
Recruiter Reality

HANDOUT

Military recruiters operate under a quota system, and have found their duties increasingly difficult in light of the ongoing tragedies in Iraq and Afghanistan. Individual quotas vary, but a typical recruiter is expected to enlist 10 to 12 high school juniors and seniors per school, per year.¹

Despite their persistence and pervasiveness, many are falling short of their goals. This has led to more aggressive recruiting in high schools, especially in those serving low-income and minority students.²

In 2005, 5 of 10 military components — the Army, Army Reserve, Army National Guard, Air National Guard, and Navy Reserve — missed their recruiting goals by a range of 8-20%. The entire military missed its target of 299,333 enlistees by 25,057 (8.4%).³

Overall, this has resulted in the lowering of recruitment standards and has led to a high level of misconduct on the part of recruiters:

- The Army's statistics show cases of wrongdoing by recruiters increased by more than 60% in 2004. Recruiters and former Army officials attribute the rise in abuse to the extraordinary pressure being put on recruiters, who must meet quotas of roughly two recruits a month. The strain is breeding not just abuses, they said, but stress-related illnesses, damaged marriages and even thoughts of suicide among some.⁴
- For the first time since 1998, the Army has lowered its standards, accepting more recruits without high school diplomas.⁵
- "Interviews with more than two dozen recruiters in 10 states hint at the extent of their concern, if not the exact scope of the transgressions. Several spoke of concealing mental-health histories and police records. They described falsified documents, wallet-size cheat sheets slipped to applicants before the military's aptitude test, and commanding officers who look the other way. And they voiced doubts about the quality of some troops destined for the front lines."⁶

¹ *PBS News Hour with Jim Lehrer*, aired 12 May 2005 www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/military/jan-june05/recruiting_5-12.html

² *Ibid.*

³ GAO-06-134: "Military Personnel: DOD Needs Action Plan to Address Enlisted Personnel Recruitment and Retention Challenges," November 2005. www.gao.gov/new.items/d06134.pdf

⁴ Cave, Damien, "Army to Spend Day Retraining Recruiters," *New York Times*, 12 May 2005

⁵ Cave, Damien, "For Recruiters, a Hard Toll From a Hard Sell" *New York Times*, 27 March 2005

⁶ Cave, Damien, "Army Recruiters Say They Feel Pressure to Bend Rules," *New York Times*, 3 May 2005



- "Recruiters in Ohio, New York, Washington, Texas and New England said that as long as an offending recruiter met his enlistment quota of roughly two recruits a month, punishment was unlikely. 'The saying here is, "Production is power.'" the recruiter in northern Ohio said. 'Produce, and all is good.'"¹
- By the Army's own count, there were 320 substantiated cases of "recruitment improprieties" in 2004. The offenses varied from threats and coercion to false promises that applicants would not be sent to Iraq. 1,118 recruiters (nearly 20% of active recruiters) were investigated for improprieties in 2004.²
- The Army's figures also show that it is not punishing offenses as it once did. In 2002, roughly half of recruiters who were found to have committed improprieties intentionally or through gross negligence were relieved of duty; in 2004, that number slipped to 3 in 10.³
- Former Marine Staff Sgt. Jimmey Massey recruited in the Appalachian Mountains of western North Carolina. During his years as a recruiter, he signed up 75 young men, mostly working class. Massey often used deceptive techniques he called "frauding" to get young men to sign up, which included coaching new recruits to lie about medical conditions and drug use on entrance forms. "When I got on recruiting duty, I was quickly taken underneath a senior recruiter's wing and explained the ropes of how real recruiting works," said Massey. Of the 75 young men Massey signed up, he says 70 of them were the result of frauding.⁴

This handout was researched and written by Nick Raymond
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¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *NOW*, 25 November 2005. www.pbs.org/now/transcript/transcriptNOW147_full.html

