



Civic Duty

Recruiting



In my civic duty experience I spent time observing a recruiter for the United States Army. I observed Captain Patrick Johnson who is a proud service member of the Army National Guard. His current job duties include meeting people, talking with them and ultimately to get them to join the military. While observing him in his recruiting quest I saw many instances where almost all of the economic concepts I learned manifest themselves and also gave me a better understanding of the concepts. I was able to watch him talk with prospects and hear their opinion and reasons for wanting to join the military and almost all of their reasons began with economic related reasons. The reasons included inability to find a job, wanting to increase their human capital by getting a degree, and simply the desire for income stability.

There are quite a few ways in which the prospects can join. One of the most popular routes that can be taken is joining ROTC. ROTC allows (requires) students to obtain a degree and upon completion they also receive a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant and they have an opportunity to compete for an active duty slot in the United States Army. There is also another option called GRFD. The GRFD stands for guaranteed Reserve forces duty. This option guarantees that the individual will serve in either The National Guard or the Army Reserve. The National Guard and The Reserve allow the person to maintain a civilian job working in the field in which they obtained a degree in while serving part time in the Army National Guard or Reserve. This option gives them the opportunity to have two sources of income. Having two sources of income as it relates to economic increases their buying power increases which also increase GDP.

There are many stipulations that come along with the ROTC commitment. The individual is required to take military science courses every semester while pursuing their degree; they must also attend regular training events, and most importantly commit to serving a minimum of eight

years in the Army National Guard or active duty Army. Prospects are also required to maintain a certain level of physical fitness throughout their tenure in the program. On the other hand of this trade off the Army agrees to pay for either the students' tuition or room and board fees. In addition to one of these incentives the student also receives a monthly stipend. The ROTC option is an appealing option for college students who need financial help while attending college. Prospects must weigh the opportunity cost of the decision to commit to this program.

As I looked closely at the process and benefits of recruiting I saw a lot of instances in which concepts from economics were relating to this process. The more students that join ROTC in college decreases the labor supplied. Some of the students simply join because of the inability to find a job while in college and also because of the difficulty of time management. The higher the ROTC enrollment is at State college the more money those colleges receive that in turn helping built up the college and the community. When the population in an area increases the amount of money being spent also increases which help that state's economy.

With an increased enrollment in Army ROTC helps maintain a strong military. Having a strong military supports property rights. Strong property rights encourages people to save money and invest in property such as houses and other property because they know that it cannot be taken from them. Having one of the strongest militaries in the world allows the United States to have strong property rights which in turn allows for people to increase their wealth.

The scholarship offered by ROTC enables the student to earn a college degree. Earning a college degree is an investment in human capital. In the long run the individual that has earned a college degree will make more money than someone who has not and in turn will have a higher standard of living. They also have a greater chance of obtaining wealth which will encourage

them to save money which increases the amount of money banks have to lend to people which stimulate the economy. They also give back to the economy by paying more money in taxes. In having more people with college degrees there will be an increase in salary at which will cause the demand for normal goods to increase. The more money people make the more goods they buy. An increased number of people who make high salaries will also cause an increase in real GDP because they are making more which causes them spend more money.

In the recruiting field there is a saying that states “when the economy goes bad recruiting goes up”. In the past nine months Captain Johnson says that there has been a decrease in supply of ROTC scholarships but an increase in demand for the scholarships. The change in supply of scholarships have forced recruiters to take the focus off quantity and more on quality in regards to their prospects. There Army has also become stricter about what they will not tolerate. There has been a decrease in the number of people they will accept of whom have a criminal background. There are also some ROTC programs such as the Air Force that are “rifting” individuals because of the decrease in supply of jobs available for military officers . Captain Johnson says “the reduction in scholarships have made recruiting harder.” The recruiters have to probe to see who really wants to become an Army Officer.

It was very interesting to gain knowledge and take a closer look at how economics affect different careers. This experience allowed me to tie ideas together and gain a better overall understanding of economic concepts and how they are related to the real world. I was able to see and think about both the positive and negative sides of economic downturns. It is easier to make economic decisions when you have a good foundation of key concepts such as supply and demand and human capital. After this experience I feel that I am more knowledgeable about

economics and better prepared to make wise choices as it relates to economics, but after all doesn't everything relate to economics.