



## Senate Panel Hears From DoD Officials on Strengthening the All-Volunteer Force

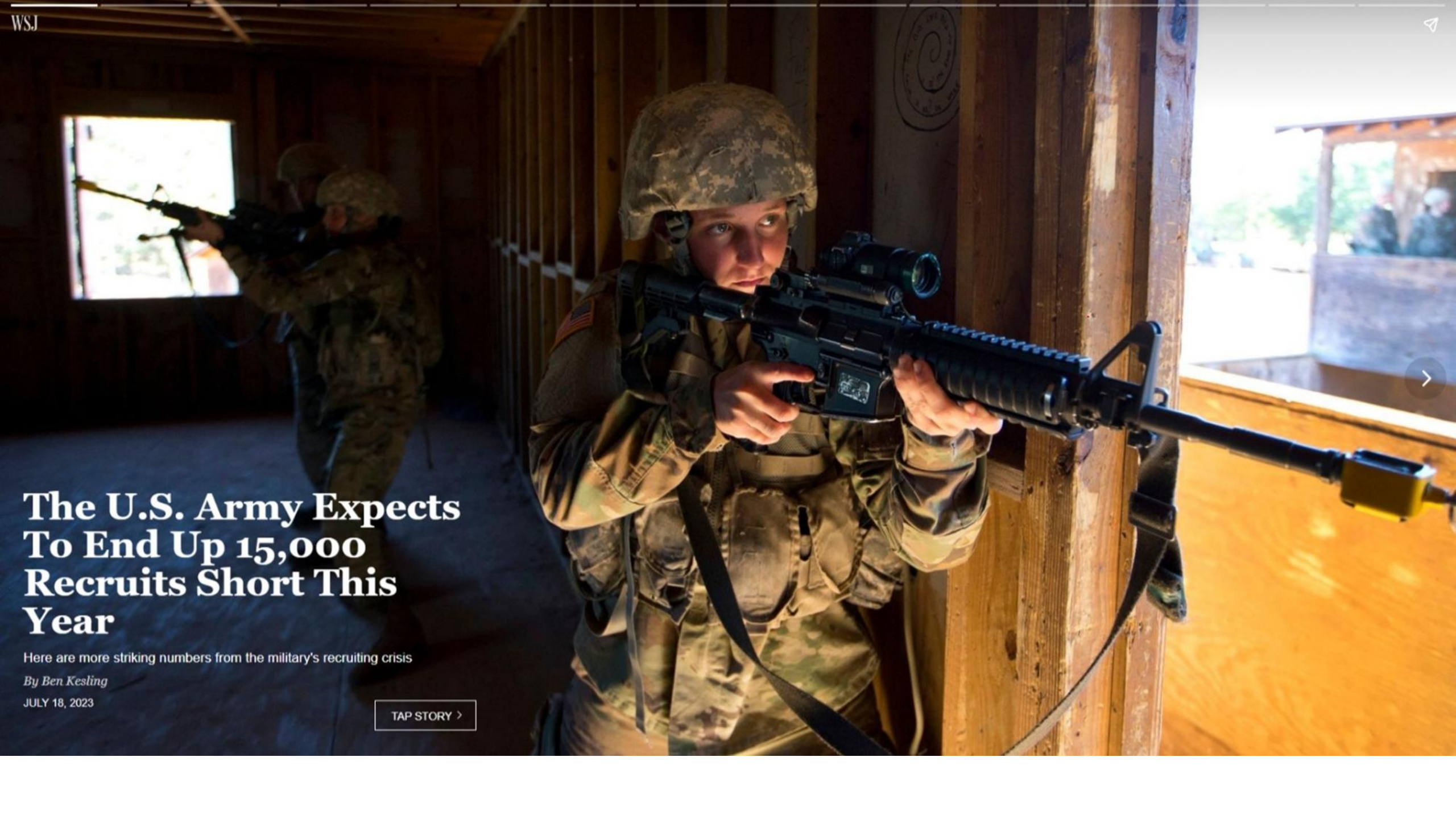
By: René Campos

MARCH 21, 2023

### MOAA's Position:

The all-volunteer force is our national strategic advantage. Maintaining such a capability requires protecting the quality of life for our uniformed community.

Deliberate steps like improving physical fitness and health programs in our education system will help increase the pool of eligible over time, while investing in uniformed community housing, health care, child care, food insecurity prevention, and improved facilities and services will make a meaningful difference to those already in service.



# The U.S. Army Expects To End Up 15,000 Recruits Short This Year

Here are more striking numbers from the military's recruiting crisis

By Ben Kesling

JULY 18, 2023

TAP STORY >



“Influencers are not telling them to go into the military,” said Adm. Mike Mullen, the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in an interview. “Moms and dads, uncles, coaches and pastors don’t see it as a good choice.”

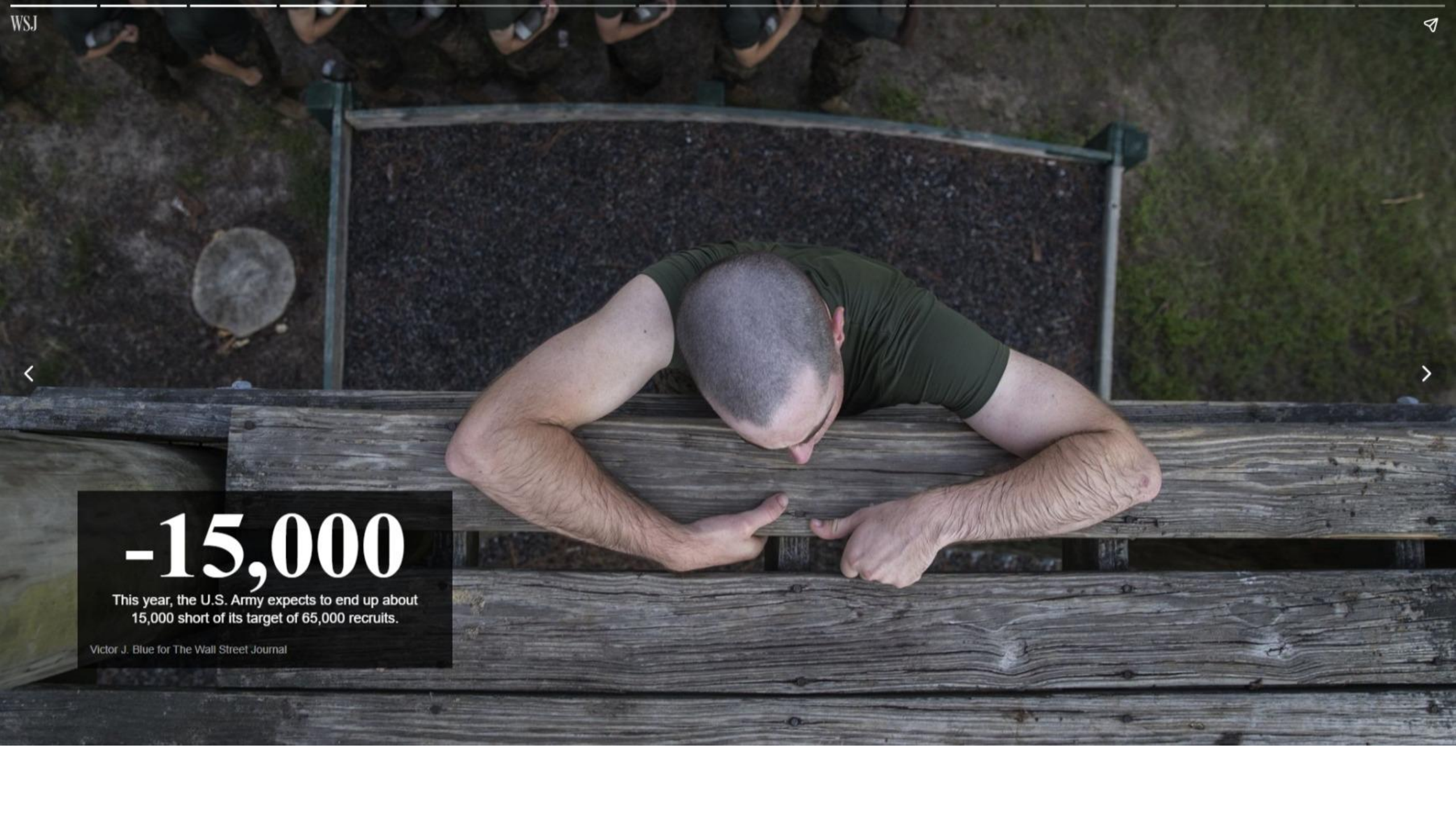




# -15,000

This year, the U.S. Army expects to end up about 15,000 short of its target of 65,000 recruits.

Victor J. Blue for The Wall Street Journal





# -10,000

The Navy expects to fall short by as many as 10,000 of its goal of nearly 38,000 recruits this year.

Basilio Sepe/Zuma



# -3,000

The Air Force has said it is anticipating coming in at 3,000 below its goal of nearly 27,000 recruits this year.

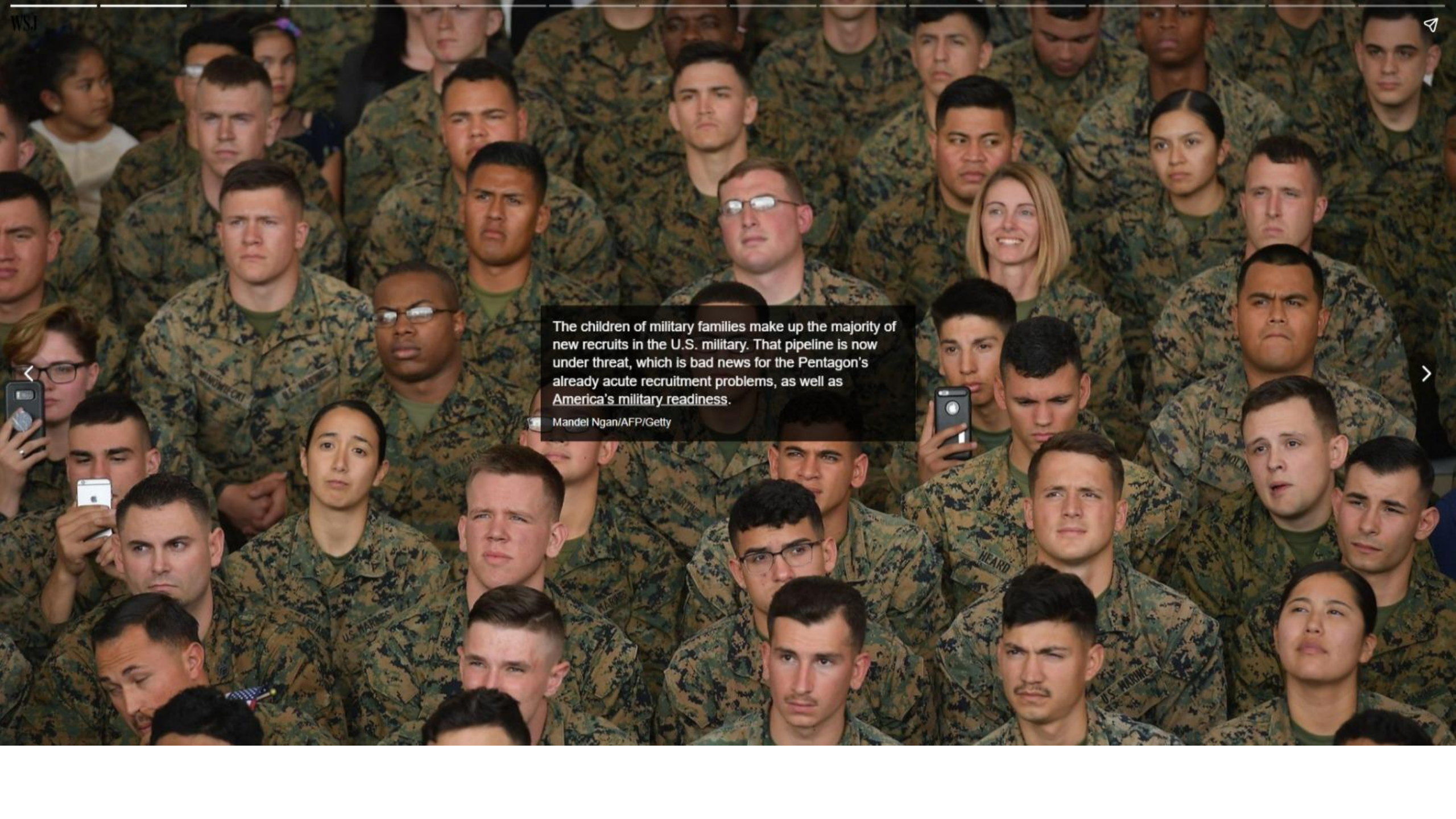
U.S. Air Force/Zuma





The Marine Corps met its target last year of sending 33,000 to boot camp, and expects to meet its goals this year, but its leaders described recruitment as challenging.

Michal Dyjuk/AP



The children of military families make up the majority of new recruits in the U.S. military. That pipeline is now under threat, which is bad news for the Pentagon's already acute recruitment problems, as well as America's military readiness.

Mandel Ngan/AFP/Getty





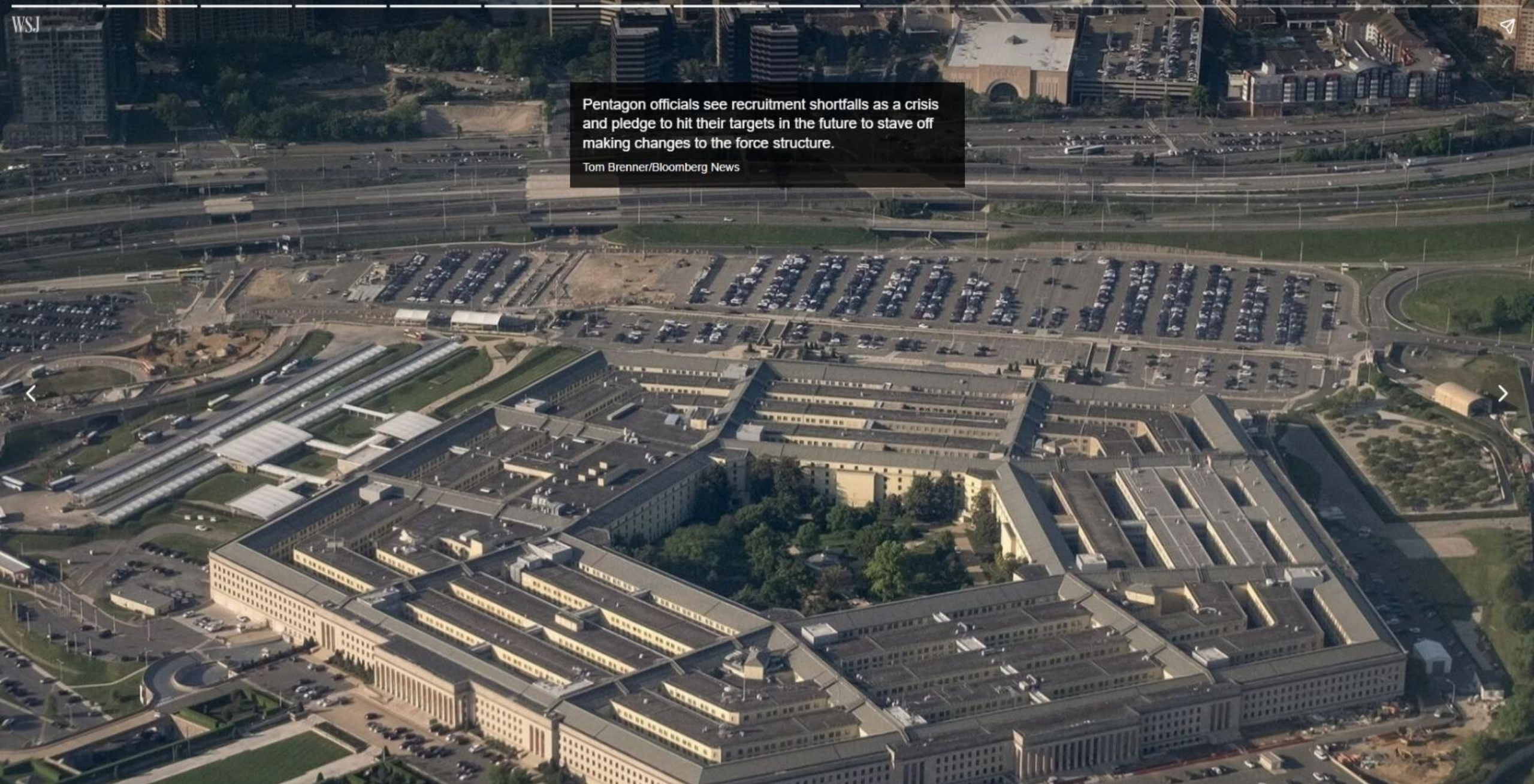
# 9%

< of young people ages 16-21 said last year they would consider military service, down from 13% before the pandemic, according to Pentagon data. >

Kaiti Sullivan for The Wall Street Journal

Pentagon officials see recruitment shortfalls as a crisis and pledge to hit their targets in the future to stave off making changes to the force structure.

Tom Brenner/Bloomberg News



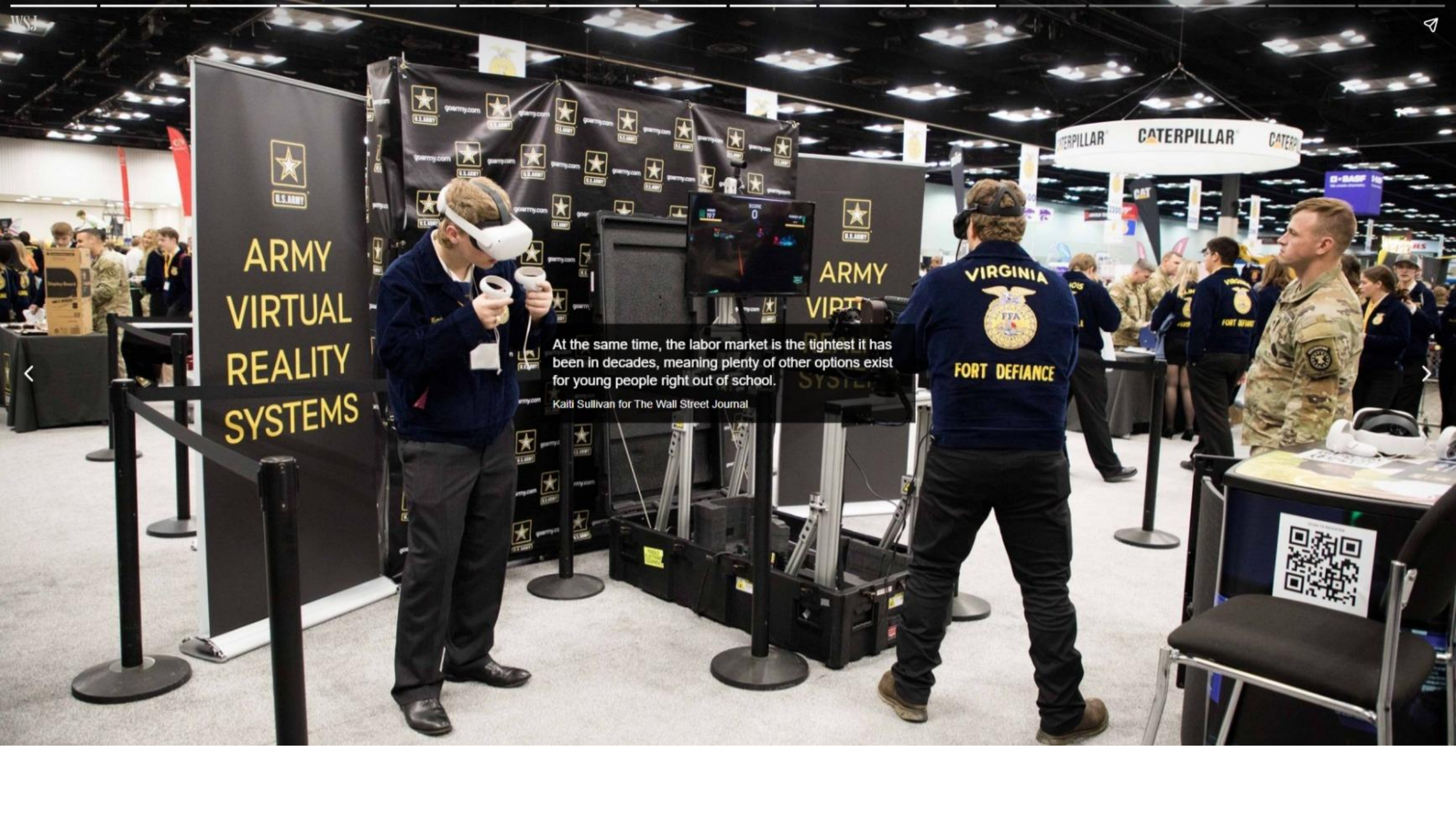


### Why is there a crisis?

After the patriotic boost to recruiting that followed 9/11, the U.S. military has endured 20 years of war in Iraq and Afghanistan with no decisive victories.

There have also been scandals over shoddy military housing and healthcare, poor pay for lower ranks that forces many military families to turn to food stamps, and rising rates of post-traumatic stress disorder and suicide.





ARMY  
VIRTUAL  
REALITY  
SYSTEMS

At the same time, the labor market is the tightest it has been in decades, meaning plenty of other options exist for young people right out of school.

Kaiti Sullivan for The Wall Street Journal

VIRGINIA  
FORT DEFANCE



A man wearing a VR headset is looking down at a device in his hands. He is standing in front of a booth with a repeating pattern of the Army logo and the text 'ARMY VIRTUAL REALITY SYSTEMS'.

# ARMY VIRTUAL REALITY SYSTEMS

Katherine Kuzminski, head of the Military, Veterans and Society Program at Center for a New American Security, a bipartisan security think tank, said the pandemic exacerbated the military's long-term recruiting problems.

"You can't underestimate the fact we didn't have recruiters on college and high school campuses for two years," she said. "Recruiters are the only military access point for many people" without family or friends in the military.

The back of a person wearing a dark blue uniform with 'VIRGINIA' and 'FORT DEFIANCE' printed on it. A circular emblem is visible on the back.

VIRGINIA  
FORT DEFIANCE

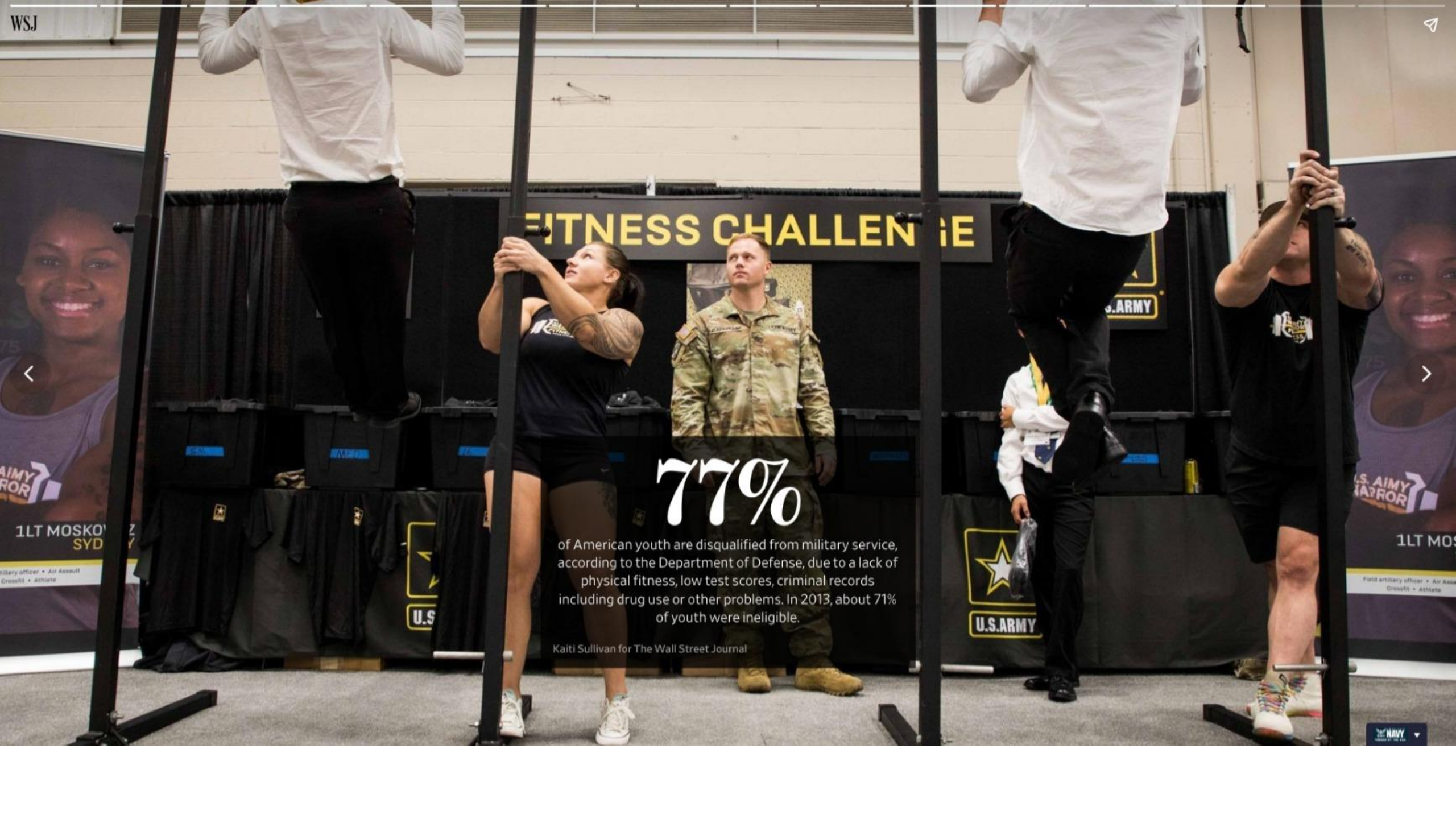




# Less than \$2,000

What the lowest-ranking troops make a month, although pay is bolstered by benefits including healthcare, food and housing, leaving them few out-of-pocket expenses.

Kaiti Sullivan for The Wall Street Journal



# FITNESS CHALLENGE

# 77%

of American youth are disqualified from military service, according to the Department of Defense, due to a lack of physical fitness, low test scores, criminal records including drug use or other problems. In 2013, about 71% of youth were ineligible.

Kaiti Sullivan for The Wall Street Journal

U.S. ARMY  
1LT MOSKOWITZ  
SYDNEY  
Field artillery officer • Air Assault  
Crossfit • Athlete

U.S. ARMY  
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## FITNESS CHALLENGE

U.S. recruiting shortfalls represent a long-term problem that, if not resolved, would compel the military to reduce its force size.

"I've been studying the recruiting market for about 15 years, and we've never seen a condition quite like this," said a senior Defense Department official.



U.S. ARMY  
1LT MOSKOW  
SYD

U.S. ARMY  
1LT MOSKOW  
SYD

U.S. NAVY





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The Navy determined that numerous failures occurred on the part of leadership and watchstanders as follows:

Failure to plan for safety.

Failure to adhere to sound navigation practice.

Failure to execute basic watch standing practices.

Failure to properly use available navigation tools.

Failure to respond deliberately and effectively when in extremis.

The Navy determined the following causes of the collision:

Loss of situational awareness in response to mistakes in the operation of the JOHN S MCCAIN's steering and propulsion system, while in the presence of a high density of maritime traffic.

Failure to follow the International Nautical Rules of the Road, a system of rules to govern the maneuvering of vessels when risk of collision is present.

Watchstanders operating the JOHN S MCCAIN's steering and propulsion systems had insufficient proficiency and knowledge of the systems.



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- On 29 July 1967, a fire broke out on board the aircraft carrier USS Forrestal after an electrical anomaly caused a Zuni rocket on an F-4B Phantom to fire, striking an external fuel tank of an A-4 Skyhawk. The flammable jet fuel spilled across the flight deck, ignited, and triggered a chain reaction of explosions that killed 134 sailors and injured 161. At the time, Forrestal was engaged in combat operations in the Gulf of Tonkin, during the Vietnam War. The ship survived, but with damage exceeding US\$72 million, not including the damage to aircraft. Future United States Senator John McCain and future four-star admiral and U.S. Pacific Fleet Commander Ronald J. Zlatoper were among the survivors. Another on-board officer, Lieutenant Tom Treanore, later returned to the ship as its commander and retired an admiral.
- The incident was the second of three serious fires to strike American carriers in the 1960s. A 1966 fire aboard USS Oriskany killed 44 and injured 138 and a 1969 fire aboard USS Enterprise killed 28 and injured 314.
- The disaster prompted the Navy to revise its firefighting practices. It also modified its weapon handling procedures and installed a deck wash down system on all carriers. The newly established Farrier Firefighting School in Norfolk, Virginia was named after Chief Gerald W. Farrier, the commander of Damage Control Team 8, who was among the first to die in the fire and explosions.



## From Pay Raise to PACT Act, What You Need to Know About the Biden Budget MARCH 15, 2023

The budget requests \$880 billion for defense programs (an increase of 3.3% over last year). From those programs, DoD garners \$842 billion (\$26 billion more than FY 2023) and nearly \$100 billion more than FY 2022. The remaining portion of that overall budget includes \$38 billion to DoD to maintain a strong nuclear deterrent.

This budget includes a 5.2% pay raise for uniformed service members – consistent with the statutory requirement to keep pace with the Employment Cost Index. Although some news outlets are reporting this increase as "the largest military pay raise in 20 years," our service members' pay is still 2.6% behind ECI after falling short of the index from 2014 to 2016. The budget also includes a 5.2% pay increase for federal civilians, an area where competition for talent has struggled with the private sector.

# What can you do?

Go to the MOAA site and then the **Legislative Action Center**. <https://moaa.quorum.us/>

Send the Letters MOAA has created to Your Legislators.

Help Protect the military's

**PAY, BENEFITS, & RETIREMENT**