



U.S. ARMY RECRUITING

Case Study Presentation

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AMERICA'S FIRST NATIONAL INSTITUTION

“The largest and oldest of the armed services”

- Founded **June 14, 1775**
- Service Components: Active Army Duty, Army Reserve, Army National Guard
- Core Functions: National Defense, Humanitarian Aid, Technological Innovation, Personal Development (U.S. Armya)
- Brand Positioning: Possibilities - **“Be All You Can Be”**
- Brand Identity: Clear, Confident, Human



MISSION

“To deploy, fight and win our nation’s wars by providing ready, prompt and sustained land dominance by Army forces across the full spectrum of conflict as part of the joint force. The Army mission is vital to the Nation because we are the service capable of defeating enemy ground forces and indefinitely seizing and controlling those things an adversary prizes most – its land, its resources, and its population” (*Army, 2022*).

MOTTO

“This We’ll Defend” (*Army, 2022*).

CORE VALUES

Loyalty

Duty

Respect

Selfless Service

Honor

Integrity

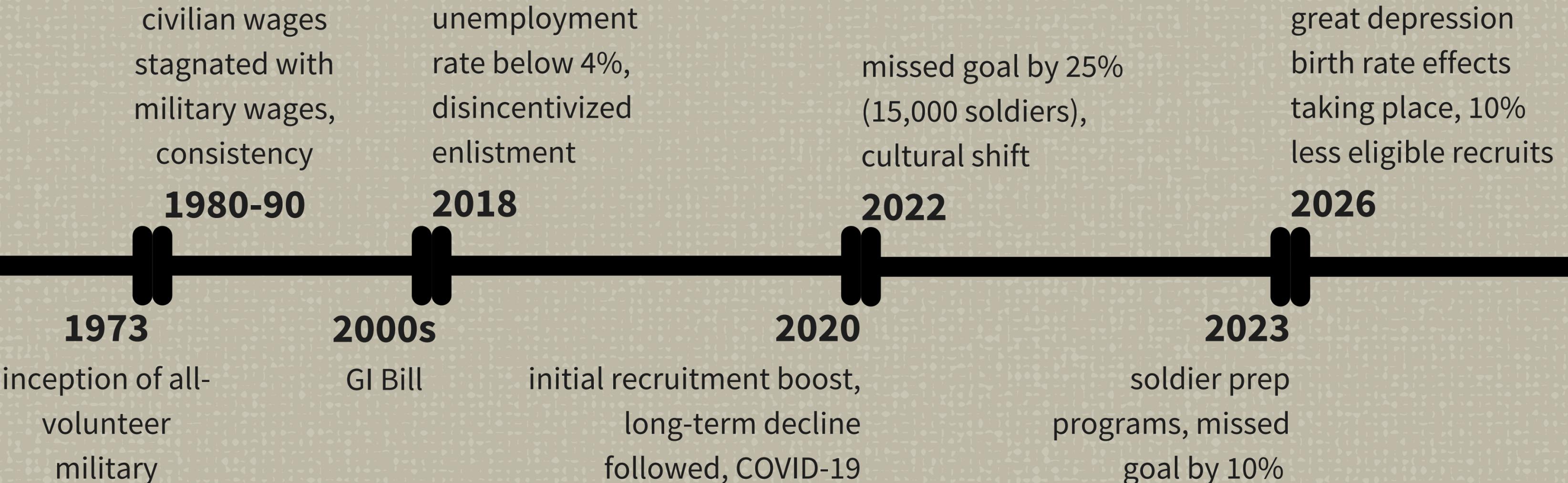
Personal Courage

(*Army, 2022*)

Context

ARMY RECRUITING CHALLENGES

“Recruitment rises and falls in conjunction with civilian unemployment”



(Mansoor, 2025)

ARMY ENLISTING DOWN 25%

- **Sept. 30, 2022:** U.S. Army fell **15,000 soldiers** short of its recruiting goal (*Army 2022*)
- U.S. Army was the **only branch** that faced significant shortage
- Started a new conversation around **advertising and public relations** to entice new enlisters

Despite efforts, there were external factors that the organization could not control...



LOW UNEMPLOYMENT

Low unemployment rates = Low recruiting rates

- Any unemployment rate **under 6 percent** usually decreases the recruitment rate (*Syeed & Whiteaker, 2018*)
 - **2022 unemployment rate was 3.5 percent**
- Must compete with the pay of civilian jobs through **financial incentives** (*Warner, 2009*)



\$35,000
ENLISTMENT BONUS
FOR #QUICKSHIP



GEOGRAPHY & POLARIZATION



Primary target for recruiting = Geography

Less exposure to military = Less likely to serve

- Higher exposure in **Southern** region (*Philipps & Arango, 2020*)
- 2019: **Fayetteville, NC** (Fort Bragg) produced **more than twice** the number of military enlistments in all of **New York City**
- **High polarization:** Conservative criticism to progressive plans in the U.S. Army (*Spoehr, 2022*)
- **Roe v. Wade:** Restricting reproductive rights (*Horton & Roubain, 2022*)

COVID-19



How many of you have had the U.S. Armed Forces speak to you at your high school or here at UT?

- **Education**
 - **Primary recruiting tool:** Face-to-face tabling with high schoolers
 - Low test passing rates (*Rovero, 2022*)
- Competing with **remote work**
- **Vaccination** debate: Was required to serve (*Watson, 2021*)



GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES



- Americans, aged 17-24, roughly **27 %** are **ineligible** for military service based on their **weight** (*Johnson, 2012*)
- **Marijuana usage:** High among young adults, prohibited in U.S. Military
- New Military Health System: **More medical disqualifications** (*Britzky, 2022*)

23%

of Americans (17-24)

**meet minimum
enlistment
requirements**

(Lacdan, 2022)

Only

9%

*of that group has any
interest in serving*

(Kube & Boigon, 2022).

Appealing to Gen Z with Advertising



Army's "Be All You Can Be" Commercial



Share



ARMY.
BE ALL YOU CAN BE.
1-800-USA-ARMY

Watch on  YouTube

PRODUCED BY THE U.S. ARMY

Appealing to Gen Z with Advertising

☆ Be All You Can Be - U.S. Army's new brand trailer | U.S. Army

Share

▶

BE ALL YOU CAN BE.

☆ U.S. ARMY
Watch on YouTube

BE ALL YOU CAN BE REVIVAL

- Slogan originally used from 2001-2008
- Return of slogan is apart of a **larger rebranding effort**
- “We know youth seek purpose, passion, community and connection, but we also know many don’t recognize the Army’s ability to deliver on those needs. We need a brand that effectively communicates the possibilities of Army service.” (U.S. Army, 2023b)
- Branding: New logo, font, color palette, motion graphics



BE ALL
YOU
CAN BE.



VERBAL IDENTITY

BEFORE

FULL-TIME SCHOOL

You can choose to serve part-time in the Army while you go to college. Many Soldiers take advantage of this unique opportunity to get career training, train a weekend a month and two weeks a year, and earn money while getting their degree.

AFTER

Your degree. On the Army.

If education is a top priority for you, we fully support your work toward a degree. Earn a salary while attending college and participating in Army training one weekend a month and two full weeks a year.

Earn money. Earn your degree. Find your purpose.

- Focus on verbal identity, going beyond messaging
- **Clear, Confident, Human**
- “Army voice” = authentic and distinct
 - instantly recognizable

COMMONALITY & KNOWLEDGE

- Military/Civilian Divide
 - misperceptions
 - lack of knowledge
 - **inability to identify with those who serve**
- Shrinking military footprint
 - declining veteran population
 - **“uninformed and often misguided messages”** about risks of military service
- Results
 - **drop in interest** in the military
 - **drop in appreciation** for social worth or intrinsically motivating elements of military service

12%

of youth
believe they share a lot in common with people in the U.S. military

(Garamone, 2019)

87%

of youths responded “definitely not” to the likelihood of them serving in the military

(Garamone, 2019)

ANALYSIS

Desanto:

- Specialized stakeholder group: Moms vs Gen Z
- Core Mission: Ending gun violence vs Raising Recruitment numbers
- Commonalities: both use communication research to advocate for a clearly defined cause

Smith

- Goal: To increase recruitment
- Objective: to increase applications from Gen Z recruits by 15% by December 2025
 - to inform 50% of civilians about military misconceptions by December 2025
 - Results: Improved image, stronger relationships between civilians and the military

TAKEAWAYS

- The U.S. army is America's first national institution
- "This we'll defend"
- U.S. Army's rebrand is aiming to attract younger audiences to maintain an all-volunteer military using modern branding and values that correspond with the interests of Gen Z
- Military/ Civilian divide is caused because of misperceptions, lack of knowledge, and an inability to identify with those who serve
- Campaign objective are subjective to the organization's end goal

ISSUE

- **When?** End of 2022 fiscal year
- **What?** Recruiting crisis within the U.S. Army, reached only 75 percent of recruiting goal
- **Why?** Low unemployment, geography and polarization, COVID-19 and generational challenges

SOLUTIONS

- **Prioritize advertising efforts:** Target young audiences (Gen Z) by highlighting diversity, empowerment and community
- **Refocus communication:** Tool for information & education, rather than persuasion (*Army Public Affairs, 2022*)
- **Correct internal systematic issues:** Some being mental health transparency, sexual harassment prevention, housing conditions and pay



ACTIVITY

Split off into 2-4 groups for 7 minutes and plan out a 30-second video encouraging the target audience to join the U.S. Army

Remember!

Issue: U.S. Army has had low recruiting numbers in recent years

Target Audience: Gen Z

What you need to do...

Make a video script outline (EX: Who will be in the video? What is the tone? What visuals will be used? What platform is the video intended for?)

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