Department of Defense
2000 Military Exit Survey
Report for Congress
April 2001
Overview

Introduction
• Legislative Requirement
• Questionnaire Development
• Administration
• Survey Content

Findings
• Reasons for Leaving
• Command Climate and Leadership
• Satisfaction with Pay, Benefits, Work, and Life
• Plans after Service
• Other Issues
Requirement

National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000 (Section 581)

“The Secretary of Defense shall develop and implement, as part of outprocessing activities, a survey on attitudes toward military service to be completed by all members of the Armed Forces who…are voluntarily discharged or separated from the Armed Forces or transfer from a regular component to a reserve component…. The survey shall, at a minimum, cover the following subjects:

(1) Reasons for leaving military service.
(2) Command climate
(3) Attitude toward leadership
(4) Attitude toward pay and benefits
(5) Job satisfaction during service as a member of the Armed Forces
(6) Plans for activities after separation (such as enrollment in school, use of Montgomery GI Bill benefits and work)
(7) Affiliation with a reserve component, together with reasons for affiliating or not affiliating, as the case may be
(8) Such other matters as the Secretary determines appropriate to the survey concerning reasons why military personnel are leaving military service.”
Questionnaire Development

Sources Reviewed during Item Development

- Personnel surveys from DoD and the Services
  - General Organizational Questionnaire (Army)
  - Azimuth Leadership Scale (short version, Army)
  - Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (short, non-proprietary version)
  - USMC Exit/Retention Survey (USMC)
  - Sample Survey of Military Personnel (Army)
- Foreign military personnel surveys
  - Australia
  - Canada
  - Britain
  - New Zealand
- Office of Personnel Management Survey (Organizational Assessment Survey)
- Civilian surveys (Roper, Gallup)
- Private sector organizations--International Survey Research (ISR)
Questionnaire Development

- **Major Sources of Items**
  - 2000 Survey of Reserve Component Personnel (DoD)
  - 1999 Active Duty Survey (DoD)
  - 1999 New Directions Survey (Air Force)
  - Sample Survey of Military Personnel (Army)
  - 1996 Survey of Retired Military Personnel (DoD)
  - Azimuth Short Leadership Scale (Army)
  - Army Career Transitions Survey (Army)
  - International Survey Research

- **Procedures for Refining Items**
  - Review by DoD and Service survey professionals
  - Consultation with Service experts on measuring military leadership
  - Review by DoD policy officials
  - Conducted focus groups at 2 local military installations
Administration

- **Dates**--The law directed the fielding period to be between January 1-June 30, 2000. To adequately develop and field the survey, DoD requested and received a delay in the implementation. The questionnaire was administered from April 1-September 30, 2000.
- **Method**--Over 113,000 questionnaires sent to about 1,300 transition/separation points, worldwide.

- **Target Population**
  - All Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force members leaving active duty (includes full time Reservists)
  - Voluntarily leaving the military between April 1, 2000 and September 30, 2000
  - Leaving with an Honorable discharge
  - Distributed to Coast Guard separatees beginning 1 July 2000.

- **Response Rate**
  - About 81,000 members honorably and voluntarily separated between 1 April and 30 September, 2000
  - 15,952 eligible respondents returned a usable questionnaire
  - Response rate is 20% which is a typical return rate for exit surveys
Survey Content

Section 1: Background Information
• Characteristics of military service
• Demographic characteristics
• Type of separation

Section 2: Assignment Information
• Characteristics of last assignment
• Number and type of deployments
• Operations tempo

Section 3: Career Information
• Career intentions when joining the military
• Reasons for joining
• Plans for National Guard/Reserve
• Satisfaction with military work and life

Section 4: Leadership/Command Climate
• Aspects of work and climate
• Assessments of first-line supervisors

Section 5: Military Life
• Expectations about military work and life
• Recommendation to join any Service
• Military vs. civilian opportunities
• Pride in Service membership
• Satisfaction with the military way of life

Section 6: Separation/Retirement
• Primary activities after separation/retirement
• Plans for civilian employment
• Plans for use of Montgomery GI Bill
• Influence of family, peers, and supervisor on the decision to leave
Findings

- Reasons for Leaving
- Command Climate and Leadership
- Satisfaction with Pay, Benefits, Work, and Life
- Plans after Service
- Other Issues
Reasons for Leaving

When asked what most influenced them to leave...

Overall, at least one third mentioned the following to a very great/great extent:

- 41% -- Pay and allowances
- 37% -- Desire to start second career before becoming too old
- 36% -- Continue my education
- 35% -- Overall job satisfaction
- 34% -- Desire to settle in a particular location

Top reasons by paygrade category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Junior Enlisted</th>
<th>Senior Enlisted</th>
<th>Officers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continue education (45%)</td>
<td>Desire to start 2nd career (46%)</td>
<td>Overall job satisfaction (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay and allowances (42%)</td>
<td>Pay and allowances (45%)</td>
<td>Desire to start 2nd career (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall job satisfaction (34%)</td>
<td>Desire to settle in part. loc. (38%)</td>
<td>Desire to settle in part. loc. (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall job satisfaction (34%)</td>
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</tbody>
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Reasons for Leaving

The top 2 reasons selected by each paygrade group as the 1st or 2nd most important reason for leaving:

- **Junior enlisted personnel**
  - Pay and allowances (21%)
  - None of the listed reasons applied (18%)

- **Senior enlisted personnel**
  - Pay and allowances (25%)
  - Continue my education (12%)

- **Officers**
  - Overall job satisfaction (25%)
  - Desire to start second career before becoming too old (19%)
Reasons for Leaving

The top factors selected by each paygrade group as what would have to be improved so they would stay:

- **Junior enlisted personnel**
  - Basic pay (41%)
  - Quality of leadership (23%)

- **Senior enlisted personnel**
  - Basic pay (44%)
  - Quality of leadership (20%)

- **Officers**
  - Quality of leadership (30%)
  - Basic pay (21%)
Command Climate and Leadership

- Overall, 61% agreed their Service’s core values were clear
  - 53% of junior enlisted
  - 70% of senior enlisted
  - 74% of officers

- Overall, 36% agreed their Service established a climate in which truth could be taken up the chain without fear of reprisal
  - 29% of junior enlisted
  - 42% of senior enlisted
  - 49% of officers
Command Climate and Leadership

- Overall, 25% were satisfied with the quality of leadership while on active duty.
  - 21% of junior enlisted
  - 28% of senior enlisted
  - 36% of officers

- 47% agreed that the chain of command keeps them informed about important issues
  - 38% of junior enlisted
  - 56% of senior enlisted
  - 64% of officers

- 34% agreed that leadership generally understands the problems they face on their jobs
  - 31% of junior enlisted
  - 38% of senior enlisted
  - 39% of officers
Command Climate and Leadership

Separatees rated their immediate supervisor on 12 dimensions of leadership:

- handling the technical-skills parts of the job
- handling the people-skills parts of the job
- handling the conceptual-skills parts of the job
- communicating
- decision making
- motivating
- developing
- teambuilding
- learning
- planning and organizing
- executing
- assessing
Overall, more separatees agreed that their supervisor was adept at handling the technical-skills parts of the job (63%) than other aspects of supervision (47%-56%).
Satisfaction with Pay, Benefits, and Work

- **Satisfaction with pay and allowances**
  - 25% were satisfied and 48% dissatisfied with “basic pay”
    - Officers (62%) were more likely than junior enlisted (20%) or senior enlisted (28%) to be satisfied with basic pay
  - 28% were satisfied with “special and incentive pay”
  - 34% were satisfied with “housing allowance”
  - 34% were satisfied with “SEPRATS/COMRATS”

- **Satisfaction with retirement benefits**
  - 20% were satisfied with the “retirement pay they would get”
  - 23% were satisfied with the “other retirement benefits such as medical care and use of base services”
  - 18% were satisfied with “cost of living adjustments to retirement pay”
Satisfaction with Pay, Benefits, and Work

Satisfaction with aspects of military work and life ranged from 77% satisfied with “Friendships developed while in the military” to 17% satisfied with “Level of manning in your unit.

Satisfaction with several aspects of military work:

- Type of assignments received
  - 64% officers
  - 53% senior enlisted
  - 30% junior enlisted

- Training and professional development
  - 59% officers
  - 53% of senior enlisted
  - 37% junior enlisted

- Amount of enjoyment from your job
  - 58% officers
  - 46% senior enlisted
  - 29% junior enlisted

- Chances for future advancement
  - 48% officers
  - 35% senior enlisted
  - 27% junior enlisted

- Unit morale
  - 40% officers
  - 26% of senior enlisted
  - 18% junior enlisted
Primary activities after separation/retirement*

- 67% working for a company/organization
  - Officers (73%) and senior enlisted (74%) more likely than junior enlisted (61) to work for a company/organization
- 57% attending school
  - Junior enlisted (70%) are more likely than senior enlisted (49%) and officers (20%) to attend school after separation
- 23% working for the government (federal, state, or local)
  - Senior enlisted (27%) more likely than junior enlisted (22%) and officers (13%) to work for civilian government
- 8% self-employed
- 5% full-time active-duty member of National Guard/Reserve
- 4% work in family business
- 5% homemaker
- 1% full-time retirement
- 2% none of the above

* Since respondents are able to give multiple responses, total exceeds 100%
Plans After Active-Duty Service

- 83% planned to work after separation. Of these,
  - 40% would be looking for a full-time (FT) civilian job
  - 36% already had a FT civilian job
  - 4% would be self employed

- 92% of those eligible planned to use Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) benefits
  - Junior enlisted (94%) and senior enlisted (92%) were more likely than officers (69%) to plan to use benefit
Plans After Active-Duty Service

- **Affiliation with Reserve component**
  
  - 36% said they were likely to join the National Guard/Reserve. Top reasons for deciding to join were:
    - Educational benefits (46%)
    - Extra income (41%)
    - To complete military service obligation (32%)
    - To continue to serve my country (32%)
    - Retirement benefits (30%)

  - 49% said they were unlikely to join the National Guard/Reserve. Top reasons for not joining were:
    - I have no interest in serving in National Guard/Reserve (50%)
    - It would interfere with my civilian job (32%)
    - It would interfere with my family responsibilities (27%)
Other Issues Related to Leaving Military Service

How would your opportunities in the military compare to opportunities you will have in the civilian world?

- At least half rated the following opportunities as better in the military:
  - Job security (55%)
  - Opportunity for travel (53%)
  - Vacation time (50%)

- For all other opportunities (e.g., “Total compensation”, “Health care benefits”), 6%-30% said the military was better

- Of all aspects rated, fewest said “General quality of life” and “Amount of personal/family time” were better in the military (6% for both)