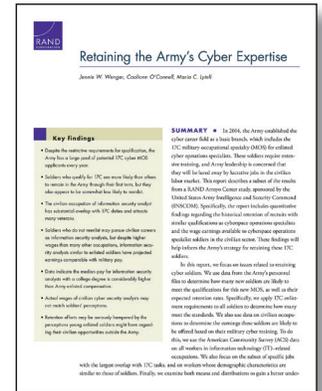




# Retaining the Army's Cyber Expertise

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In 2014, the Army established the Cyber career field as a basic branch, which includes the 17C military occupational specialty for enlisted cyber operations specialists. These soldiers require extensive training, and Army leadership is concerned that they will be lured away by lucrative jobs in the civilian labor market. This report describes findings that will help inform the Army's strategy for retaining these 17C soldiers.



## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How many new soldiers are likely to meet the qualifications for the new 17C cyber MOS?
- What are their expected retention rates?
- What earnings are these soldiers likely to be offered in civilian occupations, based on their military cyber training?
- How do civilian wages compare with Army pay?
- How can the Army retain cyber soldiers?



## KEY FINDINGS

Despite the Restrictive Requirements for Qualification, the Army Has a Potentially Large Pool of Suitable 17C Cyber MOS Applicants Every Year

- Soldiers who qualify for 17C are more likely than others to remain in the Army through their first term, but they also appear to be somewhat less likely to reenlist.
- The civilian occupation of information security analyst has substantial overlap with 17C duties and attracts many veterans.
- Soldiers who do not reenlist may pursue civilian careers as information security analysts, but despite higher wages than many other occupations, information security analysts similar to enlisted soldiers

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have projected earnings comparable with military pay.

- Data indicate the median pay for information security analysts with a college degree is considerably higher than Army enlisted compensation.

#### Actual Wages of Civilian Cyber Security Analysts May Not Match Soldiers' Perceptions

- Retention efforts may be seriously hampered by the perceptions young enlisted soldiers might have regarding their civilian opportunities outside the Army.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

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- Given that continuation rate is strongly tied to the length of initial obligation, a long initial obligation can serve as an important retention tool; the Army should retain its long initial obligation requirements for 17C for the foreseeable future.
- Given that military pay for soldiers near the end of their first term is comparable with the median pay of likely jobs in the civilian sector, retention tools like selective reenlistment bonuses and special pay can go a long way toward tipping the scales in favor of staying in the Army.
- Ongoing analyses should include careful tracking of successful training completion and retention rates, as well as civilian pay and demand for information security analysts in the civilian sector; this information will play an important role in managing this occupation.



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