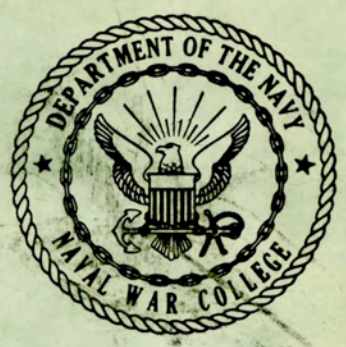


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UNITED STATES NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
SCHOOL OF NAVAL WARFARE
THESIS



AVIATION JUNIOR OFFICER
RETENTION THROUGH ROTATION-
AN ANALYSIS
by James H. Scott
Commander, U.S. Navy

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James H. Scott

Commander, U.S. Navy

1 April 1967

Abstract of AVIATION JUNIOR OFFICER RETENTION THROUGH ROTATION-AN ANALYSIS

The problem of retention in the Navy is not new; however, the high resignation rate among the carrier aviators and the cause or causes of the two-fold increase has become a prime subject today. One possible significant cause of the increase is the excess away-from-home time being experienced by these officers.

A young officer's career depends upon performance of duty, a variety of duties and a sub-specialty. Superimposed over his entire career are the broad skills of management--technical, human and conceptual.

The rotation policies that are in effect call for three and one-half years of sea duty followed by three years of shore duty followed by four and one-half years of sea duty. The Personnel assignments are accomplished in the Bureau of Naval Personnel in keeping with needs of the service, needs of the individual, and desires of the individual.

When the career planning factors are coupled with the rotation policies and then applied to aviators in the attack carrier Navy, the result is excessive away-from-home time for the officer. The long arduous cruises combined with short turn-around times have had a deleterious effect on carrier aviation to the extent that resignations have increased two-fold in the last year. Of seventy-two resignations in the Atlantic Fleet, fifty-one were from the carrier squadrons or the Replacement Air Wing.

In order to decrease the resignation rate of the young aviators, the away-from-home time must be decreased. The solution does not lie in

indiscriminate early rotation because it will certainly result in an unsatisfactory draw-down of fleet aviators. However, early rotation by merit will give relief to those aviators who have had excessive away-from-home time.

Merited rotation wedded to a reclassification of sea duty and shore duty stations will give the young aviator more at-home time and he will become, once again, a human being with a family and a future in the Navy.

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AVIATION JUNIOR OFFICER
RETENTION THROUGH ROTATION-
AN ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

This paper concerns itself with the retention of aviation junior officers in the attack carrier forces. There are numerous studies, both completed and in progress, that attempt to find the reasons why so many capable officers turn their backs on a navy career. The problem of the attack carrier aviation junior officer egress has become especially acute in the last few years. This statement is not meant to ignore the retention problem of other officers in the Navy. Without a doubt, some of the reasons that aviators have given for resigning, apply equally as well to other unrestricted line officers and the specialists. However, an investigation into the possible solutions to the retention problem of all officers is beyond the scope of this paper. Indeed, in order to remain within the guidelines of practicability, it was necessary to restrict the analysis to but one portion of the attack carrier aviators' retention problem--away-from-home time.

The author's purpose then is two-fold. First, it is to determine if there is a correlation between the egress of aviation junior officers in the attack carrier navy and the rotation policies that are in effect. Second, if there is a correlation between the two, can changes be made that will improve the rotation policies and thereby improve the retention rate.

In order to treat the subject in a palatable manner, the chapters are arranged so as to establish a background for the reader which includes the career planning requirements, tour length, and billet assignment policies that are in effect. Using this information as a foundation, the reader can then be more prepared to examine and understand the at-sea exposure time for the carrier aviation officer and how it compares to the exposure time of other junior officers.

The next order of business is to establish whether or not a substantial correlation exists between the away-from-home time of the attack carrier aviators and their resignation rate. In this regard, the terms "sea duty" and "shore duty" will lose their identity in this paper and be replaced by the phrases "away-from-home" and "at-home". This is done in order to avoid the less definitive terms of "sea duty" (which in some cases is duty ashore) and "shore duty" (which in some cases is duty afloat). If it can be established that many resignations are impelled by excessive away-from-home time; then, a gain in the retention rate may be realized by a policy of early rotation to an at-home duty.

In arriving at conclusions and making recommendations, the author makes these assumptions: The attack carriers will not in the foreseeable future decrease their away-from-home time, nor will carriers be able to sacrifice present manning levels in order to improve pilot rotation policies.

AVIATION JUNIOR OFFICER
RETENTION THROUGH ROTATION-
AN ANALYSIS

CHAPTER I

CAREER PLANNING REQUIREMENTS

Successful career planning may be analysed from many points of view, three of which are: the Navy's, the Detail Officer's and the individual's. Additionally, it must be understood that the proper mix of sea duty, operational experience, staff work, schools and other shore duty will vary almost individually. All the aforementioned additives to the mix are vital to the growth of any young officer if he expects to progress to the rank of Admiral during his career. To better understand the present career planning requirements, it is necessary to follow the evolution of the requirements through history. "Evolution" does not connote rapid sweeping changes. Rather, it is to suggest subtle changes that have developed because of the refinements in the state of the art of naval warfare and its staggering scientific growth.

The Peaceful Years. Prior to World War II, the Navy was a small, close-knit, well managed organization wherein the officers knew the required pattern and background that were requisites for progress to flag rank. Emphasis was placed on each line officer having a sub-specialty and working at it through education and training ashore and afloat.

During that time, there was comparatively little protracted separation of an officer and his family. There was a very low turnover rate and the Navy was a career for most of the people who were in it.

The War Years. Then came World War II. The stabilized, close-knit navy society became a nostalgic memory because the officer forces were swelled by a factor of ten and the ships were underway constantly. The officer corps was filled with naval aviators (and others) who had, in many cases, less than college educations and who were "strictly flyers". The need for career planning and a well-rounded background were overshadowed by the two-fold problem--to win the war and, in the case of the reserves, get out of the service.

After World War II, the Navy was able to expand the post graduate and college level courses and to commence a period of education reconstruction that was aimed at giving baccalaureate and higher educations to all its officers who had the desire to avail themselves of the opportunity. It was recognized that our modern technological advances were growing at a tremendous rate and that our officer corps would be hard pressed to remain abreast the arts.

In 1955, the recognition of the impact of advanced technology on officers' careers began to appear in the Secretary of the Navy letters of instruction to flag selection boards. (31:17) Officer Fact Book, NavPers 15898 was published as a counseling guide for the Naval Officers in order to assist them in their quest for career planning information. During that same time a change to our present officer rotation policies

took place. This subject will be addressed in Chapter II.

Today. In dealing with the unrestricted line officer in general Vice Admiral Fitzhugh Lee, USN, who had just completed his duty as the senior member of an officer selection board, stated the following in "Officer Personnel Newsletter":

What kind of career pattern should an Unrestricted Line Officer have? Boards reach opinions which may vary slightly from year to year, but I think most boards would say that there are no fixed career patterns, no superhighways to success. Recognizing that the Navy exists to fight at sea, it is fundamental that the line officer be qualified in the art of naval warfare. Thus his career pattern should show the acquisition of operational experience at sea and a broader application thereof in each grade. Concurrently, the officer should have acquired and demonstrated excellence in technical, management, or planning jobs in the Shore Establishment. The principal questions to be resolved by the boards are first, how well has the officer performed in difficult assignments both at sea and ashore; second, does he possess operational qualifications commensurate with his grade; and third, what additional qualifications has he acquired along the way and how effectively has he used them. There are countless duty patterns which will provide satisfactory answers to the above. In the final analysis, the officer who, in a succession of tough and demanding jobs, gets generally topnotch marks, with but few lapses, will get the nod over the man who has had nothing but easy jobs with little responsibility, even though the latter's fitness reports seem appreciably better. (26:4)

Of particular note is the statement that "there are countless duty patterns which will provide satisfactory answers to the above", and "in the final analysis, the officer who, in a succession of tough and demanding jobs, gets generally topnotch marks, with but few lapses, will get the nod over the man who has had nothing but easy jobs with little responsibility, even though the latter's fitness reports seem appreciably

better".

Vice Admiral B. J. Semmes, Jr., USN, Chief of Naval Personnel, very succinctly describes the inputs to career success as follows:

"To begin with, it must be understood that there is no formula for success as a naval officer than that can be expressed in terms of specific assignments. Officer assignments are based upon needs of the service, the individual's qualifications, and whenever possible, his stated desires... Outstanding performance in past assignments is over the span of a naval career the major, qualifying factor for all assignments and is the common denominator of successful careers." (30:cover)

It is clear from these two authorities that the unrestricted line officer's successful career depends primarily upon demonstrated performance in a billet and to a lesser degree upon the variety of billets that the officer has occupied. As stated in Officer Fact Book: "The primary criterion for promotion must be performance in all duty assignments." (29:8-9)

The Skill Application. Increased emphasis is now being placed upon the need for a sub-specialty qualification. With reference to the junior aviator, his specialty is that of naval warfare and command at sea. His sub-specialty is any of several qualifications in a particular field of naval endeavor, other than naval warfare, obtained through any combination of formal education, functional training, and practical experience.

(24:2) The purpose of the sub-specialty is to broaden the technical background of the junior officer so as to enable him to discharge properly his day to day business. This technical skill will be required up to and including the rank of Commander. "By this point, the technical

skills of an individual are in full flower." (31:8)

The human skill--the executive's ability to work effectively as a group member and to build cooperative effort within the team he leads--gains added emphasis in the middle ranks. These are the ranks where the officer's managerial capabilities are required and it is in between the technical and conceptual management levels. "Finally, in the very top positions in the Navy, the need for the broadest conceptual skill becomes overriding." (31:8)

It has been shown that the junior officer's successful career depends upon: first, his performance in his duties; second, a variety of duties to broaden his background; third, a sub-specialty education to assist him in the performance of his duties--which may or may not be in the area of his specialty. In addition, and superimposed on the career, are the demonstrated abilities in the broad skills of management--technical, in the lower ranks; human, in the middle ranks; and conceptual, in the higher ranks.

CHAPTER II

ROTATION AND BILLET ASSIGNMENTS

For an officer to attain flag rank, he must have the proper mix of duties as covered in Chapter I. However, variety of duty is not itself the panacea to success nor is performance alone the key. The performance requirement is truly an individual input. But, the mix requirement is fulfilled for the individual by the Bureau of Naval Personnel where officers are grouped into sea duty and shore duty for assignment purposes.

Tour Lengths. Aviation officers are assigned to their first tour of sea duty for a period of three and one-half years. (34:lff) Normally, this will be a squadron assignment and if applicable will include training in the Replacement Air Wing. Second and subsequent tours are different in that they are split tours of two and one-half years in a flying billet and two years in a ship, staff, or overseas billet. (34:lff) In this regard, fleet staffs and overseas duty are considered to be sea duty. (24:3) Aviation officers (a very small percent of carrier aviators are participants) who are assigned to the below overseas areas for sea duty (with dependents) are transferred at the end of three years and such rotation is to shore duty.

HAWAII, BERMUDA, PUERTO RICO, UNITED KINGDOM, ITALY, SPAIN,
JAPAN (34 encl. 1, p. 1)

Between these two sea duty periods there is one shore period of three years. (34:lff)

Figure 1 shows the idealized sea/shore rotation times as it is published by the Bureau of Naval Personnel. (29:8-26)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

GR	YEARS	PERIOD	PHASE	ASSIGNMENT AREAS	
* ENS	1	FUNDAMENTAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Basic Training	FLIGHT TRAINING	
LTJG	2		First Operational	FLEET TRAINING	
	3			SEA	
LT	4		Educational	Operational Squadrons	
	5			SHORE	
	6	Training Command Postgraduate Education Undergraduate Program Bureaus, NAS, OPNAV, TPS CRAW			
	7	FLEET TRAINING			
LCDR	8	Second Operational	SEA		
	9		Split Tour Squadron/Ship/Staff/Overseas		
	10		SHORE		
	11		Training Command Postgraduate Education Undergraduate Program		
	12		Service College Subspecialists normally assigned to subspecialty field OPNAV, Bureaus, NAS, USNA.		
CDR	13	Subspecialty and/or Educational	Operational Command		
	14		FLEET TRAINING		
	15		SEA		
	16		Split Tour Squadron/Ship/Staff/Overseas		
CAPT	17	Operational Command Development; Subspecialty and/or Educational	SHORE		
	18		Planning and administrative duties in aviation activities Research and development OpNav, Bureaus Training Command Service College		
	19		Assignments varied as necessary to round out qualifications and meet service needs		
	20		Policy planning and managerial duties in OpNav, Bureaus, technical offices, shore commands, and naval districts (may be allied to subspecialty field) Research and development activities Joint staffs Service colleges CO of shore activities		
	21		Deep draft and major command Staff Overseas		
CAPT	22	Final Development			
	23				
	24				
	25				
	26				
	27				
	28				
	29				
	30				

* Indicates average promotion points. Actual promotion point will vary within each promotion zone and will shift according to required promotion flow.

Figure 1

This idealistic rotation system continues to be modified by the three

factors of needs of the service, the needs of the individual, and the personal desires of the individual. These, less the desires of the individual, are defined as follows:

The needs of the service -- "in effect, getting the right man (or woman) in the right job, relating the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to a particular occupation and its level of responsibility in a given naval activity."

The needs of the individual -- "providing each officer with the kinds of experience and training that will insure his personal growth and self development, fulfill his naval career plans, and equip him for assignments of greater responsibility - in short, broadening both his 'know how' and 'can do'."
(28:25)

Thus, it is seen that a normal sequence for a newly designated naval aviator is to have three and one-half years of sea duty followed by three years of shore duty followed by four and one-half years of sea duty provided that he has no post graduate or unusual shore training that would interrupt the cycle.

Shore Billet Assignment. The present day rationale used in the assignment of officers to duty stations is based, once again, on the needs of the service, the needs of the individual, and the personal desires of the individual, in that order.

The purpose of the first sea tour is to develop "his reputation as a professional highly skilled, operational naval aviator". (24:8-27)
Therefore, billet assignments for aviation junior officers on their first tour of sea duty are almost 100% squadron assignments. Upon being designated a Naval Aviator, the young officer receives squadron orders with, where necessary, Replacement Air Wing (RAG) training enroute. RAG

training is required for those officers who go to Attack Carrier Air Wings. Parenthetically, some of these officers are sent to the RAG without destination orders. They receive their orders to their squadron as they complete training.

Attack carrier pilots may expect an uninterrupted first tour in order to acquire a maximum degree of experience in squadron tactics, administration, fleet deployments and shipboard operations. "Squadron and shipboard collateral duties provide the young naval aviator the opportunity to acquire the essential non-flying qualifications required of all junior line officers." (29:8-27)

Upon completion of the first sea tour, the aviator is rotated to one of the following shore duty billets. (24:6ff)

<u>TYPES</u>	<u>QUALIFICATIONS</u>
Replacement Air Wings	Current in fleet operations in type aircraft. Officers will be ordered from fleet squadrons at completion of normal sea tour.
Experimental and Test Squadrons*	As above - Usually VF/VA
Aviation Training Command Schools*	All types of flight qualifications CIC/Air Control/Intercept/AEW/VF(J)/VW/VAW/ASW/Special weapons experience and technical backgrounds in specialty taught by the school
Various Bureaus#	Various Technical and Administrative backgrounds
OPNAV#	Various Operational/Administrative/Technical experiences

TYPESQUALIFICATIONS

Safety Center*

Safety School Graduates/Safety Officer experience

USNA

All types of flight and administrative experience can be utilized plus BS or BA degree as a minimum

NROTC Units

Same as USNA

Fleet Schools*

Programmer, Operations and all types pilot/NFO/CIC experience

BUWEPS Field Activities*#

located at: Naval Weapons Evaluation Facility, Albuquerque, N. M.
Defense Atomic Support Agency, Various
Naval Astronautics Group, Pt Mugu, Calif.
Pacific Missile Range, (Complex)
Naval Missile Center, Pt Mugu, Calif.
Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River, Md.
Naval Air Test Facility (Ships Installations), Lakehurst,
New Jersey.
Naval Aviation Engineering Service Unit, Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania
Bureau of Naval Weapons Representative, throughout the
United States
Naval Air Facility/Naval Ordnance Test Station, China
Lake, Calif.

* Few openings available in these groups

Varying amounts of post graduate education are requisites for many of these billets

Post graduate training is scheduled so as to insure that the officer is eligible for two years of that training. The two year period may cause an extension of shore duty to four years because the officers who complete post graduate training of less than two and one-half years are extended on shore duty to fulfill the requirements of a tour in their newly acquired sub-specialty. If the extension prolongs shore duty past four years then the officers do not repay their sponsor until they have had a

sea duty tour. The intent is to insure that the officers' careers are not jeopardized by extended shore periods. (6)

Overall Distribution. The overall distribution of naval aviators to shore duty is depicted in Figure 2. It should be noted that the distribution includes all designated aviators and is not oriented toward Attack Carrier aviators per se. (30:7) Although this data was obtained as of July 1966, it remained correct as late as February 1967. (6)

OVERALL DISTRIBUTION SHORE DUTY

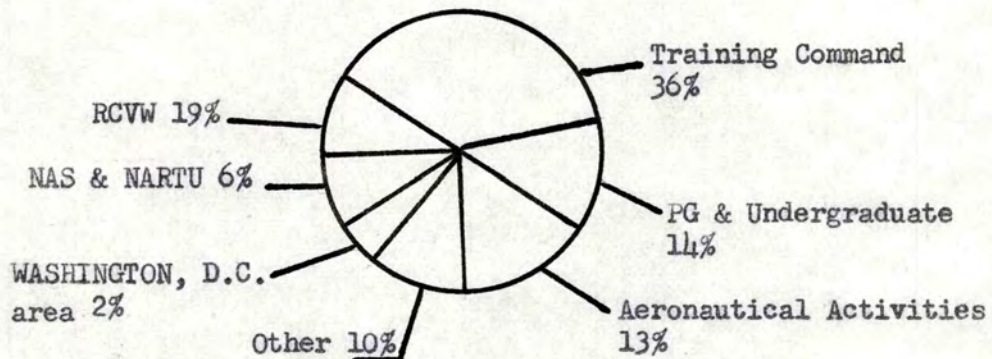


Figure 2

Included in the overall distribution is the second tour of sea duty breakdown as shown in Figure 3. (30:7) It too is accurate as of February 1967.

OVERALL DISTRIBUTION SECOND SEA DUTY

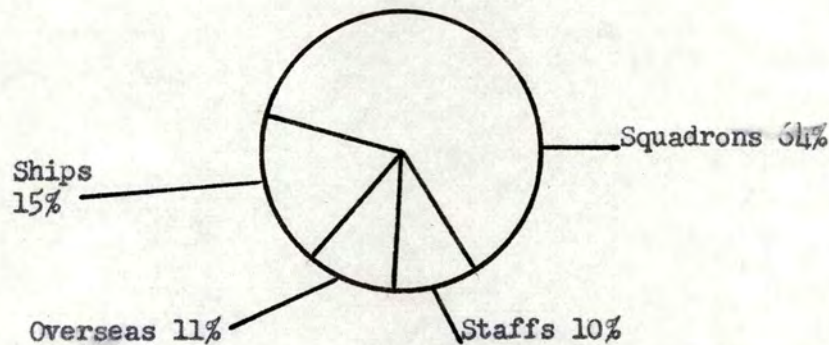


Figure 3

Second Sea Billet Assignments. The second sea duty period should occur at about the tenth year of the officer's commission time. If the career time has been handled efficiently, then the officer will have had three years in a squadron and, hopefully, two years of post graduate work, followed by two years in a shore flying billet.

At present, 64% of all aviators return to squadron duty. The remaining are assigned to ships, staffs, and overseas billets. The ship lists and the staff lists have been edited and included to show the probable attack carrier aviator billets. The overseas lists have been included in total. As stated previously, a very small percent of attack carrier aviators are assigned to overseas billets. (24:10ff)

SHIPS

<u>TYPE UNIT</u>	<u>BILLETS</u>
AIRCRAFT CARRIERS	A/AI, A/CATC, A/CIC, ASCAG, A/NAV, A/FLT DK, CAT & HGR DK, FUELS, NTDS, ORD, IOIC
SEAPLANE TENDERS#	METRO, AIR OPS, FIRST LT, AUM & NUC SUPV, COMM, CIC, NAV
HELICOPTER CARRIERS#	A/CIC, A/C HAND, FLIGHT/ HGR DK, COMM, METRO
COMMAND SHIPS	AIR INTERCEPT, CIC PRO- GRAMMER, METRO, WPNS EMPLOY

STAFFS

<u>TYPE UNIT</u>	<u>BILLETS</u>
COMNAVAIRLANT/PAC*	REQM'TS & ALLOW, A/C SUPPORT SYSTEMS, VH/VT CLASS DESK, A/CINC AIR NAV OFFICE, ENL ASSIGN, GROUND TRAIN, GUIDED MISSILE, INTELL, VF/DESK, XO FLAG ADMIN UNIT
COMCARDIVS	AIDE/FLAG LT, A/AIR OPS, A/CIC
OPTEVFOR*	A/AIR OPS, AAW
MAAF/MISSION/*	INTELL,
CINCLANT/LANTFLT*	INTELL,
CINCPAC/PACFLT*	NUCLEAR PLOT, OPS DIV
FIRST/SECOND	ANALYSIS
SIXTH/SEVENTH	OPS, A/NUC
FLTS	WARFARE
JOINT/COMBINED/*	Very few 13XX Lt billets but primarily INTELL PG
NATO*	grads
COMFAIRS*	A/WPNS

STAFFS

TYPE UNIT

BILLETS

COMFAIRS* (cont.)

AIRFRAMES, A/ADMIN, A/TRNG,
ASCAC, AVIONICS, A/PAR, A/
FACILITIES, INTELL, LSO OINC
ANO, PWR PLANTS ASCAC, ABC
DEFENSE, INTELL, A/PLANS &
READ, COMM, LEADERSHIP, METRO,
SCHEDULE, WPNS TRNG

Most probably helo pilots

* Operate from shore stations

OVERSEAS

TYPE UNIT

BILLETS

NAV/NAF

A/C MAINT, ADMIN/PERS, GCA/
RATTC, METRO, OPS, ORD SAR

Note: In addition to the qualifications required for primary billet description, there generally exists a requirement for the officer to be a transport, seaplane or helo pilot.

PMR FAC HAWAIIAN AREA

ADMIN, COMM, HELO RECOVERY, SAR

NAVFACS

CO, XO, OPS/TRNG

COMFAIRS/COMFAWS*

Same as for COMFAIRS above

DEF REGIONAL/AREA
COMM CONTRCEN

COMM, SYS STATUS

FLT OPCNCEN

AEW/SATELLITE ANALYST PROGRAMMER,
COMPUTER OPS, WATCH OFFICERS

There are then, a multitude of ways to assign an aviator to his duties during his first three tours. However, those naval aviators who are attack carrier oriented are much more restricted in their assignment to shore and sea billets. The mix of duties and billets is determined ultimately by the assignment officers in the Bureau of Naval Personnel

who use as their guidelines the three factors of needs of the service, needs of the individual and desires of the individual. The timing is predicated on the adherence to the policy of three and one-half years of sea duty followed by three years of shore duty followed by four and one-half years of sea duty. In some cases of sea duty - staffs and overseas - the organizations are located ashore and such duties result in less away-from-home time.

CHAPTER III

THE AT-SEA EXPOSURE TIME

The requirement to keep the most talented officers in the most demanding billets is not in itself the at-sea exposure problem. But it does become a problem when our carrier forces are required to increase their at-sea time and the Air Wings are required to move from ship to ship in order to keep the carriers manned. The following quotation expresses the feelings of one of our Fleet Air Commanders who was deeply involved in the problem of retention.

"I have had a wonderful opportunity to discuss the low retention rate and its causes with a large cross section of our Navy. The matters brought out so far fall within three broad subjects, namely; instability of Navy life; pay and long working hours; and being treated as a machine rather than as a human being." (11:1)

In discussing a particular aviator case wherein excessive away-from-home time was involved he stated:

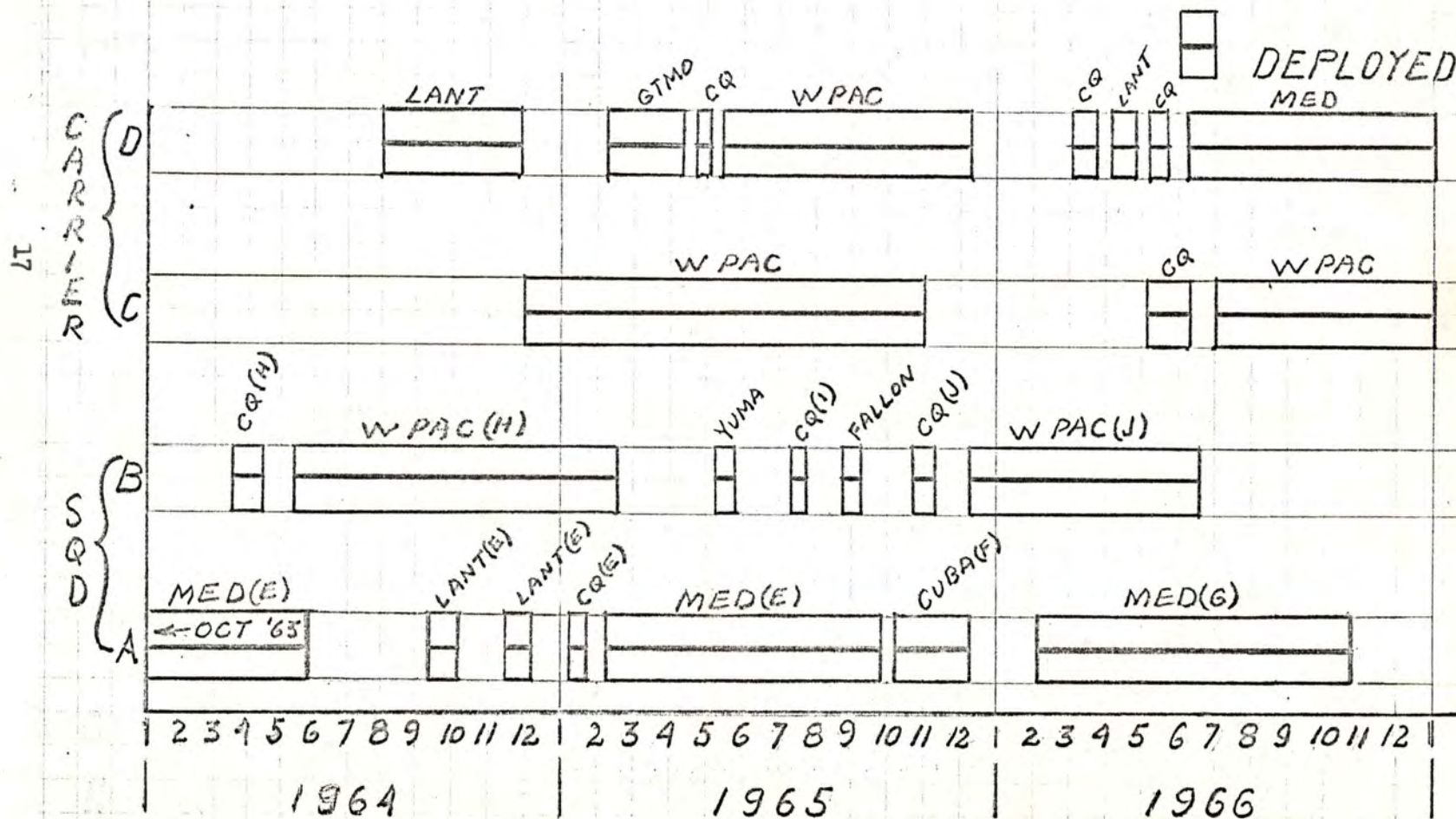
"...which is the obvious result of treating our personnel as machines rather than as human beings in the administration of our policy concerning career planning of Naval Aviators." (11:1)

What happens to the individual when the career planning factors are coupled with the rotation policies is varied; but, in most cases particularly in the attack carriers, the result is excessive away-from-home time. An actual example of the present tempo is shown by Figure 4. The illustration is somewhat strenuous when it is compared to operations in 1960 and before; but, after much investigation, it was revealed to be

Figure 4

A LANT SQD.
 B PAC SQD.
 C PAC CARRIER
 D LANT CARRIER

E SHANGRI LA
 F INTREPID
 G SARATOGA
 H CONSTELLATION
 I YORKTOWN
 J RANGER



not unusual today. (5) There are examples where carriers have had a three month turn-around between eight month deployments. (5)

The results of the requirement to have squadrons shift from carrier to carrier are also illustrated in Figure 4. Squadrons A and B are the actual schedules of particular squadrons--one from the Atlantic Fleet and one from the Pacific Fleet. Note that squadron A has been home no more than eleven months in the entire three years. This fact becomes more significant when it is recognized that the officers remained aboard ship 50% of the nights when they were aboard ship in port. When on an air station the junior officers, Lieutenant and below, were duty officers approximately once a week. In addition, these away-from-home figures do not include individual temporary additional duty for schools, such as Legal, Weapons, Personnel, Survival, or Aviation Safety.

The Chief of Naval Personnel addressed the problem of excessive away-from-home time thusly:

"The career pattern and resulting arduous sea duty for the top performing aviators have been of concern to me for some time. ...We must assign the best performing officers to operational billets leading to command for the dual purpose of enhancing fleet readiness and strengthening the qualification of future leaders in naval aviation. In addition, there is an interaction among tempo of operations, limited aviation command opportunity and selection opportunity to Captain. These factors have created an intense operational career pattern for the most promising aviation Commanders in each year group."
(11:1)

The question arises as to whether or not the tempo has reached a maximum. With reference to the excessive away-from-home time, apparently it has not. The Secretary of the Navy's Task Force on Navy/Marine Corps

Personnel Retention reported on 25 January 1966:

"Over the next five years worldwide fleet operational requirements are expected to increase while force levels remain fairly constant. As a result, the tempo of fleet operations, already far beyond that of peacetime, may be expected to increase even more. Despite these increases in tempo, the fleet is still manned on the basis of peacetime allowance. Working under the existing tempo of operations, manning levels, low retention rates, and high turnover of personnel, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain adequate standards of fleet readiness. These problems stem directly from the conditions facing fleet personnel, i.e., long and repetitive periods of separation from family and friends and long work hours at sea under difficult conditions."
(34:16)

When all of the career planning factors are coupled with the present rotation policies and those two are applied to an attack carrier aviator today, the result is an excessive amount of away-from-home time. The at-sea exposure time has become progressively longer since about 1960 and there appears to be no vision of improvement for the next several years. To further complicate the problem, the attrition rate of carrier aviators through resignations has caused a pilot shortage throughout the fleet. (14:12)

CHAPTER IV

AWAY-FROM-HOME TIME AND RESIGNATIONS

The resignation rate among young aviators has grown at an alarming rate in the last few years. In the Atlantic Fleet it was the subject of letters and conferences originating from Commander Naval Air Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet and Commander Fleet Air Jacksonville, Florida. In the Pacific Fleet, Commander Naval Air Force U.S. Pacific Fleet defined it as "a two-fold rise in career naval aviation resignations" and he initiated a study of the problem. (3) (10:1)

The author as the Commanding Officer of a carrier based attack squadron interviewed eight young aviators in the Air Wing who had submitted their resignations. Seven of the eight gave family separation as their primary reason for leaving the Navy. Their reasons for resigning were cached in such phrases as "too much steaming time", "too many cruises in one sea duty period", "I have two children and both were born while I was on cruise". (7) Granted, their statements were somewhat emotional and aggravated by their being on an extended cruise at the time; however, the fact remained that family separation was their primary reason for submitting their resignations.

A summation of the resignations received by Commander Naval Air Force U. S. Atlantic Fleet in 1966 is as follows: (13:1)

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>
CVA/CVS SQDS	27

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>
RAG SQDS	24
VP SQDS	6
VC/HC/VW SDQS	7
VX/VRF	3
STAFF/SHORE	3
CVA	<u>2</u>
Totals	72

The primary reasons for resignations as stated in the letters are:

(13:1ff)

<u>REASON</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>
Family separation (by itself)	21
Civilian Opportunity (by itself)	17
Both family separation and civilian opportunity	18
Education	9
Humanitarian	4
Other reasons	<u>3</u>
Totals	72

In the cases of both the attack and ASW carrier squadron aviators, excerpts from their resignation requests reveal that in most cases the away-from-home time is the primary reason for resigning. By contrast the statements of VP pilots in the sample taken do not give away-from-home

time as a primary reason. Their reasons were: "The prestige that I had hoped to enjoy as a Naval Officer has not been forthcoming. ...the junior officer in the Navy today does not enjoy the prestige of the special trust and confidence of those officers of the higher echelon who promulgate directives that affect our daily living." (12:encl. 3-1) And a second letter stated:

"I have not been greatly dissatisfied with the Naval Service as a potential career and have had a short, but rewarding career in the Navy. However, I do feel that the opportunities for a young military officer to closely participate in the economic, civic, and religious activities of a community are greatly curtailed by the many demands placed on his time as a fledgling administrator and aviator....they leave limited time for additional endeavors on the part of the individual." (12:encl. 2-1)

LCDR Albert D. Wood, USNR, authored the article "This Way to Egress" in The Naval Institute Proceedings, September 1966. He summarized his article by saying: "If you are willing to come out [of the Navy] and serve the profit motive; if a stable homelife is of high priority...then come on out; the water's fine." (37:97) This is a very interesting summary when it is recognized that the entire article is aimed at the junior officer and its purpose is to offer a word of caution to those who are considering leaving the service.

U.S. Naval Personnel Research Activity Report. A survey of naval aviators and flight officers in Naval Air Force Pacific Fleet ships and squadrons was conducted to investigate the influence of various job values and possible policy changes on career motivation. The two populations studied were: Those officers with at least 18 months since designation

or three years active duty since commissioned; and those officers previously within this experience range who had been released to civilian life within the past 6-18 months. The most critical influences on retention of this particular aviation community were found to be: Navywide dissatisfaction with family separation and long working hours, the enormous attraction of an airline pilot career, type squadron assigned, preference for a "strictly Pilot/Flight Officer" career (as contrasted with the conventional unrestricted line officer career), command opportunity for the naval flight officer, and effective officer career counseling.

The least critical influences on retention were found to be: methods of awarding medals, and personal risk as it pertains to combat or aircraft carrier operations.

The most favorable responses were to the following possible career incentive policy changes: choice of type squadron, maximum of six months away from home port, cash bonuses for additional years of active duty, and personnel interviews prior to issuing change of duty orders. The least favorable responses were to the proposals of accelerated promotion to LCDR, cash bonuses while flying from aircraft carriers, and family assistance centers. (18:v)

Within the sample it was found that the important-detrimentals to a career and the percent of responses to the question were: (18:12)

<u>IMPORTANT - DETRIMENTAL</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
Home life	35
Command effectiveness of superiors	12

IMPORTANT - DETRIMENTAL

PERCENT

Shipboard habitability

8

All others

5

Within the civilian sample, the greatest significant differences between Navy and civilian obtainability of various job values were:

(18:29)

CIVILIAN SUPERIOR

NAVY SUPERIOR

Home life

Recreational activities

Acceptable working hours

Social life

Acceptable working conditions

Job security

Choice of work area opportunity

to be own boss

Recognition for work

Opportunity to apply schooling

As a qualification to these results, it should be noted that the results were tallied from the 37% of the forms that were returned by civilians. Generally, the less successful members of a group are more reluctant to respond. Hence, the rather heavily weighted values in favor of civilian life. (18:29)

Reserve Aviation Survey. In a similar survey conducted in June 1966 among reserve aviators, 1205 questionnaires out of 1895 were completed and returned. Almost half of all the occupational groups chose deprivation of home life as the main reason for leaving the Navy. 42% gave it as the primary reason and "little financial opportunity" received the next highest with 19%. (15:3)

In the area of away-from-home time the percentages were:

<u>NIGHTS SPENT AWAY FROM HOME</u>	<u>PERCENT*</u>
Never	24
Less than 5 per month	20
5-8 per month	25
9-12 per month	19
13-16 per month	5
17-20 per month	1
more than 20	1

* 5% not full time employed (15:4)

The Importance of the Surveys. The results of the very comprehensive surveys reveal that a large percentage of naval aviators' resignations are tied directly to away-from-home time. Various terms--family separation, unstable home life, deprivation of home life--have been used to express the reasons for resigning; but, the away-from-home phrase applies to all. The surveys show that the problem exists and therefore, it must not be overlooked. This is an especially strong point in the face of such facts as "Even with no increase in the present pilot attrition rate, it is estimated that the Navy will be short some 1500 pilots by 1970", which appeared in The Journal of the Armed Forces, 12 March 1966. (14:28)

The problem of away-from-home time cannot be summarized more aptly than was stated by one resigning Lieutenant who said:

"During the four and one-half years I have been in the Navy I have enjoyed the challenging, fulfilling role of a single-engine attack pilot. The general living conditions and atmosphere of Navy life has been satisfactory. Salaries,

benefits, BOQ accommodations, etc., leave little room for complaint. However, there is one major area in the career of a carrier aviator that has become personally unacceptable; that is the amount of time a pilot can expect to spend at his home base when on a sea-duty tour. I speak not only of my one sea-duty tour during which I have spent 20 out of 27 months away from my home base, but the cumulative total of an entire career as a carrier aviator. From all sources of information, the ratio of time spent away from home to that spent at home will get much larger in the near future. I, therefore, feel that I have no choice but to resign my commission in the United States Navy." (12: encl. 6-4)

The endorsement of his Commanding Officer is equally as applicable to the problem. "In this example, Lt. _____ averaged 61 nights per year at home with his family during the preceding two calendar years. A sampling of other junior officers in this command substantiates this to be an average, not a low figure. (12: encl. 6-3)

CHAPTER V

THE ALTERNATIVES

In examining proposals to change the away-from-home time, there is a strong tendency to avoid the ideas that involve early rotation from sea duty to shore duty. Nevertheless, it is clear that in order to attempt to eliminate the problem, the aviator must be removed from the attack carrier element. The reluctance to remove him is most understandable in view of the present pilot shortage within the junior officer ranks. However, because there is evidence that excessive away-from-home time is associated with the resignation rate, any proposed solutions to the problem should be investigated.

The Accepted Dilemma. Commander Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet made twenty recommendations to the Chief of Naval Operations aimed toward improving the retention rate of aviation officers. None of the recommendations focused on the away-from-home problem with the exception of one-fifth of one recommendation which said: "Shorten deployments to six months and plan accordingly." (10:encl. 1:p.2) In the basic correspondence (Enclosure 4 is the U.S. Naval Personnel Research Activity Report) he stated:

- "The most significant findings derived from enclosure (4):
- a. It is important to be able to fly the type aircraft of one's choice.
 - b. It would be appealing to certain subgroups to contract for extended obligated service for a reasonable but meaningful bonus.

- c. It is attractive to perform strictly pilot duties as opposed to spreading their efforts over various administrative areas while still functioning as pilot.
- d. There are relatively small adverse effects on retention induced by combat exposure and hazard." (10:2)

Disappointingly, the above significant findings do not mention home life as a detrimental factor toward aviation junior officer retention.

The Reserve Aviation Survey was referenced in Chapter IV as saying "Almost half of all occupational groups chose deprivation of home life as the main reason for leaving the Navy." (15:v) Again, in that survey there was but one question that concerned inducements to return to the Navy, and it was a question related to cash bonus inducement. 42% of the sample stated that "no amount of money would influence my return". (15:7)

During an interview with the Head Aviation Lieutenant Grade Assignment Officer, the question of deprivation of home life was discussed. The assignment officer's feelings were that deprivation of home life was true to a degree but that it was a rationalization on the part of most officers who chose to resign. This implies strongly that the officers had hidden reasons for resigning and that deprivation of home life was not their primary reason. (6) The two aforementioned reports do not appear to support his opinion.

One wonders, then, if excessive away-from-home time is truly a dilemma. At present the service is taking the traditional route in assigning and rotating the attack carrier aviators, discussing alternatives in an attempt to find a solution to the retention difficulty; but none, however, deal

directly with excessive away-from-home time to any degree. The alternatives so far explored are less arduous ones than looking into a revision of the at-sea time--a major undertaking, but evidently one of the major causes of the retention problem.

Blanket Early Rotation. To rotate all aviators from their squadrons before their sea duty time is completed would certainly create at least two problems: one, there would be vacancies left in the squadron; two, there would be increased cost for transportation because rotations would, in effect, be accelerated throughout the attack carrier aviation family. In view of the present shortage of aviators such a "blanket" change in policy would cause a draw-down within the squadrons that at present, cannot be afforded.

Another obvious mistake in blanket rotation would occur if an officer were rotated after having experienced but one long deployment. Such a situation could easily arise in the case where a squadron is involved in converting to a different type aircraft and the conversion is taking place at the home air station. It would be advantageous to the Navy and the squadron to have those aviators remain in their squadrons and deploy with their new aircraft.

Merited Rotation. In contrast to blanket rotation it appears that rotation to a shore duty on a merit system offers a solution to the problem. Although not a new technique, the point system wherein credit is given for away-from-home time would be a useful yardstick for measuring

the length of time to be spent in a sea duty billet. Officers serving in squadrons that have deployed very little per tour would remain for the full duty time--which may be re-established as something more than three and one-half years. Officers serving in squadrons that have deployed almost continuously through the years of a normal sea duty tour, i.e. Squadron A in Figure 4, would be transferred early. How early would vary directly as the number of days spent away-from-home.

Other Alternatives. For certain, there are many possibilities in the area of incentives for retention. However, the ones that associate with rotation are few. To remain status quo offers nothing, at present. To commence wholesale transfers is not acceptable to the readiness posture of the fleets. A system of merited rotation does offer possibilities, especially if it were tied to a realignment of defined sea and shore duties.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions. The successful career of a junior aviator is composed of a mix of duties that will prepare him for higher command. In the attack carrier forces this mix requires that the aviator spend much of his time at sea. Due to the high tempo of operations today and since about 1960, this requirement has caused the young aviator to encounter excessive away-from-home time. This problem has turned into a hardship that has caused, in part, a two-fold rise in the resignation rate among carrier aviators. The impressive egress rate has generated several studies on the subject; however, these studies on retention appear to "miss their mark" in the areas of career planning and sea duty as they are related to away-from-home time and rotation.

One solution to the rotation problem is the "merited rotation" concept that assigns points for time spent away-from-home. When this system is coupled with a realignment of sea duty/shore duty billet definition, a more stable home life will result for the carrier aviator and his family. Because family security and away-from-home time are tied to the increase in resignations, some decrease in the resignation rate will be realized. This will occur without jeopardizing either the officer or fleet readiness.

During the research into this problem of retention and rotation, the author has noted one particular philosophical point: although monetary

compensation can help, it is no substitute for the security that the attack carrier aviator realizes from a reasonable amount of at-home time during both his and his family's developing years.

Recommendations. In order to improve the retention rate of aviation junior officers in the attack carrier Navy, it is recommended that the present duty station and billet assignment designations for sea duty and shore duty be re-evaluated and reassigned so that a more realistic picture can be obtained from the term "sea duty". Further, it is recommended that a system of merited rotation be devised so that officers who are experiencing excessive away-from-home time will be rotated to an at-home duty before the normal three and one-half or four and one-half year tour is complete.

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