



Department of Defense 2000 Military Exit Survey

Report for Congress

April 2001

Defense Manpower Data Center

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)
 - » Navy Personnel Survey (Navy)
 - » New Directions Survey (Air Force)
 - » 1999 Active Duty Survey (DoD)
 - » 1996 Survey of Retired Military Personnel (DoD)
 - » Other Service-specific surveys (e.g., Army Career Transitions Survey)
- 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)
- 1985 Survey of Enlisted Personnel and Officers (1985)
- 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

▮ 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 3: Career Information

- Career intentions when joining the military
- Reasons for joining
- Plans for National Guard/Reserve
- Satisfaction with military work and life

↖ 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 2: Assignment Information

- Characteristics of last assignment
- Number and type of deployments
- Operations tempo

↖ Section 4: Leadership/Command Climate

- Aspects of work and climate
- Assessments of first-line supervisors

↖ 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

Junior Enlisted

Continue education (45%)

Pay and allowances (42%)

Overall job satisfaction (34%)

Senior Enlisted

Desire to start 2nd career (46%)

Pay and allowances (45%)

Desire to settle in part. loc. (38%)

Overall job satisfaction (34%)

Officers

Overall job satisfaction (44%)

Desire to start 2nd career (40%)

Desire to settle in part. loc. (40%)

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

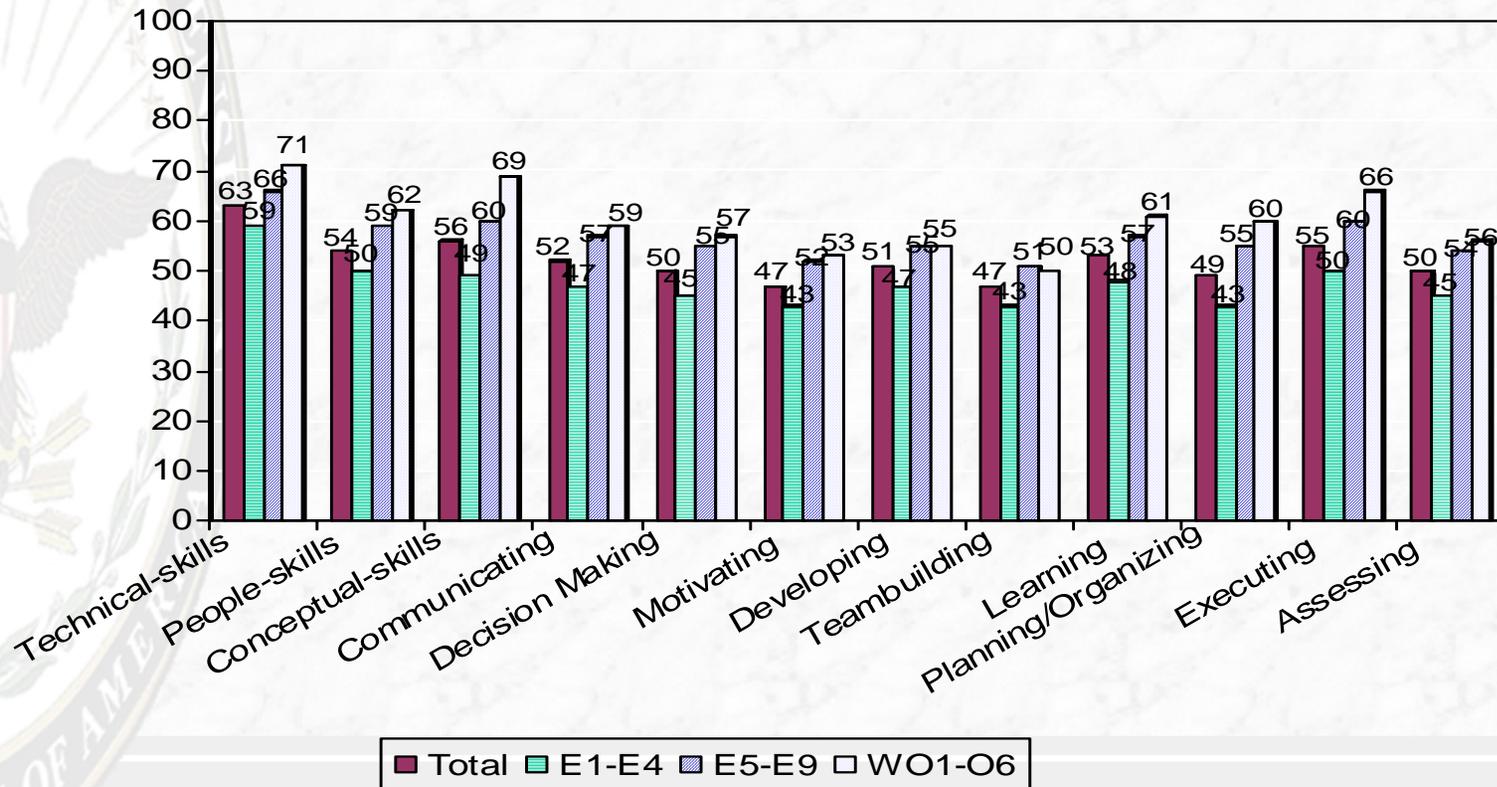
Command Climate and Leadership

▣ **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

Command Climate and Leadership

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

Plans After Active-Duty Service

▮ 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)