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US Army having recruiting problems

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5 October, 2005

THE ARTICLE

US Army having recruiting problems

BNE: The US Army fell short of its recruitment goals in the 2005 fiscal year ending September 30. Although it enlisted more than 73,000 recruits, that was more than eight percent short of its target. Army spokesman Francis Harvey expressed concern about the lower than expected numbers, the biggest slump in 25 years, but denied there was any impending crisis. Mr. Harvey offered a number of reasons for the shortfall, including an increasingly robust American economy luring young people into different careers and a reluctance of parents to let their children be deployed overseas, especially in Iraq or Afghanistan. There are currently 140,000 troops stationed in Iraq. The near 2,000 deaths in Iraq have severely dented young people's enthusiasm to join. To combat this problem, the Army had taken a series of initiatives aimed at increasing incentives for young people to enlist, including greater financial remuneration. Any soldier serving a minimum of four years would automatically be eligible for a \$25,000 bonus for buying a home. A larger recruitment drive entailed the Army to vastly increase its number of recruiters, who tour shopping malls actively coaxing young people to sign up with the inducement of bigger bonuses. Richard Cody, the Army's deputy chief of staff, said that with the current shortfall, the Army would not be able to increase in size to 502,000 as planned. This throws into doubt the Army's plans to expand and fulfill its overseas commitments.

WARM-UPS

1. JOIN THE ARMY: In pairs / groups, talk about which of the following are good reasons to join the army. Do you think initial expectations of these points and the realities are very different?

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. Adventure | f. To learn new skills |
| b. To use a gun | g. To travel |
| c. To fight in combat | h. To be a hero |
| d. To protect one's country | i. To get medals |
| e. The uniform | j. To have good friends |

2. I'M A SOLDIER: You are now a soldier in the US Army. Walk around the classroom and talk to the other "soldiers" about army life. What are the best and worst things about being a soldier? Where have you been stationed? Are you going to stay a soldier?

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Armies / soldiers / targets / recruitment / slumps / American economy / careers / Iraq / enthusiasm / incentives / bonuses / buying a home / commitments

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. ARMY: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "army". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. ARMY DEBATES: Debate each of the arguments below with a partner for just two minutes, before moving on to the next partner and debate. Student A agrees with the first argument, Student B, the second.

- Army life is better than deskwork. vs. Deskwork is better than army life.
- All countries need compulsory military service. vs. Conscription is a dated idea.
- Soldiers should get a very high salary. vs. Soldiers get enough now.
- All soldiers are heroes. vs. Soldiers are just doing their jobs.
- Killing someone in action is murder. vs. Killing the enemy is a soldier's duty.
- There should be no armies in the world. vs. Armies help keep the peace.
- Defence budgets should be spent on reducing poverty. vs. A ridiculous idea.
- Joining the army is best. vs. Joining the air force or navy is better.

6. WE NEED YOU: Write down some of the attractions of your job (or desired job). After you have finished, take the following roles: Students A - You are a recruiter for your company. You need to hire more people to do your job. Try to encourage Students B to join your company and do your job. Students B - You do NOT want to do the job Student A is offering. Take turns in being Students A and B.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. The computers in the US Army recruitment office shut down. | T / F |
| b. The US Army experienced its biggest recruitment slump in 25 years. | T / F |
| c. More young people are being lured by different careers. | T / F |
| d. The Iraq War has no bearing on the shortfall in new recruits. | T / F |
| e. Anyone who joins the US Army gets \$25,000 to buy a new house. | T / F |
| f. Army training includes driving around shopping malls. | T / F |
| g. Many young people are being coaxed into enlisting by bigger bonuses. | T / F |
| h. There is no problem in the US Army fulfilling overseas commitments. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| a. impending | damaged |
| b. luring | meet |
| c. reluctance | rewards |
| d. stationed | enticing |
| e. dented | campaign |
| f. combat | incentive |
| g. remuneration | looming |
| h. drive | unwillingness |
| i. inducement | based |
| j. fulfill | fight |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| a. fell short | crisis |
| b. impending | young people's enthusiasm |
| c. robust American economy luring | of bigger bonuses |
| d. be deployed | remuneration |
| e. severely dented | young people into different careers |
| f. initiatives aimed at increasing incentives | to sign up |
| g. greater financial | overseas |
| h. actively coaxing young people | doubt the Army's plans to expand |
| i. the inducement | for young people to enlist |
| j. This throws into | of its recruitment goals |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

WHOOPS: Five of the ten words in bold in each paragraph are incorrect. Find and delete them. In pairs / groups, think of a better word.

US Army having recruiting problems

BNE: The US Army fell **long** of its recruitment goals in the 2005 fiscal year ending September 30. Although it **enlisted** more than 73,000 recruits, that was more than eight percent short of its target. Army spokesman Francis Harvey **compressed** concern about the lower than expected numbers, the biggest **boom** in 25 years, but denied there was any **impending** crisis. Mr. Harvey offered a number of reasons for the shortfall, including an increasingly **robotic** American economy **curing** young people into different careers and a **reluctance** of parents to let their children be deployed overseas, especially in Iraq or Afghanistan. There are currently 140,000 troops **stationed** in Iraq. The near 2,000 deaths in Iraq have severely **dented** young people's enthusiasm to join.

To combat this problem, the Army had taken a **serial** of initiatives aimed at increasing incentives for young people to **enlist**, including greater financial remuneration. Any soldier **serving** a minimum of four years would automatically be **illegible** for a \$25,000 bonus for buying a home. A larger recruitment **drove** entailed the Army to vastly increase its number of recruiters, who tour shopping **malls** actively coaxing young people to sign **down** with the inducement of bigger bonuses. Richard Cody, the Army's deputy chief of staff, said that with the **current** shortfall, the Army would not be able to increase in size to 502,000 as planned. This **drops** into doubt the Army's plans to expand and **fulfill** its overseas commitments.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'throw' and 'doubt'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. WHOOPS: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "ARMY" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about armies and being a soldier.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| • fell | • combat |
| • slump | • eligible |
| • reasons | • vastly |
| • robust | • coaxing |
| • deployed | • shortfall |
| • dented | • doubt |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What were your initial thoughts on this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What do you think of the US Army?
- d. Would you like to be a soldier?
- e. How would you feel about being sent to a war zone in another country?
- f. Are you surprised at the shortfall in America's Army recruiting?
- g. How would you feel if your child joined the army?
- h. Would you prefer to join the army, navy or air force?
- i. Do you think life in the army would be exciting?
- j. What do you think of the idea of conscription?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. What do you think of people who become soldiers?
- d. Do you think soldiers are paid enough money?
- e. Do you think it's the duty of every citizen to fight to protect his / her country?
- f. Have you ever considered joined the armed forces?
- g. What do you think the US Army can do to enlist more new recruits?
- h. What do you think of the fact that almost all army recruits come from poor families?
- i. Are you proud of your country's army?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

ARMY RECRUITMENT: Your job is to recruit thousands of young people into the army. Use the attractions in the left hand column to make a campaign aimed at encouraging people to enlist. Think of the wonderful reasons why young men and women should sign up.

ATTRACTIONS	WONDERFUL REASONS TO SIGN UP
Foreign travel	
Stable employer	
Financial benefits	
Uniform	
Learn new skills	
Meet new people	
Other	

Change partners and show each other your ideas. Provide each other with feedback on how to improve your campaigns.

Change partners again. Take turns in role playing the recruiter and a young person very reluctant to join the army.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

US Army having recruiting problems

BNE: The US Army _____ of its recruitment goals in the 2005 _____ year ending September 30. Although it enlisted more than 73,000 _____, that was more than eight percent short of its target. Army spokesman Francis Harvey expressed _____ about the lower than expected numbers, the biggest _____ in 25 years, but denied there was any _____ crisis. Mr. Harvey offered a number of reasons for the shortfall, including an increasingly robust American economy _____ young people into different careers and a reluctance of parents to let their children be _____ overseas, especially in Iraq or Afghanistan. There are currently 140,000 troops stationed in Iraq. The near 2,000 deaths in Iraq have severely _____ young people's enthusiasm to join.

To _____ this problem, the Army had taken a series of initiatives aimed at increasing incentives for young people to _____, including greater financial remuneration. Any soldier serving a minimum of four years would automatically be _____ for a \$25,000 bonus for buying a home. A larger recruitment drive _____ the Army to vastly increase its number of recruiters, who tour shopping malls actively _____ young people to sign up with the inducement of bigger bonuses. Richard Cody, the Army's deputy _____, said that with the current shortfall, the Army would not be able to increase in size to 502,000 as planned. This _____ into _____ the Army's plans to expand and fulfill its overseas commitments.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on the US Army. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. FIRST DAY: You have joined the army. Write your diary / journal entry describing your first day. What are your fears, hopes and expectations? Show your entries to your partners in your next class. Did you all write about similar things?

4. LETTER: Write a letter to the head the US Army's recruiting department. Tell him / her how he / she can increase the number of recruits joining the Army. Make suggestions as to why the number of young people joining the Army is lower than expected. Read your letter to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. T c. T d. F e. F f. F g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| a. impending | looming |
| b. luring | enticing |
| c. reluctance | unwillingness |
| d. stationed | based |
| e. dented | damaged |
| f. combat | fight |
| g. remuneration | rewards |
| h. drive | campaign |
| i. inducement | incentive |
| j. fulfill | meet |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| a. fell short | of its recruitment goals |
| b. impending | crisis |
| c. robust American economy luring | young people into different careers |
| d. be deployed | overseas |
| e. severely dented | young people's enthusiasm |
| f. initiatives aimed at increasing incentives | for young people to enlist |
| g. greater financial | remuneration |
| h. actively coaxing young people | to sign up |
| i. the inducement | of bigger bonuses |
| j. This throws into | doubt the Army's plans to expand |

WHOOOPS:

US Army having recruiting problems

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