

1950

## On the Intelligence of Soldier-Criminals

Edmund F. Fuchs

Conrad Chyatte

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/jclc>

 Part of the [Criminal Law Commons](#), [Criminology Commons](#), and the [Criminology and Criminal Justice Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Edmund F. Fuchs, Conrad Chyatte, On the Intelligence of Soldier-Criminals, 40 J. Crim. L. & Criminology 753 (1949-1950)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Northwestern University School of Law Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology by an authorized editor of Northwestern University School of Law Scholarly Commons.

## ON THE INTELLIGENCE OF SOLDIER-CRIMINALS

Edmund F. Fuchs and Conrad Chyatte

Edmund F. Fuchs was a Civil Service examiner in New York City and later held a similar position in Washington with the U. S. Civil Service Commission. He worked on tests in the Army Air Force during the war, and has since been a research psychologist in the Personnel Research Section of the Adjutant General's Office U. S. A.—EDITOR.

Conrad Chyatte has been with the Army Personnel Research Section. He has recently transferred to the Air Force's Human Resources Research Laboratories at Bolling Field as an Aviation Psychologist.—EDITOR.

The opinions presented in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect official Department of Army policy.—EDMUND F. FUCHS and CONRAD CHYATTE.

Although there appears to be some disagreement among the results of previous studies concerned with the intelligence of male juvenile delinquents, Wedeking<sup>1</sup> reporting that the greater number of them are intelligent in contradiction to the data published by Healy and Bronner<sup>2</sup> and the National Committee for Mental Hygiene,<sup>3</sup> the tendency toward lower intelligence levels among adult offenders, at least in the Army, seems to be quite definite and stable.

During the 1940's the Army General Classification Test was the best measure of "general intelligence" that was widely used by the Army. Scores on this test were standardized on a scale designed to provide a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 20 for the total World War II Army population. For administrative convenience, these scores were grouped into five intervals called Army grades: Grade I for scores of 130 or higher, Grade II for scores of 110 to 129, Grade III for scores of 90 to 109, Grade IV for scores of 60 to 89, and Grade V for scores of 59 or lower. Thus, grades I and V represented a small percentage of the brightest and dullest enlisted personnel, respectively, whereas grades II and IV represented the bulk of those somewhat above and below average respectively, and grade III represented the broad average group of enlisted men in the Army.

The Army studied 9,107 general prisoners received in rehabilitation centers, disciplinary barracks and federal institutions during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1946. General prisoners are those who have been convicted of relatively serious offenses and sentenced to confinement and dishonorable or bad-conduct

1. Wedeking, L. P., A note on the intelligence of delinquents at Indiana Boys School, *J. Consult. Psychol.*, 1948, Vol. XII, No. 1, p. 58.

2. Healy, W., and Bronner, A., *Delinquents and criminals; their making and un-making*. New York: Macmillan, 1926.

3. Report of a mental hygiene survey of New York County jails and penitentiaries, with recommendations. New York: National Committee for Mental Hygiene, 1924.

discharge; they generally must serve at least a year of imprisonment. Of these, AGCT scores were reported for 4,924 cases. As far as could be ascertained, no bias was operating in the selection of these cases. A summary for this group according to nature of offense and AGCT score is presented as Table I. For purposes of comparison, a distribution of AGCT scores for a random sample of the total Army population of 3,533,000 on December 31, 1945 is included. Military offenses include absence without official leave, desertion, discreditable conduct toward superior officers, violation of arrest and confinement, etc. All civil offenses are listed in two arbitrary sub-categories: 1) "crimes of violence" which involve murder, rape, assault with intent to rape, robbery, manslaughter, assault, burglary and housebreaking and 2) "crimes of deceit" which include larceny, frauds against the government and forgery.

TABLE I  
AGCT SCORES OF ARMY GENERAL PRISONERS RECEIVED FOR  
CONFINEMENT IN YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 1946<sup>1</sup>

Nature of Offense	Percentage in AGCT Grade					N
	Grade I	Grade II	Grade III	Grade IV	Grade V	
	130-162 Superior	110-129 Above Average	90-109 Average	60-89 Below Average	42-59 Inferior	
Military (AWOL, desertion, etc.)	1.2	13.0	30.3	47.2	8.3	3667
Civil (total)	3.1	17.5	25.2	45.1	9.1	1257
Crimes of violence (murder, rape, etc.)	0.2	9.4	21.6	55.1	13.7	(394)
Crimes of deceit (larceny, fraud, etc.)	4.4	21.2	26.9	40.6	6.9	(863)
Total	1.7	14.1	29.0	46.7	8.5	4924
For comparison: Distribution of Army on 31 Dec. 45 <sup>2</sup>	6.6	30.7	31.4	26.8	4.5	

1. Data on Army prisoners were obtained from Corrections Branch, AGO.

2. Data for whole Army are based on a 2 percent Army Machine Records Unit sample.

The trends found in Table I are quite clear cut. AGCT grades I (superior) and II (above average) constituted 37.3 percent of the enlisted strength of the Army; yet they contributed but 15.8 percent of new prisoners, while grades IV (below average) and V (inferior), claiming only 31.3 percent of the enlisted population, yielded 55.2 percent of the prisoners.

This disparately high contribution of low-grade men to the prison population was not confined to the 1946 figures. It has been shown to be quite consistent from year to year. More recent data demonstrating this are displayed in Tables II and III.

TABLE II  
ARMY GENERAL PRISONERS RECEIVED FOR CONFINEMENT IN YEAR  
ENDING JUNE 30, 1947 COMPARED WITH ALL ARMY ENLISTED  
MEN ON PERCENTAGE IN EACH AGCT GRADE

	Percentage in AGCT Grade				
	I	II	III	IV	V
Prisoners .....	01	12	29	48	10
All Enlisted Men* ...	06	27	31	31	05

\*As of December 31, 1946.

TABLE III  
ARMY GENERAL PRISONERS RECEIVED FOR CONFINEMENT FROM JULY  
TO DECEMBER 1947 COMPARED WITH ALL ARMY ENLISTED  
MEN ON PERCENTAGE IN EACH AGCT GRADE

	Percentage in AGCT Grade				
	I	II	III	IV	V
Prisoners .....	01	12	33	48	06
All Enlisted Men <sup>1</sup> ....	05	28	34	30	03

1. As of December 31, 1947.

For the three samples given in Tables I, II and III, the high AGCT grades contributed to the Army prisoner population an average of 20.5 percent *less* and the low AGCT grades an average of 22.3 percent *more* than would have been anticipated if each AGCT grade were to contribute to the offender group in direct proportion to its incidence in the over-all Army population.

AGCT grades I and II among 1946 prisoners (Table I) numbered 15.8 percent of those received in confinement. However, these men had been charged with 25.6 percent of the crimes of deceit and only 9.6 percent of the crimes of violence. In fact, AGCT grade I contributed but a single case to the crimes of violence. Yet, even in the crimes of deceit, grades I and II fell well below the 37.3 percent to be expected on the basis of the number of such men found in the total Army enlisted population.

The situation was reversed in grades IV and V. Here, 55.2 percent of new confinees were found to have committed 47.5 percent of the crimes of deceit and 68.8 percent of the crimes of violence.

In summary, as measured by the Army General Classification Test, the Army prisoner population is drawn much more, proportionately, from the lower intelligence groups than from the higher intelligence groups of the Army parent population. When compared with over-all Army figures, the less intelligent group exceeded the chance expectations, while the more intelligent group failed to reach the anticipated number in every offense category. The data presented reveal a tendency for the brighter prisoners to have been convicted of crimes of deceit, while the duller offenders were shown to be prone to crimes of violence.