

# Commentary

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## Troop Talk



This week I will use my column to challenge all of you, Soldiers and civilians to join in the "Army of One" recruiting campaign.

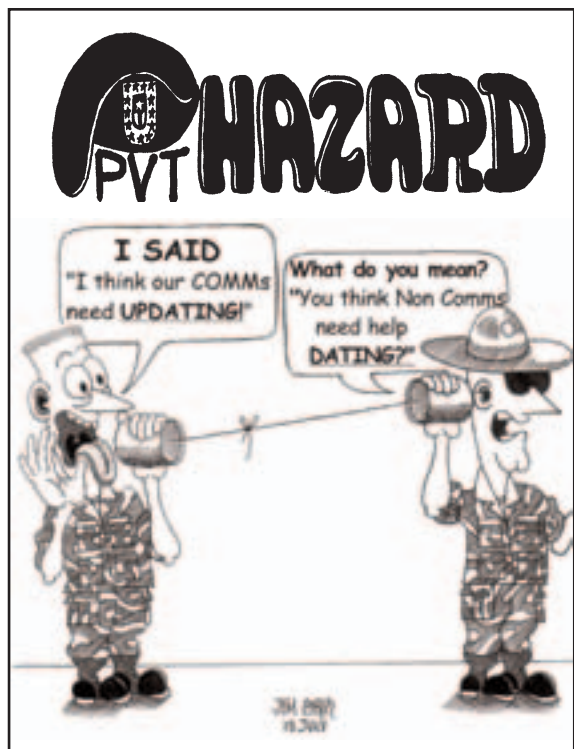
"We are all recruiters." We have a unique opportunity to tell the Army's good news story everywhere we go.

"We are competing for a very small percentage of the population. We have to make sure we address the full spectrum," Army Chief of Staff Peter Schoomaker said during a visit to a recruiter station.

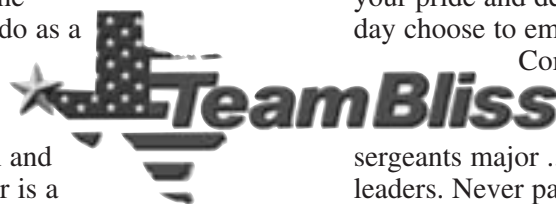
"During World War II we had a population of about 140 million people in this country and we put almost 9 percent of that population in the uniform. Today we have twice the population in this country, we're trying to put about four-tenths of one percent of that population in uniform, and we are facing a national security situation that is at least as dangerous if not more dangerous than we faced in World War II."

There are many influencers out there, which include family, peers, coaches, teachers, administrators and others. Some are supportive, others have different opinions, and with this recruiters have a monumental challenge to create an interest among those eligible in joining the Army.

According to recently published statistics, the Army exceeded its goals for the month of June achieving 109 percent. If this trend continues until the end of FY 2005 the Army is optimistic that they will reach their goal for this FY. The summer months also tend to draw more recruits, according to historical data. Reenlistment across the Active Component, Army Reserve, and Army National Guard continue to be above 100 percent, which is a good indicator that once a member of the force, Soldiers choose to stay, even with the danger they may be facing if deployed to a combat zone.



There are many programs being considered, some of which will require Congressional approval like the bonuses of \$40,000 for signing up. Recruiters can't do it all. Active duty Soldiers can become S-RAP volunteers. If you are an OEF/OIF veteran you are given the opportunity to return to your hometown and tell the community, your friends and neighbors all about the Army and what you do as a Soldier. They will learn that serving our country is an honorable profession and the uniform you wear is a testimony to that pride.



In support of this effort I have initiated a number of programs to assist recruiters and to help friends, families, teachers and others understand what the service of a young man or woman means to this country. This program will require many of you to become actively involved to make it a success.

Aug. 12, I am inviting a number of counselors, educators and members of PTSA to join me and the Soldiers at Fort Bliss in telling the Army story. I want them to experience the pride and dedication these young Soldiers have in what they are doing.

Aug. 19 and 20, I will be inviting a number of principals and superintendents to attend the Soldier Show here which is also open to the public. A great venue for seeing another aspect of what talents our men and women in uniform have to share with us.

Army Career Day will be held at USASMA Sept. 10. This is another public event where representatives from USAREC, Cadet Command, West Point all will be represented. I have asked the recruiting command here to provide us with some special parents and students to be our guests on that day.

We will be supporting the Balloon Festival in Albuquerque with Soldiers, static displays and recruiters during the first week in October. The Golden Knights along with local recruiters and military displays will participate in the Amigo Airsho Oct 8 and 9.

Nov. 12, Soldiers will march in the Veterans Day parade along with the 62nd Army Band, and rolling stock. The equipment will then move to UTEP and be on static display for the UTEP football game with has been designated as Military Night. Recruiters and Soldiers will be on hand to answer questions and brief on weapons systems like the Patriot Missile/Launcher.

We plan to end the year in December by invite a group of young students to visit Fort Bliss. They will spend the day as a Soldier, do physical training, go for a run with the troops, rappel off the tower, visit the indoor rifle range, have breakfast and lunch with the troops and the top performers will be recognized with a CG coin.

Here in the local community, I am going to be speaking to community groups about our military, encouraging their support and helping to create an awareness of the importance of what Soldiers do and how critical their service is to this nation.

I welcome your input and ideas into how

we can, as active duty military, help with the recruiting effort. One way we can do this is through our partnerships with various schools. You can't go into a school and "sell" the Army. But whether judging a science fair, tutoring in math or English, or demonstrating physical fitness techniques, you can be a role model, a mentor which tells young people of your pride and dedication, which they may one day choose to emulate.

Commanders, officers, senior NCOs, first sergeants, command sergeants major, sergeants major ... you are the first line leaders. Never pass up an opportunity to talk to students, community groups, and the media. I recall when old Soldiers never went on leave without a dress uniform and they always took the initiative to be seen in their hometown at local events in full dress. They wore that uniform with pride and their influence on the younger generation led to many young men and women choosing to join this elite group of warriors, humanitarians and ambassadors of good will around the world. It is not a surprise that according to a recent Gallup poll the American public has more confidence in the military than in any other institution.

All the services can be proud of that distinction which they have earned in the service of their country.

Brig. Gen. Robert P. Lennox  
Fort Bliss Commanding General

## Letter to the Editor

### Family sends regards

Dear Editor,

Thank you for your expression of sympathy and kindness during the recent untimely death of our daughter, sister and mother Staff Sgt. Salesia R. Cook. We are especially thankful to the Casualty Assistance Officer, Debbie Rushbrook, for her assistance during a very trying time for us. We cannot thank the command and staff at William Beaumont Army Medical Center enough for their above-and-beyond help provided to us from the moment we arrived and departed, and for the beautiful memorial given in her honor.

To those people who donated food, money and time to help us cope with her death, you truly were a Godsend. A very special thank you to all those individuals who offered their condolences while visiting with us during our brief visit to El Paso. It is gratifying to know that Salesia worked with a caring and sympathetic family during her final days.

May God bless and keep you,

The Cook Family

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