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Management Problems, Policies,  
Procedures, And Results Of  
Military Personnel Reductions  
During Fiscal Year 1972 B-179927

Department of Defense

*UNITED STATES  
GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE*

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UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

FEDERAL PERSONNEL AND  
COMPENSATION DIVISION

B-179927

The Honorable  
The Secretary of Defense

Dear Mr. Secretary:

This is our report on management problems, policies, procedures and results of military personnel reductions during fiscal year 1972.

Our principal observations are summarized in the digest. The preliminary draft of this report was informally discussed with members of your staff and staff members of each of the services.

We are sending copies of this report to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations, Armed Services, and Government Operations and the Director, Office of Management and Budget. We are also sending copies to each of the service Secretaries and to the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Comptroller).

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Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Forrest R. Browne".

Forrest R. Browne  
Director

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ABBREVIATIONS

ATC	Air Training Command
CONUS	continental United States
GAO	General Accounting Office

D I G E S T

WHY THE REVIEW WAS MADE

Substantial reductions in military personnel were planned, directed, and made during fiscal year 1972.

To provide a basis and perspective for improving the management of military personnel reductions should they occur again, GAO identified the

- types and severity of the management problems that arose in 1972;
- effectiveness of policies and procedures employed in the reductions; and the
- impact on personnel turbulence and readiness.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

As a general principle, strength reductions could afford an opportunity to improve personnel readiness. Several conditions are involved, including:

- Enough leadtime to accomplish reductions efficiently and effectively.
- Policies and procedures which insure quality selection and retention while they control quantity.
- Reliable projections of the impact of management policy decisions and controls to discipline actions.

--Accurate and timely feedback.

--Control of the impact of policy decisions on interrelated activities of the personnel system, such as the training establishment. (See p. 33.)

The military manpower system is geared to a defined cycle of departmental reviews ordinarily providing leadtime needed to adjust strength objectives. During fiscal year 1972, several out-of-cycle changes occurred as late as 3 and 6 months into the year. These generated problems involving revisions to plans, policies, and procedures. (See apps. I and II and pp. 4 and 15.)

Each service used a variety of policies and procedures, revising some and canceling others, during the year. (See pp. 9, 10, 12, 17, 24, and 31.)

In terms of accomplishing the required quantitative reductions, the policies and procedures were effective. The services ended the year at or below the strength limitations. (See app. I and II.)

The services, in varying degrees, began the year with skill imbalances and personnel readiness problems. The problems carried through the year and may have increased corrective problems for subsequent years. (See pp. 13, 20, 27, and 32.)

The services' strength projections lacked reliability. Differences between projections and actual strength were significant. (See pp. 10, 17, 22, and 30.)

Under the time constraints of the year, information was required very quickly. For several services, information systems required weeks, and in certain instances months, to accumulate and process information. (See pp. 11 and 24.)

Frequency, timing, and magnitude of changes in strength objectives caused abrupt changes in training programs. GAO believes that, as a result, the efficient use and operating costs of training facilities had to be affected. The revisions in training may very well contribute to skill shortages and future imbalances and may necessitate retraining. (See pp. 18, 27, and 31.)

Quantitative reduction policies involved involuntary separations and curtailment of regular service commitments, which may have conflicted with the concept of an all-volunteer force. (See pp. 10, 12, 24, 25, 31 and 32.)

Difficulties experienced in reducing strength under the circumstance of fiscal year 1972 are severe enough to warrant reassessment of management abilities and systems. (See p. 35.)

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Secretary of Defense should:

--Review policies, procedures, and plans that are established for managing reductions to insure that:

1. Policies conform with the principle that management of reduc-

tion should provide an opportunity for and result in improved skill balances and personnel readiness.

2. Procedures are consistent between services and compatible with their commitments to military personnel and commitments expected of military personnel.

3. Plans are balanced to minimize personnel turbulence and disruption of supporting activities.

--Establish definitive objectives and time frames for each service to improve skill balance and personnel readiness.

--Evaluate reliability of current strength projections and availability of models for use under conditions requiring strength reductions with short leadtime.

--Improve reporting systems capabilities to provide timely, essential, and accurate decisionmaking information. (See p. 35.)

When substantial reductions are to be made, the Secretary of Defense should apprise the Congress explicitly of personnel policies and procedures to be used, including:

--Extent of voluntary and/or involuntary separations.

--Changes in established service commitments and obligations necessary to accomplish the reductions.

--Adjustments in quantity and quality standards of manpower intake.

--Anticipated impact on skill balances and personnel readiness. (See p. 36.)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

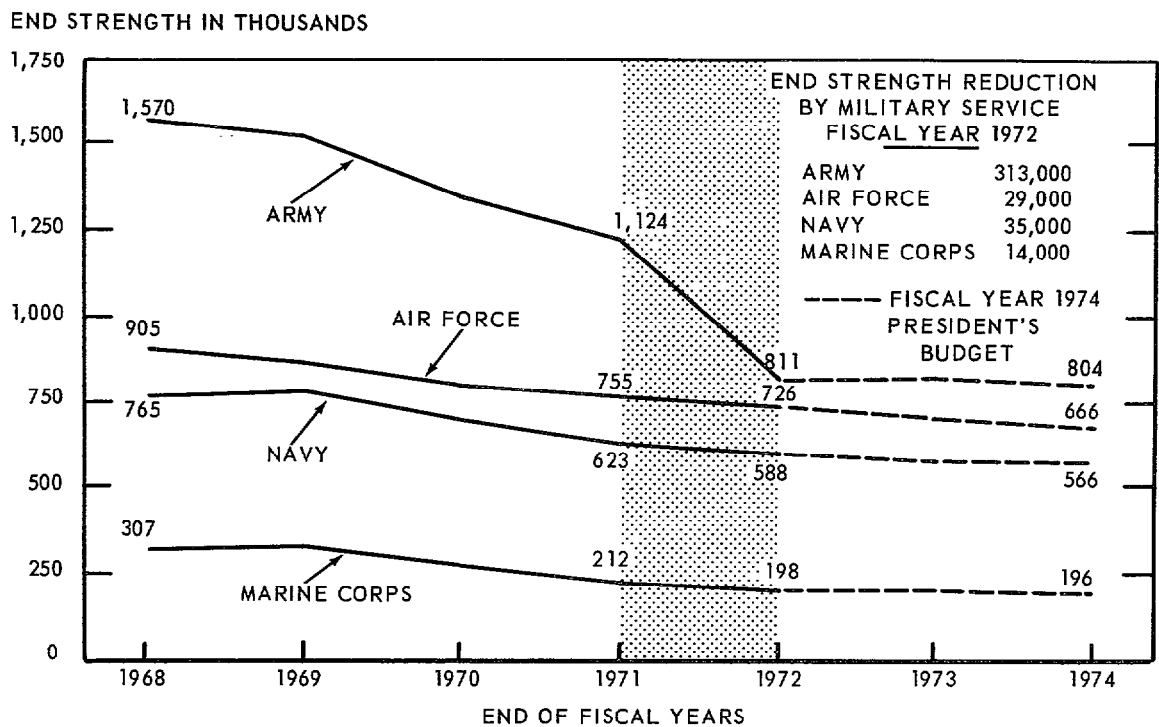
Manpower management in the Department of Defense, involving more than 2 million active duty personnel, is a complex task. The ability to manage effectively and efficiently is tested when significant reductions are required in a short, prescribed period of time.

During fiscal year 1972 military personnel strength was significantly reduced under time constraints.

Figure 1 illustrates the dimension of the actual decline in strength by military service.

FIGURE 1

**ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY PERSONNEL END STRENGTH  
BY MILITARY SERVICE**



To military manpower managers, average strength, or man-years expended during a fiscal year, is very important because it involves financial constraints and limitations.

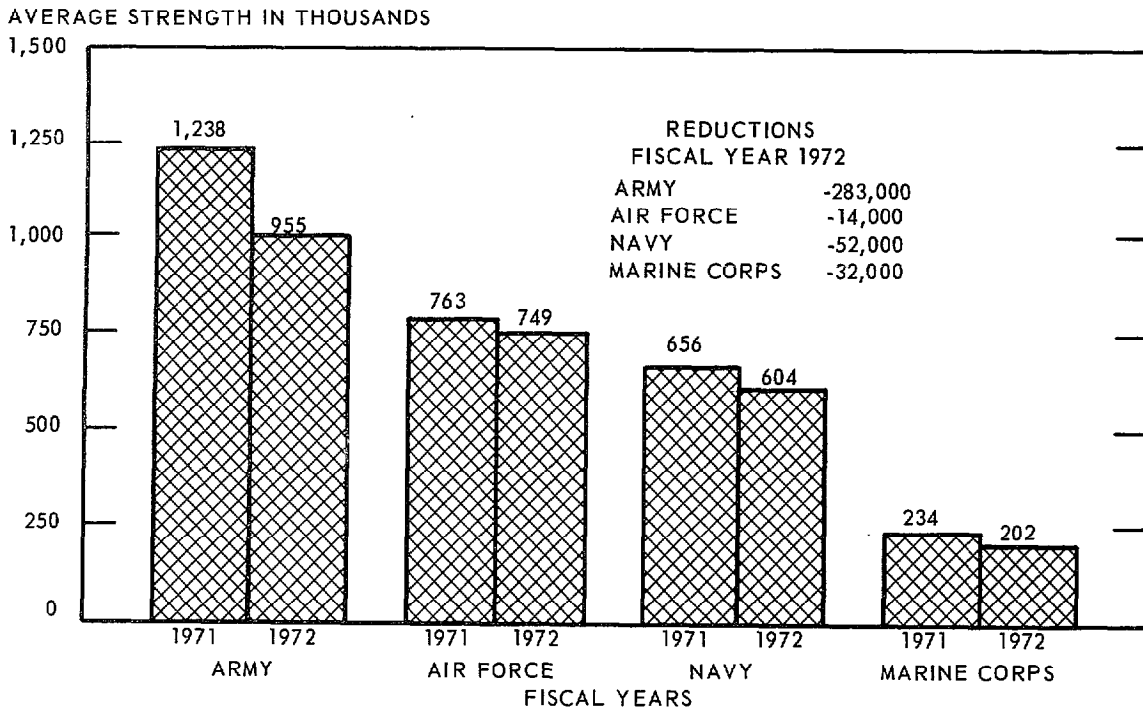
On September 28, 1971, almost 3 months into fiscal year 1972, Congress enacted Public Law 92-129, which contained amendments to the Selective Service Act of 1967 and a reduction in the man-years requested in the fiscal year 1972 President's budget.

Public Law 92-129 also provided increases in military pay and benefits for lower grade enlisted personnel and officers and other financial incentives, to encourage military personnel to remain in the service and to attract volunteers.

The law, while imposing man-year reductions, at the same time provided incentives to encourage enlistments and reenlistments.

Figure 2 illustrates the dimension of the total reduction in average strength for fiscal year 1972.

**FIGURE 2**  
**AVERAGE STRENGTH (MAN-YEAR) REDUCTIONS**  
**BY MILITARY SERVICE**



This report describes the problems encountered, policies and procedures used to accomplish the reductions, and the impact of the many actions each service took during the year. This report is intended to provide the Secretary of Defense and the service Secretaries with a basis for evaluating current and planned policies and procedures for managing future reductions, should they occur, in the interest of maximum responsive and effective management.



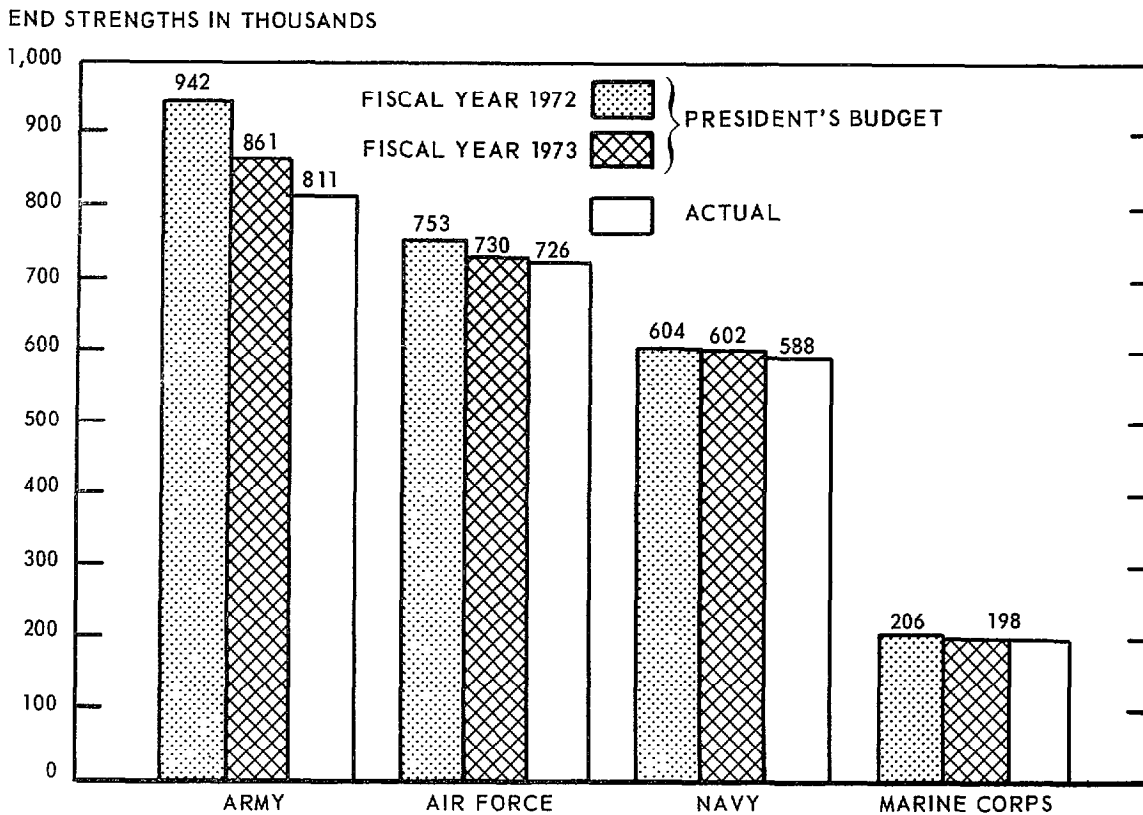
CHAPTER 2

BUDGET DECISIONS AND TIMING

For fiscal year 1972, preliminary budget estimates, including military personnel strengths, were submitted to the Office of the Secretary of Defense in the fall of 1970, approximately 21 months, before June 30, 1972, when the reduced strengths were to be achieved. Appendix I presents key budget actions and changes in strength objectives after the initial submissions as well as the time remaining to effect these reductions.

Each service, except the Marine Corps, ended fiscal year 1972 below the end strength estimated in its budgets. This occurred notwithstanding successive budget changes which lowered the end strength to be achieved by June 30, 1972. (See figure 3.)

FIGURE 3  
COMPARISONS  
BUDGET VERSUS ACTUAL END STRENGTHS  
JUNE 30, 1972



Maintaining average strength is a management function involving controlled gains and losses in order to comply with the prescribed average and fiscal constraints for the year. Changes in average strength objectives or constraints, depending upon the amount and timing, can generate problems. For example, a decision made midpoint in a fiscal year to reduce the average strength for the balance of the year by 5,000 man-years would require an immediate reduction of at least 10,000 individuals, or as many as 20,000 if spread uniformly over the remaining half of the fiscal year. Since this circumstance involves complex and comprehensive adjustments, the availability of current and accurate information upon which to base decisions is extremely important.

Appendix II sets forth the key times and the related average strength objectives and changes that occurred during fiscal year 1972, including reductions made by Public Law 92-129, almost 3 months after the fiscal year began.

As appendix II notes, the changes in average strength required of each service varied in frequency and timing. Nevertheless, in all cases the actual average strength for fiscal year 1972 fell below the authorized averages for that year. The Army, with the largest reduction to be achieved, fell short by the largest amount.

### CHAPTER 3

## MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS, POLICIES, PROCEDURES,

## AND RESULTS

Each service experienced manpower strength management problems in fiscal year 1972. As previously noted, changes involving additional reductions in strength objectives were made at points 3 months, and for several services 6 months, after the year began. Additionally, new and attractive incentives to remain in the service had become available. Therefore, among other complications, estimating factors based on former experience were less applicable and less predictive than in past years.

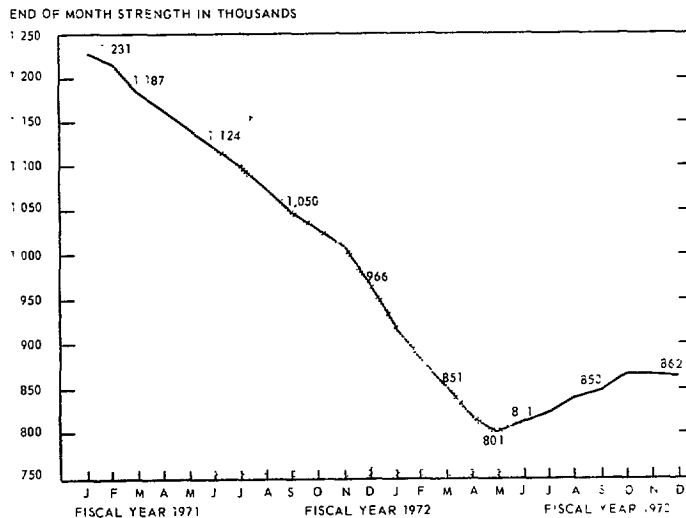
Each service used a variety of policies and procedures to accomplish reductions. The following sections describe those actions and their results.

### ARMY

#### Dimension of reduction

Figure 4 presents insight into the dimension of the reduction on a month-by-month basis, during fiscal year 1972 and the preceding and subsequent 6-month periods.

FIGURE 4  
ARMY  
MILITARY MANPOWER ON ACTIVE DUTY  
JANUARY 1971 THROUGH DECEMBER 1972



In the President's budget for fiscal year 1972, the Army's estimated total strength for the beginning of the year was approximately 1,107,200, with a yearend objective of approximately 942,200. Subsequent estimates and the actual numbers indicated that the beginning of the year initial estimate was understated by more than 16,000. Therefore, the magnitude of the reduction was greater than anticipated. Public Law 92-129 (about 3 months after the fiscal year began) reduced the average strength by 50,000 below the budget request, which necessitated a further decrease in end strength. An additional complication in managing the reduction was the acceleration of the Vietnam withdrawal.

The foregoing indicated that timely and responsive action would be required by the Army before or immediately after fiscal year 1972 began. Knowledge that the additional 50,000 man-year reduction was imminent was available on May 5, 1971, when the Senate Committee on Armed Services issued Senate Report 92-93. The Secretary of the Army sent a memorandum dated May 17, 1971, to the Secretary of Defense expressing opposition to the reduction. A series of exchanges of views and alternatives followed, culminating in a memorandum by the Deputy Secretary of Defense on July 13, 1971, which requested the Army to implement the 50,000 additional man-year reduction. Specific proposals followed during August and September 1971.

### Policies and projections

Proceeding with approved major programs to accelerate strength reductions, the Army, in September 1971, implemented a policy of mandatory release of draftees in the continental United States (CONUS) with 120 days or less remaining in service obligation and subsequently implemented follow-on policy changes further liberalizing release programs. The Army also tried to restrict gains by revising and raising qualification standards. The draft and the emphasis toward an all-volunteer force were continued.

July 1971 projections of gains and losses through October 1971, versus actual gains and losses, indicated that the objectives had not been realized. The problem of achieving the reductions had, in fact, increased since the Army had gained approximately 12,100 more than projected and lost approximately 29,000 less than projected. The Army determined that, as of the end of October, 5,000 man-years more than

available under the constraints of the authorized average strength had been expended.

On November 30, 1971 (5 months into the fiscal year), the Secretary of the Army advised the Secretary of Defense of the overstrength and recommended approval of a series of additional actions to meet strength limitations. The Secretary of the Army described the effects that the required reductions in man-years would have on readiness, the uncertainties in estimates of gains and losses based on limited experience, and the estimated requirements for draftees. On December 6, 1971, the Secretary of Defense approved the following:

- 179-day early release for first-term regular Army personnel and draftees in CONUS and overseas, except in Europe and Vietnam.
- 150-day early release for first-term regular Army personnel and draftees in Europe.
- Voluntary discharge at the port of entry for those first-term regular Army personnel and draftees returning from Vietnam with more than 179 days remaining in service.
- Up to 12 months early release for 3-year regular Army personnel to join the Reserve components.
- Slippage of the personnel fill of four brigades of the 13 Division Force from the fourth quarter of fiscal year 1972 to the first quarter of fiscal year 1973.

#### Revised projections

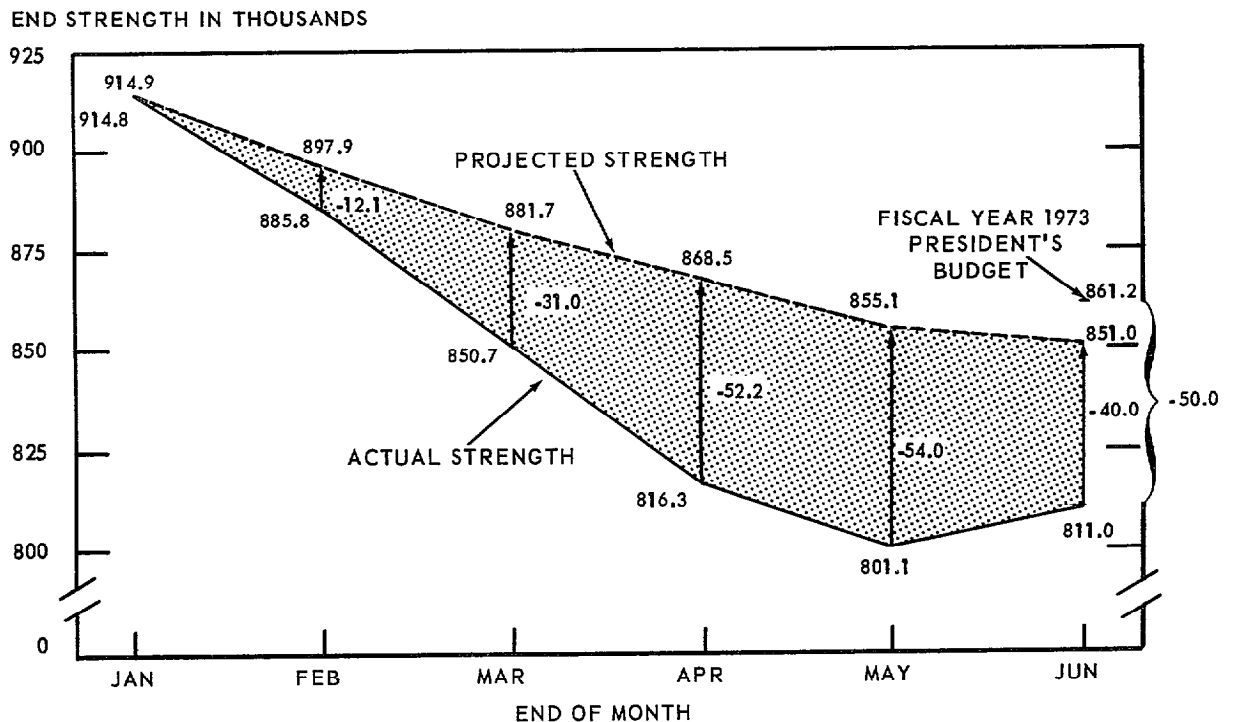
Taking the above policy considerations into account, as well as the experience through November 1971, projections of gains and losses were revised to meet the required man-year average of 974,309 (Public Law 92-129). These projections, as of January 25, 1972, specified gains and losses, by month, for January through June 30, 1972.

A comparison of the above projections with actual results by the end of the fiscal year indicated that the Army gained approximately 28,600 less than projected and lost

approximately 12,200 more than projected, a reversal of the preceding trends.

The net result was that the June 30, 1972, end strength was approximately 40,000 less than projected and approximately 50,000 less than proposed in the 1973 budget request. Further, average strength was approximately 14,100 less than projected and approximately 19,000 less than authorized. Figure 5 illustrates the month-by-month results of this situation.

FIGURE 5  
**ARMY**  
**PROJECTED STRENGTH VERSUS ACTUAL STRENGTH**  
**JANUARY 1972 THROUGH JUNE 1972**



Lack of accurate and timely data

The capability of the military personnel management system to maintain accurate and timely data was a major problem in fiscal year 1972.

Army personnel involved in the day-to-day management of the fiscal year 1972 reduction were well aware of this. They found it necessary to develop a more sophisticated program

for determining enlisted losses, referred to as the enlisted loss model, in the early fall of the year when they realized that certain factors in the model needed revision and new methods were needed for predicting enlisted losses. (For example, the model did not accurately depict the expiration of the terms of service for those returning from Vietnam.) The new model, however, was scheduled to be completed in fiscal year 1973. They also initiated a flash system of reporting information from separation centers.

Further evidence of continuing problems with the personnel data system was the fact that personnel computing training requirements could not obtain up-to-date inventory data. In addition, the computations were requiring about 5-months to complete and were not reflected in the training base for another 4 months.

Inaccurate and untimely data was not a new problem. The many actions initiated to increase early-outs and to promote an all-volunteer force caused much former predictive data to be unreliable. For example:

- Management could not estimate the number of personnel who would delay retirement until the expected passage of the pay raise in mid-fiscal year 1972.
- During the push for early-outs, men with pregnant wives were allowed to stay in the service beyond delivery and postnatal care of the wives and thus affected early-out projections.
- The numbers electing to obtain early release by joining the Reserves were substantially underestimated.

#### Revised policies

The early-out policies resulted in too rapid a reduction and specific programs had to be rescinded or changed before the year was over. For example:

- As of February 21, 1972, the voluntary early release program to join the Reserves was terminated. The number actually released had exceeded estimates by approximately 21,000.

- As of May 1, 1972, the voluntary early release program at CONUS ports of Vietnam returnees with 6 to 12 months of remaining service was terminated.
- As of May 18, 1972, the balance of the early-out programs and policies designed to accelerate the reduction were canceled.
- Inductions from January 25, 1972, projected requirements of 2,600 for the balance of the year were increased to 14,900, of which 14,400 were inducted from April through June 1972.

Skill imbalances and personnel readiness

In planning and executing policy and program changes to reduce strength the Army recognized that the policy of matching skills available to skills required was being ignored and this would adversely affect personnel readiness. However, the magnitude of the difference between the projections and actual strength, particularly from January through June 1972, as figure 5 shows, probably led to an even greater impact on readiness than planned and to effects which carried into fiscal year 1973.

The Army had a significant skill imbalance problem at the beginning of the year and ended the year with almost the same problem. Of the 463 skills, 26 percent were manned at less than 80 percent and 27 percent were manned at more than 120 percent of requirements.

The following table illustrates personnel readiness for all major combat units except those in Vietnam.

	June 1971 ( <u>percent</u> )	June 1972 ( <u>percent</u> )
Personnel strength (quantity):		
Ready or substantially ready	60	52
Marginally or not ready	40	48
Military occupational specialty (quantity):		
Ready or substantially ready	60	52
Marginally or not ready	40	48



Further, at the end of the year, the training readiness indexes, which include personnel as a major component, indicated that approximately 60 percent of the units were considered marginally or not ready.

Considering the total force, as previously mentioned, the personnel fill of four brigades was slipped from the fourth quarter of fiscal year 1972 into fiscal year 1973.

A period of strength reduction to achieve a smaller total force could afford manpower management an opportunity to improve personnel readiness through quality selection policies and quantity control procedures. The extent to which such objectives are achieved depends upon management and systems capabilities to control the situation during the reduction, including the availability of accurate and timely information. All of the foregoing data indicate that, under the circumstances of fiscal year 1972, the Army either did not possess or could not exercise those required capabilities.

## AIR FORCE

### Dimension and timing of reduction

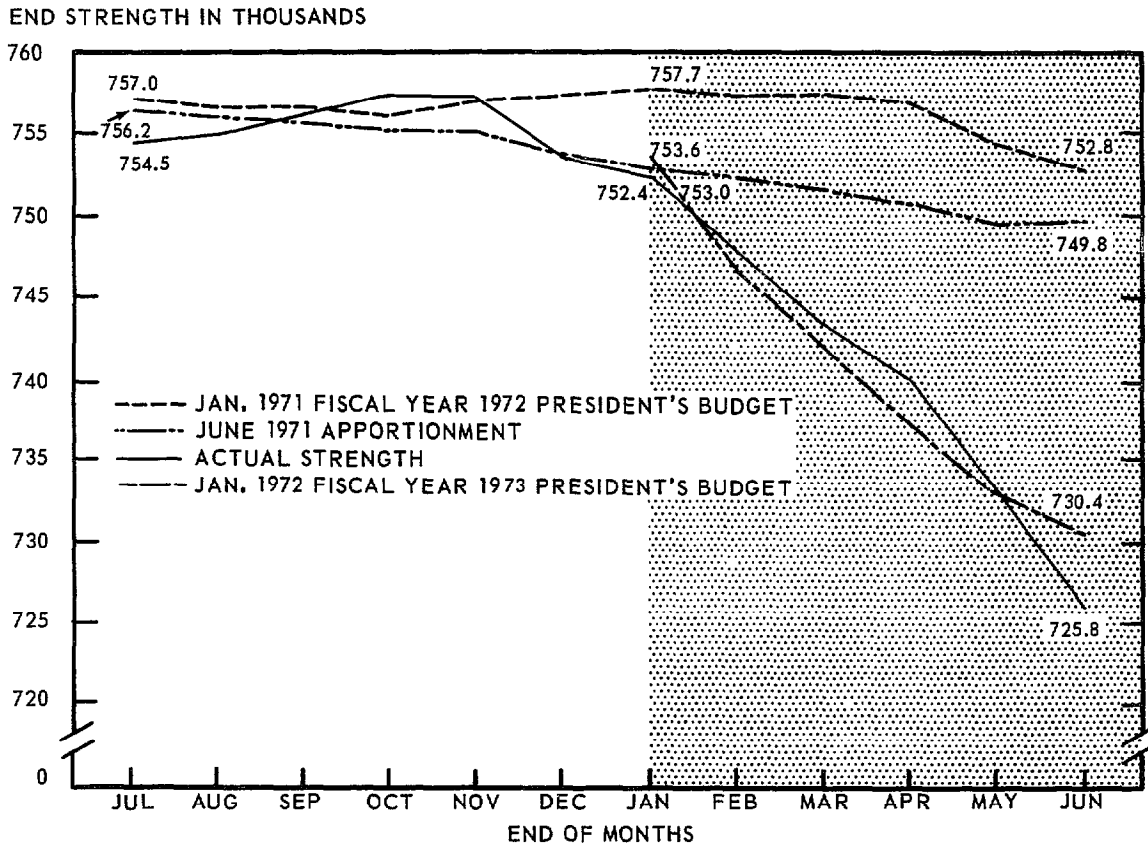
As of the end of January 1971, when the President's budget for fiscal year 1972 was submitted to the Congress, the Air Force strength was approximately 754,700. The June 30, 1972, end strength in the budget was 752,800. The small difference between these strengths forecast relative stability for fiscal year 1972.

In June 1971 the Air Force apportionment reflected a June 30, end strength of about 749,800. As of June 30, 1971, the Air Force actual strength was 755,300. The required reduction, considering that the fiscal year had just begun, was relatively small--5,500 as compared with the reduction of 181,600 required of the Army at the same time.

Public Law 92-129, approximately 3 months into the fiscal year, reduced man-years by 3,000 below the budget estimates to 755,635. As of September 30, 1971, Air Force actual strength was 755,855. By the end of October 1971, strength increased to approximately 757,200 and remained at that level through November 30, 1971. That circumstance and the fact that leadtime to effect reductions was becoming shorter added to the Air Force's difficulty of accomplishing the reduction.

The President's budget for fiscal year 1973 (Jan. 1972), 6 months into the fiscal year, significantly reduced all previous planned yearend strengths. The Air Force, in mid-year, had to make very significant reductions in a short time. The following chart illustrates that situation and actual strengths during the year.

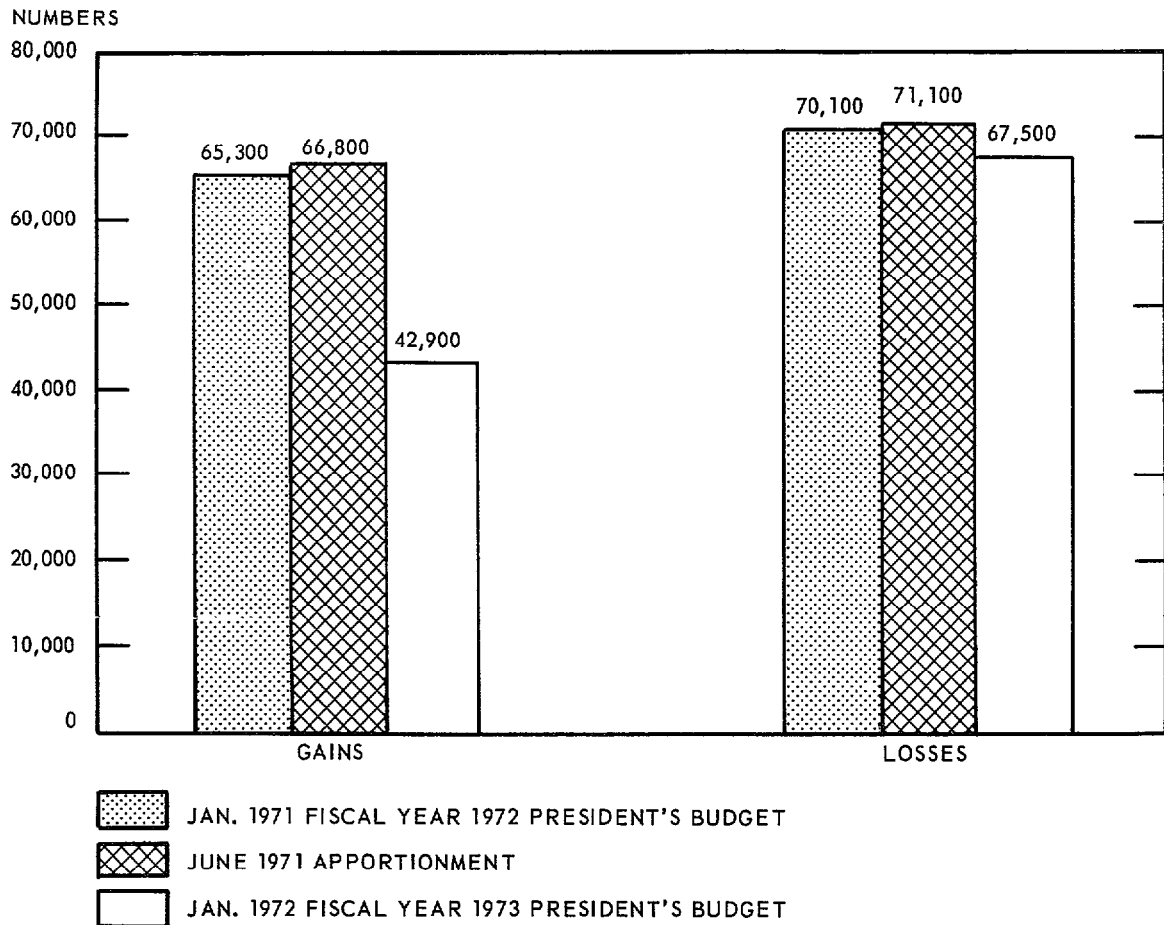
FIGURE 6  
**AIR FORCE  
 END STRENGTH CHANGE  
 SECOND HALF - FISCAL YEAR 1972**



Revised projections

To implement the January 1972 reduction, gain and loss projections were revised. Figure 7 indicates the magnitude of the changes as compared to previous Air Force projections.

FIGURE 7  
**AIR FORCE**  
**COMPARATIVE PROJECTIONS OF GAINS AND LOSSES**  
**JANUARY THROUGH JUNE 1972**



The revised projections reflected program changes instituted to restrict total gains and minimize losses for the remainder of the fiscal year. Actual gains were reasonably close to projections. Actual losses, however, exceeded projections. As of June 30, 1972, the Air Force was below budgeted end strength by approximately 4,600 and the man-year average by approximately 1,600.

Policies and procedures

Within the Air Force, revisions in strength were related to changes in specific programs and capabilities which in our review we could relate to specific authorizations (for example, a reduction in crew ratios in specified

flying units). The Air Force's approach involved reductions in selected functions or activities as compared to the Army's bulk release policies.

Early release programs were offered to officers during the second half of fiscal year 1972, as follows:

- Those who had applied for dates of separation during the remainder of fiscal year 1972.
- Those who had applied for dates of separation during fiscal year 1973.
- Those who had not applied for dates of separation but were eligible to do so during fiscal year 1973 and the first quarter of fiscal year 1974.

Excluded from the above were officers in the rated officer career fields, missile operations, development engineering, and civil engineering.

#### Effect on training system

We believe the decision and timing to accomplish the reduction primarily by reducing enlisted gains for the last half of the fiscal year had serious consequences for the Air Force training system. That system was staffed and facilities were operational at midpoint in the fiscal year to provide training for the planned greater input. The Air Force Training Command (ATC) described the potential impact, from its perspective, in a letter to Air Force Headquarters dated January 28, 1972. The letter's enclosure set forth the results of the ATC review and is presented as appendix III. The following quotations illustrate several major aspects of the potential impact.

"4. Analysis of the impact of required programming actions indicates:

"a. A temporary reduction in the requirement for Basic Military Training instructors will exist at Lackland. This equates to an average surplus of 252 instructors for six months or 126 man-years. Their wasted capabilities costed at the average grade of

the MTIs is about \$987,336. Again, it is not economically feasible nor desirable to reassign these instructors and then requisition new personnel to be trained as replacements prior to July 1973.

"b. Crash reductions in the program of technical training from February 1972 through July 1972 will result in average quarterly load reductions of about 1,300 in 3/72, 5,400 in 4/72, and 1,900 in 1/73. Because of the lead time for instructor PCS moves and the subsequent build up in programs to meet FY 73 graduate requirements, this reduction results in a temporary surplus of instructors equating to around 550 man-years of unused personnel. Costing this at the average pay of a technical instructor results in \$4,309,800.

"c. Impact of this reduction on Base Operational Support (BOS) personnel, will be about 230 man-years of ineffective utilization costing out at approximately \$1,454,520.

"d. In summary, the tangible costs of such a mid-year decrease are around \$6.8 million. Note that dollar amounts shown are not additional out-of-pocket costs since they would be incurred in producing the original program goals. They represent an attempt to quantify in dollars the under-utilization of personnel.

"5. In addition to those dollar costs estimated in the preceding paragraph, there are a number of impact areas where costs are hidden or where results cannot be measured exactly but which do affect morale, operational readiness, etc. Among these are the following:

"a. There will be a marked increase in the number of skills with overages or shortages at the end of FY 72. A review of the

programs in support of TPR 73-2R indicates the total skill overages will be over 7,000, while the total shortages will be over 6,800. Obviously this will have definite impacts on the mission effectiveness of the operating commands.

"b. There will be some abnormal increases in course training loads in the early months of the follow-on fiscal year to compensate for the forced reduction in entries during the last half of the current year. When these increases are of sufficient magnitude, added costs of instructor procurement, pre-service instructor training and classroom qualification will result.

"c. There is inefficient use of the training plant which, under normal conditions, operates on two shifts. Reduction to operation on one shift or placing courses on temporary standby can represent a considerable loss due to the nonuse of expensive training equipment and facilities."

Although we did not audit the actual impact on ATC, we believe it was significant because planned enlisted gains on which training requirements were based for January through June were approximately 60,000 while actual enlisted gains for the same period were approximately 37,900.

#### Skill imbalances and personnel readiness

The percentage of skills less than 80 percent manned remained at the 3-percent level of fiscal year 1971. However, the number of skills more than 120 percent manned increased from the fiscal year 1971 level of 17 percent to a fiscal year 1972 level of 22 percent. The number of skills involved in the more than 120 percent category increased from 40 in fiscal year 1971 to 53 in fiscal year 1972.

Personnel readiness indexes remained unchanged; i.e., 10 percent of reporting units were marginally or not ready in July 1971 and July 1972. This situation, however, improved in December 1971 when 4 percent of units were reported

marginally or not ready. The Air Force qualified the implications of readiness indexes by explaining that they did not reflect the impact of reductions in authorized manning on actual capability. For example, a reduction in certain crew ratios and related authorized maintenance manning lowered total capability to generate combat sorties. (Readiness indexes were assessed against the lowered authorizations.) Also, according to the Air Force, during the latter part of fiscal year 1972, it became necessary to augment Southeast Asia forces from units with lowered air-crew and maintenance authorizations. Consequently, the readiness status of those units involved in providing augmentation was affected.

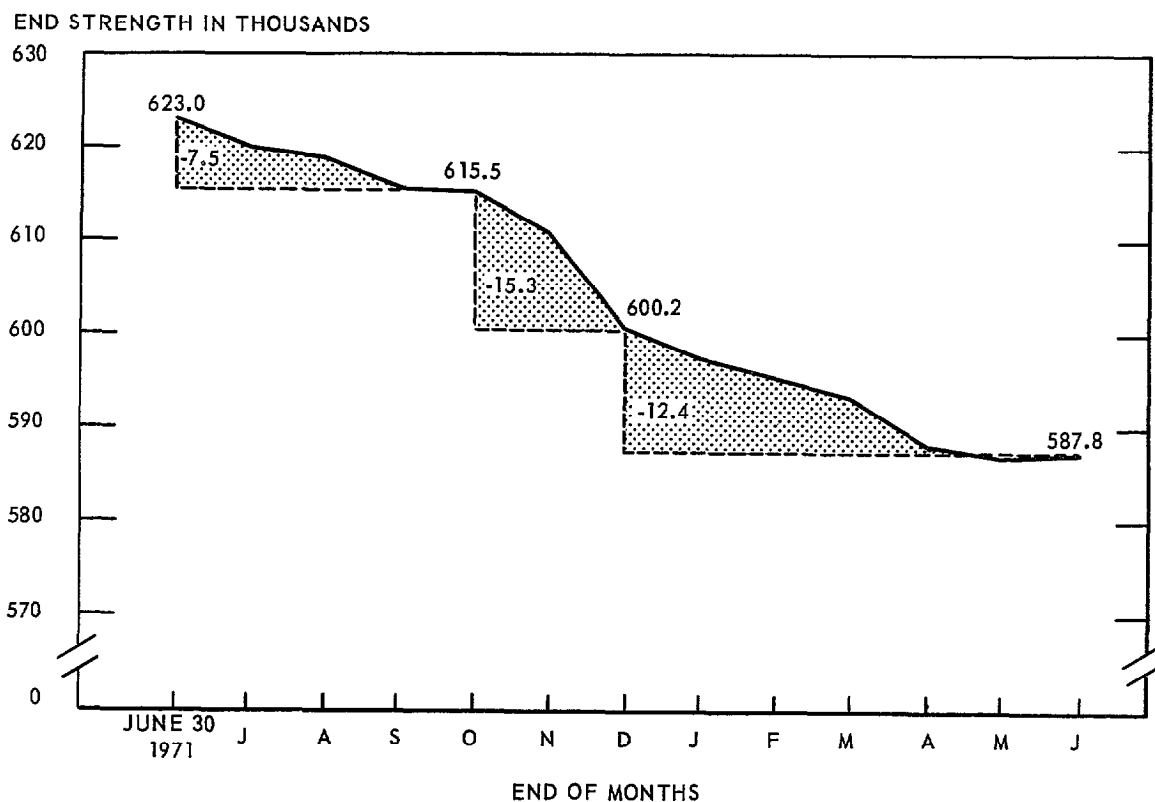


## NAVY

### Dimension of reduction

As of June 30, 1971, the Navy's total strength was approximately 623,000. By June 30, 1972, strength had declined to approximately 587,800, a loss of approximately 35,200. Figure 8 shows how this loss was distributed.

FIGURE 8  
NAVY  
MILITARY MANPOWER STRENGTH DECREASE BY MONTH  
FISCAL YEAR 1972

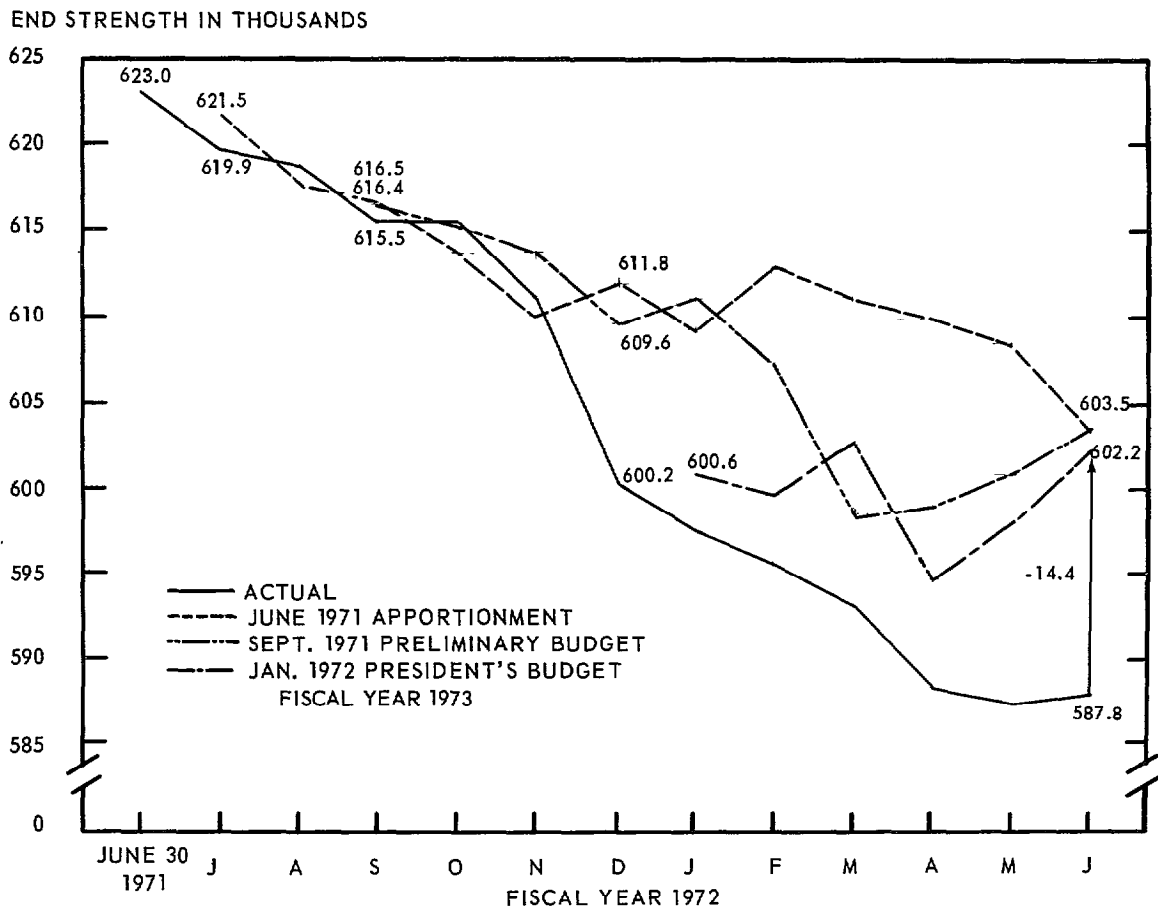


### Projections

Of interest, in the context of the pattern of reductions in the above chart, particularly the concentration of reductions in the 2-month period of October 31 through December 31, is the relationship between actual and projected strength. Three projections were selected for comparison which

represented: (1) the beginning of the year (June 1971 apportionment), (2) September 1971 projections, related to the preliminary budget for fiscal year 1973, and (3) projections midpoint in the fiscal year, January 1972, related to the President's budget for fiscal year 1973. All three projections reflected approximately the same total strength objective for June 30, 1972. Figure 9 compares actual and projected strengths.

FIGURE 9  
NAVY  
ACTUAL VERSUS PROJECTED STRENGTHS



As illustrated in figure 9, projections and actual strength were close through October. After that, actual strength began to fall short of projections and continued below subsequent projections for the balance of the year. By

June 30, 1972, actual strength was approximately 14,400 below the projections made as late as January 1972.

Strength projections to meet program objectives depend upon the ability to project gains and losses and to control against them. During the initial months of fiscal year 1972, Navy projections of gains and losses and actual gains and losses were reasonably close. After that period, significant differences became apparent.

From September through December 1971, losses were very close to projections but gains were almost 10,000 less than projected and were attributable mainly to deliberate accession constraints and recruiting results considerably lower than anticipated. During the last half of the year, gains were again almost 10,000 less than projected and losses exceeded projections by more than 4,500.

#### Lack of timely data

When the time available to accomplish strength reductions is limited, it is extremely important to have current information upon which to base projections, policies, and decisions. According to the Navy at the time of this review, strength reports emanating from all ships, units, and field activities generally took 6 to 8 weeks to compute and verify end month strengths which formed the basis for man-year computations. Thus, according to the Navy, the degree of understrength (overstrength) cannot be applied against gains (recruit input) before the second or third month following the report. The later in the year the understrength/overstrength becomes apparent, the more severe the compensating action must be.

This review did not quantify the severity or number of policy changes and resulting turbulence occasioned by this timelag. We agree, however, that such a long timelag compounded the problems and actions necessary to accomplish the required reduction.

#### Policies and procedures

Policies and programs to reduce strength had been initiated before fiscal year 1972 began. Additional policies and programs were instituted during the year. A chronological summary of the major policies and programs, separately identified for officers and enlisted personnel, follows.

## Officers

- In May 1971 an early-out program was initiated for releasing 1,440 officers by mid-September 1971. Releases under this program totaled 1,283.
  
- In October 1971 another early-out program was initiated for releasing an additional 860 officers by January 31, 1972. Releases under this program totaled 785. At the same time, voluntary recalls (reservists volunteering for active duty) were reduced by approximately 50 percent to 266 officers. Additionally, officer candidate accessions were adjusted by delaying the start of classes in fiscal year 1972 and thereby delaying commissioning of graduates until fiscal year 1973.
  
- In January 1972 a third early-out program was initiated for releasing about 1,120 officers by mid-March 1972. Releases under this program were about 970. At the same time, a moratorium was placed on voluntary recalls not already committed for January through June 1972, and 100 Officer Candidate School students were placed in fiscal year 1973 classes.
  
- Early release programs, in general, were curtailed in April 1972.

We understand that early-out officer programs were both voluntary and involuntary in that an officer could have requested an early release. We also understand, however, that the Navy selected most officers for early release. The Navy advised us that only Reserve officers with less than 5 years of active duty service were separated early during the fiscal year since involuntary separation of those with 5 or more years of service would result in a legal obligation to incur a readjustment payment.

## Enlisted personnel

- Before fiscal year 1972 the Navy had instituted five early release programs to reduce enlisted strength. These consisted of a general early release program, Navy-wide, 2- or 3-month early-out, early release of enlisted personnel returning from Vietnam, a

release program related to decommissioned ships and inactivated shore stations, and specific early release of communication technicians and Seabees from whom requirements had been decreased as a direct result of changes in Vietnam activities.

--During fiscal year 1972, the Navy continued the previous general early release program until April 1972. At that point the general early release program was canceled because of the diseconomic impact the Navy believed to be involved in separation costs compared to retention for the 3 months remaining in the fiscal year. Approximately 85,000 enlisted personnel were separated early under the general early release program.

#### Additional actions to effect reduction

Although previously the Navy had generally used early release programs to meet end strength requirements, the fiscal year 1972 circumstance required additional programs to insure both yearend objectives and man-year constraints. These took the form of successive reductions in programmed gains for enlisted personnel. Examples of these programs follow.

--In May 1971 a plan to reduce man-year strength by 2,841 through rephasing recruit inputs.

--In October 1971 revision of former plans to further reduce total man-years by 2,512 to offset per capita cost increases. The reduction was to be made by a combination of rephased recruit input and expansion of the early release program.

--In January 1972 plans were revised to reflect a yearend reduction of 1,127 and a man-year decrease of 2,781. This was accomplished by a combination of end strength reduction and an additional rephasing of recruit quotas.

In summary, though policy changes were instituted during the year in addition to those carried into the year, management emphasis shifted to a reduction in accession involving frequent and major revisions to projections of gains. Although this method can result in a more immediate reduction,

it is important to recognize, as previously noted, the Navy experienced a 2- to 3-month timelag in the availability of data upon which to base time-constrained and complex inter-related decisions.

#### Effect on training systems

Training systems, facilities, and staffing are normally in place and are related to projections of planned accessions. We did not assess the impact of reduced gains, particularly the shortfall in recruiting results, on utilization of the Navy training complex. We do believe it highly probable that underutilization did occur, particularly as successive downward revisions were made after the fiscal year began.

#### Skill imbalances and personnel readiness

As pointed out, a period of strength reduction to achieve a smaller total force could afford manpower management an opportunity, through quality selection policies and quantity control procedures, to balance skill requirements and to improve personnel readiness. Achieving these objectives depends on management and systems abilities to control the situation during the reduction, including the availability of accurate data and timely information.

For the last half of fiscal year 1972, actual strength of the Navy was below the projected levels even after adjustments for mandated reductions. Our review of selected skills in the Navy revealed existing imbalances with some skills at 90 percent or less of required personnel while others were as high as 150 percent of requirements. These imbalances, on individual ships, were complicated by total personnel shortages, which reduced flexibility to compensate for shortages in some areas with excesses in other areas. From the overall perspective, we have no data to indicate that the imbalances at the beginning of fiscal year 1972 changed significantly toward a more balanced inventory by the end of fiscal year 1972.

According to Navy officials, the reduction resulted in turbulence with regard to personnel readiness. Though the Navy's overall combat readiness, according to Navy officials, did not change significantly during fiscal year 1972, personnel readiness was a prime factor limiting improved fleet readiness.

Reasons identified to us by Navy officials included personnel shortages, imbalances in military skills, and large numbers of personnel in transient status.

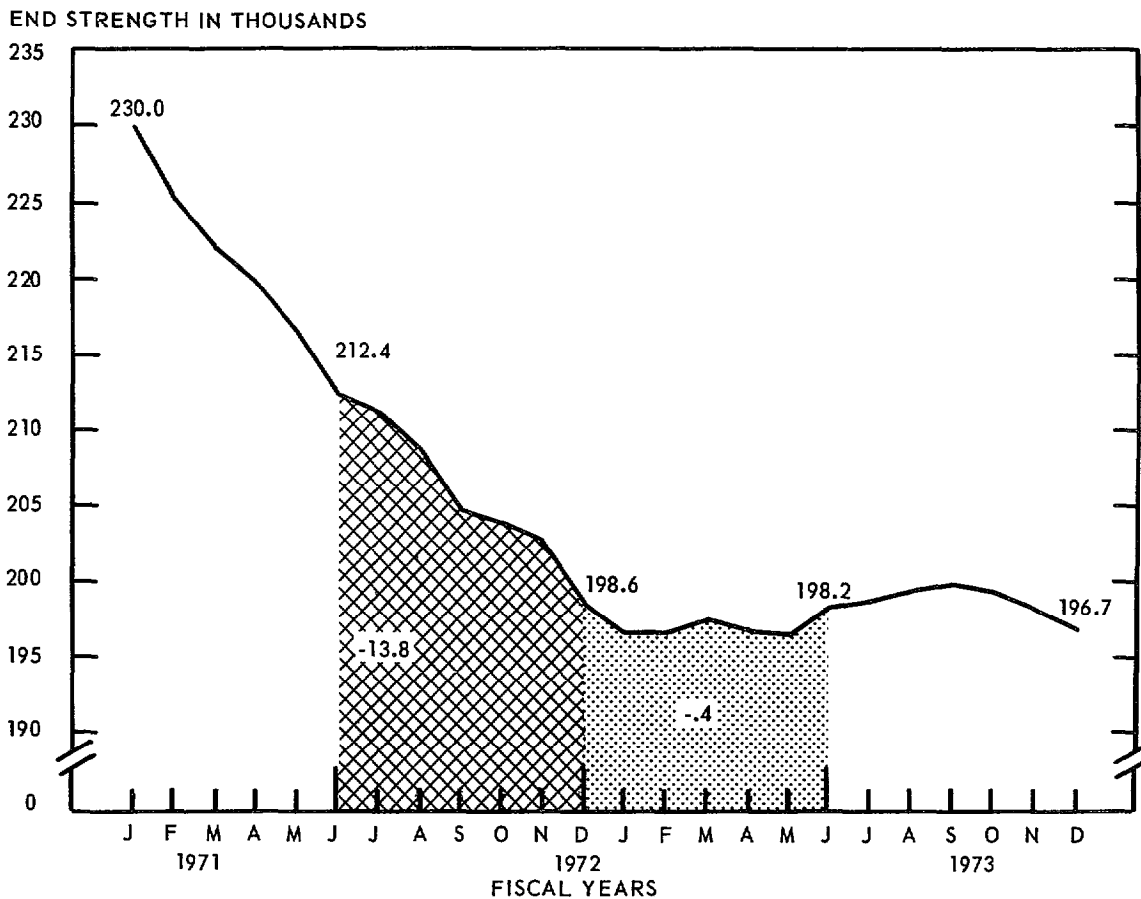
## MARINE CORPS

### Dimension of reduction

Among the services the Marine Corps had a unique situation in that, for the second half of fiscal year 1972, total strength remained relatively constant (see figure 10), compared to a continued reduction in the other services.

FIGURE 10

### MARINE CORPS MILITARY MANPOWER ON ACTIVE DUTY JANUARY 1971 THROUGH DECEMBER 1972



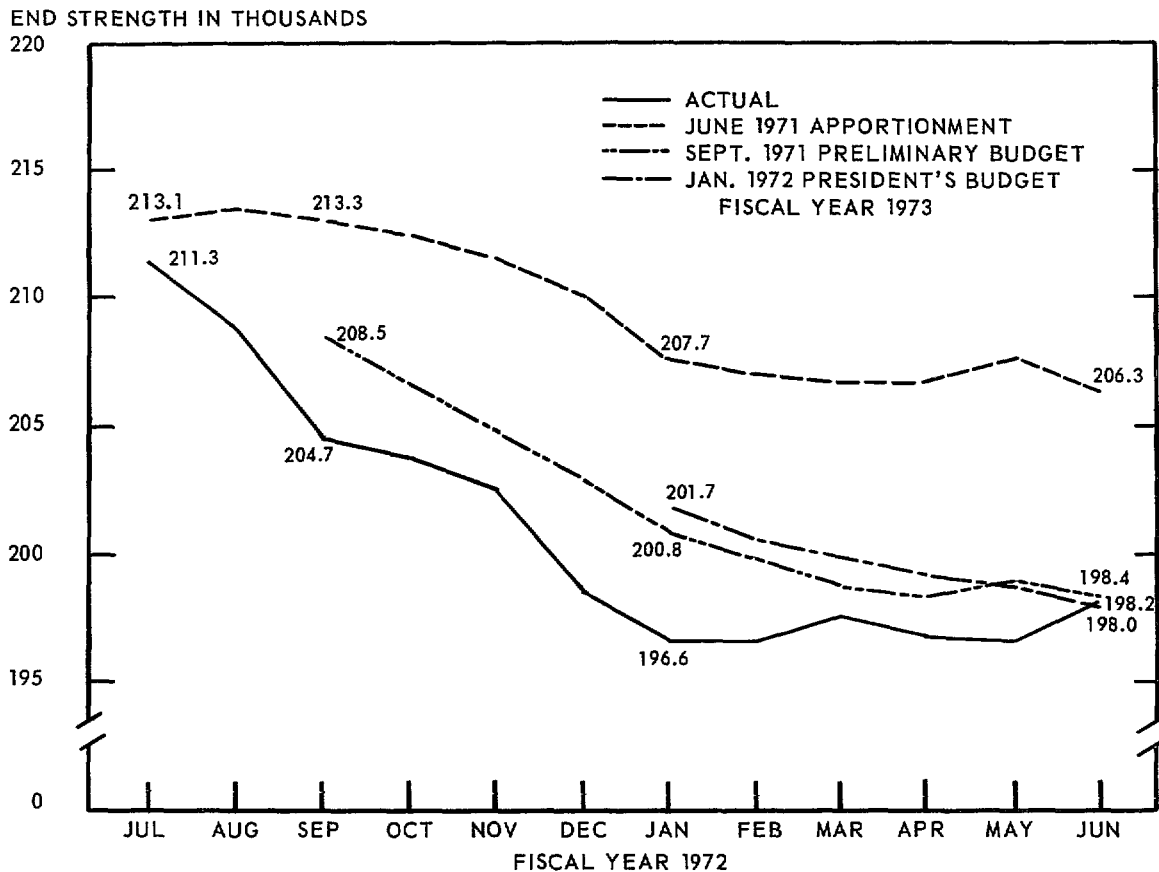
### Projections

As this report consistently notes, ability to project gains and losses and to control against these projections is



extremely important if a service is to meet program objectives. The difference between projected and actual strength can be critical, particularly if the net result is a shortfall in anticipated strength. Figure 11 compares actual strength with a series of projections made by the Marine Corps at key points during fiscal year 1972.

FIGURE 11  
MARINE CORPS  
ACTUAL VERSUS PROJECTED STRENGTHS



An analysis of projected and actual gains and losses related to the projected and actual strengths illustrated in figure 11 yielded the following.

--During the period July through August 1971, the Marine Corps overestimated gains and underestimated losses. The net result was a shortfall of about 5,300.

--During the period September through December, the Marine Corps overestimated gains and overestimated losses. The net result was another shortfall of more than 2,900.

--In the first half of the fiscal year the net shortfall totaled more than 8,100.

--During the second half of the fiscal year, the Marine Corps underestimated gains and overestimated losses. The net result was gains and retention of 3,900 more personnel than estimated during the 6 months.

#### Effect on training system

We believe it important to point out again that training systems, facilities, and staffing are normally in place and are related to projections of planned accessions. We did not assess the impact of the shortfall in gains during the first half of fiscal year 1972 on the utilization of Marine Corps training facilities. We do believe it highly probable that underutilization did occur.

#### Policies and procedures

Marine Corps programs and policies to reduce strength involve early-out programs, both voluntary and involuntary, and reduced accessions. The following is a summary of the major policies and programs separately identified for officers and enlisted personnel.

##### Officers

--A reduction-in-force board convened before fiscal year 1972 began, with reductions effective during fiscal year 1972.

--Reserve officers whose expiration of active service dates were in July, August, September, and October 1972 were offered early-outs effective June 1, 1972.

--Reserve officers whose expiration of active service dates occurred in fiscal year 1972 were subject to a 3-month early-out.

### Enlisted personnel

--Only one early release program was in effect during fiscal year 1972. It allowed a maximum 120 days early-out for Marines returning to the United States from overseas.

--Reduction in recruitment objectives.

For both officers and enlisted men, revised retirement criteria were instituted to encourage retirement.

### Skill imbalances and personnel readiness

Concerning skill balances and personnel readiness, the following summarizes the Marine Corps situation for fiscal year 1972.

--Total strength was below projected levels.

--The percentage of skills less than 80 percent manned increased from 27 percent in fiscal year 1971 to 37 percent in fiscal year 1972. Skills more than 120 percent manned decreased from 27 percent in fiscal year 1971 to 18 percent in fiscal year 1972. In short, imbalances shifted; overstrength categories were significantly reduced but understrength categories increased.

--The Marine Corps objective for combat readiness is to maintain all combat forces at a combat ready or substantially ready level. Marine Corps officials advised us that turbulence created by manpower reductions in fiscal year 1972 prevented the Marine Corps from achieving its readiness goal during that year.

--We were further advised that the support, training, and transient accounts exceeded the 40-percent level desired by the Marine Corps, resulting in a lower than 60-percent level in combat forces. Transfers of combat personnel from lower priority units to higher priority units became necessary. The Marine Corps anticipated, at the time of this review, that the 60 percent-40 percent balance would be restored during fiscal year 1973, provided no further personnel reduction occurred.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### CONCLUSIONS

This report has maintained, as a general principle, that a period of strength reduction to achieve a smaller total force could afford an opportunity for manpower management to improve personnel readiness, provided:

- Enough leadtime is available, considering the complexity of the task, to accomplish reductions efficiently and effectively.
- Policies and procedures are employed which insure quality selection and retention while they control quantity.
- Reliable projections of the impact of management policy decisions are available and controls are instituted to discipline actions accordingly.
- Accurate and timely feedback data is available to provide a reasonably sound basis for responsive decisionmaking.
- There is control of the impact of policy decisions on interrelated activities throughout the personnel system, including consideration of long-range as well as immediate results of selected courses of action.

The military manpower management system is geared to a defined cycle of departmental reviews which ordinarily provide needed leadtime to adjust strength objectives. Fiscal year 1972 was, however, noteworthy because of several out-of-cycle changes that occurred as late as 3 and 6 months into the year, which generated problems for the services. These changes were significant and required revisions in plans, policies, and procedures which normally would have been afforded more leadtime for implementation. The ability of each of the services to respond under these conditions varied. For each, however, there was a resultant turbulence and disruptive consequences.

Each service used a variety of policies and procedures, revising some and canceling others, during fiscal year 1972. These actions were taken to reduce strength within the time constraints of the fiscal year. Under these circumstances, the policies and procedures were successful since all the services ended the year at or below their strength limitations.

The services, in varying degrees, began fiscal year 1972 with imbalances between personnel skill requirements and personnel skill inventories. Indeed, the problem of skill imbalances carried through fiscal year 1972 and may have increased the correction problems for subsequent years.

Force readiness, related to quantity and quality of available personnel, did not improve during fiscal year 1972. Although the circumstances and indexes of measurement vary between services, the data and information available during this review indicated that the year began and ended with personnel readiness problems.

Projections used in measuring the impact of management policy decisions lacked reliability since the historical foundation upon which they were based was changed during fiscal year 1972. This was the result of the introduction of new and attractive incentives to remain in the service, while introducing a series of relaxations of mandatory terms of service to reduce strength--all within a current year. Under these circumstances, forecasts or projections necessarily became reactions to new experience.

Under the time constraints of fiscal year 1972, information of the results of policy decisions was required with an absolute minimum of time. For several services, information systems continued to require weeks, and in certain instances months, to accumulate and process information. Under these conditions, decisionmaking was forced into a severe corrective, after-the-fact situation.

Economical and efficient training requires dependable and regulated input since facilities, staff, and training activities are programed and timed according to a predetermined plan. During fiscal year 1972, the frequency, timing, and magnitude of changes in strength objectives caused abrupt changes in planned training input. We believe that,

as a result, efficient utilization and operating costs of military training facilities had to be affected.

The revisions in training inputs, particularly those close to and during the last half of the fiscal year, although having served the immediate requirement to reduce strength, may very well contribute to skill shortages and imbalances in following years and may necessitate a retraining effort to replace released but required personnel.

Policies were employed in the service of expediency in achieving the required reductions within the time constraints, as contrasted to the use of disciplined controls required to more effectively manage reductions.

Quantitative reduction policies, particularly those involving involuntary separations and curtailment of regular service commitments, may have conflicted with efforts to promote the concept and achievement of an all-volunteer force. Further, those policies were not consistent between the services, particularly as the severity of the reduction requirement changed during the year.

The services encountered problems in accomplishing the military strength reductions under the time constraints of fiscal year 1972. Though the reductions were achieved, the severe problems encountered in achieving them warrant reassessing management capabilities and systems.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Fiscal year 1972 represented a period of significant reductions in military manpower, frequent revisions in objectives, and time constraints to achieve those reductions. This report has described the experience of the services under those circumstances, detailing the problems encountered and the policies and procedures, including their results, employed to accomplish the reductions.

There is no assurance that similar circumstances will not occur again. We recommend that, to improve management's ability to respond more effectively under such circumstances, the Secretary of Defense:

- Review policies, procedures, and plans that are established for managing strength reductions to insure that:

1. Policies conform with the principle that the management of strength reductions should provide an opportunity for and result in improved skill balances and personnel readiness.
2. Procedures are consistent between services and compatible with their commitments to military personnel and commitments expected of military personnel.
3. Plans are balanced to minimize personnel turbulence and disruption of supporting activities.

--Establish, and incorporate into the review cycle of military personnel requirements, definitive objectives and time frames for each service to achieve improved skill balance and personnel readiness.

--Evaluate the reliability of projections (gains and losses) currently used by each service and availability of models for use under varying alternative conditions, particularly those requiring significant strength reductions with short leadtime.

--Review current military strength reporting systems to identify and implement improvements necessary to decrease time required to provide manpower managers with minimum essential and accurate decisionmaking information.

We further recommend that, when significant military manpower reductions are to be made, the Secretary apprise the Congress of the personnel policies and procedures required to achieve the reduction, being explicit about:

--Extent of voluntary and/or involuntary separations.

--Changes in established service commitments and obligations necessary to accomplish the reduction.

--Adjustments in quantity and quality standards of manpower intake being planned.

--Anticipated impact on skill balances and personnel readiness, including implications for the future.

## KEY BUDGET ACTIONS

(asterisks indicate changes in yearend strength objectives)

	<u>Budget action</u>	<u>June 30, 1972, objective</u>	<u>Actual strength</u>	<u>Required change</u>	<u>Remaining time in months</u>
Army:					
Sept. 1970	Preliminary budget 1972	940,800	1,293,300	-352,500	20 to 21
Jan. 1971	President's budget 1972	942,200*	1,231,200	-289,000	17 to 18
June 1971	Apportionment	942,200	1,123,800	-181,600	12 to 13
Sept. 1971	Preliminary budget 1973	902,400*	1,050,400	-148,000	8 to 9
Jan. 1972	President's budget 1973	861,200*	914,900	-53,700	5 to 6
<hr/>		Actual strength at June 30, 1972		811,000	
		Difference		-50,200	
Navy:					
Sept. 1970	Preliminary budget 1972	602,700	677,200	-74,500	20 to 21
Jan. 1971	President's budget 1972	603,500*	645,000	-41,500	17 to 18
June 1971	Apportionment	603,500	623,000	-19,500	12 to 13
Sept. 1971	Preliminary budget 1973	603,500	615,500	-12,000	8 to 9
Jan. 1972	President's budget 1973	602,200*	597,500	+4,700	5 to 6
<hr/>		Actual strength at June 30, 1972		587,800	
		Difference		-14,400	
Marine Corps:					
Sept. 1970	Preliminary budget 1972	205,300	246,200	-40,900	20 to 21
Jan. 1971	President's budget 1972	206,300*	230,000	-23,700	17 to 18
June 1971	Apportionment	206,300	212,400	-6,100	12 to 13
Sept. 1971	Preliminary budget 1973	198,400*	204,700	-6,300	8 to 9
Jan. 1972	President's budget 1973	198,000*	196,600	+1,400	5 to 6
<hr/>		Actual strength at June 30, 1972		198,200	
		Difference		+200	
Air Force:					
Sept. 1970	Preliminary budget 1972	733,700	767,300	-33,600	20 to 21
Jan. 1971	President's budget 1972	752,800*	754,700	-1,900	17 to 18
June 1971	Apportionment	749,800*	755,300	-5,500	12 to 13
Sept. 1971	Preliminary budget 1973	744,800*	755,900	-11,100	8 to 9
Jan. 1972	President's budget 1973	730,400*	752,400	-22,000	5 to 6
<hr/>		Actual strength at June 30, 1972		752,800	
		Difference		-4,600	

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APPENDIX II

AVERAGE STRENGTH

(asterisks indicate changes in average strength objectives)

	<u>Budget action</u>	<u>Fiscal year 1972 objective</u>	<u>Actual Fiscal year 1972 average strength</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Army:				
Jan. 1971	President's budget 1972	1,024,309		
June 1971	Apportionment 1972	1,024,309		
Sept. 1971	Public Law 92-129	974,309*		
Jan. 1972	President's budget 1973	974,309	955,200	-19,109
Navy:				
Jan. 1971	President's budget 1972	616,619		
June 1971	Apportionment 1972	608,613*		
Sept. 1971	Public Law 92-129	613,619*		
Jan. 1972	President's budget 1973	607,384*	604,373	-3,011
Marine Corps:				
Jan. 1971	President's budget 1972	209,846		
June 1971	Apportionment 1972	209,846		
Sept. 1971	Public Law 92-129	209,846		
Jan. 1972	President's budget 1973	203,283*	201,617	-1,666
Air Force:				
Jan. 1971	President's budget 1972	758,635		
June 1971	Apportionment 1972	755,635*		
Sept. 1971	Public Law 92-129	755,635		
Jan. 1972	President's budget 1973	751,045*	750,438	-607

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ENCLOSURE TO LETTER FROM THE AIR TRAINING COMMAND TO  
AIR FORCE HEADQUARTERS, DATED JANUARY 28, 1972

IMPACTS OF MID-YEAR STRENGTH CHANGES ON THE PROGRAMMING OF  
TRAINING

1. Effects of any mid-year change in the current year end-strength are exemplified by the directive furnished ATC in December 1971 to cut NPS [Non-Prior Service] recruiting by 18,000 in the January - June 1972 time period; to reduce Prior Service recruiting by 3,000; and to reduce the FY 72 TPR [Training Program Requirements] of formal training by 12,000 and the FY 73 TPR by 11,000.
2. Impact of such a change on ATC military/technical training is magnified several fold because:
  - a. Lead time is required for personnel to be recruited and trained, or
  - b. Lead time is required for reducing the flow of graduates to operating commands because personnel are already in the training pipeline. For example, in an electronics course of 40 weeks, receipt of a reduced AFSC [Air Force Speciality Code] strength in December 1971 results in no reduction in flow of graduates until November 1972. Consequently, the reduction in FY 72 & 73 graduates has to occur in the seven months from November 1972 to June 1973.
  - c. To achieve the FY 72 end-strength reduction, NPS recruiting in the January - June period is just over 32,000, an annual rate of 64,000. Since training course entries during this period are largely for FY 73 graduates, it means forced reductions below the average rate required for FY 73. As a result, in August 1972, course entry rates must be built above the norm to achieve the required FY 73 graduate production.
3. Programming actions in support of TPR 73-2R have had to be artificially adjusted because of two constraints:
  - a. An average last-half NPS input of just over 5,000 per month.

## APPENDIX III

b. An FY 73 requirement for an average monthly recruiting input of over 8,000 per month.

4. Analysis of the impact of required programming actions indicates:

a. A temporary reduction in the requirement for Basic Military Training instructors will exist at Lackland. This equates to an average surplus of 252 instructors for six months or 126 man-years. Their wasted capabilities costed at the average grade of the MTIs is about \$987,336. Again, it is not economically feasible nor desirable to reassign these instructors and then requisition new personnel to be trained as replacements prior to July 1973.

b. Crash reductions in the program of technical training from February 1972 through July 1972 will result in average quarterly load reductions of about 1,300 in 3/72, 5,400 in 4/72, and 1,900 in 1/73. Because of the lead time for instructor PCS moves and the subsequent build up in programs to meet FY 73 graduate requirements, this reduction results in a temporary surplus of instructors equating to around 550 man-years of unused personnel. Costing this at the average pay of a technical instructor results in \$4,309,800.

c. Impact of this reduction on Base Operational Support (BOS) personnel, will be about 230 man-years of ineffective utilization costing out at approximately \$1,454,520.

d. In summary, the tangible costs of such a mid-year decrease are around \$6.8 million. Note that dollar amounts shown are not additional out-of-pocket costs since they would be incurred in producing the original program goals. They represent an attempt to quantify in dollars the under-utilization of personnel.

5. In addition to those dollar costs estimated in the preceding paragraph, there are a number of impact areas where costs are hidden or where results cannot be measured exactly but which do affect morale, operational readiness, etc. Among these are the following:

a. There will be a marked increase in the number of skills with overages or shortages at the end of FY 72.

A review of the programs in support of TPR 73-2R indicates the total skill overages will be over 7,000, while the total shortages will be over 6,800. Obviously this will have definite impacts on the mission effectiveness of the operating commands.

b. There will be some abnormal increases in course training loads in the early months of the follow-on fiscal year to compensate for the forced reduction in entries during the last half of the current year. When these increases are of sufficient magnitude, added costs of instructor procurement, pre-service instructor training and classroom qualification will result.

c. There is inefficient use of the training plant which, under normal conditions, operates on two shifts. Reduction to operation on one shift or placing courses on temporary standby can represent a considerable loss due to the non-use of expensive training equipment and facilities.

d. There is certainly some effect on the morale of those instructors and support personnel who will be temporarily surplus during "low input" periods, but must be retained for subsequent buildup. This could result in job dissatisfaction and affect career motivation and reenlistment rates.

e. Crash reprogramming actions of this nature generate pressure and added work loads on command and center staffs to reach the best compromise between dictated changes in requirements and recognized efficient levels of training operation.

f. There is certain to be loss of confidence of command staff planners in the realism of Air Staff and DOD long-range planning, when such short-range changes are so frequent with little advance notification.

APPENDIX IV

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS OF  
 THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
 RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF ACTIVITIES  
 DISCUSSED IN THIS REPORT

<u>Tenure of office</u>	
<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE:

James R. Schlesinger	July 1973	Present
Elliot Richardson	Jan. 1973	Apr. 1973
Melvin R. Laird	Jan. 1969	Jan. 1973

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
 (MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS):

William K. Brehm	Sept. 1973	Present
Carl W. Clewlow (acting)	June 1973	Aug. 1973
Roger T. Kelley	Feb. 1969	June 1973

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

Howard H. Callaway	May 1973	Present
Robert F. Froehlke	July 1971	May 1973
Stanley R. Resor	July 1965	June 1971

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY  
 (MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS):

Carl S. Wallace	Mar. 1973	Present
Hadlai A. Hull	May 1971	Mar. 1973
Donald W. Sruell (acting)	Dec. 1970	May 1971
William K. Brehm	Apr. 1968	Dec. 1970

Tenure of officeFrom ToDEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

## SECRETARY OF THE NAVY:

John W. Warner	May 1972	Present
John H. Chaffee	Jan. 1969	May 1972

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
(MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS):

Joseph T. McCullum, Jr.	Sept. 1973	Present
James E. Johnson	June 1971	Sept. 1973
Robert H. Willey (acting)	Apr. 1971	June 1971
James D. Hittle	Mar. 1969	Mar. 1971
Randolph S. Driver	Aug. 1967	Feb. 1969

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

## SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE:

John L. Lucas	July 1973	Present
John L. Lucas (acting)	May 1973	July 1973
Robert C. Seamans, Jr.	Jan. 1969	May 1973

ASSISTANCE SECRETARY OF THE AIR  
FORCE (MANPOWER AND RESERVE  
AFFAIRS):

James P. Goode, (acting)	June 1973	Present
Richard J. Borda	Oct. 1970	June 1973



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