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2014

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NAVY  
RETENTION  
STUDY

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## 2014 Navy Retention Study

*"The Ultimate 360 Degree Evaluation"*

April 12, 2014

To: All Active Duty U.S. Navy Officer and Enlisted

The recent paper "Keep a Weather Eye on the Horizon" was written to provide our Navy's senior decision-makers with an argument for approaching manpower with proactive incentives rather than reactive controls. The paper went viral within days, and the subject matter has evidently hit a chord with many of you. The force-wide implications remain substantial, and to get a better understanding of the landscape, a few of us elected to dig deeper.

Led by Guy "Bus" Snodgrass, our survey team has created a product that will hone in on the factors vital to retaining our future leaders, while gaining a better understanding of why many choose to leave. Most importantly, the results of this study will provide our Navy's senior decision makers with timely and relevant information – facilitated *by* servicemembers, *for* servicemembers – to help enable the proactive steps required to keep our service's best and brightest in uniform.

The survey team is doing this in our personal capacity, and we do not have official blessing from Navy leadership – although many senior leaders have expressed great interest in this endeavor. We believe the data we get will help senior leaders better understand the trends shaping our force. We've constructed our survey to be as unemotional and fact-filled as possible. And, unlike the many surveys we've taken throughout our career, we will make the results of this one publically available.

Those of us on the planning team span the gamut of intentions – a pre-command, career-oriented commander, a junior officer departing at his MSR, and an ensign just starting his career, trying to determine which course is best for his life and for his family. All of us, regardless of our intentions, love the Navy and want to see it succeed. We firmly believe that people are our greatest asset, and retaining talented individuals is critical to American national security. Without pre-conceived ideas, we simply want to learn more about what motivates our volunteer Navy.

This is your chance to give input in a comprehensive way, evaluate the Navy as a whole, and identify the issues that drive you to "stay Navy" or seek other opportunities. Your participation and dissemination of this survey is vital to its success. The same viral networks that spread the retention paper are critical to providing more comprehensive data. YOU are the driving force behind Navy retention, and we need you to help us get the word out.

Nearly all of you have taken official Navy surveys before. Yet as soon as many of those surveys are complete, they fall into a black hole, with results slowly trickling out, highlighting selected trends. Independent analysis is impossible. Often the questions are focused on a specific part of a specific community, or ask broad questions that occasionally miss more subtle nuances.

Our survey strives to be different. We will make the data set available for independent analysis. We will publish the question bank for those who are unable to take the survey, but are curious as to what it contains. We will publish our findings, and let you decide what it means. Finally, we ask you to assess your thoughts on the survey itself – we want this to be a dynamic document that annually evolves based on input from its participants.

We know that the things that drive people to stay in or get out vary greatly from person to person, so we've tried to cast as broad a net as possible in shaping the questions. Our philosophy focuses on the pillars of naval service, namely Quality of Work, Quality of Life and Quality of Leadership. In addition, as you make your way through the survey, there will be specific community related questions for you to answer. Although some of the questions may be quite personal, asking about your professional performance and duty stations, the data cannot and will not be used to identify a participant. Not only will you help the Navy understand its culture, you will also help your specific community understand what its members are thinking.

This survey is focused on the active duty component of the Navy, and our primary focus is to identify concerns within that component. However, we also understand how important civilians and reservists are to our Navy ecosystem. Based on how this survey is received, we may do follow on surveys with those populations in mind, but for now, need to focus on a smaller subset of our community.

We are passionate about this effort, and thank you for the time you take to have your voice heard. This will only be a success if you take part and tell your subordinates, peers and superiors to do the same. Let us know if you have any questions – we're here to help, and ensure our Navy is retaining the right people to defend our nation.

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