the armed forces with no alternative but to bid for "job-seekers" in the economic marketplace. Pay has been tied to average civilian scales. While military pay is nowhere near the levels paid by those private companies that send personnel to "hardship" areas overseas or place them in hazardous situations, remaining "benefits" have provided the additional incentives needed to keep quotas reasonably well filled. High unemployment levels in a recessionary economy (and continuing even into the recovery period) have, of course, helped.

The cost, however, has been enormous. Attempts have been made to save money by whittling away at the umbrella of benefits. Commissaries barely survive after a series of narrow escapes. Along with post exchanges, they appear to be headed for extinction. A new contributory retirement system, with savings clauses to protect those presently involved, but with greatly reduced benefits in the long run, has strong political support. Medical care is continually eroded, especially for the retired. A total compensation concept that computes cash value for all benefits—even recreational facilities, in some versions—and aims at substituting cash compensation for benefits in the future, is in the offing. At the same time, personal libertarianism has whittled away at the "total institution" concept. The end result is likely to be the final demise of the old "national service" pattern and a changeover to marketplace recruiting in which military employment is regarded as nothing more than a job, competing economically for the work-time of job-seekers.

Assuming that this trend continues, the probable outcome will be unionization of the armed forces. As one of the most hotly-debated issues presently facing the military, the future of military unionization cannot be predicted with any degree of confidence. The outcome, however, is not likely to be determined by the horrified opposition of senior officers and NCOs, by debate on its inherent merits in the pages of Army Times, or resolutions sponsored by large numbers of senators. Unions are too respectable and too well established as American social institutions to accept passively the "bogeyman" label. The outcome depends, rather, on whether the present trend toward transforming military service into just another job, competing for personnel in the marketplace, is continued. Without that traditional umbrella of protective benefits, military people are not likely to continue indefinitely foregoing the widely-recognized right of job-holders to engage in some form of negotiation on job conditions and compensation, through collective bargaining. On balance, the present judgment would have to be that the trend is likely to continue, and that a unionized Army will probably be the pattern of 2000 AD.