranks. The female share of the population in ranks E7–E9 is between 5.2 percent and 13.5 percent, whereas it is between 6.3 percent and 20.9 percent in ranks E1–E6. Note, however, that across the board, the female shares are smaller in the senior ranks.

- Once again, the Air Force, with 13.5 percent, has the largest share of women, and the Marine Corps, with 5.2 percent, has the smallest. The Army, with 11.0 percent women, follows the Air Force; and the Navy and the Coast Guard are made up of 7.3 percent and 6.3 percent women, respectively.

- Using the percentages, we calculated ratios to determine how closely the senior enlisted ranks mirror the E1–E6 population within each Service. For example, in the Coast Guard, 6.3 percent of servicemembers in the senior enlisted ranks are women; in the E1–E6 group, 12.5 percent are women. The ratio, then, is 0.50 (6.3/12.5 = 0.50). The ratios of female enlisted personnel in ranks E7–E9 to those in E1–E6 in the remaining Services are as follows: Air Force = 0.65, Army = 0.81, Marine Corps = 0.83, and Navy = 0.46. The Army and the Marine Corps stand out because their ratios are relatively close to 1.0. Their ratios show that the percentage of women in the lower ranks is similar to that in the senior ranks.

Table 1: Number of Enlisted Personnel by Service, Gender, and Rank, September 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>E1–E6</th>
<th>E7–E9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAF</td>
<td>224,152</td>
<td>177,322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>396,534</td>
<td>342,919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USCG</td>
<td>28,851</td>
<td>25,259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USMC</td>
<td>164,450</td>
<td>154,057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USN</td>
<td>243,363</td>
<td>204,488</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Percentage of Female Enlisted Personnel by Service and Grade, September 2008
**Points to Take Away from Table 1**

- Regarding the E1–E6 ranks,
  - There is significant variation in the size of the E1–E6 population across the Services, ranging from 28,851 in the Coast Guard to 396,534 in the Army.
  - The Air Force and Navy are similar in size, while the Marine Corps is smaller.

- Regarding the E7–E9 ranks,
  - As in the lower ranks, there is considerable difference in size across the Services, ranging from 4,364 senior enlisted personnel in the Coast Guard to 55,531 in the Army.
  - The senior groups in the Air Force and the Navy, again, are similar in size, while the Marine Corps group is smaller.

**Minority Enlisted Personnel**

In this section, we first combine all racial and ethnic minorities\(^2\) in order to contrast them with white non-Hispanics (white, NH) and with those whose race/ethnicity are unknown. Later, we examine each race/ethnicity category individually. Note that because our focus in this section is specifically on race and ethnicity, we do not further categorize by gender. That is, both women and men are included in all categories used in this section.

Figure 2 compares the percentages of minorities in ranks E1–E6 with those in ranks E7–E9. Table 2 shows raw counts, including the total number of enlisted personnel, as well as the number of personnel in each of the following categories: white, NH; minority; and “unknown.”

**Points to Take Away from Figure 2**

- Regarding “unknown,”
  - Enlisted personnel who do not report a race/ethnicity are classified as “unknown” and are not included in this figure. The “unknown” shares for ranks E1–E6 are as follows: Air Force = 2.7 percent, Army = 1.2 percent, Coast Guard = 1.5 percent, Marine Corps = 2.7 percent, and Navy = 0.8 percent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>E1–E6</th>
<th>E7–E9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>White, NH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAF</td>
<td>224,152</td>
<td>154,384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>396,534</td>
<td>248,609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USCG</td>
<td>28,851</td>
<td>19,933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USMC</td>
<td>164,450</td>
<td>115,122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USN</td>
<td>243,363</td>
<td>120,805</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Number of Enlisted Personnel by Service, Race/Ethnicity, and Rank, September 2008

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Figure 2. Percentage of Minority Enlisted Personnel by Service and Grade, September 2008
For ranks E7–E9, the “unknown” shares are as follows: Air Force = 3.1 percent, Army = 5.1 percent, Coast Guard = 3.5 percent, Marine Corps = 3.2 percent, and Navy = 1.7 percent.

Regarding ranks E1–E6,
- The Navy, with nearly 50 percent minority personnel in this group, stands out.
- The remaining Services range from 27.3 percent to 36.1 percent minority personnel. The Army has slightly higher minority representation than the Air Force, the Coast Guard, and the Marine Corps.

Regarding ranks E7–E9,
- The Army, with 45.2 percent minority personnel in this group, stands out.
- The Marine Corps, with 39.9 percent, is a close second, and the Navy, with 36.0 percent, follows closely behind.

The Air Force and Coast Guard have 26.5 and 18.1 percent senior enlisted minority representation, respectively.

As noted above, using the percentages, we calculated ratios to determine how closely the senior ranks mirror the lower ranks within each Service. For minority shares, the ratios for each Service are as follows: Air Force = 0.93, Army = 1.25, Coast Guard = 0.62, Marine Corps = 1.46, and Navy = 0.73. Ratios close to 1.0 indicate similarity across rank groups. With a ratio of 0.93, the two groups in the Air Force closely mirror each other. The Marine Corps and the Army stand out with ratios over 1.0, indicating that there are proportionately more minorities in the senior ranks than in ranks E1–E6.

Point to Take Away from Table 2
- As noted in the discussion of Table 1, there is significant variation in the size of the enlisted population across the Services.

### Table 3: Numbers of Enlisted Personnel in Ranks E1–E6 by Service and Race/Ethnicity, September 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>API, NH</th>
<th>Black, NH</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Other, NH</th>
<th>White, NH</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USAF</td>
<td>8,236</td>
<td>36,937</td>
<td>12,347</td>
<td>6,300</td>
<td>154,384</td>
<td>5,948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>14,017</td>
<td>76,918</td>
<td>48,396</td>
<td>3,792</td>
<td>248,609</td>
<td>4,802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USCG</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>1,652</td>
<td>3,593</td>
<td>2,845</td>
<td>19,933</td>
<td>433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USMC</td>
<td>4,856</td>
<td>15,845</td>
<td>21,431</td>
<td>2,829</td>
<td>115,122</td>
<td>4,367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USN</td>
<td>15,088</td>
<td>46,839</td>
<td>41,207</td>
<td>17,372</td>
<td>120,805</td>
<td>2,052</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Figure 3. Percentage of Minority and “Unknown” Race/Ethnicity in Ranks E1–E6, September 2008
Figure 3 shows detailed race/ethnicity shares of enlisted personnel in ranks E1–E6. Table 3 shows raw counts. The data are reported for the following race/ethnicity categories:

- non-Hispanic Asians and Pacific Islanders (API, NH)
- non-Hispanic blacks (Black, NH)
- Hispanics
- non-Hispanic others (Other, NH), which includes American Indians, Alaska natives, and “more than one race”
- “unknown.”

**Points to Take Away from Figure 3**

- Regarding non-Hispanic Asians and Pacific Islanders (API, NH),
  - The Air Force, Army, and Marine Corps range from 3.0 percent to 3.7 percent in this category.

- Regarding non-Hispanic blacks (Black, NH),
  - There is a wide range of representation in this category, ranging from 5.7 percent in the Coast Guard to 19.4 percent in the Army.
  - The Navy, with 19.2 percent, follows closely behind the Army; and the Air Force and the Marine Corps have 16.5 percent and 9.6 percent, respectively.

- Regarding Hispanics,
  - Excluding the Air Force, Hispanic representation is fairly even across the Services, ranging between 12.2 and 16.9 percent.
  - The Air Force has 5.5 percent in this category.

- The Navy, with 6.2 percent representation, stands out, and the Coast Guard, with 1.4 percent, has the lowest representation in this category.

**Table 4: Numbers of E7–E9 Enlisted Personnel by Service and Race/Ethnicity, September 2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>API, NH</th>
<th>Black, NH</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Other, NH</th>
<th>White, NH</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USAF</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>6,159</td>
<td>1,790</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>23,867</td>
<td>1,069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>1,072</td>
<td>18,383</td>
<td>5,175</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>27,628</td>
<td>2,818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USCG</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>3,421</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USMC</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>2,982</td>
<td>1,927</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>7,840</td>
<td>436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USN</td>
<td>2,430</td>
<td>5,740</td>
<td>2,756</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>19,895</td>
<td>547</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4. Percentage of Minority and “Unknown” Race/Ethnicity Enlisted Personnel in Ranks E7–E9, September 2008**
Points to Take Away from Figure 4

- Regarding non-Hispanic “others,”
  - The Coast Guard, with 6.6 percent, has the highest representation in this category. The other Services range from 0.8 percent to 1.8 percent.
  - The ratios of the senior to the lower ranks are as follows: Air Force = 0.39, Army = 0.80, Coast Guard = 0.67, Marine Corps = 1.06, and Navy = 0.25.
- Regarding “unknown,”
  - With between 1.7 percent and 5.1 percent in the “unknown” category, this group is fairly even across the Services.
  - The ratios of the senior to the lower ranks are as follows: Air Force = 1.15, Army = 4.25, Coast Guard = 2.33, Marine Corps = 1.19, and Navy = 2.13.

Summary

In this IP, we present consistent demographic profiles of the active-duty enlisted corps for all five Services. The data used are from DMDC and are snapshots from September 2008. We present both percentages and raw counts in order to facilitate comparisons and show differences in magnitude.

In this IP, our goal was to present statistics in a standard format that allows for easy comparison across Services. Because we do not discuss factors that may influence differences or similarities perceived in the numbers, we urge caution in interpretation.

Notes

1See Military Leadership Diversity Commission, 2010, for data on active-duty officers.
2These include non-Hispanic Asian and Pacific Islander (API, NH), non-Hispanic black (Black, NH), Hispanic, and non-Hispanic other (American Indians, Alaska natives, and “more than one race”).
3Because of the nature of our data, we deviate slightly from the race/ethnicity categories presented in Military Leadership Diversity Commission, 2009. The data in this issue paper, group Pacific Islanders with Asians instead of placing them in the category “non-Hispanic others.”

References
