



MLDC Research Areas

Definition of Diversity
Legal Implications
Outreach & Recruiting
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Branching & Assignments
Promotion
Retention
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National Guard & Reserve

This issue paper aims to aid in the deliberations of the MLDC. It does not contain the recommendations of the MLDC.

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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 Guard¹

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.

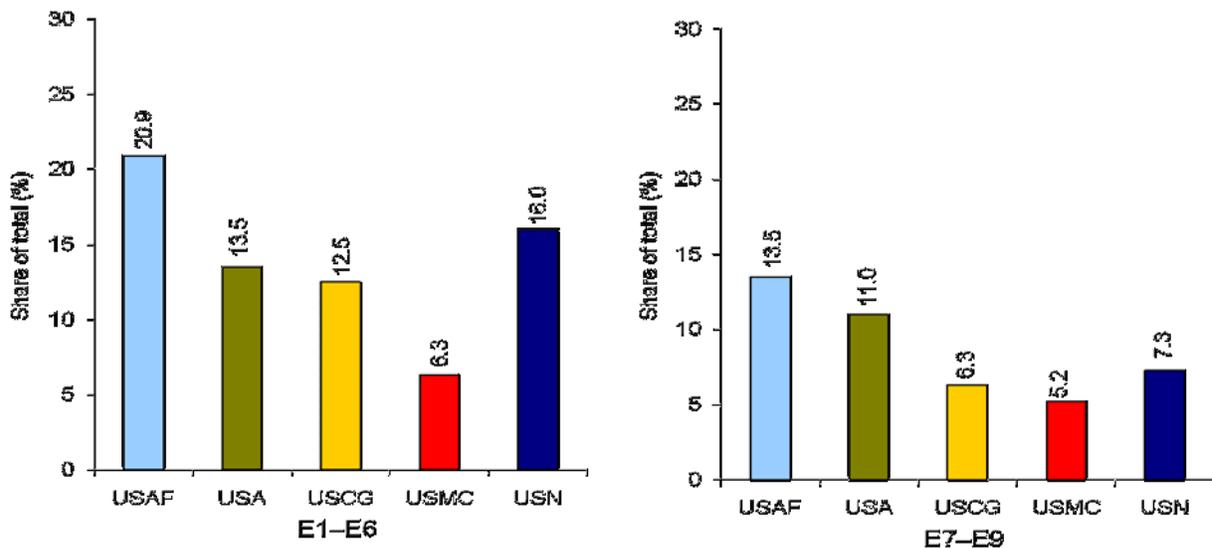
Points to Take Away from Figure 1

- 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

Service	E1–E6			E7–E9		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
USAF	224,152	177,322	46,830	33,940	29,367	4,573
USA	396,534	342,919	53,615	55,531	49,443	6,088
USCG	28,851	25,259	3,592	4,364	4,089	275
USMC	164,450	154,057	10,393	13,763	13,043	720
USN	243,363	204,488	38,875	31,928	29,610	2,318

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.

(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.

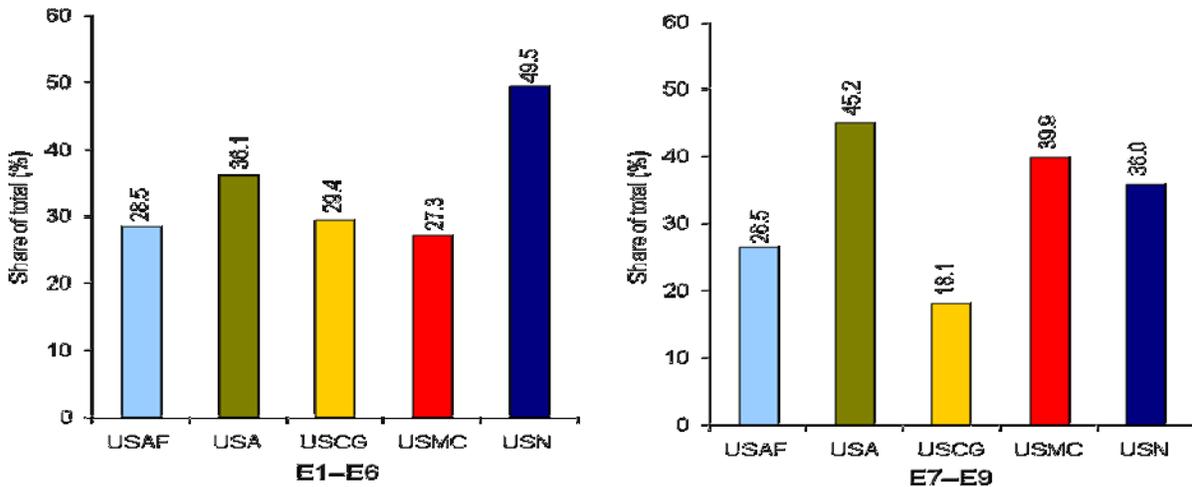
Minority Enlisted Personnel

In this section, we first combine all racial and ethnic minorities² in order to contrast them with white non-Hispanics

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

Service	E1–E6				E7–E9			
	Total	White, NH	Minority	Unknown	Total	White, NH	Minority	Unknown
USAF	224,152	154,384	63,820	5,948	33,940	23,867	9,004	1,069
USA	396,534	248,609	143,123	4,802	55,531	27,628	25,085	2,818
USCG	28,851	19,933	8,485	433	4,364	3,421	791	152
USMC	164,450	115,122	44,961	4,367	13,763	7,840	5,487	436
USN	243,363	120,805	120,506	2,052	31,928	19,895	11,486	547

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

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

Figure 3. Percentage of Minority and “Unknown” Race/Ethnicity in Ranks E1–E6, September 2008

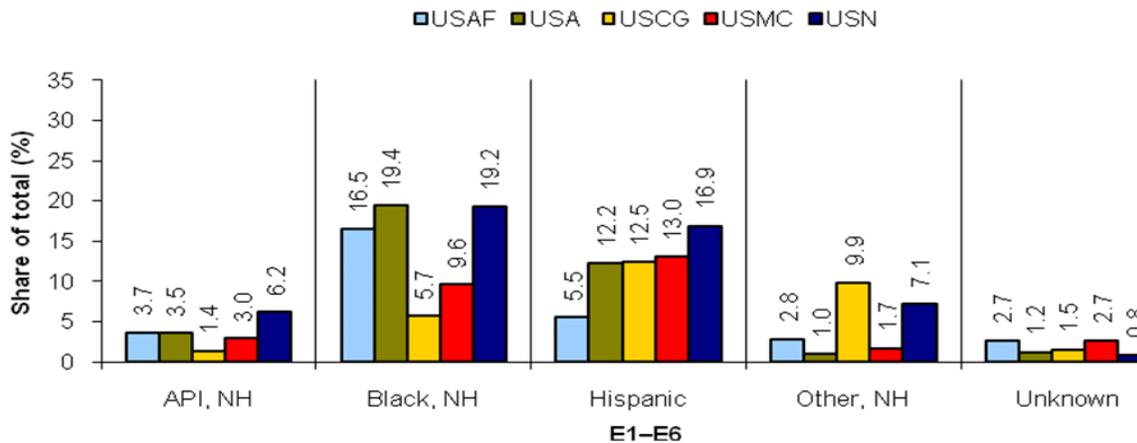


Figure 3 shows detailed race/ethnicity shares of enlisted personnel in ranks E1–E6. Table 3 shows raw counts. The data are reported for the following race/ethnicity categories:

- non-Hispanic Asians and Pacific Islanders (API, NH)³
- 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

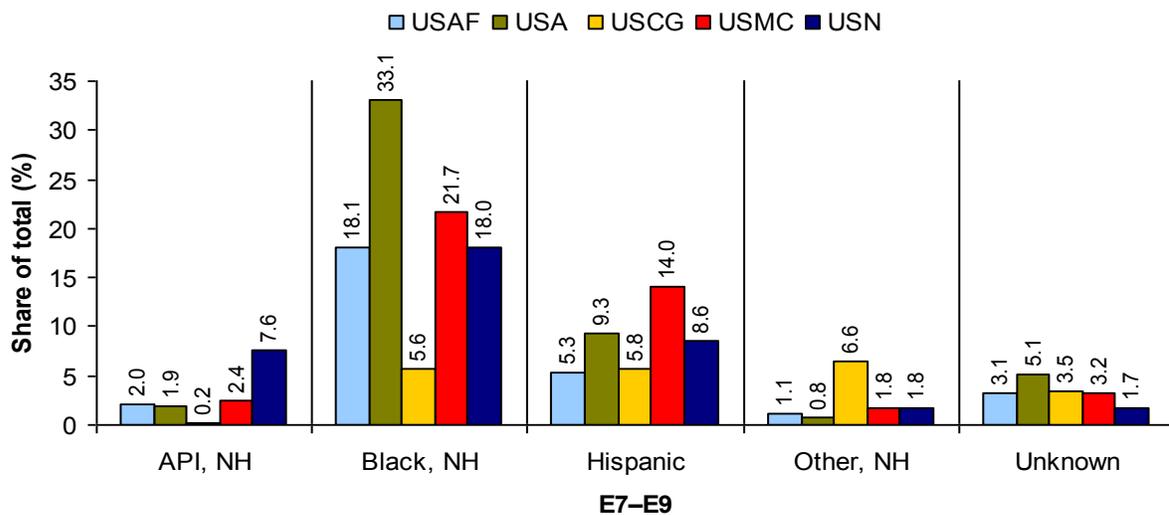
- Regarding non-Hispanic Asians and Pacific Islanders (API, NH),
 - The Air Force, Army, and Marine Corps range from 3.0 percent to 3.7 percent in this category.

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

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

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

Figure 4. Percentage of Minority and “Unknown” Race/Ethnicity Enlisted Personnel in Ranks E7–E9, September 2008



- Regarding non-Hispanic “others”
 - The Coast Guard, with nearly 10 percent of its E1–E6 personnel reporting in this category, stands out.
 - The Navy follows with 7.1 percent and the other Services range between 1.0 and 2.8 percent.
- Regarding “unknown,”
 - This category is fairly even, with percentages ranging between 0.8 percent and 2.7 percent.

Figure 4 shows detailed race/ethnicity shares of enlisted personnel in ranks E7–E9. Table 4 shows raw counts.

Points to Take Away from Figure 4

- Regarding non-Hispanic Asians and Pacific Islanders,
 - Excluding the Navy, with 7.6 percent in this category, and the Coast Guard, with 0.2 percent, representation across the Services is fairly even, ranging from 1.9 to 2.4 percent.
 - The ratios of the senior to the lower ranks are as follows: Air Force = 0.54, Army = 0.54, Coast Guard = 0.14, Marine Corps = 0.80, and Navy = 1.23. As noted above, ratios close to 1.0 indicate similar profiles when comparing the two groups within a Service.
- Regarding non-Hispanic blacks,
 - The Army, with 33.1 percent representation, stands out in this category. In the Marine Corps, the Air Force, and the Navy, black non-Hispanic shares range from 18.0 to 21.7 percent. The Coast Guard has the lowest representation in this category with 5.6 percent.
 - The ratios of the senior to the lower ranks are as follows: Air Force = 1.10, Army = 1.71, Coast Guard = 0.98, Marine Corps = 2.26, and Navy = 0.94. The Marine Corps and the Army stand out in this category. Along with the Air Force, they have proportionately more non-Hispanic blacks in the senior ranks than in ranks E1–E6.
- Regarding Hispanics,
 - In the Marine Corps, Hispanics make up 14 percent of the senior enlisted ranks. In the Army and the Navy, the Hispanic shares are 9.3 percent and 8.6 percent, respectively. The Air Force and the Coast Guard are similar, with 5.3 percent and 5.8 percent Hispanic shares, respectively.
 - The ratios of the senior to the lower ranks are as follows: Air Force = 0.96, Army = 0.76, Coast Guard = 0.46, Marine Corps = 1.08, and Navy = 0.51.

- 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

Military Leadership Diversity Commission. (2009, November). *How we define race and ethnicity categories for MLDC research* [Issue Paper #1]. Arlington, VA: Military Leadership Diversity Commission.

Military Leadership Diversity Commission. (2010, February). *Demographic profile of the active-duty officer corps: September 2008 snapshot* [Issue Paper #13]. Arlington, VA: Military Leadership Diversity Commission.