

The Chart Page

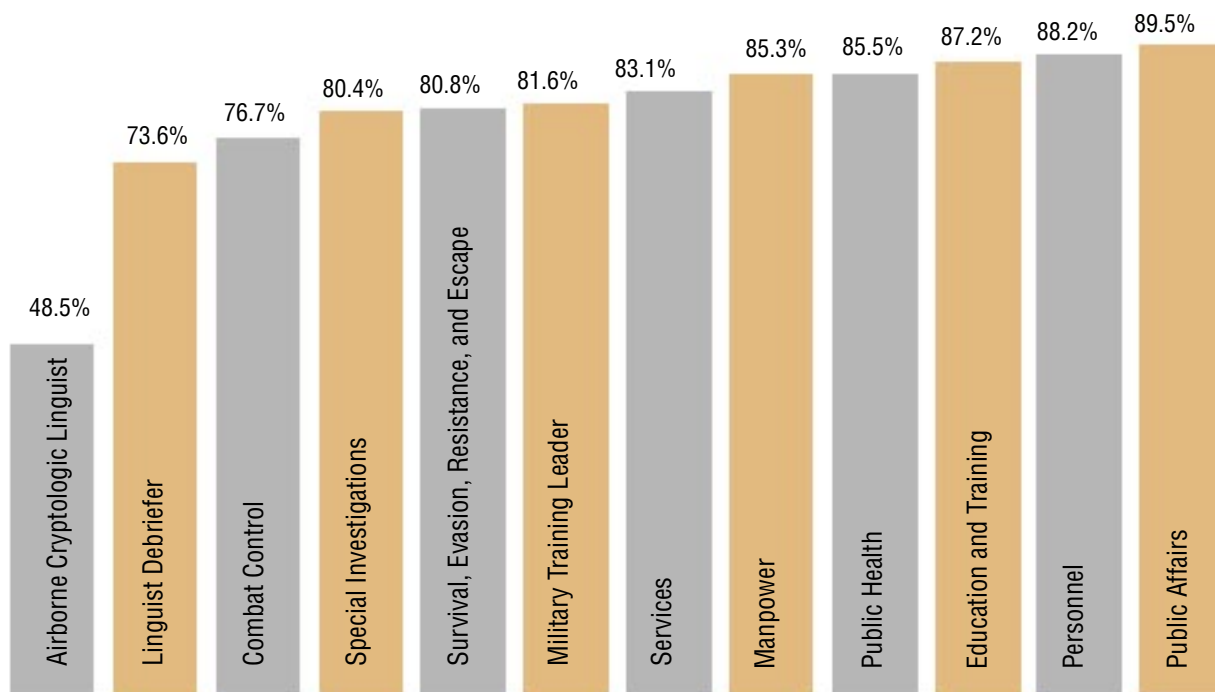
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USAF Jobs That Go Begging

Though USAF almost always achieves annual end strength targets, it struggles to fill certain occupational specialties. Which jobs are hardest to man? The chart below shows that, in 2005, there were 12 Air Force enlisted occupations (active, Guard, and Reserve) manned at less than 90 percent of authorized strength. In virtually all cases, the problem is chronic, that is, resistant to bonuses and other enticements over

several years. The toughest spot to fill, evidently, is the job of airborne cryptologic linguist, language specialists who fly in RC-135 Rivet Joint aircraft, operate signals intelligence gear, and translate intercepted communications. They even have to be able to type at a rate of 25 words per minute. For 2005, the Air Force needed 1,110 of these specialists, but attracted only 538—less than 50 percent of its goal.

Air Force's Consistently Underfilled Occupational Specialties
Percent of Goal in Fiscal 2005



Source: Government Accountability Office, "Military Personnel: DOD Needs Action Plan To Address Enlisted Personnel Recruitment and Retention Challenges," November 2005.