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Military Leadership Diversity
Commission
1851 South Bell Street
Arlington, VA 22202
(703) 602-0818

<http://mldc.whs.mil/>

The Prior Service Recruiting Pool for National Guard and Reserve Selected Reserve (SelRes) Officers

Abstract

In the active-duty military, diversity starts at recruitment. This is also holds true for the National Guard and Reserve. As a part of a series of issue papers that examine demographic representation in the National Guard and Reserve, this issue paper examines racial/ethnic and gender composition of the prior service officer recruitment pool and of prior service officer accessions for the Selected Reserve (SelRes) across National Guard and Reserve Components. Our research shows that the majority of SelRes accessions had prior service experience and affiliated with the SelRes in pay grades O-3 and O-4. This suggests that the main SelRes recruiting pool came from the military itself rather than from the public at large. The results also show that the recruiting pool for the National Guard and Reserve was less demographically diverse than that of the Active Component (AC). Among those in the prior service pool, women and minorities, with the exception of blacks, were as likely or 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 most minority groups.

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 officer accessions (i.e., gains from officers with prior military service) and the prior service officer accession pool for the Selected Reserve (SelRes) in all seven Reserve and National Guard components.¹ 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 to the profiles of the recruiting pool for the active-duty military?
- 3) At what rate did officers who leave 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 to the profiles of each force and the profiles of the relevant-age eligible population?

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, 2010d). 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 the primary source of officer 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 enlisted personnel in the RC (see Military Leadership Diversity Commission, forthcoming).

Data and Definitions

The Prior Service Pool and Prior Service Accessions

For the purposes of this IP, the prior service officer accession pool is defined as the pool of all officers who leave active duty within a particular fiscal year (FY).² A SelRes prior service officer accession is defined as an officer who joins a SelRes unit 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 officer 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 Recruiting Pool for Active-Duty Officers

To determine how the demographic profile of the prior service accession pool for SelRes officers differs from that of the civilian recruiting pool for active-duty officers, this IP uses the external, or civilian, benchmark for officers in pay grades O-1 through O-3 that was presented in IP #26 (Military Leadership Diversity Commission, 2010b). This benchmark is defined as labor-force participants, age 23–40, with citizenship and at least a bachelor's degree. This age range is a broader measure of the civilian officer recruiting pool than the one used in the IP on active-duty officer accessions (Military Leadership Diversity Commission, 2010c), which uses age 34, rather than 40, as a cut off. This wider age range was used to account for the fact that prior service accessions affiliate with the SelRes at higher ranks and older ages.³ The data for this civilian benchmark come from the March 2008 Current Population Survey (CPS).

Race and Ethnicity

This IP uses the following race/ethnicity categories:⁴

- 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, for all seven components, the vast majority—an average of 87 percent—of SelRes officer accessions are prior service accessions. This means that the relevant

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 Active Component (AC) of the military, and it has two important implications for the potential diversity of the RC. First, the demographics of RC accessions are constrained by the demographics of the AC population. Second, the eligibility issues that affect the demographic diversity of AC accessions only *indirectly* affect RC accessions (via their effect on the AC).

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	94.3%	5.7%
Air National Guard	91.3%	8.7%
Army National Guard	84.8%	15.2%
Army Reserve	80.1%	19.9%
Coast Guard Reserve	87.7%	12.3%
Marine Corps Reserve	97.2%	2.8%
Navy Reserve	89.6%	10.9%
Total	87.3%	12.7%

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.

The law requires all active-duty officers to serve a minimum of six to eight years, with the specific length of service depending on the officer's occupation and training. This period is known as the minimum service obligation (MSO). The law further requires that any qualified officer who is released from active duty before completing his or her MSO must transfer to an RC in either the SelRes or the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) to fulfill the legal requirement.⁵ When such a transfer occurs, yet another provision of the law allows the former active-duty officer to receive his or her reserve appointment at the grade at which he or she was serving when he or she left active duty.⁶ Table 2 shows that the vast majority of prior service accessions (roughly 87 percent) joined the SelRes at pay grade O-3 or O-4. This pattern varies somewhat by component, with the highest O-3/O-4 share occurring for the Navy Reserve (95 percent) and the lowest occurring for the Coast Guard Reserve (72 percent). The Coast Guard Reserve and the Marine Corps Reserve were the only two components with substantial shares of O-2 accessions.

The data used for this IP do not allow for the explicit identification of accessions who joined the SelRes to fulfill their MSOs. However, Department of Defense (DoD) guidelines dictate that promotion to O-4 occurs between nine and 11 years of service.⁷ Therefore, any prior service accessions

occurring at O-3 or below may represent officers who joined the SelRes to fulfill their MSOs. In contrast, most of those joining at O-4 or above would have left the AC after serving 12–15 years and would likely have completed their MSOs before transferring to the SelRes.

The Demographic Profile of the Prior Service Pool

For FY 2008, Table 3 shows the female and minority shares of the prior service accession pool overall and for each component. For context, the table also shows the female and

minority shares of the civilian O-1 through O-3 eligible population benchmark as a proxy for the active-duty officer recruiting pool. Compared with the benchmark, the overall prior service pool and the pools for each component had fewer women, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics. How black shares compared to the benchmark varied by Service: Compared with the benchmark, blacks were overrepresented in the Army pool and underrepresented in the Coast Guard and Marine Corps pools. Thus, in FY 2008, the RC pool had fewer women and, in some cases, fewer minorities, than the AC pool.

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

	O-1	O-2	O-3	O-4	O-5	O-6
Air Force Reserve	0.9%	5.9%	46.7%	43.3%	3.0%	0.2%
Air National Guard	1.9%	6.8%	47.8%	42.4%	1.1%	0.0%
Army National Guard	3.9%	8.8%	81.2%	5.6%	0.5%	0.0%
Army Reserve	3.5%	6.9%	78.3%	10.0%	1.1%	0.2%
Coast Guard Reserve	0.3%	19.5%	53.1%	19.2%	5.8%	2.1%
Marine Corps Reserve	2.7%	15.7%	46.4%	31.1%	3.6%	0.6%
Navy Reserve	2.9%	1.2%	62.7%	32.4%	0.9%	0.0%
Total	2.7%	8.1%	64.9%	22.3%	1.7%	0.2%

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

NOTES: No officers joined at a pay grade higher than O-6. Prior service accessions by pay grade for each fiscal year are shown in the appendix in Table A2.

Table 3. Demographic Profiles of the Prior Service Pool, by Service Versus a Proxy for the Active-Duty Recruiting Pool, FY 2008

	Female ^a	API ^a	B ^a	H ^a	O ^a
Air Force	21.6%	2.3%	7.5%	4.4%	1.4%
Army	20.2%	3.0%	11.7%	4.8%	0.7%
Coast Guard	18.0%	0.0%	5.8%	5.5%	11.1%
Marine Corps	7.6%	2.0%	4.6%	4.4%	1.9%
Navy	18.4%	3.1%	7.0%	4.9%	1.5%
Total	19.1%	2.7%	8.8%	4.7%	1.4%
Active-duty recruiting pool proxy ^b	52.7%	6.1%	8.5%	6.6%	1.3%

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

NOTE: API = Asian and Pacific Islander, B = Black, H = Hispanic, O = Other. “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.

^a 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.

^b Defined by four characteristics: citizen, active labor-force participant, college education, and between the ages of 23 and 40.

Affiliation Rates by Gender and Race/Ethnicity

For men and women, Table 4 presents the percentages of officers from the overall prior service pool who joined a SelRes unit within six months of leaving active duty. Each percentage is calculated *within each 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.

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

	Men	Women
O-1	3.9%	4.1%
O-2	14.1%	11.8%
O-3	17.0%	15.8%
O-4	7.9%	8.8%
O-5	0.9%	0.5%
O-6	0.1%	0.0%
O-7	0.0%	0.0%
O-8	0.0%	0.0%
O-9	0.0%	*
O-10	0.0%	*
Total	8.6%	10.1%

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.

* No officers available to join SelRes from prior service pool.

Therefore, the percentages can be thought of as crude affiliation rates. The data show that, across the Services, women joined at slightly higher rates than men—10 percent versus 9 percent—thus indicating that, relative to their share of the prior service pool, women were slightly overrepresented among FY 2008 accessions. This pattern varies slightly by pay grade, with women in the O-2 and O-3 pools being slightly less likely to join.

Table 5 shows the same data by race/ethnicity. Again, the percentages reflect *within-group* rates of joining a SelRes unit. As shown in the table, 7 percent of whites in the prior service pool joined a SelRes unit. Overall, Asian/Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, and others joined at higher rates than whites, and blacks joined at a lower rate. These affiliation rates indicate that, relative to their shares of the prior pool, Asian/Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, and others were overrepresented among FY 2008 officer accessions and that blacks were underrepresented. Although there was some variation by pay grade, the trend was generally consistent from O-1 through O-6. At pay grades above that level, either no one joined the SelRes or there was no one available to join.

Demographic Profiles of Prior Service SelRes Accessions

Table 6 shows the female and minority shares of actual SelRes gains from the prior service pool. When compared with the active-duty recruiting pool proxy, women were underrepresented among actual SelRes accessions, overall and for each component. The same was true for all minority race/ethnicity groups with the following exceptions. Blacks

Table 5. Share of Prior Service Pool That Joined a SelRes Unit, by Race/Ethnicity Group and Pay Grade, FY 2008

	API	B	H	O	W
O-1	11.9%	2.9%	3.6%	7.7%	4.0%
O-2	10.0%	18.8%	14.6%	20.0%	12.0%
O-3	17.0%	11.4%	17.6%	19.2%	14.1%
O-4	9.2%	3.8%	7.1%	17.1%	7.7%
O-5	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	0.9%
O-6	0.0%	0.8%	2.7%	0.0%	0.0%
O-7	*	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
O-8	*	0.0%	*	*	0.0%
O-9	*	0.0%	*	*	0.0%
O-10	*	*	*	*	0.0%
Total	12.1%	5.7%	10.8%	14.1%	7.3%

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.

* No officers available to join SelRes from prior service pool.

in the Marine Corps, Hispanics in the Navy, and others in the Coast Guard and the Marine Corps were overrepresented compared with the external benchmark. Thus, RC officer accessions were not representative, in terms of race/ethnicity and gender, of the eligible civilian population.

Since accessions can be thought of as the baseline for future leaders, Table 6 also shows an internal benchmark based on the FY 2008 profiles of RC midgrade officers. All else equal, when the accession share of any group is greater than the benchmark share, that group will have greater representation among future midgrade officers than among current midgrade officers. Conversely, when the accession share of any group is lower than the benchmark share, that group is likely to have lower representation among future midgrade officers.

When compared with female shares of midgrade RC officers in each Service, female accession shares were higher in the Army, Air Force, and Coast Guard and lower in the Marine Corps and the Navy. In terms of race/ethnicity, the minority shares of RC prior service accessions were generally higher than their shares of midgrade RC officers, although there are a few notable exceptions. First, there were no Asian/Pacific Islander accessions in the Coast Guard or Marine Corps. Second, black accession shares were lower

than the benchmark shares in all Services except the Marine Corps. Third, Hispanic accession shares were lower than the benchmark in the Coast Guard.

Conclusion

The primary goal of this IP was to show the racial/ethnic and gender compositions of both prior service officer accessions and the prior service officer accession pool for the entire SelRes and for each Reserve and National Guard Component. There are five sets of findings, each with its own implications:

- The vast majority of SelRes officer accessions had prior service experience and affiliated with the SelRes in pay grades O-3 and O-4. Thus, the main SelRes recruiting pool came from the military itself rather than from the public at large.
- Compared with the relevant-age eligible portion of the U.S. population, the pool of prior service officer accessions had fewer women, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics. Therefore, the effective RC officer recruiting pool was less demographically diverse than the AC officer pool.
- Among those in the prior service officer pool, women and all minorities, except blacks, were as likely or more likely than men and whites, respectively, to join the SelRes. This means that the net effect of factors—institutional and other—that determine whether departing active-duty members join the SelRes was positive for women and most minorities.

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

	Percentage of SelRes Gains				
	Female ^a	API ^a	B ^a	H ^a	O ^a
Air Force	20.7%	3.3%	4.6%	5.9%	1.3%
Army	22.6%	4.3%	5.6%	5.6%	0.3%
Coast Guard	36.4%	0.0%	6.5%	3.9%	33.8%
Marine Corps	7.5%	0.0%	8.8%	6.3%	2.5%
Navy	10.2%	3.4%	6.8%	8.5%	0.0%
Total	21.7%	3.6%	5.7%	5.7%	2.3%
Active-duty recruiting pool proxy ^b	52.7%	6.1%	8.5%	6.6%	1.3%
O-4 to O-6 internal RC benchmark ^c	16.9%	2.3%	8.5%	4.4%	0.4%

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 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.

^a 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.

^b Defined by four characteristics: citizen, active labor-force participant, college education, and between ages of 23 and 40.

^c The group shares of officers in these pay grades in FY 2008.

- Compared with the relevant-age eligible portion of the U.S. population, women were underrepresented among prior service accessions, as were most racial/ethnic minorities. Therefore, the RC accessions were less demographically diverse than the AC pool.
- Compared with shares of current midgrade RC officers, overall female accession shares and the accession shares of all minorities, except blacks, were higher. Thus, the pool of DoD-wide, future midgrade officers are likely to be more diverse than the midgrade officers from FY 2008. The patterns differ, however, across groups and components such that the accession shares for some groups in some components were lower and others were higher. Therefore, future expectations of diversity differ by group and component.

Notes

¹The 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 Air Force Reserve, and the Coast Guard Reserve.

²Not all active-duty losses are included in our sample. We disregarded all those we considered ineligible. We used the DoD Separation Program Designator (SPD) codes 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.

³Because 22 percent of prior service accessions join at O-4 and an additional 3 percent join at even higher ranks, it might also have been appropriate to present the O-4 through O-6 benchmark from IP #26 (Military Leadership Diversity Commission, 2010b). The female and minority shares for this benchmark were not, however, sufficiently different from those of the O-1 through O-3 benchmark to add to the story here.

⁴See 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.

⁵See Title 10 U.S. Code 651.

⁶See Title 10 U.S. Code 12206.

⁷See DoD Instruction 1320.13 (U.S. Department of Defense, 2009).

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