

the nation

Study asks for age over youth Experience needed in military

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The Brookings Institution believes the U.S. armed services — in this age of mechanized weaponry — need graybeards with experience as much or more as they need young, combat-ready troops.

The emphasis on youth over experience may be a mistake, with only three out of every five military personnel regarded as being "fully productive," the institute's study, "Youth or Experience? Manning the Modern Military," said Sunday.

The study said the armed services, "adhering to outdated policies handed down from previous eras, place a greater premium on youth and vigor at the expense of experience," but there should be some new thinking in this respect.

"The ascendancy of technicians and specialists over warriors that has been the result of technological substitution has yielded a more industrialized military institution, a large segment of which closely resembles civilian organizations," it said.

But, it noted, military hiring practices do not resemble those in civilian organizations. Of the 1.8 million enlisted personnel in 1977, 60 percent were 25 years old or younger and close to 90 percent were under 35. In contrast, the study said, less than 25 percent of civilian workers are under 25 and 33 percent of the civilian labor force is 44 or older compared to only 1 percent of enlisted personnel in that age category.

The study's authors Martin Binkin and Irene Kyriakopoulos said a youthful force "is necessarily inexperienced. At last count, nearly 40 percent of all military personnel were either trainees, apprentices, or helpers. Only three of every five were fully productive."

The authors contend the military can have both physical fitness and experience. Citing research, the study said that although physical capacity diminishes with age, the rate of decline was sharpest after the age of 50.

"The emphasis on youthfulness not only appears unwarranted but may also be misplaced," the study said, adding that the proportion of enlisted personnel in the 17 to 24 age bracket is the smallest in the clerical job category.

"This pattern is quite unlike that prevailing in civilian employment, where clerical jobs are more likely to be staffed by young workers," the study said.

The emphasis on youth also has budgetary drawbacks, the study said, citing reports that in 1974, 37 percent of the men who volunteered left the service before completing their 3-year term, causing the services to recruit more volunteers for each position than they previously did.

The study called for a reform of the military retirement system and said the Pentagon "should take steps to improve retention among certain experienced personnel, thereby reducing the demands for new volunteers and for the resources now devoted to maintaining a relatively large pool of nonproductive employees."

Proposition 13 slashes property tax by billions

United Press International
NEW YORK — One year after California's Proposition 13 was passed, despite predictions of catastrophe from many economists, Fortune magazine says the controversial measure is working.

Proposition 13, billed as a taxpayer rebellion, slashed California property taxes by \$6.4 billion. It was followed by a \$1 billion cut in state income taxes, and opponents predicted massive lay-offs, curtailment of services and recession as a result.

In its current issue, Fortune says the tax-slashes stimulated California's economy, "enabling it to outperform the country as a whole."

The magazine says in the final quarter of 1978 and the first three months of this year, Californians' personal income jumped 14 percent, spurring an upsurge in spending.

Predicted massive lay-offs never materialized. The magazine says since passage of the measure, 100,000 workers have left local government, but only about 17,000 of them were laid off. The rest quit or retired and never were replaced, reducing the state payroll by 8 percent. But in response to tax savings, businesses generated 552,000 new jobs, "enough to absorb laid-off government workers and still reduce unemployment faster than the national average."

"Californians are now seeing proof that the government can manage with fewer dollars and employees and still provide essential services," the magazine said.

Coupons pay off for two airlines

United Press International
Officials at United and American Airlines say the Great Coupon Caper is the most successful promotion in the history of the business, but harried ticket agents — on the firing line for three weeks — are glad it's over.

Odd-even plan goes East Thurs.

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The chief executives of Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia announced Monday that they will put a regional odd-even gas sales plan in effect Thursday for the Washington metropolitan area.

Virginia Gov. John Dalton, Maryland Gov. Harry Hughes and D.C. Mayor Marion Barry said the plan would take effect at 12:01 p.m. Thursday unless the gas situation improves significantly before then.

The decision was announced at a meeting called by Rep. Herbert Harris, D-Va.

Under the plan, owners of cars with license plates ending in even numbers will be allowed to buy gas only on even-numbered days and owners of cars whose license number ends in odd numbers will buy gas only on odd-numbered days.

A similar plan is now operating in California.

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