



Landpower Essay

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TTHS Is Not a Four-Letter Word

by

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To build and maintain a ready and relevant force, the U.S. Army must invest in its people, equipment and installations. Individual training and leader development form the foundation of the Army's investment in Soldiers. With the Army at war, some would contend that allowing Soldiers to attend schools and training courses means fewer Soldiers are available for units. However, this line of reasoning misses an important point—personnel readiness in units is not based solely on the total number of Soldiers, but also on the number of qualified (trained) Soldiers. To meet current operational requirements and not jeopardize the long-term health of the organization, the Army must continue to find an acceptable mix of Soldiers in units and those not in units for training or other reasons.

The Army uses the term Trainees, Transients, Holders and Students (TTHS) to represent Soldiers not assigned to units. TTHS often is viewed in a negative light and seen as the reason the Army cannot have more units in the force structure. Although this is technically true, it may be more appropriate to consider TTHS as the investment required for the Army to have trained and educated leaders and Soldiers ready and available to perform their missions. TTHS allows the Army to transition citizens to Soldiers, maintain leader development systems unequaled in any other military force and ensure that trained Soldiers are provided to unit commanders. The active Army's total strength is divided between the Force Structure Allowance (FSA)—the total of all authorized positions in units—and TTHS. With the Army's congressionally mandated endstrength of 482,400, the FSA is set at 419,100 and the TTHS target is 63,300. While TTHS is a target and not a limit, Army policy decisions influence its size and composition.

Approximately 13 percent of the active Army is considered to be in the TTHS account. Many factors affect TTHS. For example, Stop-Loss and Stop-Move orders are currently depressing TTHS because Soldiers are not leaving the Army, attending training or moving to other units due to deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq in support of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). The Army's historical TTHS rate is comparable to those of the other military services—the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps also recognize the “cost of doing business” inherent in having trained and ready forces. As shown in figure 1, the actual number of Soldiers (measured in man years or MYs) in TTHS fluctuates over time. The reasons include the drawdown of overall strength, changes in annual accessions missions, lengthening of Basic Combat Training (BCT), implementation of the Hometown Recruiter Assistance Program (HRAP) and the use of Stop-Loss and Stop-Move policies.

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TTHS History

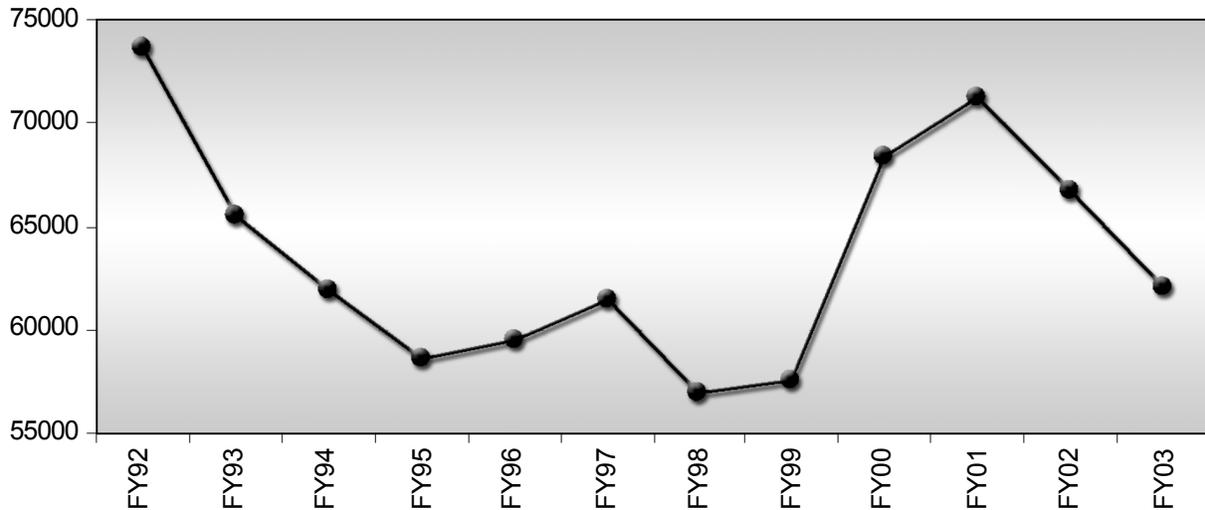


Figure 1 - TTHS History

It is important to understand which Soldiers are included in the TTHS account and which are not. Soldiers attending schools in a temporary duty (TDY)-and-return status are not counted as Students because they remain assigned to their units during this training time. The majority of Noncommissioned Officers (NCOs) attend NCO Education System (NCOES) courses in this manner. The Department of Defense (DoD) provides guidance to all of the services on military manpower programming and accounting with DoD Instruction 1120.11, which specifies the following categories for the Individuals Account (i.e., TTHS):

- Trainees—Soldiers who have not yet begun travel to their first permanent duty assignment who are undergoing Initial Entry Training (IET) or other proficiency or developmental training (officers are called Officer Accession Students, or OAS);
- Transients—Soldiers between assignments in a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) status;
- Holdees—prisoners and hospital patients, until they are returned to their units or are no longer counted against active Army strength;
- Students—Soldiers attending non-IET courses of instruction in a PCS or TDY-en route status; and
- Cadets—the 4,000 cadets at the U.S. Military Academy (even though there is no “C” in the acronym).

The driving factors behind TTHS are training, education and leader development. As shown in figure 2, 85 percent of TTHS is directly attributable to training (i.e., the sum of the Trainees, Students and Cadets categories). Additionally, 40 percent of Transients are Soldiers PCSing due to accession or schooling and are, therefore, an indirect result of training. The remaining Soldiers in Transient status are so categorized by one of three types of moves: rotational (from overseas, or OCONUS, assignment, to assignment in the continental United States, or CONUS, and vice versa), operational (between OCONUS assignments or between CONUS assignments) or separation (leaving the Army). All told, 90 percent (85 percent direct plus 5 percent indirect) of TTHS is driven by training, education and leader development.

TTHS Composition

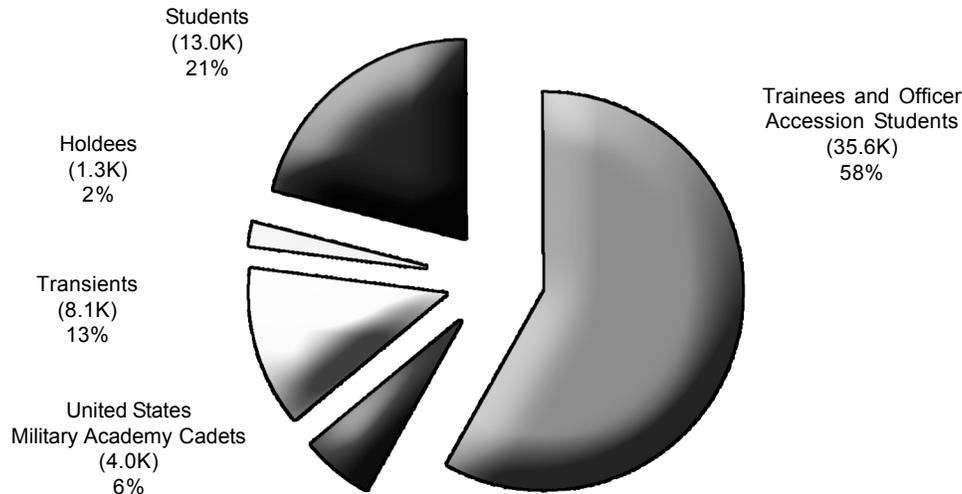


Figure 2 - TTHS Composition

As figure 3 shows, the number of annual accessions (Soldiers recruited and brought on active duty) and the number of Soldiers in TTHS are closely related. As the number of accessions increased (e.g., from 1999 to 2001), TTHS also increased. Similarly, when accessions decreased (e.g., from 2001 to 2003), TTHS also decreased. This relationship exists because 95 percent of accessions require IET or, in the case of recruits with prior service, at least some training before proceeding to their first duty assignment.

The Army includes the active Army, reserve components and civilian workforce. The Army Reserve is creating a TTHS account modeled after that of the active Army. This initiative will be implemented in 2005 by reducing the Army Reserve's force structure by approximately 34,000 to a figure below its authorized endstrength. The intent of this action is to improve unit readiness in the Army Reserve. The Army National Guard also is developing a TTHS account for the same reason. One of the major results of the Civilian Personnel Management System (CPMS) XXI and Army Training and Leader Development Panel-Civilian (ATDLP-C) studies is creation of the Senior Army Workforce (SAW). The key tenet of the SAW is centralized management, promotion, assignment and leader development of all Department of the Army civilian leaders, supervisors and managers in grades GS-12 and above. Another fundamental element of the SAW is mandated mobility, whereby members are expected to be trained and moved among duty assignments and locations as Soldiers currently are. To accomplish this, the SAW will also be resourced with a TTHS-like account.

As the Army begins a temporary increase in strength from 482,400 to 512,400, TTHS will initially increase. Not only does the Army need to recruit and train more Soldiers overall, but due to significant force structure changes the mix of skills required will also be considerably different in the future, thereby generating additional training requirements. Part of the TTHS increase can be mitigated with the addition of recruiters, drill sergeants and instructors to increase training capacity and prevent a backup of Soldiers awaiting class seats. TTHS is a key to unit readiness; not accounting for it will prevent units from being fully manned.

Given that 90 percent of TTHS is caused (directly or indirectly) by training and leader development, this is the area that must be closely examined in any serious effort to reduce TTHS. For example, shortening Basic Combat Training (BCT) by one week from its current nine weeks

Accession and TTHS by Fiscal Year

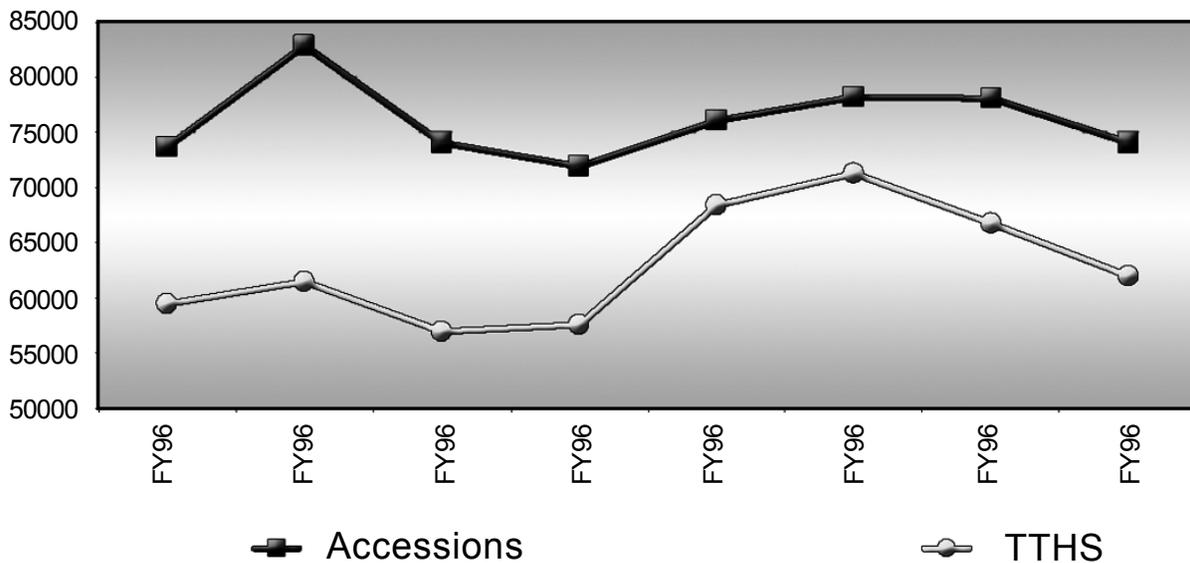


Figure 3 - Accessions and TTHS by Fiscal Year

would decrease TTHS MYs by 1,400. Another option is to shorten the course length of Army schools such as the Command and General Staff Officers Course, Army War College and Sergeants Major Course. Changing any of these courses of nine to 10 months to durations of less than 20 weeks would allow officers and NCOs to attend in a TDY-and-return status and, therefore, not be counted in TTHS. However, such changes would have drawbacks. Although the Soldier would be considered to be assigned to a unit while attending school, he or she still would not be working in the unit on a daily basis and would be available to the unit for operational deployment only if recalled from training. Also, reducing course lengths to meet limits on TDY periods would result in additional separation of families (primarily for officers and senior NCOs) because they would not be authorized to move with the Soldier attending school. Although training courses are not held in overseas or hazardous duty locations, from a family member's perspective, TDY-and-return training is one more "deployment" of their Soldier away from home.

A successful effort to reduce a portion of the Trainees element of TTHS was implemented in 1999. By spreading accessions into the Army over the year (as much as possible, given that the majority of enlistees enter active duty following high school graduation), the Army has reduced the backlog of Soldiers in the training base in late summer and early fall. This was done by using the Delayed Entry Program (DEP) to manage the dates when new enlistees enter active duty and are counted against the Army's strength. In conjunction with precision recruiting (ensuring that the correct recruit is programmed directly into a training seat), the Army was able to reduce the number of holdovers in the training base and thus reduce TTHS.

The Army's shift to home-basing, unit-focused stability and unit rotations is also expected to reduce TTHS. These actions could result in a reduction in PCS moves and, therefore, Transients. One program that may help reduce the Training category of TTHS is the use of Assignment Oriented Training (AOT), in which a new Soldier receives only training tailored to the equipment and skill sets required for his or her first unit of assignment rather than all equipment of the branch. To date AOT

has been used only within the Signal Corps, but other branches are evaluating its potential application in their areas. The use of distance learning is also being studied as a means of reducing the time Soldiers spend away from units for training and education. If all these efficiencies result in a net decrease to TTHS of 9,000 MY, the “cost of doing business” will decrease from 13 percent to approximately 11 percent.

What if the Army did not set aside a portion of endstrength for TTHS? Put yourself in the place of a light infantry battalion commander with 570 Soldiers in five companies under your command. Under current policy, approximately 34 of your Soldiers are nondeployable for a variety of reasons. If TTHS were eliminated, you would have even fewer Soldiers available for training on any given day because Soldiers currently counted in TTHS will now be counted as assigned to your unit. For example, 17 of your Soldiers who depart on PCS orders in a given month will still be counted against your battalion until they sign into their new units instead of being considered Transients. The specialist convicted of assault by court-martial and sentenced to 90 days’ confinement will no longer be considered a Holdee but will remain assigned to Charlie Company. One of your two majors may be TDY to the Intermediate Level Education (ILE) Core course for three months. One of your first sergeants may be gone for five months to attend the Sergeants Major Course during the battalion's Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) rotation. These are in addition to the Soldiers already attending TDY-and-return courses such as the Primary Leadership Development Course (PLDC), Basic NCO Course and Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) School. Elimination of TTHS would allow the Army to increase the force structure but would also significantly reduce personnel readiness in all units. (Note: The author is not aware of any proposal to eliminate TTHS; this was a hypothetical situation to illustrate how TTHS impacts unit readiness.)

In summary, the Army must train new Soldiers before risking their lives in combat and must continuously grow and sustain highly skilled leaders. Training and education represents the Army's investment in its people. For the long-term health of the Army, this investment must be sustained even while at war. TTHS is the management tool the Army uses to account for Soldiers not assigned to units. The size of the TTHS account is primarily determined by the values, policies and decisions regarding training, education and leader development that have shaped the Army over the past three decades. Other services’ use of Individuals Accounts, and the fact that the Army National Guard, Army Reserve and Civilian Personnel System are beginning to account for TTHS reflects the importance of this account. Any serious attempt to reduce TTHS must look critically at the areas described above and will require difficult decisions by senior Army leaders; simply saying, “Let’s reduce TTHS by x ” is not sufficient. TTHS is the mechanism that allows the Army to have training, education and leader development systems that are the envy of every other military force around the globe. It demonstrates the Army's commitment to its people and enables readiness.

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