MILITARY PERSONNEL: A HIGH RISK GROUP

Finally, if it appears that problems related to the use of alcohol are more heavily concentrated among military personnel than among the civilian population it is probably true:

1. Although less than half of the civilian population is male, those identified as problem drinkers are preponderantly male; on that account alone, because military personnel are largely male, a larger portion of the military population than of the civilian population could be expected to be problem drinkers.

2. To the extent that alcohol problems are most prevalent among persons between 20 and 45 years old a higher frequency of problem drinkers can be found among the military personnel.

3. Although problems related to alcohol are found in all strata of society, they are more numerous among those of lower social status. To the extent that the lower social status is over-represented among military personnel, alcohol problems will likewise be more numerous among the military than among the civilian population.*

4. To the extent that a lack of family structure and mode of living is conducive to increasing alcohol related problems, such problems can be expected to be more prevalent in the military than in the civilian population.

5. To the extent that boredom, loneliness and frustration are conducive to excessive drinking, such drinking can be expected to occur more often in a military population.

6. To the extent that peer group support for drinking tends to increase the use of alcohol, the relative homogeneity of military society is conducive to increased drinking.

It is clear that the military population is highly exposed and vulnerable to alcohol related problems. It is equally clear that the kind of practical information presented here should be widely disseminated as a matter of survivability until methods are found to prevent or correct the abuses of alcohol.

*It should be noted that we are speaking here of problems related to alcohol, not alcoholism. Alcoholism is generally not a respecter of social status. But members of the lower group suffer more from any social problem because they lack the personal education, training, and resources used by the higher group to cope with such problems.