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CIVILIAN ORGANIZATIONAL INHIBITORS TO U.S. ARMY RECRUITING AND THE ROAD AHEAD

BY

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**CIVILIAN ORGANIZATIONAL INHIBITORS
TO U.S. ARMY RECRUITING AND THE ROAD AHEAD**

by

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ABSTRACT

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In order to continue prosecuting Overseas Contingency Operations, and to secure opportunities for diplomacy and statecraft into the future, leaders of our Nation will continue to rely heavily on the United States Armed Forces. Since 1973, an all-volunteer force has comprised the formations of the United States Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Coast Guard. Non-Commissioned Officers have recruited this all-volunteer force, by providing information and presenting opportunities to young Americans considering their future. Hundreds of organizations throughout our Country have a negative influence on our recruiting efforts, using techniques and strategies that frequently depict professional military recruiters in an ill light, disillusion influencers and dissuade potential applicants from looking into military service as a viable option. More often than not, our strategy has been to disengage at the tactical level and re-focus efforts where the success is more likely. Our failure as an enterprise to understand and address the mis-information and challenge these organizations may hurt the quality of

Soldiers in our formations, and more importantly leave a bad impression on our centers of influence.

This paper will identify organizations throughout the United States that aim to hinder, deter, or prevent United States Army Recruiters from presenting information and providing opportunities to their target market. It will address the central themes used by these organizations to dissuade young Americans from serving, an analysis and discussion of these themes, and a discussion on the tactical, operational, and strategic communications in response.

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CIVILIAN ORGANIZATIONAL INHIBITORS TO U.S. ARMY RECRUITING AND THE ROAD AHEAD

“Be convinced that to be happy means to be free and that to be free means to be brave. Therefore do not take lightly the perils of war.” –Thucydides--

BACKGROUND

The United States and the international community are engaged in a global war on terrorism that has affected all developed states of the Western World. In order to continue prosecuting the overseas contingencies, and to secure opportunities for diplomacy and statecraft into the future, leaders of our Nation will rely heavily on the United States Army, the largest branch of the United States Armed Forces. “The Secretary of the Army is responsible for the department of the Army, including the following functions: recruiting, organizing, supplying, equipping, training, servicing, mobilizing, demobilizing”¹ responsibilities which are grounded in Title 10 United States Code

Since 1973, the formations of America’s Army, the most powerful ground force in the world, have been graced with an all-volunteer force, recruited by, Non-Commissioned Officers from high school student centers, college campuses, gymnasiums, fitness facilities, shopping malls, state fairs, car racing venues, ultimate fighting competitions, and other places where people gather. It is this professional recruiting force that provides information and presents opportunities to young Americans considering their options, and how service in America’s Army may be part of that future.

The recruiting mission is considerable. In order to resource the Army's 569,000 Active Component force, 358,200 National Guard force, and 205,000 United States Army Reserve force, America's Army recruited 149,800² Soldiers in 2009. The President of the United States and his Combatant Commanders are pursuing a counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan which requires a significant increase in servicemen and women, somewhere around 30,000, and America's Army is the major muscle movement of that surge. The unique challenges associated with fighting a counterinsurgency will require more than ever that our Soldiers and their small unit leaders are bright, have cultural awareness, and understand how their unit mission set translates to the strategic goals of the NATO coalition and the United States in Afghanistan. Plainly put, we need our Army to be the face of the United States of America in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

"If given the choice between peace and righteousness, I choose righteousness." -- Benjamin Franklin--

PROBLEM STATEMENT

In order to continue to enlist the quality Soldiers needed to achieve success in these overseas contingencies, our recruiting force needs to have access to young Americans who are receptive to being presented with information, training, requirements, benefits, and opportunities so that they can make an informed decisions about whether or not to serve in the United States Army.

Our 11,000 strong recruiting force reaches out to communities, schools, and venues located in more than 3,000 recruiting stations across the Country. These professional Soldiers are countered by hundreds of organizations that endeavor to have

a negative influence on our recruiting efforts. They use techniques and strategies that frequently depict professional military recruiters in an ill-light, disillusion influencers, and dissuade potential applicants from looking into military service as a viable option.

Too often, the tactic of our recruiting force when engaged by a hostile force, is to break contact, and re-focus efforts and resources where those hostile to military recruitment are less likely to be confronted, and therefore where success is more likely. Our failure as an enterprise to address the mis-information, and challenge these organizations, leaves a bad impression on centers of influence, and more importantly may hurt the quality of Soldiers in our future formations.

It is imperative that our Army recruiters and Army leaders understand the messages that are communicated to centers of influence by the counter-recruiting forces throughout our Country, so that our Army can address the mis-information that is discussed and debated around conference centers, in lunch rooms, and around the dinner tables of America. This paper will identify organizations throughout the United States that aim to hinder, deter, or prevent our Recruiters from presenting information and providing opportunities to their audience. It will address the central themes used by these organizations to dissuade young Americans from serving. It will analyze, discuss, and address these themes. And, finally, it will provide recommendations on how we as an Army should respond and react at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels in order to ensure a fair and accurate picture of America's Army, and provide an unobstructed conduit into the decision making cycles of those who represent the next generation of America's Army.

“Never give in--never, never, never, never, in nothing great or small, large or petty, never give in except to convictions of honour and good sense. Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy.” --Sir Winston Churchill--

COUNTER-RECRUITING ORGANIZATIONS

There are hundreds of counter-recruiting organizations, associations, and groups across the United States. These groups represent different segments of society, and have different twists on the central theme, which is, joining the United States Army, or any other service of the United States Armed Forces, is a bad decision.

Counter-recruiting groups have many common characteristics, including the perception that they are obliged to inform and educate those who are considering service in our Army. Some actually do a decent job of providing useful information, decision making tools and counsel to those who are considering enlistment in the United States Army. Others base their arguments on religious principles that if implemented as a matter of policy would significantly decrement our Nation’s security and stability. It is imperative that Army Recruiters, and Army leadership, understand the arguments, perspectives, and messages of these groups in order to be in a position to respond. Failing to address a frequently repeated inaccurate statement provides the uninformed audience with a belief that the message is accurate.

Religious-Based Organizations

Quaker House

The “Quaker House”³ organization, which is headquartered in Fayetteville, North Carolina, is a very good starting point, as it is an organization that has reasonably deep

roots, having been in existence for over 40 years. Quaker House has Nation-wide reach, and offers free and personal services to individuals considering enlistment or currently serving. Noteworthy is the fact that Quaker House was founded on the principles of the Religious Society of Friends (Quaker) Church, which has a testimony against war for any reason, prohibits service in the Armed Forces as a combatant, and actively campaigns against war.

The manner in which the Quaker House illustrates their support for their Quaker ideals is by endeavoring to hurt our Army's recruiting and retention efforts by: 1. providing reference material to potential Soldiers and centers of influence that negatively portrays the military recruiter and the enlistment process; 2. counseling enlistees in the delayed entry program on how they can terminate their enlistment; 3. counseling Soldiers on active duty on how to adjudicate their situation when they are in an unexcused absence or absent without leave status; 4. counseling to Soldiers on how they can quickly adjudicate a conscientious objector status with the Army; 5. providing expertise to Soldiers on discharge procedures and regulations.

Quaker House publishes and widely distributes a document entitled, "Meet Sgt. Abe, the Honest Recruiter"⁴. This pamphlet emphasizes that the applicant needs to thoroughly read and understand the enlistment contract before signing the document. The pamphlet draws attention to the fact that the Army can at will extend an enlistment indefinitely, that "Recruiters make 'sweet promises' that the Army is not required to deliver"⁵. The pamphlet draws attention to the fact that serving in the Army is "not a normal job"⁶, and that "you can be sent to war"⁷. The final few pages give our impressionable applicant some "things to think about", included in this list is that "much

military training is NOT useful in civilian jobs”⁸; that “many Vets suffer LONG-TERM physical and psychological damage: PTSD, ‘Gulf War Syndrome’”⁹, that “Women in the military face a HIGH RISK of sexual harassment and rape”¹⁰; that “military life is hard on families with higher rates of domestic abuse and divorce”¹¹, that “there are long delays in getting veterans benefits”¹²; that dozens of Soldiers are killed and hundreds are wounded every month”¹³. Finally, Sgt Abe warns the potential Soldier to, “think HARD before you sign – your life could be at stake”¹⁴

Mennonite Central Committee

The Mennonite Central Committee¹⁵, is a religious-based organization, comprised of Amish, Hutterites, and Mennonites, operates with a \$65,000,000+ budget¹⁶, and one of its many programs is a counter-recruitment campaign against the United States Armed Forces. It is important to note that the Mennonite Central Committee condemns any type of oath by a believer to anyone other than God, and establishes the precept that a believer must not bear arms or offer forcible resistance to wrongdoers, nor wield the sword. “Pacifism is one of the cornerstones of the Mennonite faith, prompting many young Mennonites to elect service to the church rather than service in the military.”¹⁷ Among the shared convictions established at the Mennonite World Conference is that “the Spirit of Jesus empowers us to trust God in all areas of life so we become peacemakers who renounce violence, love our enemies...”¹⁸ It is easy to deduce from the Committee’s own publications that they are pacifistically oriented, and do not believe in defense in either the case of the individual or the defense of one’s Nation. Specifically, in regards to global violence, the Committee

challenges its members to “directly confront the reality of violence in and around” them.¹⁹

Like Quaker House, the Mennonite Central Committee endeavors to impact our recruiting efforts through an information campaign directed toward high school guidance counselors. They distribute an information bulletin²⁰ and flyer²¹ which challenges a high school guidance counselor to do their job in ensuring that their students are not joining the military for the wrong reasons. In this flier, the Mennonite Central Committee emphasizes that the delayed entry program does not commit a new Soldier from shipping to training, and explains in great detail the process to free a student from that contract. The flier highlights the fact that most students enlist in order for education benefits, and suggests that a student will NOT get the amount of money promised by their recruiter. The flier emphasizes that these students will be trained and expected to kill on the field of battle, and that the guidance counselor should ensure that there is an understanding of this expectation.

The Mennonite Central Committee highlights on their “ask a veteran”²² web site link the very negative opinions of those who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces. All of the individuals highlighted regret having served in the U.S. Armed Forces, and provide a variety of reasons. These reasons include the following: serving in the military is incompatible with following Jesus; basic training is de-humanizing; the military trains soldiers to hate entire groups of people; soldiers do not show sadness in removing evil, but instead rejoice in the opportunity to kill; the military makes every effort to rob what is inside a person; people for whom we are fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan do not want us there; I came to the determination that love is stronger than fear, hate, suffering, and

death. The veteran testimonials ranged from their description of the sincere sorrow that followed the death of a comrade to the frustrations of not being able to do more for a soldier in need. In all cases they describe how they eventually came to see our presence in Iraq, Afghanistan and other places as illegal, and against their convictions.

Finally, the Mennonite central committee builds and markets a case of why it is unjust to be a Christian and serve as a Soldier in the United States Armed Forces. They do this through a program called “Christian Peacemaker Registration Form”²³, which is oriented towards youth groups through various churches, and is ultimately focused on getting young Christians to become Conscientious Objectors. The movement challenges youth ages 16-18 to begin a “file of your peace convictions”²⁴

It is natural, and to a degree expected, that Christian organizations take a non-violent approach to conflict resolution. For this reason, it is not unexpected and to add to this file periodically in order to be able to demonstrate their sincerity and long-term commitment to peace, when asked.

It is natural, and to a degree expected, that Christian organizations take a non-violent approach to conflict resolution. For this reason, it is not unexpected that organizations like Quaker House and the Mennonite Central Committee oppose military service and recruitment. However, our Army and our Recruiters are also confronted by those who have served, including some whom have led our formations. Their premise for countering our Army efforts and recruiting endeavors carries considerable weight, especially with those who have no military experiences.

“If man does find the solution for world peace it will be the most revolutionary reversal of his record we have ever known.” --George C. Marshall--

Veterans Organizations

Most American citizens have not served in the United States Armed Forces, and increasingly fewer citizens have ties to America's Army. As a result, they depend on others to provide them with their situational awareness and understanding of the service. It is for this reason that veteran organizations which counter-recruit approach society with automatic credibility. In general, those who are considering service in America's Army want to talk to veterans, and veteran organizations who deliver a counter-recruiting message carry a great deal of weight with our young Americans. These are Soldiers, who have completed initial entry training, have served our Nation, have represented the institution that potential Soldiers may join, and who are now disenfranchised with their service. There are numerous organizations that fall into this category; I will provide an overview of two of them.

Iraq Veterans Against the War

In July 2004, the Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW)²⁵ organized during a National Convention of Veterans For Peace (VFP) in Boston. Veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan have built a coalition under this organization to disenfranchise currently serving military personnel with the war effort with the hope of instigating the eventual withdrawal of "occupying forces" in Iraq, along with other demands of the United States Government.

IAVA has a specific counter recruitment campaign, which they refer to as "truth-in-recruiting"²⁶, and their efforts could be quite effective. Veterans' stories about combat are powerful, and can be influential, especially when delivered out of context, and with a desired outcome of shaping the minds of our young men and women against service in

America's Army. Their campaign includes visiting high schools, talking to students about their hardships and experiences, and even developing relationships with teachers in order to get an opportunity to present their respective stories during class time. IVAW reaches out to counselors and administrators, and garner their support to get parents to sign an opt-out form, which prevents the school from releasing student information to the U.S. Army Recruiter who has responsibility for the school. They campaign against the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps programs in our high schools, and protest recruiters when they visit schools.

Veterans for Peace

Veterans for Peace²⁷ is another military-related counter-recruiting organization. While they profess to not discourage individuals from enlisting, Veterans for Peace does endeavor to portray a "more complete picture" of the secondary effects of enlisting. Their 14 minute 32 second video on Youtube, "Before You Enlist"²⁸, begins with video from the United States Army Recruiting Command, where a recruiter comments that, "just because you get deployed doesn't mean you will end up in the Middle East or Iraq"²⁹ – followed quickly by an applicant saying, "if I were to get mobilized, it wouldn't be a whole big ordeal"³⁰. These comments are quickly retorted by a Soldier who had been severely injured in an improvised explosive device in Iraq, his mother providing an overview of her son's injuries³¹. Next, a Marine veteran of Vietnam addresses the invincibility of being a Marine ending as soon as one engages in combat, and that "all of the myths and lies" that a recruit has been told are "over"³². This is followed by a stepmother talking about her stepson being killed in Fallujah, and the fact that he was only 19 years old when he enlisted, and therefore he could not know what he would

face in Iraq³³. Next, there is an excerpt from a U.S. Army Recruiting Command video of a recruit talking about joining for the educational benefits³⁴.

Several veterans then discuss the smoking mirrors associated with educational benefits. There is a claim that “on average the Montgomery GI Bill will only cover ½ the cost of a public college and 1/5 the cost of a private college”³⁵. Further, they communicate a message that Soldiers in the Reserve Components of the U.S. Army are prevented from using education benefits due to repeated deployments. And, by the time a Soldier completes two and three tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, they are in no shape to go to college. A former Reservist says that because he cannot use GI Bill benefits after being discharged that the government is not fulfilling their obligation to him³⁶.

The video transitions to a recruit saying that he is joining the U.S. Army because, “service will help me in civilian life”³⁷. This transitions immediately to a young man who served in Iraq who says, “I’m a great killer; I know how to blow up bridges and buildings, and people, and how to dismantle mines”³⁸; this same young man says that the Army prepared him to be a custodian. Another veteran commenting that she was absolutely lost after leaving the service, and worked menial jobs for many years, and still does not have a direction³⁹.

The video then transitions to a Vietnam veteran talking about his transition from Southeast Asia to his life here in the United States, and his homeless lifestyle of panhandling for three years⁴⁰. The video shows a statistic that “the VA estimates on any given night 200,000 veterans are homeless”⁴¹.

The video includes an interview of a former Recruiter, who indicates that he was trained to cover up one-time drug offenses, and to do what it takes to enlist applicants into the service⁴². The video shows a statistic that “the Government Accounting Office reports 6,600 complaints of recruiting wrongdoing during a one year period.”⁴³

Cindy Sheehan, whose son, SPC Casey Sheehan, was killed in Iraq, said that her son’s recruiter told her that “even if there was a war, he would not see combat”⁴⁴. She clearly communicates on the video that Recruiters will tell a recruit anything in order to get their signature on a contract⁴⁵. Further, this contract binds the recruit, but not the United States government. There is a comment that “since the start of the Iraq War the Army has extended the enlistment of more than 50,000 troops through ‘stop loss’”⁴⁶.

The video again interviews the former Recruiter, who talks about a blue collar community in which he recruited. He mentions that there is little opportunity in this town, and as a result, he could “pull two bodies per month out of this one school”. He then talks about the “class system in America”, and the fact that “the poor really do fight the wars”⁴⁷. They interview a young black man, who says that recruiters target those who have no plan in life, and the recruiter sees himself as Superman saving the day. He explains that he is pursuing a career in rap music, he will go to college if his music career does not progress, and that he is glad he did not enlist⁴⁸. The female veteran comments that many young Americans see the military as an escape, but that in reality it is a system that makes you dependent on it, but that really does not care about you as a person⁴⁹.

The video highlights a U.S. Army Recruiting Command video which provides scenery of the nice community living on a military base, and then interviews a veteran of Fort Hood, who describes an existence of stabbings, rapes, and drug deals⁵⁰. A female veteran comments that, “if you are a female in the military, you are a bitch, a slut, or a lesbian, and this is how you will be treated.” She mentions that as a Soldier in a combat zone, she was fearful of insurgents when on missions, but then fearful of her fellow Soldiers when back in the forward operating base. She talked about other female Soldiers whom she knows were raped, but who were directed by their chain of command to drop the charges because there was not enough evidence⁵¹. The video transitions to a comment that “A Pentagon Report shows 2,374 sexual assaults were reported in the United States military in 2005.”⁵²

The video shows a Striker vehicle, and a Squad leader talking about its capabilities, and then to a young male veteran explaining how his unit was outfitted prior to deploying Northward from Kuwait into Iraq. He indicated that they were told to nail ½” sheets of plywood to canvas doors to protect them, while showing vehicles that had been damaged by improvised explosive devices⁵³. Cindy Sheehan adds that her son was wearing a Vietnam era flack jacket, and going into battle on the back of a trailer⁵⁴

The video shows a United States Army mobile event trailer set up outside a school for a military career day in Washington, D.C. We see young teenagers playing war games on a computer, and listen to a narration that “when you think about war, it’s like a video game, and that is how the recruiters portray it too, which is why they use video games to attract” applicants⁵⁵. She indicated that at no time do they mention the terrible potential secondary effects of military service, including that “as of Sept. 1, 2006,

more than 20,000 US troops have been wounded in Iraq”⁵⁶; and, that “In a Dept. of Defense study 1 in 6 soldiers from Iraq reported symptoms of severe depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).”⁵⁷

One of the Spanish speaking veterans encourages people considering enlistment to talk to others about the Army, not just the recruiters. He recommends that they visit the hospitals where there are soldiers with no legs and who have psychological problems⁵⁸.

The video transitions to an excerpt from a U.S. Army Recruiting Command video. This video shows an artilleryman and an aviator talking about how being in the Army is fun because they “get to blow things up”⁵⁹. The video then shows scenes from Iraq, where young children were carried to an ambulance; the voice of the former recruiter tells us that “war is not a game; once you kill – that’s it; the horrors of killing stay with you forever”⁶⁰. The Spanish speaking Soldier says that his unit killed 30-40 people – only 3 or 4 of which were armed⁶¹. Next, the video showed a statistic that “since the invasion of Iraq an estimated 50,000 to 100,000 civilians have died.”⁶²

The last part of the video showed two Soldiers, one a veteran of Iraq, the other a veteran of Vietnam, talking about the negative mental effects of combat. The Vietnam veteran states, “what you bring back from war is in a literal sense in your bones, in your blood, in your skin, in your tissues, in your mind – FOREVER.”⁶³

“People sleep peaceably in their beds at night only because rough men stand ready to do violence on their behalf.”--George Orwell—

Independent and Unaffiliated Organizations

Most of the counter-recruiting organizations have neither a religious affiliation, nor ties to an organized military organization, but instead are independent. These organizations range in size from a few volunteer leaders and activists to a staff with strategic goals and a formal strategy to dissuade those from serving in the United States Army. These independent organizations focus their efforts and resources toward counter-recruiting in our communities and schools. I will describe one such organization, Courage to Resist, which is a conservative representative of the scores of similar organizations across the country.

Courage to Resist

Courage to Resist⁶⁴ headquartered in the San Francisco Bay area, and provides a conduit through which discontented veterans can voice their dissatisfaction with military service. Courage To Resist endeavors to build support for these Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen, and Coast Guardsmen, and ultimately get them released from their contractual obligation to our Nation. Further, Courage to Resist renders support in terms of legal assistance and referrals, and provides services to veterans throughout the United States. Although their energy is specifically focused toward assisting service members who seek dismissal from their contract with the United States Armed Forces, they also “provide political, emotional, and material support to all military objectors critical of our government’s current policies of empire”⁶⁵, one of these independent organizations, is and it is these efforts that have a negative affect on potential Soldiers in our formations, and the centers of influence in our schools, communities, and religious institutions.

Courage to Resist documents the issues and reasons that veterans outline as justification for not fulfilling their contractual obligation to the United States Government; their stories are quite emotional. Their web site, and the public networking site, Youtube, contain the details of their issues, which are also presented as part of the counter-recruiting efforts in student centers, and other areas where our Army Recruiters provide information and present opportunities.

Sergeant David “Travis” Bishop⁶⁶ was a Soldier in the 57th Expeditionary Signal Battalion, and is recognized by Amnesty International as a “prisoner of conscience”. Bishop was sentenced to 12 months in the stockade for resisting a deployment to Afghanistan, saying that he, “had serious doubts about his views on war for a long time, but was unaware of his right to fight for ‘conscience objector discharge’ until just before he was scheduled to deploy”⁶⁷

Another example is Sergeant Matthis Chiroux⁶⁸, who served as a photojournalist in the U.S. Army for four years. After being discharged from the Army, and while serving out his two year contract in the Inactive Ready Reserve, Sergeant Chiroux received a letter from the Army ordering his return to Active Duty for the purpose of mobilization for Operation Iraqi Freedom. Sergeant Chiroux implored on his videotaped statement that, “this occupation is unconstitutional and illegal and I hereby lawfully refuse to participate.”⁶⁹

One of the more emotional interviews is done by Mr. Bill Carpenter, where he discusses Private First Class Kimberly Rivera’s⁷⁰ enlistment process and brief Army career. Initially, Rivera enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserve in 2000, and describes her ill-feelings about Army Recruiters, how they refused to even speak with her until she

turned 17 years of age, and then placed extreme pressure on her to have a home appointment with them⁷¹. She voiced frustration that she was only presented with three occupational specialties from which to choose, and was shocked upon finding out that she had actually enlisted in the service without her full knowledge⁷². Rivera's first enlistment resulted in an honorable discharge due to pregnancy at initial entry training. Five years later, in 2006, after getting married and having two children, Rivera enlisted in the U.S. Army, became a truck driver, and deployed to Iraq with her unit. She was a gate guard, and met many Iraqis visiting her operating base to receive compensation payments, and for other business. She was traumatized during her three month tour, was quite emotional in describing the Iraqi women and children she met, and provided her thoughts as a mother of their dire circumstances. At the time of the interview, Rivera was fighting deportation from Canada to the United States in order to prevent being sent back to her unit⁷³.

“The difference between a soldier and a civilian lies in the field of civic virtue. A soldier accepts personal responsibility for the safety of the body politic of which he is a member, defending it, if need be, with his life. The civilian does not.” --Robert Heinlein--

COUNTER-RECRUITER THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important that our Army leadership, and the professional Soldiers who serve our Army in our schools and communities, have a general understanding of not only the organizations that counter-recruit, but also an understanding of the messages that they use to deter potential Soldiers and centers of influence. These messages can be summarized into three categories, including: 1. unprofessionalism of the recruiting force and the enlistment process; 2. Inhumaneness and inherent risk associated with service

in America's Army; and, 3. mis-treatment of our Soldiers by the Army. In many cases counter-recruiting individuals and organizations spread myths, partial truths, and untruths about the U.S. Army which are accepted as factual by those considering service as an option. Our Army leaders, and Recruiters need to do more than understand the messages; we need to be prepared to discuss these issues in a professional manner, when called upon to do so.

Message of Unprofessional Recruiting Force and Enlistment Process

Counter-recruiting organizations present our Army Recruiters as vultures who see potential Soldiers as a "body, a "number", and as "prey", who have little or no interest in the individual as a person, and who will do literally anything to enlist the individual into our Army. Counter-recruiting organizations present as evidence Youtube videos, web page links, and newspaper articles highlighting sexual misconduct and criminal activity by Army Recruiters. Their messages highlight our Recruiters lying to applicants, encouraging applicants to lie on their medical and criminal history, promises of bonus money that never come, promises of education benefits that are grossly exaggerated, and promises of state-side duty with no likelihood for service overseas.

Commissioned Officers need to take every opportunity to reinforce reality; that is, our Non-Commissioned Officers are the backbone of our Army; this is true in literally every aspect, occupational specialty, and unit of our service. Our Army's Recruiters are interested in people, have had positive experiences in our Army, and want to share these experiences, and present the same opportunities to our next generation of Soldiers. Our Recruiters develop relationships with young Americans considering their future, provide information, sit at the dinner table with parents and families, and paint a

picture of our Army and how this young man or woman may fit into this institution. Like society in general, Soldiers in our Army are as connected today as they have ever been in history, and it is impossible to enlist someone and not be held accountable, or not remain connected in some way.

As professionals, our Recruiters are sickened when a peer violates his oath as a Soldier and the Creed of the Non-Commissioned Officer, through abuse of power and influence, resulting in crimes being committed against applicants, and against society. Army leadership needs to continue to support the Recruiting Battalion leadership in punishing to the maximum extent those who violate our code of conduct. Our Recruiting Battalion leadership teams need to continue to maintain situational awareness of the issues within the respective recruiting teams. Further, recruiting teams need to disseminate and discuss media reports from throughout the country during their periodic meetings. It is important that we reinforce within our recruiters that poor judgment will greatly damage them both professionally and personally, and will result in tremendous embarrassment to their families. It is very important to talk about the issues, and communicate the expectation that it is the responsibility of a professional to hold other professionals accountable to the standard, as accountability and adherence to the Creed that contribute to the “professional” designation of our Non-Commissioned Officer Corps.

And, while our adversaries in counter-recruiting organizations use every tool to highlight the transgressions of a small fraction of the Corps, it is the responsibility of each individual Recruiter to hold himself, and his or her peers, accountable to the principles which make our Non-Commissioned Officer Corps the very best in the world.

When confronted with media accounts of transgressions, an individual Recruiter needs to communicate that he is a professional, and should in no uncertain terms denigrate the actions of those who have violated the principles by which he stands.

Message of Inhumanity and Inherent Risks of Military Service

Counter-recruiting organizations emphasize, and skew, the negative attributes of our Army culture. Their literature, interviews, and stories address the challenges and grimness of initial entry training and the negative aspects of service in a combat zone. Counter-recruiter groups' messages implore potential Soldiers to consider that they will be trained to kill, they will be deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan, they will live and serve in austere conditions, and they will see destruction and death of both friends and innocent people. They challenge potential Soldiers to visit a hospital and see those who suffer the effects of physical and psychological damage as a result of service in America's Army. Counter-recruiting organizations highlight the increasing domestic abuse and divorce rate present in Army families.

Many of the issues raised by these counter-recruiting organizations are based on truths, although in a quite negative manner. America's Army is the largest of our five services, and provides the major muscle of our Nation's defense team. America's Army contributes significantly to national power and influence, and our Nation depends on America's Army to carry out its core competencies on the battlefield, when called to do so by the President of the United States. These core competencies require our Soldiers to be physically fit, adaptable, flexible, and always ready. Initial entry training for a U.S. Army Soldier is not easy and not everyone who reports will complete training successfully, earn the title of Soldier, and have the privilege of serving in America's

Army. Soldiers must be prepared to employ their assigned weapon and to serve in austere conditions. A truth is that the business of our Army results in casualties, including those who are adversarial combatants. Regretfully, these casualties also include our fellow American Soldiers and civilians or non-combatants. This is a grim reality of war, and certainly those who have fought on any battlefield understand this reality. There are obvious risks to serving in a combat zone, and those who separate themselves from the rest of American society by taking the oath of enlistment or appointment, accept these inherent risks, and further acknowledge that they are willing to serve in austere conditions.

As Senior Army Leaders, and as a recruiting force, it is important that we understand the counter-recruiting message as it pertains to inhumanity, and the inherent risks associated with service in our Army. Further, we need to be able to communicate with potential Soldiers and centers of influence about these issues when called upon to do so. Certainly the framework of our response should include an acknowledgement of the inherent risks. But, at the same time the framework should include an overview of our Nation's need for a strong defense in order that Americans can continue to enjoy the rights and privileges associated with living in this society. Freedom, as they say, is not free, and our Nation depends on Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen, and Coast Guard personnel to serve and defend the interests of our Nation. The response framework also needs to include the outstanding medical support available within minutes of the battlefield in each theater of operation. Finally, the framework needs to include mention of the resources invested by the U.S. Government

in ensuring that those injured and returned to the United States continue to receive the absolute best in terms of treatment and compensation.

Allegations of Mis-Treatment of Soldiers by Army

Many counter-recruiting organizations endeavor to achieve a negative impact on our ability to enlist Soldiers, and to dissuade those from considering service by collecting and documenting the personal stories of veterans. These stories are powerful and influential tools, as they are delivered from a veteran, who at one time was part of the institution into which the applicant is considering enlistment, and they put a face on the concepts and talking points outlined in the counter-recruitment literature. These personal stories communicate a message that Soldiers are sent on back-to-back deployments with no care given to the quality of life of the Soldier, or the well-being of his family. Veterans outline in emotional detail their fear of Soldiers in their units, who commit crimes against one another, and where drug use is rampant. Female veterans detail sexual harassment that is informally condoned by leaders; in addition, female veterans discuss being raped, and worse yet, being told by Army leaders that they should drop the charges due to lack of evidence.

Army leaders and members of recruiting teams need to understand, and even acknowledge, that this type of criminal behavior has taken place, and does take place, in our Army. Failing to acknowledge what is factual discredits both the individual and the institution. However, there are additional points which we need to address when confronted by these very sensitive allegations. First, we need to acknowledge that all Soldiers live by a code of ethics, and that the foundation of this ethic are outlined in the Army Values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal

courage. This code of ethics also includes the Soldier's Creed, and the Creed of the Non-Commissioned Officer. These values and principles are so important to our institution that they are memorized and recited with frequency within our formations, and they clearly demonstrate that the institution of the United States Army does NOT support the mis-treatment of Soldiers, as the mis-treatment of Soldiers violates every principle outlined in the foundational principles of our Army. On the contrary, Soldiers are the cornerstone, and strength, of our formations.

Our Army Leaders and recruiting team members need to consider how to reply to these allegations, and speak from the heart on these sensitive issues. The framework of a response should include the fact that our Army represents the communities from which we come, and although there is no organization that better documents, communicates, and reinforces leadership and policy related to sexual harassment, equal opportunity, and illicit use of non-prescription drugs, violations do take place.

Our Army has many systems intended to provide for the well-being of our Soldiers. These protective systems provide a first layer of defense through professional leadership. Each Soldier has a Non-Commissioned Officer, typically a Sergeant, and an Officer, a Lieutenant in their chain of command – both of whom have as a primary responsibility of their position the care and welfare of the individual Soldier. If a Soldier is not able to address a need through their first line leaders, then the Army has a second layer of defense, a more experienced Non-Commissioned Officer, a First Sergeant, and a more experienced Officer, typically a Captain. If a situation, or incident, is too sensitive to discuss with the chain of command, or if the Soldier does not feel comfortable talking with their leaders, every battalion has a Chaplain who is an

ecclesiastically endorsed minister, and counselor, who answers directly to a battalion commander. If neither the chain of command nor the battalion level support chain, work for the Soldier with a problem, then there is a tool outside the chain of command, the Office of the Inspector General, which in part is responsible for vetting complaints and allegations, being an investigative and fact finding arm of the commander, serving as an honest broker for the our Army, and ultimately providing every Soldier with an avenue to vet their issues. To summarize, America's Army has systems built into it to both prevent crimes against Soldiers and to respond once a crime, or unprofessional act, has been committed.

Further, counter-recruiting organizations encourage young Americans to pursue opportunities other than military service; most literature directs students to continue their post-high school education by enrolling in college. In terms of sexual assaults against women, there is no place that is more dangerous than a college campus.

Myths

Counter-recruiting organization promulgate myths that are accepted as truths by the students and centers of influence who hear them, as more often than not no one in their sphere of influence is presenting another side of the argument. These myths include allegations that the Army does not train you to do anything more than kill the enemy, and as a result an individual is discharged from the Army with no marketable skills that are useful in the civilian world. Another myth that is leveraged by counter-recruiters is that the U.S. Army routinely and methodically commits war crimes, and that Soldiers have no recourse other than to participate in a limited manner in whatever mission they are assigned, fulfill their commitment and leave the service. Many claim

that the Army sends America's Soldiers into battle without the right equipment, putting our greatest resource in the most dangerous positions. Finally, there is a disingenuous myth that reverberates throughout our schools, on college campuses, and resonates with centers of influence and our minority communities, that those who fight our Nation's wars are individuals who have no other options in life. These myths need to be addressed, both by our Army leaders and recruiting team members; the following framework is a starting point.

Myth – Military Service Requires Limited Intelligence

Anyone who has served in a recruiting assignment has heard an argument from either the potential Soldier or one of his centers of influence that they want more for their son, student, athlete, congregation member, etc., than for them to be a “trigger puller”, a “cannon cocker”, a “tank driver”, or a “demolition specialist”. I have personal experience with this; when my son enlisted in the Army National Guard as an Infantryman, someone close to our family commented to him, “I thought you were smarter than that.” Army leadership and the recruiting team need to do all we can to explain the critical role and intrinsic values associated with serving in ANY position within America's Army, and maybe even focus on the combat arms occupational specialties.

The United States of America demands a great deal of our Infantrymen; the combat arms is certainly not an economy of force occupational specialty where we can accept anything but our best. The United States of America is arguably most represented to the international community by the actions of America's Army serving in combat formations in the hardened battlefields of Southwest Asia today, and we need

our best and brightest in these positions. No where is the term “strategic corporal” more applicable than in close combat where the fog of war results in conditions that require the ability to quickly synthesize information and make quick and accurate decisions. Our Infantrymen depend on their ability to multi-task in order to survive on the battlefield. In their most challenging hour, our Infantrymen must ensure that they arrive at the fight with the equipment needed to accomplish the mission; they must be able to maintain contact with the enemy, and communicate with their small team, squad, and chain of command; they must be able to consolidate the total force of our military power in the tactical fight, including the incorporation of engineers, artillery, aviation, civil affairs, logistics, and all other branches of our Army, to achieve mission accomplishment. This is hardly the job for a “trigger puller” alone!

Myth – The U.S. is Fighting an Unjustifiable War

There is a great deal of information published on “just war”, the legalities of the United States leading a “coalition of the willing” into Southwest Asia, and our continued offensives in both Iraq and Afghanistan. While presenting information to students during table displays at high schools and on college campuses, our Recruiting team routinely faces adversarial counter-recruiting groups, and these groups tout the illegalities of our engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan in an effort to reinforce in the minds of our potential Soldiers, and their centers of influence, why service in America’s Army results in their contributing to this “illegal war”. Without question, the role of the U.S. Armed Forces is to carry out the orders of our civilian leaders; however, if we avoid addressing the issue in total, we fail to provide the necessary perspective and framework that will allow the young American to make an informed decision. Our Army Leaders and Recruit team

members need to consider the timing and delivery of our message, but we need to establish a framework of how we arrived at our current position, and the argument should include the attack on our Nation on September 11, 2001, as well as the events leading up to this horrific day.

The potential Soldiers with whom we interact and endeavor to enlist are all quite aware of the terrorist attacks that took place on September 11, 2001. However, they are NOT as aware that terrorists began their attacks on the United States, and the principles for which we as a Nation stand, decades ago. Regretfully, many centers of influence similarly either have forgotten, or have failed to understand, the significance of these attacks against our Nation, over the past three decades. It is important that our military personnel understand this history.

- On November 4, 1979, “militants” stormed the United States Embassy in Tehran, Iran, and seized over 90 hostages, and held on to 54 of them for over 444 days;
- On April 18, 1983, the United States Embassy in Beirut was attacked with what we call today a “vehicle born improvised explosive device”. Back then we called it a “vehicle packed with explosives”. There were 63 people, including 18 Americans, killed in this attack;
- On October 23, 1983, another vehicle bomb, this one including over 2,500 pounds of explosives, targeted a United States Marine Corps barracks in Beirut, Lebanon, killing 241, and wounding over 100;
- On December 12, 1983, terrorists in a truck full of explosives attacked the United States Embassy in Kuwait, killing 5 and wounding 37;

- On September 20, 1984, another vehicle bomb was used by terrorists against the United States Embassy in Beirut. This attack killed 24 people, including U.S. Marines, and wounded over 21 others;
- On April 12, 1985, a bomb exploded in the El Descanso Restaurant in Madrid, Spain, which catered to United States military personnel, wounding eight Americans;
- On June 13, 1985, Trans World Airlines Flight 847 was hijacked en route from Athens to Greece. When the hijackers arrived in Beirut, they discovered that one of the plane's passengers was United States Navy Germany, resulting in 22 Airmen being killed;
- On October 8, 1985, hijackers took over the Achille Lauro Cruise Ship, shot Leon Klinghoffer, a 69 year old handicapped American in the head, and pushed him, still in his wheelchair, into the ocean while his wife helplessly watched;
- On December 21, 1988, Pan American Flight 103 was bombed over Lockerbie, Scotland; among 270 victims were 35 Syracuse University students, 16 crew members, and 11 residents of Lockerbie, Scotland;
- On February 26, 1993, the World Trade Center was bombed for the first time. A massive explosion occurred in the public parking garage beneath the towers, killing five Americans, and wounding many more;
- On June 25, 1996, the Khobar Towers Apartment Buildings in the Military Complex at Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, were attacked by a truck loaded with explosives, killing 19 U.S. Air Force Airmen, and wounding hundreds;

- On August 7, 1998, a coordinated attack was made against the United States Embassies in both Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. A total of 11 people were killed and 86 wounded in the attack in Tanzania. A total of 213 people were killed and over 5,000 were injured in the attack in Kenya;
- On October 12, 2000, a small group of suicide bombers used a skiff to pull along the Destroyer U.S.S. Cole, and detonated a bomb, killing 17 United States Sailors and wounding 19 more.

We need to remind those individuals who are considering service to their Nation in America's Army that the fatalities on September 11, 2001, were astounding. There were 265 Americans killed on commercial airliners. There were 2,595 people killed in New York City, alone, including citizens of many other Countries, 343 firemen, and 60 Port Authority workers. There were 125 Americans killed in the Pentagon. There were at least 2,985 people who were killed on that fateful morning.

We also need to remind those individuals who are considering enlistment into the U.S. Army that there were over 9,500 terrorist attacks between 1981 and 2001⁷⁴. It may be worthwhile to point out that there are two stone plaques⁷⁵, fixed to the wall in the lobby of the State Department Building in Washington, D.C, listing the names of 231 U.S. diplomats killed in the line of duty. The first name on the first plaque is of a diplomat who died at sea in 1780. The last name on the first plaque is of a diplomat killed in 1967. The entire second plaque lists the names of diplomats killed between 1967 and 2009⁷⁶. Our Country has been under attack for quite some time. And it is through these lenses that the President of the United States and the United States Congress voted to engage in what was previously known as the Global War On Terror

(GWOT), and to which we now refer as Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO). Now more than ever our Nation depends on citizens separating themselves from the rest of society by making a commitment to serve in its time of need.

Myth – Focused on Hard Power and Fighting an Empire Building Campaign

Counter-recruiting organizations use as a mantra the allegation that the United States leaders use hard power, aggression, and brute force instead of soft power and diplomacy, and that we endeavor to build empires. This argument further dissuades young Americans from considering service America's Army, and it is important that we be able to address this issue.

No one better articulates the United States' position on empire-building than the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, and his response is an outstanding tool for our Recruiting team members, and senior leaders, to use when confronted by this counter-recruiting argument. While serving as the Secretary of State, and speaking at the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum on January 26, 2003, Secretary Powell was asked a question by former Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, regarding the United States quick transition to the use of hard power and its perceived empire building. Secretary Powell responded very articulately: "There is nothing in American experience or in American political life or in our culture that suggests we want to use hard power. But what we have found over the decades is that unless you do have hard power -- and here I think you're referring to military power -- then sometimes you are faced with situations that you can't deal with. . . It was not soft power that freed Europe. It was hard power. And what followed immediately after hard power? Did the United States ask for dominion over a single nation in Europe? No. Soft

power came in the Marshall Plan. Soft power came with American GIs who put their weapons down once the war was over and helped all those nations rebuild. We did the same thing in Japan. So our record of living our values and letting our values be an inspiration to others I think is clear. And I don't think I have anything to be ashamed of or apologize for with respect to what America has done for the world. We have gone forth from our shores repeatedly over the last hundred years and we've done this as recently as the last year in Afghanistan and put wonderful young men and women at risk, many of whom have lost their lives, and we have asked for nothing, except enough ground to bury them in, and otherwise we have returned home to... live our own lives in peace. But there comes a time when soft power or talking with evil will not work where, unfortunately, hard power is the only thing that works..."⁷⁷

Myth – Military Training Not Useful in Civilian Jobs

Many counter-recruiters dissuade potential Soldiers by denigrating the employability of veterans upon their discharge from service. Many of the videos posted on Counter-Recruiting organization web sites show veterans making outlandish comments about their ability to serve in only menial and labor type positions in the civilian world. These are incredibly inaccurate statements, and our Recruiting force and Army leaders need to articulate the outstanding qualities that translate very well from military service to employment in the civilian world. The framework should include the following:

First, The United States Army is a leadership academy, and Soldiers from the very lowest level are trained, and encouraged, to seek leadership positions, and to set a positive example. Many companies hire employees and send them to seminars and

other professional development courses in order to prepare them for leadership opportunities. Our Soldiers already have an outstanding baseline, which can be built upon with skill sets particular to the company or organization. Second, there is no organization more professional than the U.S. Army. Our Soldiers understand the importance of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. Our Soldiers have not only learned these values, but they have also lived these values; and, unquestionably, these values translate magnificently to the civilian employment arena. Third, the concept of responsibility – for one’s self, for one’s unit or department, and for one’s equipment is a very important part of a Soldier’s life. Fourth, physical fitness is a very important aspect in the life of a Soldier. Without question, a healthy employee is a better employee; bi-annually, Soldiers participate in a three event test called the Army Physical Fitness Test, which evaluates their physical readiness. Fifth, Soldiers will arrive at the workplace with a positive, can-do attitude, which is instilled in them through all of their formal military training, and energized within them during their operational assignments. Sixth, Soldiers will be able to handle the stressful work environments, as they have become accustomed to working in tense working conditions, with constrained resources, and a requirement to accomplish the mission with the resources available. Seventh, Soldiers are required to maintain a positive image; they will dress for success, well-groomed, and otherwise appear the consummate professional. Eighth, the U.S. Army depends on each individual and section being on-time, every time; our operational success depends on it in a battlefield situation, and as a result, seconds matter at all times. Finally, your Soldiers will arrive at the workplace with a global perspective, having traveled around the country, and

possibly even around the world during their tenure in the U.S. Army. All of these attributes make a Soldier a very good candidate for positions at any level in the civilian world.

Minorities and Poor Fight America's Wars

Many within the counter-recruiting community promulgate the myth that the formations of America's Army are filled primarily with minorities, young men and women from disadvantaged backgrounds, and those who represent the lower socio-economic rungs of our society. Counter-recruiters influence prospective Soldiers, and their centers of influence, by imploring them not to enlist into an Army where they are denigrated, not respected, and where they will be asked to do the dirty work for the powerful and influential segment of society. This school of thought, which is vocalized within the hallways of our high schools, across college campuses, and even around dinner tables in small towns and large cities, pushes forth the concept that individuals choose to serve in America's Army and America's defense team only because they have no other options. My experience shows something quite different.

Our Recruiters know this scenario all too well: After investing considerable amounts of time dialoguing with a potential Soldier, explaining the opportunities of various occupational specialties, providing an overview of the benefits of service, and outlining how service will make a positive impact on the individual's life and future, the recruiter is greeted with a cold shoulder in the student center on his next visit. After asking questions of the potential Soldier, the recruiter learns that he or she is no longer interested, but really has no reason why there has been a change of plans.

In too many of these cases, the applicant has sought guidance, direction and counsel from someone for whom he has a great deal of respect, a center of influence; frequently these centers of influence provide counsel to our impressionable potential Soldier that is based on outdated information, mis-information, hearsay, and untruths.

Certainly it is true that service in America's Army is a viable option to those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Army can be a light of opportunity, a beacon of hope, and an opportunity for a tremendous future for those who come from a disadvantage background; this is as true today as it has been in the past. However, those of us who serve know that our Army offers a wide variety of opportunity to ALL segments of society who meet the eligibility requirements of enlistment. Further, it is quite possible that the Army will not present an opportunity to those with no other options, due criminal convictions and low test scores. In order to assess the substance of our formations in terms of race and socio-economic background, we can look at the most broadly supported public policy research institute, The Heritage Foundation⁷⁸, which explains that those who serve in the United States Armed Forces are likely NOT to come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Specifically:

- Members of the all-volunteer military are significantly more likely to come from high-income neighborhoods than from low-income neighborhoods.
- Only 11 percent of enlisted recruits in 2007 came from the poorest one-fifth (quintile) of neighborhoods, while 25 percent came from the wealthiest quintile.
- These trends are even more pronounced in the Army Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program, in which 40 percent of enrollees come from

the wealthiest neighborhoods—a number that has increased substantially over the past four years.

- American soldiers are more educated than their peers. A little more than 1 percent of enlisted personnel lack a high school degree, compared to 21 percent of men 18–24 years old, and 95 percent of officer accessions have at least a bachelor’s degree.
- Contrary to conventional wisdom, minorities are not overrepresented in military service.
- Enlisted troops are somewhat more likely to be white or black than their non-military peers.
- Whites are proportionately represented in the officer corps, and blacks are overrepresented, but their rate of overrepresentation has declined each year from 2004 to 2007.
- New recruits are also disproportionately likely to come from the South, which is in line with the history of Southern military tradition.
- The facts do not support the belief that many American soldiers volunteer because society offers them few other opportunities. The average enlisted person or officer could have had lucrative career opportunities in the private sector.
- Those who argue that American soldiers risk their lives because they have no other opportunities belittle the personal sacrifices of those who serve out of love for their country.”⁷⁹

These points cannot be over-emphasized, and it is integral to our continued success that these statistics remain true, and that our Army pushes this as one of its strategic messages to the American people. It is important that the American public, and those who influence potential Soldiers to serve, or not to serve, see that service in our Army provides opportunity for **EVERYONE**. It is very important to a young man or woman graduating from high school, and considering their next step, that those in their lives whom they know and respect value their decisions. I can think of nothing more noble, and honorable, than making a decision to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. This investment in one's Nation adds value to Americans of all races, socioeconomic backgrounds, creeds, and religions.

Another very solid argument is the issue of leadership of American Soldiers. Leaders at all levels of America's Army consume themselves with training, maintaining, and caring for the resources provided to them by the Army to accomplish the mission, whether this be at the tactical, operational, or strategic level. While there are no organizations in the United States that more embrace diversity, our leaders are NOT as concerned with the race, religion, creed, or socio-economic background as much as they are concerned with the intrinsic qualities and values that make a Soldier what he or she is; namely, the values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. Commanders see THESE attributes in their Soldiers, as the color of one's skin, and other traits that distinguish Soldiers from one another, really make very little difference in the heat of battle.

“What constitutes an American? Not color or race or religion. Not the pedigree of his family or the place of his birth. Not his social standing or his bank account. Not his trade or his profession. An American is one who loves justice and {has a high regard for} the dignity of man. An American is one who will fight for his freedom and that of his neighbors. An American is one who will sacrifice his property, his ease, and his security to retain for himself and his children the rights of free men.”
--Harold Ickes—

SUMMARY

History tell us that the world is a violent place; there was a brief period between A.D. 100 and A.D. 200 where world peace existed; this was the result of the Roman Empire dominating the civilized world.⁸⁰ Looking at more recent history, since 1959, there has been no period where Nations have not been at war. While technological advancements have opened up lines of communication and facilitated interaction among people, it has not made the world a safer more secure place. There is great conflict in today’s world, and a solemn obligation and responsibility of the U.S. government is to provide security to its citizens and represent our interests internationally.

The U.S. Army is responsible to the American people for fighting, and winning, our Nation’s wars. In order to continue to have the strongest army in the world, the U.S. Army needs to continue to enlist top-quality civilians into America’s All-Volunteer Army. Our ability to recruit these top-quality civilians will be determined by the quality of Recruiter, their presence in our communities, high schools, and college campuses, and their ability to communicate with and present information and provide opportunity to potential Soldiers. Their success will necessitate that they understand the adversarial components confronting them in their respective areas of operation, and their ability to

counter the arguments of counter-recruiting organizations in the eyes of applicants and centers of influence.

The challenges and shortfalls of the United States Army are played out in plain view of the American people; one needs to look no further than the media coverage of atrocities committed by Soldiers at Abu Ghraib in 2003, the events following the death of Corporal Pat Tillman in 2004, the facility conditions in which Soldiers recovered from injuries at Walter Reed Medical Center in 2007, and the alarming increase in suicides within the U.S. Army in 2007-09, to understand that the U.S. Army is accountable to the American people. The U.S. Army is a professional organization, which means that it holds itself accountable to a set of principles and values. The rank and file of the Army learns on a weekly basis of ethics violations in the pages of The Army Times.

Regretfully, counter-recruiting organizations sensationalize these unfortunate situations, build the appearance that the occurrences are routine in nature, and attempt to use these incidents to build barriers between young Americans and our Nation's Army.

Counter-Recruiting organizations base their arguments on religious principles, negative experiences of veterans, and a general disenfranchisement with the role of force, and use of military power by the United States. While some counter-recruiting organizations are useful sources of information for individuals considering a future in the U.S. Army, they can also represent a negatively slanted viewpoint of America's Army, intended to dissuade young Americans from service.

While the media is a conduit for the American people into the bowels of the organization, the U.S. Army remains strong as an institution, and in general holds the trust, faith, and confidence of the American people. While many Americans avoid

service in the U.S. Army, most see the value of service, and respect those who separate themselves from society by serving their Nation in uniform. This operating environment sets a generally positive tone for U.S. Army Recruiters to represent the institution in our communities, and to present information and provide opportunities to potential Soldiers and centers of influence throughout our Country.

Our Army's Recruiting force understands that there is an adversarial component working against them as they build relationships, bridge gaps, and establish common ground in our communities. It is imperative that our Recruiters understand the messages that counter-recruiting organizations deliver in their areas of responsibility, and that they prepare themselves for their mission as they would for any other mission – by thoroughly understanding their adversary. As part of that mission preparation, our Recruiters must be armed with information about the Army that they represent and prepared to engage in the arena of public opinion those who spread negative information about our institution with the purpose of dissuading others from service.

In order to ensure that our Army's message is best communicated to the American people at the grass roots level, leadership needs to set the conditions to incentivize our very best Non-Commissioned Officers to serve as Recruiters. Army leadership needs to ensure that our experienced, high-performance Non-Commissioned Officers accept the challenge of serving at least one tour as Recruiters. It takes a very seasoned, experienced, and mature Non-Commissioned Officer to address these sensitive issues while sitting across the kitchen table from parents who are concerned with the well-being and future of their child.

Not every good Soldier or Non-Commissioned Officer can be an effective Recruiter for without question it takes a unique individual to serve in this capacity. Our Recruiters need to understand that they represent the U.S. Army both while on duty and off duty; and that they are always under observation and scrutiny by the public whom we, as Soldiers, serve. For these reasons, it should be adamant that our Recruiters have great maturity and the ability to make the right decisions in an environment where they have a great deal of flexibility. Although of the U.S. Army, those who serve in the United States Army Recruiting Command must also engage, and bring to bear the strength and intellectual capacity of Army Leadership, where necessary, to counter those who spread mis-information, hearsay and untruths.

We are fortunate to live in a country based on principles which provide free speech for all, and where counter-recruiting organizations are welcomed into communities alongside those of us who serve in uniform. It is the U.S. Army, and our sister services that assure these individuals freedoms that allow them to be expressive idealists. And, in order to ensure that the principles on which our Country was founded continue into the future, America's Army must be a quality force, trained and ready to back up the diplomatic efforts of our government. This force should be manned by volunteers. These volunteers will learn about opportunities to serve from multiple sources in order for them to make a reasoned, informed decision about serving. Information received from a professional recruiting force, representative of the service which they serve – America's Army – is one such source and its voice should not be silenced nor understated.

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