

TRANSCRIPT

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Q: Welcome to Lieutenant General Benjamin Freakley. He is the head of Army Accessions Command, part of TRADOC at Fort Monroe. It's an organization I think that came into being about five years ago?

A: Correct, about five years ago.

Q: And you took over in May?

A: I did.

Q: Lots of operational experience in the various nasty parts of the world before then. Anyway, let's get going this morning. We're on the record. You said you had a couple of things you wanted to talk about to begin with, so why don't you go ahead.

A: Good morning, everyone. I look forward to answering your questions this morning.

I just would tell you that the United States Army Accessions Command which is part of Training and Doctrine Command has responsibility to recruit soldiers, to conduct over watch of the Reserve Officer Training Corps program which commissions about 60 percent of our officers. And of course Officer Candidate School is not in ROTC, but we also over watch that. And then for General Wallace, I'm his deputy for all initial military training for all soldiers and all officers. We do their initial training from joining the Army until they go to their first unit.

What we try to do is get America's qualified volunteers and then train them in the warrior ethos, transforming them from a citizen to a soldier or a leader to be prepared for combat in their first unit of assignment. We work hard with America to try to find the right volunteer and train them in the right core competencies to be ready to go, so he or she contributes to their first unit. We do it with an integrated team of professionals that are both soldiers and civilians. We have a huge civilian complement that helps both our recruiters, also our ROTC programs and also helps with our initial military training in some form or fashion.

We imbue the soldiers with the warrior ethos. You've heard soldiers say that probably, I'll always place the mission first, I'll never accept defeat, I'll never quit, and I'll never leave a fallen comrade. We also work hard on instilling the seven core Army values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, integrity, honor, and personal courage in our soldiers and young leaders.

We select, access, develop, train, and then retain our volunteers through what we try to have as a seamless longitudinal process from recruiting them to their first unit and work to try to also get them to reenlist and stay in the Army.

We're working hard and have been working hard to take lessons learned from a combat-seasoned force and put those lessons learned right straight back into who we're looking for and, also, in our training, how do we plow back in relevant training for the soldiers so they're ready to serve the nation, fight, and win in combat.

I've been in the Army 32 years, and I can honestly say that I joined a platoon that was a draft, and have seen that transformed to an all-volunteer force, and we have great soldiers in our Army. We constantly share and embrace best practices and try to have better relationships with our soldiers, leaders, and the Army and the American people.

We have met our goals for 2007 in recruiting, and those will be discussed in detail on October 10th, I believe, from an OSD announcement, so I am really not going to talk in detail about the goals because that is an OSD announcement that is forthcoming. I would just say that I got to serve last year in Afghanistan with 22,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines, and I saw the quality of our soldiers on the battlefield in Afghanistan as their JTF commander.

With that, I am ready to take your questions.

Q: When you assumed command, I think General Wallace summarized your job and he said, getting the right soldiers for the Army these days. Other than the standard metrics of high-school graduate and AFQT scores, what constitutes the right soldier these days?

A: That's a great question. What we use right now is a standardized test like an SAT. It's called the Armed Forces Standardized Vocational Battery Test. It measures their different skills. Are they mechanically inclined? Are they more inclined towards math or science or towards liberal arts? It helps us help shape them towards which of the hundred-plus military occupational specialties we have, and which ones they would be most inclined to. If a young man or woman is totally unable to be an aircraft mechanic because of their scores, it is very hard to train them towards that bent if they have never done any of that kind of work.

But I always say, and I am asking for some studies to be begun. It's the standardized test plus what? When you look at colleges today - I'm a father of five sons, so I have looked at a few colleges. Colleges look at, firstly, your grade-point average; secondly, how did you get those grades? Did you take physics or did you take something that was much less demanding? And then, how many extracurricular activities were you involved in so you handled an academic load plus being involved?

Lastly, the SAT is a standardized test, so right now we measure by AFSVB, but what our recruiters do, is they're looking at what motivates the woman or man to come to the Army. What would they like to do? Is this a short burst? I want to get the GI bill so I can go to college, or am I thinking about a longer career?

Many of our citizens come to us not really knowing that much about the Army and also not necessarily bent on having a career, but more than one-third stay in. We have met our reenlistment goals the last several years and have again this year. So once they get in, they find a home, they like the collegiality, they like the camaraderie, they like the educational opportunities, and they like the mission, so they stay in.

So it's a combination of how they score on the standardized tests, what motivations they have, what's their level of physical fitness? Do they have any issues with the law?

I say that America has a lot less humor about high-school antics than perhaps they once did, because of a series of different things like the Columbine shooting and the recent Virginia Tech shootings and stuff like that. You can be a felon pretty quick by shoving a teacher you're mad at or acting out in school, so we look to see that this young person we are going to bring in is going to be a good soldier on the initial attributes that I talked about.

Q: One big difference between now and ten years ago is that everyone who comes into the Army now, or any of the services, can be pretty well assured that they are going to see combat. They are going to go over, and they are going to see combat. That was not the case ten years ago. So, do you get a different kind of a kid signing up today because

of that - different from in the mid-'90s when maybe they were joining primarily for training or to see the world?

A: Well, you do. I am thinking back over the last several decades of what motivated soldiers to come in. As we went to an all-volunteer force, it was opportunities. I think the Army's phrase was "fun, travel, and adventure" as we went from a draft force to a volunteer force. [Laughter]. Then, just prior to Desert Storm, we had a lot of soldiers - I used to say, I was a battalion commander in the early '90s, but before that I said that American soldiers were people going places.

When you asked a soldier in the late 1980s or early 1990s, "Why did you come into the Army?" they would say, "I want to go to college. I want to be a Sergeant Major. I want to be an officer." They all had these aspirations and goals out in front of them of the things they wanted to do. Post Desert Storm, there was a bit of a time right after Desert Storm, because it was very short, it was a big, big buildup, a big fight, pretty positive response from America and the media about it, but soldiers joined because they wanted to catch part of that.

Then, as we downsized, it was a problem to a degree because some who came in saw that opportunities for the future might be diminishing - because the Army was downsizing - for both promotion and for officers' command opportunities and growth therein.

In 2001, with the 9/11 attacks, there was a huge spike in response to that, and now that we're in a persistent conflict there is real measurement about do I want to do this, because people I know have been deployed two or maybe on their third time? Is this something that I want to do?

The centers of influence - the moms, the dads, the coaches, the ministers - are sort of cautioning against. You'll hear that the military is good to join but maybe not right now - it's very dangerous. And so, we are dealing with that dynamic of risk and combat.

There are still a lot of young men and women who come in and want to serve out of patriotism and protection of the country. They see it as their duty. They want to be a part of something bigger. That's the term you will hear them say when they are being interviewed.

Why do you want to serve? Well, I want to be a part of something bigger. I want to contribute.

But they do know they are going to combat. There is an edge of more seriousness and a bit of a somber tone as they come in and they get to work.

Basic Training is harder than it has ever been. I commanded Fort Benning, Georgia, from 2003 to 2005. When I came out of Iraq with the 101st and went straight to Fort Benning as the commanding general training our infantry, we started right then in changing our training. The training is mentally tougher because of the rigor we put on the soldiers, and they have to make more decisions because they have to make decisions on this battlefield.

It is so critical. In a counter-insurgency fight, a soldier that shoots a civilian can undo months of work in trying to build relationships and trying to win tribes over. This is a war of ideas, and try to move the enemy from an idea that supports al-Qaida to move towards an idea that supports their own government and a better way--that can be undone fairly quickly if you're not thinking your way through the problem at hand.

Q: So do you find yourself having to recruit a different kind of person for that, maybe a more mature recruit, maybe somebody who scores higher on the mental tests or is it all training?

A: I think we are looking for someone that is trainable, and our training is where we imbue this thinking much quicker at a lower level. It is about thinking on a complex battlefield, not necessarily what we have done in the past, which is just yell at them and tell them what to do and they do what their sergeant says. It is more about being a thinking member of the team.

Q: Under Secretary of the Army, Pete Geren has talked about wanting to accelerate growing the Army by a year. What are you doing to prepare for that?

A: Well, he and General Casey both have talked about, I think you know, growing the Army by 65,000. We are looking at that from a variety of approaches. One is how many soldiers we enlist. Secondly, is reenlistment numbers. And thirdly, is teaming with the National Guard. Army Accessions Command recruits the active duty soldiers and Reserve soldiers. The National Guard recruits for the National Guard. We think there are some opportunities to team up and work and ask the National Guard to do some work.

You may have heard of a term called "Active First". We are looking at that as an option where the National Guard recruits a man or a woman to come in the Guard. They come in the Army, and they do anywhere from 24 to 36 months in the active Army, and then they go back to the rest of their military service obligation in the National Guard. So they kind of get recruited in the hometown, come in and get qualified, because part of the problems for our Reserve and National Guard is getting them trained in what is called duty - Military Occupational Specialty Qualified.

Sometimes we recruit more than we have seats for on the training base. This would get them to a training base, then get them in the active component, then turn them back to the Guard, so the Guard builds their end strength.

So with a combination of reenlistment, enlistment, and the Guard help, we are trying to pull our numbers up higher.

Q: Do you think that that would do it as far as the acceleration? Would that help you pack those numbers in that year?

A: Well, if everything were to work as we speculate the answer is yes. But in any marketing business you start with programs and they either mature and get traction or they don't. So I have a wait-and-see attitude.

Q: I was wondering--the recruiting of a different kind of person who has grown up with computers and is very easily able to multitask. So I wondered, what has changed about your initial trainings? Are you using more simulators to do things? Are those sorts of things helping you with the cognitive decision business? And what has changed in that area as opposed to like books of years ago?

A: Right. The short answer is absolutely, we are using more simulation. You know, one of the things that we went into this fight deficient in is true cultural awareness. At our combat training centers we would try to get the training forces to think about culture but it was really pretty thin veneer. I'm talking about in the late 1990s, early 2000s. We were in

Bosnia, and we were trying to think about the cultural aspects of the different--the Serbs versus the Muslims versus the Croats, et cetera. But we didn't really focus on it perhaps like we should have.

We were just recently at Fort Benning, Georgia. Soldiers in their third week of training were sitting in front of a simulator. The best way I can describe it is if you ever played the game with your kids "Where in the World is Carmen San Diego?" and you could walk by different people and ask a question or not ask a question and you would get points and you would get hints. Well, it's the same thing.

The soldiers were on a street in Iraq and there were people up and down the street and the soldiers could stop and ask questions and differentiate between different people and get feedback on how well they read the situation and were engaged in that.

We spend a lot of the Army's money shooting live ammunition to what we call Zero and Group--introduce a soldier to a weapon and then have that soldier on the range firing

that weapon to learn that weapon through actual live fire.

Now we have an Engagement Skills Trainer 2000, where this simulation shows the soldier their breathing pattern before they pull the trigger. It shows them how well, how consistently they squeeze the trigger. It takes them from basic rifle and zero, and you can put the zero of their simulated weapon on their actual weapon, and they will be very close to strike of round. So we actually save those rounds, and so what we do is move those rounds to more live-fire training in the environment of being in Iraq or Afghanistan versus time just shooting a paper target.

We also have shoot/don't shoot scenarios in that simulation where we will have a soldier enter a room and there will be five or six. These were all filmed at the National Training Center, and they will be actually Iraqi people that are dressed appropriately and they will respond appropriately and the soldier has to make the decision whether he takes action or not. They are very complex situations--men in these long robes and their hands are behind their robes, and they pull their hand up quickly, and the soldier has to determine whether or not there is a gun in it or not. So, very, a more approach to complex training.

I will give you one more example. We used to take soldiers out to the military operations on urban terrain--the Army's name for a village. We would sit them in a bleacher and some sergeant would say this is a village defined by square buildings and square doors and square windows, and three buildings make a village. The soldiers were falling asleep. It was hard to keep their attention because they are the multitask Nintendo, text-message gang.

What we did is we put them on a game in the barracks with their drill sergeant actually fighting through a village, and then when we took them out to the field we just loaded them up with blanks, and they went right in the village. No lecture, no boring time spent in bleachers, just straight into the environment.

Q: How far down, just to follow, is the decision cycle going? I know part of what the Army talks about is pushing decisionmaking down to the soldier and sometimes [inaudible] soldier. Are they getting any of that in [initial] training?

A: Yes. You know, we used to teach soldiers that when receiving fire there were three appropriate movement techniques. One was called a three-second rush. You would run for three seconds and try to dive behind a hill or a rock or a tree. The second would be a high crawl, where you were kind of just crawling across the battlefield, sort of up on all fours. Then there was a low crawl where, you know, sort of Omaha Beach, head down, all body down, crawling forward to stay alive. They had to demonstrate this.

In the past, we had these very, you know, Baron Von Steuben from Valley Forge would be very happy because we had these very neat, clean, grassy fields with these creosote logs conveniently placed every three to five seconds apart. So the drill sergeant would say high crawl, and the soldier would demonstrate that, and the drill sergeant would check it off. Then he would say, low crawl, and the soldier would do it. So we would have this robotic marionette going across the battlefield.

Today, if you go to our training centers there's walls, there's cars, there's barrels, there's windows. The soldiers have to do it in a buddy team that is a live fire with pop-up targets. They have to cover one another. They have to make the decision on where is the next place to move to through this lane. At the end, the drill sergeant has to feed back to them whether or not they made good decisions on the cover and concealment down the lane, but also covering their buddy. Some of them do it rote, and so they get to do it over again and over again because they are not making good choices.

For instance, if the only thing you have is a car, use a car, but if an enemy shoots a rocket-propelled grenade at a car the car will produce shrapnel besides the rocket-propelled grenade. So if you have the choice between a building and a car, go for the building. So we are trying to teach them that in their first four weeks of Basic Training.

Q: It is my understanding that the percent of recruits with a high school diploma has decreased recently from about 90 percent to 76 percent. How does this affect the quality of the force, and what does that mean for what you all are doing?

A: Well, the Office of the Secretary of Defense has set the goals for high school degree completion to be at 90 percent of recruits. That was based on a study several years ago that was also tied to sort of stick-to-itiveness. It was determined that if you stuck it out and went through high school and graduated, in all likelihood you would stick it out and go through Basic Training and Advanced Individual Training.

Last year I think we were at about 81 percent in 2006. This year we're going to be probably close to that. OSD will, they're working those numbers now because it is the end of the year and they are compiling who did what.

That goes back to the question I had about what do the recruiters talk to the soldiers about. We have had, our attrition rate in Basic Training has been reduced drastically for several reasons. One is our approach, but two is the motivation of the young people. That is why I say it is the standardized test and high school diploma plus what makes the heart of a soldier.

We are still getting great soldiers in. One of the concerns is we recruit civilians. We make them soldiers. Some people will say well, in recruiting soldiers - We don't recruit

soldiers, we recruit civilians. And we recruit what the nation gives us.

The national average of completing high school on time is 70 percent. So when we reach into these men and women who are eligible to come into the military it is a challenge right now with--and that's the national average, and then in inner cities it is much lower. It can be as low as 50 percent of completing high school on time. So we are receiving GEDs.

Now all soldiers who come in the Army have to have a high school diploma or a GED, so there is no question. You cannot come in unless you have completed one way or the other.

Q: A couple of years ago you guys started to, hired a couple of companies to do recruiting. How has that worked out, and what is the situation of that?

A: We have had some--you're not talking about marketing, you're talking about actual recruiting?

Q: Yes. Civilian recruiting.

A: We have had some good luck with that. It has been mixed. We were just in San Antonio, Texas, and we met a civilian recruiter who had recruited 90 soldiers this year. Do you know each recruiter is asked to recruit about 12 soldiers a year, 12-13. He had recruited 90. A great guy.

One of the things we learned, in some of our recruiting stations we went straight civilian contract, and we're backing away from that. We are going towards more of a mixed team because our civilians want to know, our citizens want to know what is it like to serve? What is it like to be in the 82nd?

What is it like to be in the 1st Cavalry? What is it like to be in the Reserve or the National Guard? What is the difference, and how does that fit me? So we need a more balanced approach, but the mature civilian recruiter who can talk to Mom and Dad about all aspects of service in the military and service to nation and talk about incentives and talk about risk balancing, they're making a good contribution.

Q: May I ask you about your experience in Afghanistan and, particularly, the use of air power? I mean, there have been numerous incidents where a lot of civilians and--I mean, you know, I understand the argument that insurgents use civilians as shields and that kind of thing, but one also gets the impression that because it's such a devastating, available weapon, that people on the ground may be in a fight situation, you know, will reach for that tool maybe more often than they should. I just want to get your

perspective as a commander.

A: I would say that overall in the 12 months I was there with the 10th Mountain Division, I thought that the commanders on the ground showed a lot of restraint about the use of air power. I think it is a critical and important aspect of the joint team to have that and it is something that the enemy cannot match. The enemy is very good with rocket-propelled grenades, machine guns, and direct fire, and the enemy is good in the use of villages to maneuver through and use for concealment, cover, and hiding in plain view.

I believe that it is critically important in where we are now in a counter-insurgency fight to really determine when do I need to use force and when don't I need to use force. I go around talking to young lieutenants in the training base, captains and even battalion commanders, about a scenario that you move into a village, you receive fire, the enemy withdraws into a compound, what do you do next? Sometimes they'll say call for fire. And I say call for Afghan police. Let the Afghan police go into the village. Do not use the fire unless the enemy is starting to get the advantage.

Clearly, what drives this is actionable intelligence. There are cases where it is to your advantage to use air power and destroy the enemy in a compound. But you can almost rest assured that the Taliban are extremely adept at information operations. Using that tragic loss of an Afghan civilian, they use it to their advantage. So you can be just about assured that no matter how good your intelligence is, there is probably going to be some civilians.

So, what can you do to counter this? Of course, I don't second-guess the commanders on the ground, and we did look into every instance. This was a very big issue for President Karzai. It was an issue for General Bismullah Khan, the Chief of Staff of the Afghan Army. We are fighting with the Afghans. They are with us. They are embedded with us, and they are great fighters. But it is a problem for the commander on the battlefield, and I often try to talk about their strength.

Q: I vividly recall the '79-'80 discussion about good quality [inaudible] attrition. One of the big ways was the importance of a high school diploma [inaudible]. Three or four years ago, Dr. Chu was in front of the House, and Representative Sol Ortiz from Texas put down a line of questioning, and I never followed up on it. Ortiz said that the Hispanic community in his part of the country, the culture of the young males is such that dropping out of high school is not necessarily indicative of what we took it as indicative of, and [inaudible].

In the course of your trying to recalibrate the intake screening mechanism, is the change of this [inaudible] of how this culture works among you know, 20-year-old males

[inaudible]? Do calculations like that figure in [inaudible]?

A: They do. They do. I mean, we know for instance that in the Hispanic American community family is huge, and so it's not just what mom and dad say, it's what the grandmother and grandfather say about the service. We're trying to--

Q: [Inaudible]?

A: The influence. And we're trying to determine more about what is the cultural makeup. This is a bit of a clash of culture. You've got a sergeant or an officer out there in the recruiting station and in comes a civilian by themselves or with the influencers with them, says tell us about this thing called the Army. Part of it is, from a recruiter's perspective, it's like be like me. Put on my uniform. Let's go.

The culture, each aspect of our culture wants to know a little bit of something different. They are motivated by different activities. So we're trying to better understand the American culture. We're trying to understand what motivates.

There is a group of Americans called defenders, and they're coming in. We know that. At 13 years old, they're coming. They can't wait to be 18. At 17, they're coming in. They can't wait to be 18. And then they're the ones, you know, you ask them in Basic Training the Goldilocks question: "Is it hard enough, is it about right, or is it too hard?" And their answer will always be it's either about right or too easy. But when you say where do you measure up to your peers? Oh, I'm far superior to my peers. I came to Basic Training more fit, and I can shoot a rifle. I want to be in the Army. So we've got the defenders; they're coming.

We also have other elements of society that are looking for--they're looking into the American workplace, and they're looking for options. How does this set me up for where I want to go? You know, in the African American community and the Hispanic community there is a long-term view about owning a business, owning a home, having success long-term. So there is more than just a three- or four- or five-year burst in the Army. It's like what's beyond that? So we talk about that, and we're looking at that.

They have a great innovation that's coming forward called the College of the American Soldier. It will probably start about this February of 2008. Command Sergeant Major Sparks of Training and Doctrine Command has started this. Every soldier who comes in will be afforded the opportunity to either pursue a technical certification - say a welder - or a college degree.

We're working with colleges to get our training programs certified. So for instance many soldiers when they go through Basic Training, they will get 17 hours of college credit for

the leadership, for the first aid, for other things that they're learning in Basic Training.

At the Sergeants Majors Academy, there are 45 hours because they have to write, they have to do literature work, they have to do public speaking, they too have to do leadership. So the idea would be by the time you're a staff sergeant, somewhere between six and ten years in the Army, you're going to have your Associates Degree, and by the time you get ready to retire as a Master Sergeant or Sergeant Major, you will have your Bachelor's degree, so you will be able to reenter the work force with the discipline, with the Army values, with the leadership training you got in the Army, plus a degree. Long overdue in my view.

This, too, approaches the culture and says, you know, just don't come in for a short skill, come in also for an education.

Q: General, you have been talking a little bit about counter-insurgency this morning, so I'd like to ask a question on that. A Congressional Report came out the other day on Blackwater, contending that Blackwater's rules of engagement do not allow them to, they're not supposed to shoot except in self defense, but it's a common practice in Iraq for them to fire warning shots when a vehicle is approaching, if necessary, try to disable the vehicle with shots and, if necessary, even kill the driver.

From a counter-insurgency point of view, do you think that's a good idea to have that kind of practice, or do you see that as having an adverse impact on the population?

A: I have not served in Iraq since 2003. I had a brigade from the 10th Mountain over there, and I visited with them while I was deployed to Afghanistan. So I don't know that I'm really qualified to answer that question about that in Iraq.

I can say that rules of engagement and training on escalation of force are critical in counter-insurgency, and really trying to make the discrimination of when to use force and when not to use force is important. We're teaching that to our soldiers.

I think restraint is very important in a counter-insurgency fight. I'm not soft on, I was an infantryman for 25 years, you know, and I was a Brigade S3 in Desert Storm, and I'm not soft on closing with the enemy at all. One of the strengths of the American Armed Forces is that we have been trained to close with the enemy. Other nations that we served with in Afghanistan weren't necessarily trained the same way. I'm not soft on it, but at the same time, there is a difference between being the initial entry force and being a stability force and showing restraint and working with the population.

But these are very difficult situations that our citizens find themselves in. It's a very split-second decision that we put them into that could result in mission failure, their

buddies being killed, or them being killed personally.

Q: General, this is to follow on that question about Blackwater. Last week we spoke with General Blum, National Guard Bureau. He described being in a bidding war to retain highly skilled personnel, a bidding war with private security contractors. Is this an issue for the Army writ large, and how is the Army training soldiers to deal with this massive presence of both armed private security contractors in the battlespace and other contract personnel on whom they rely?

A: Well, we do train both at the, what we do at the Basic Training level, which I over watch for General Wallace, is awareness that there are other people on the battlefield. You've got Iraqis, you've got coalition forces, you have the media, you have contractors. You are not alone on the battlefield. There are a lot of other people that you have to have situational awareness of. First of all, you may have to protect part of that group I described. But the other part of it is that you may have to help part of that group accomplish their task or aim.

For instance, in Afghanistan we had all our supplies were moved by Afghan truck drivers. This is a great thing because it puts resources into the Afghan economy and grows their economy. But in some cases in contentious areas we escorted them and protected them to get from one point to another where we knew there was a heavy Taliban presence.

In our Combat Training Centers we do replicate civilians on the battlefield, contractors being involved. A lot of our contracting work is from a logistics perspective--bringing in fresh food, running dining facilities, et cetera.

As far as the Army competing with private firms, in other words a soldier can go be a contractor and a security agency - the Army competes with America for who comes in the Army. I think you know that only three out of ten 17-24 year old males are qualified to join the Army. Of those same three out of ten, colleges want, business wants. It is competitive for those three of ten. And the other seven aren't qualified because of high school diploma, moral turpitude, or physical fitness level.

Q: I just first of all wondered if you could say, did the Army meet its goal by more than 81 [inaudible]? Is it between 80 and 81? Would that be a fair [inaudible]?

A: The Army has met its goals, and on the 10th of October, the Office of the Secretary of Defense will lay those out.

Q: Okay. In terms of these trends with the high school diplomas and waivers--waivers [inaudible]. Can you talk about the waivers for this past year, you did say roughly

[inaudible]. And, [inaudible] internal guidelines given that it's sort of been [inaudible] a little bit. I mean, do you have an absolute number on high school diplomas [inaudible], and waivers also?

A: First of all, on what we call the quality marks assigned by the Office of the Secretary of the Defense, it is 90 percent high school graduates. It is 60 percent, half the score between the highest part of the standardized battery test, which is 99, all the way down to 50. And the test is mean to the national average of 50. The expectation going in is that if all America took it, they would score a 50. So 60 percent have to be between what is called a Category 1 and a Category 3A. And then 4 percent or less are Category 4, which means they scored about 35 or below, but they have a high school degree.

I mean, we had a high school valedictorian from a state flunk the AFSVB. She wanted to come into the Army; she flunked it. We got her onto a program called March to Success, which is a standardized test that we offer for anyone to take online, a standardized test prep, and she came back and did just fine. She just panicked. I know no one in here has ever panicked taking the SAT, other than me. [Laughter].

So those are our goals. Our internal goals are no different from what OSD's internal goals are. And you know, we've been running around 80, 60, and 4 is what we have been running for the last several years. We've made that, although we would like to be at 90.

With regard to waivers, waivers have gone up. And the waivers are in three areas. We have drug and alcohol waivers, we have medical waivers, and we have moral waivers. The moral waivers are predominantly for misdemeanors. That's what they are predominantly for, although there are some that are for serious misconduct. But you look into that and, again, it's--this isn't taken lightly. This is held at a two-star general level to make that decision. The recruiters are not allowed to waiver anyone. Recruiters cannot give a waiver. Recruiters can bring someone in and say this person has a problem, but they are not allowed to waiver.

And then we have a percentage of, a little less than half is medical, and then the other part is drug and alcohol. But, you know, again, we take each of these into serious consideration. I don't know, we're working on the statistics. We're trying to gather statistics about how do these folks who have been waived do.

I can give you one anecdote. I had a medic in my division tragically killed in Afghanistan. He earned two Silver Stars and two Purple Hearts. He earned them by going into fire and carrying guys out on his shoulders. I pinned his first Purple Heart on him on a Saturday. When I asked this about 5'9" young man, a corporal, you know, well I first asked this like 6'1" platoon sergeant, who probably went about 190 plus 70 pounds of gear on top, "Who helped you when you got wounded?" he said, "Sir, the man to my

left" And the man to his left was the corporal standing in ranks, and the corporal, who was about 5'9" and probably went about 160 carried him out on his shoulders - of the firefight--while wounded himself.

And this guy was totally inspirational. I mean, the infantry soldiers would say, "Well, Sir, we have to go forward in combat because Doc goes forward. As infantry guys you can't have a doc out front, so we've got to get out front." [Laughter].

Tragically, on Tuesday, he was killed. He had to get more waivers because as a young 14 year old kid in an American city he used marijuana, but he was straight up about it and told us about it. We looked in to it. We waived him. And how do you measure--it's tough to measure these things. I mean, Audie Murphy, Second World War decorated soldier, and Alvin York, First World War decorated soldier, both Medal of Honor winners. Neither of them would be in the Army today because of their high school completions.

Q: Do you know the overall percentage of the last year that will have come in on some kind of waiver, and just can you, can you say, again, I mean is there any sense of the absolute, like what do you want [inaudible].

A: OSD is going to lay those numbers out in detail for you on the 10th. It is a case, what I can tell you is it's a case-by-case review of every single soldier that has to come in. I know this is on the record, but I would just make one comment that shouldn't be on the record because it's personal.

[Off the record segment]

Q: I wanted to ask you about the delayed-entry pool. I know a few years back it was like 25-30 percent and it's dropped over the past few years. What was the delayed-entry pool last year and going into this year? How is that impacting how you're recruiting and the more numbers that you need?

A: Great question. What we would like to do is have a large--where we'd like to get to is about a 35 percent delayed-entry pool. Because what that does for us is it flat lines the training base over the year, and when we have a slow recruitment--you know, we never have December be a big recruiting month because American youth want to celebrate the holidays, so they're not rushing to come and be recruited, so we're normally around 700 or 800 or so in December. If we had a delayed-entry pool, we could pull those soldiers forward, put them into the training seats, and we can have a flat training year and use the nation's resources effectively.

What happens, as you know, is the National Guard, the Reserve, and the folks come in--the summertimes come in, you know, graduate from high school, look around for a

couple of weeks, don't have a job, say well, maybe I'll join the armed forces. So we get these big what we call summer surges, and we have to maximize them. We have to put relocateable buildings up. We have to get reserve drill sergeant units activated. We have to hire civilians to guard extra ammunition. We have to do a lot of extra things to get those soldiers trained in that period of time. So we'd like to build the delayed-entry pool back.

It is not going to be done this year. It is going to have to be a gradual build-back because we are going to recruit to grow the Army, as we talked about, by 65,000, but we also want to build the delayed-entry pool back.

Last year, I think we started in the year above 10,000. Maybe we were 10-12,000. I wasn't here last year. I'm trying to think.

Q: What percentage is that?

A: Well, it must have been like 12 percent--something along that line. This year, we're going to start in the year probably somewhere between 6,500 and 7,000, so less. And so it's going to be a challenge this year as it always is without a delayed-entry pool. It also gives us more time to work with the population, and we're not in such a, we're not as driven in the recruiting efforts.

Where we'd like to recruit is in the high schools. That's where you like to recruit. The Marines do it very well. You want to be in the high schools, talking to the rising seniors about their options, so they finish and get their degree and meet the quality marks and then they come in the Army. When we don't have a large delayed-entry pool and when we're in the fight for recruiting, then we're outside and talking to the graduates of the high schools and we'd rather be in the high schools.

Q: Was this one of the reasons that the Army came forward and is, you know, giving bonuses for people who report to duty within a month?

A: The Quick-Ship Bonus was determined for several reasons, one of which was to compete with industry, because if you look at what's going on out there, there's a lot of incentives that are offered by industry: 401Ks are started right away, life insurance programs, health insurance starts right up, and so we spend a lot of money in advertising, and we're trying to balance. It goes back to the question about the technology-driven kids. They don't watch TV that much. You've got them on You Tube. You've got to get them on text messaging. You've got to try to talk to them on the internet, get them to come to the internet because that's where they live. Remember, a father of five. I've got some insights on this stuff, this culture.

So the \$20,000 was to appeal to these graduating seniors to take a look at the Army. We've always had some measure of Quick-Ship or Join Now. It has been as low as \$6,000. This was an economic means to appeal to them and compete with the market place.

Q: I'm wondering about what [inaudible] has changed and [inaudible]. I'm wondering what can be done to improve those [inaudible] technologies? Are there ones you'd like to see more in the Army, especially when it comes to [inaudible] and cultural awareness things?

A: Well, we're continually looking for using simulations to put our soldiers in a virtual environment before they go into a live environment, so they get more repetitions. It's about building muscle memory. It's about building reaction prior to actually being in the actual live environment. It's like being in a driver's school where you hopefully learn all the reflexes, so the first time you go into an intersection where somebody runs a stoplight--if you thought your way through it, you'd be in a wreck. If you react, you avoid a wreck.

And so, we're looking at every aspect of simulation: shooting simulations, medical simulations. You may have seen some of our medical mannequins that we have now, but they are driven by computer and you can induce any kind of fault into the person that you want to, and our combat medics learn to rapidly assess. It's a very realistic setting.

I was just down at the Combat Medic Training Center last week. They go into a site towards the back end of their 16 weeks of training where they basically come onto a bomb scene, and there's multiple casualties and they have to wade into that and deal with these folks, and these mannequins can die, and then they get an after-action review on how they did in treating that mannequin. It's very real. It's taken very real by the medics. It's pretty emotional training, but it saves lives because they've done multiple reps now.

I mean, if they do a trach, and intubate somebody and do it wrong, just the left lung expands on this mannequin instead of the right. Or, if they go too deep, the stomach comes up and down instead of the lungs. So, its--and they moan, and their eyes open and shut--so, these kind of simulations - and we're working with industry to get as realistic as we can--give our soldiers more repetitions to be ready when they get into the fight, and it saves lives but it also makes them better thinkers in a counter-insurgency environment. Cultural simulations, fighting in city simulations, use of firepower, escalation of force--they get exposed to all of these things.

Q: The standardized tests that everybody does, how much of that test is an aptitude test like the old SAT or like an IQ test, and how much of it, or is it more like an achievement

test, testing what you sort of learned in school.

A: I guess the best way I could describe it is a multidiscipline test across all aspects of education. It is more of a skills inventory test.

Q: Skills you're supposed to have?

A: It kind of shows up your science/technology/chemistry/ mechanical inclinations, handling the English language, and then scores those so that you can be guided as a prospective soldier on what is the best military occupational specialty for you.

Q: Any you overhaul that every year, and do you know what the last time you did a major overhaul of that test was?

A: I don't know the answer to that.

Q: General [inaudible] talked to a few us about the overall recruiting trends and he came up with some interesting statistics that seemed to [inaudible] challenges to accelerate in the Army and grow in the Army. One was the influencers and Iraq. Two, he laid out the trends over the last 25 years and the propensity to serve among the 17-24 year olds had dropped from 25 percent to 15 percent. What kind of challenges do those pose to you? And then, I have a specific question about the Quick-Ship Bonus.

A: Well, the challenges are: How do you through messaging, through working with centers of influence, reverse those trends? I would not say that - the majority of our soldiers who come to us are not necessarily hugely patriotic. But by the time they graduate from Basic Training, they're very patriotic. And so, we're looking at getting out with the centers of influence, working with parents, getting other people to speak for the military, talking to school guidance counselors, school superintendents, about what the advantages are to serve the nation, what it is to have a duty towards serving the nation, want to serve the nation, but, again, it is a very difficult environment because we were already on a decline and now we're in a persistent conflict.

And you know, again, there's a great group, the defenders, they want to come in. But there's another group that really don't want to serve in any--if you ask them about Red Cross or working with inner-city youth or being kids' coaches, right now they're not too focused on that. But, you know, there was a Gallup poll taken that said that the youth dressed funny, they listened to strange music, they didn't obey their parents that well, they didn't really have a sense of service towards the country, very self centered--and that Gallup poll of 1936 was describing the Second World War veterans that came in and won democracy.

Q: Yeah, but play that out. Pearl Harbor galvanized that. That was a war we were thrust in a war of choice and now it's going badly. So that only goes so far in terms of how does Iraq complicate in terms of influencers. The hate for the war is growing, just like the war.

A: Well, it's unpopular, and the influencers see it as dangerous, and so they will talk to the youth, whether that's a coach, a priest, a parent, a friend, and they'll talk to the youth and discourage them from coming in the military. But, I mean, I guess it goes back to the fundamental question about, you know, does America need to be defended, and does America need a military, and the answers to that are yes, and part of our economic engines are driven because we have security. Believe me, I've served abroad where countries don't have security, and, you know, Maslow's hierarchy does work--and when you're not sure that you can take your tomatoes to market to be sold or be blown up, you don't take your tomatoes to market and they rot and, therefore, you don't make any money, and, therefore, your family is hungry.

Q: I've got a quick question on the Quick-Ship. General [Bostic] was asked will this become permanent, and he goes, well, we're thinking about that fact. Is that going to become permanent, or did it expire?

A: It's a sort of in-between answer. For 13 military occupational specialties, there is no change to it. For 13 others, it's gone down to \$15,000. These are things we turn up. I'm sure General [Bostic] described--we turn these things up and down based on the needs and who is coming in and what occupational specialties they want to be in, and so we have changed it to a degree. Thirteen are going to continue, thirteen have gone down to \$15,000.

Q: Can you rattle off, I mean, two or three of the top -

A: The tops are primarily fire supporters, the guys who, field artillery, and some of the Special Forces. We have a program called 18 X-ray, where we bring a certain group in to be trained to become Special--well, to compete to become Special Forces. They don't necessarily get it. And then, the \$15,000 is engineers, infantry, and some of the supply specialties.

Q: Fire supporters. Why are we having trouble bringing them in? It doesn't seem like there's a lot of demand for artillery.

A: Well, it's not necessarily having trouble bring them; it's just balancing military occupational specialties. We have to bring the soldiers in, they choose what they'd like to do. You know, the number one driver--over 70 percent--the answer is, you know, what made you come in? It's the specialty they get. It really isn't, a lot of people think since

the 20K, it's really what job did I get is the biggest why did you come in and why did you pick this? It's because of the job they got. But when you let so many go in and then you have got to back up and look at leveling that off. So this now, as we start the new year, we want to level that back up and get our fire supporters in. Infantry is a very popular branch. Some of you may be sort of shocked at that. Of course, I'm a former infantryman, so - But, you know, take the military academy. At one time, the most popular branch was engineers; today, one of the first branches to go out is infantry.

Q: Let me just ask, quickly--this may be outside your lane. I know there has been a lot written about West Point cadets getting out after their initial commitment in higher numbers. I had also heard that sort of ROTC scholarship officers were getting out at a comparable rate after their first commitment. Do you track those at all, or do you guys have a sense, do you break it down that way?

A: Well, we do break it down. We break it down between West Point. We break it down between ROTC. We split Officer Candidate School between formers NCOs who come in and go to NCOS versus the college option. You know, you can graduate from college, knock around a little bit, and then say you know what, I want to go be in Army and I want to be an officer, and we have a track that you can go on where you go to Basic Training for nine weeks and then you go to Officer Candidate School. We track all those.

Q: Do you know if the ROTC scholarship is, the attrition rate at the end of the first commitment, initial commitment, is higher?

A: Higher than whose?

Q: Than it has been? I guess -

A: You know, they go up and down over the course of the decades. Both West Point and ROTC are down as far as, the trend is down, but we're working multiple options to turn that, and we're having some success with that. You may have heard that discussed, but they can go to graduate school, they can opt to go to graduate school, they can opt to a unit of assignment of choice. Say you're serving at Fort Hood, Texas, and you want to come serve at Fort Stewart, Georgia, you can opt to take that and you can opt for a bonus for the officers, a retention bonus, and that's for three years of service.

Q: I have a quick one, Sir. What is the end strength right now for the Army?

A: I am not positive. I think 515,000, something like that. I don't have those numbers in front of me; I didn't look at them before I came up.

Q: But about 515?

A: Well, we're trying to get to 547, and we've got to do 65K to get there. I can't remember what our end strength is. Our numbers are up a little bit higher than anticipated because of, primarily, reenlistments. I don't have that number.

Q: What's the goal, the recruiting goal for '08, Sir? Is it still 80,000?

A: It is 80,000 for the active component. But also it's going to be added to by reenlistment and this National Guard incentive called Active First. But it's 80K right now for Recruiting Command, for General [Bostic's] command.

Q: What about for Army Reserve?

A: Army Reserve is 26.5--same as this year.

Q: The Commandant of the Marine Corps told the Post awhile back that his recruiters used to spend four hours with recruits and four hours with their influentials and that the Marine Corps was now spending four hours with the recruits and 14 hours with the influentials. What's the Army comparable for that figure?

A: I don't have that parsed in hours, but I will tell you that at all levels, general officers are going out and talking to the centers of influence. Our senior sergeants-majors are out talking. The brigade commanders, brigade command sergeant-majors, battalion commanders and sergeant-majors are all out working with the influencers. One of the things we have done is gone wireless, and so now the recruiter can go into the home with a laptop, can sit down and talk to the parents about the aspects of joining the Army and the different incentives that their daughter or son might be eligible for. So we're trying to get to the influencers in multiple ways.

Q: But it's a great increase in the amount of time?

A: Absolutely. It has to be, I think, because we're so long from a draft Army that we have a lot of America that doesn't know, really, anything about the military. And so there is a lot of time spent on what is it to be in the military, what does it really mean? What's Hollywood's view versus what's reality, and there is sort of a lot of teaching going on.

Q: You graduated from West Point in '75. That was a very difficult time in the military because of the backwash of the Vietnam War, a very unpopular war. The military was unpopular. So now you've got a new group coming out of West Point. Same sort of situation, superficially anyway, an unpopular war. Things are very difficult. Is that just a superficial comparison, or is the situation today very different from then? And the guys who came out in '74, '75, '76 were kind of the leading edge of the revival of the Army -

the never-again school.

What do you think is going to be said of the people coming out now?

A: Wow. That's a lot of waterfront. It was a difficult time. We had draft platoons, but I'll tell you the men were good men in my first platoon. We were not the leading edge. Actually, men who had fought in Vietnam like General McCaffrey and his peers, they came out and they were the middle-grade guys that really made the difference. We sort of executed, as lieutenants and captains, what they told us to do to be a better Army.

The Army made some great changes. The Army was not liked. The Army is very well liked today. Our soldiers go through airports, people clap for them. People come up and put their hand on their back and say thanks. The war is unpopular with many people in America. The war is not necessarily very unpopular with our forces.

Our soldiers realize the difference that they are making in Afghanistan and Iraq. Our soldiers will often say why is it portrayed this way here versus what I do on the ground over there?

I would say that most soldiers that I have talked to dearly miss America, dearly miss their families, but also, when they leave, there's a little touch of remorse because they know they know they're making a difference in people's lives, and they know that if they were to stay they could continue to make that difference.

It was not easy for me to leave Afghanistan, because I felt like our nation was making a huge difference for the people of Afghanistan, and America, more than any other nation, really does contribute. I mean financially and with expertise, and with a national effort-- I mean the Afghans are really counting on us to help them. You know, President Karzai said he would be happy being a fourth-world country. We just can't imagine the poverty, the lack of infrastructure, the lack of capacity that exists there. I mean, Mrs. Rice's counterpart goes around with two cell phones and a scribe; that is his whole bureaucracy as the Secretary of State/Minister for the Interior of Afghanistan. And it is really tough capacity wise because [inaudible] everybody left and people haven't come back.

I think the soldiers for the most part feel pretty good about the mission they're doing.

Q: Okay, these lieutenants and captains of today--

A: What'll they say?

Q: Yeah. How are they going to influence the Army over the next 20 years?

A: Oh, I think, you know that they are already influencing it. They are writing about counter-insurgency. They're writing about the use of equipment. They're writing about being joint. They're writing about how to build another Army. You know, nationbuilding from a prospective of training police, training the military. They're outspoken, which is a good thing. They will take a hard look at all aspects of what we call DOTMILPF: Doctrine, organization, materiel solutions, leader solutions. They will grasp hold of this institution and help pull it forward into the 21st Century.

Q: Okay, we're out of time. I think we'll leave it there.

A: Okay, thank you all.

Q: Thank you very much.

END TEXT