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Ahead of Wider Personnel Reforms/ 07 APRIL 15 [\[LINK\]](#)

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5.) 21st Century Sailor Office bi-weekly roll-up:

Every other week, we roll up the various stories in the 21st Century Sailor Office domain. Below are the latest products for total Sailor fitness:

- A Message from the Surgeon General: "Be Someone's Hero" — Eliminate Sexual Assault: Know Your Part.

Do Your Part [\[LINK\]](#)

- Deployment Resiliency Counselors Go to Sea: [\[LINK\]](#)

- LifeLink April [\[LINK\]](#)

Reprogram your Drinking Habits to Promote Health, Well-being and Safety: [\[LINK\]](#)

- The Countdown is On! Last Minute Tax Prep Stress Busters: [\[LINK\]](#)

- NavyNavStress URL change (navstress.wordpress.com). [\[LINK\]](#)

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1.) NPC boss hails progress in closing fleet's manning gaps/ 07APRIL 15

NAVY TIMES, David Larter

The drive to get the fleet on a more predictable deployment schedule will hit a major milestone in May, the deadline for having the carrier Dwight D. Eisenhower manned and ready to start its workups.

The Ike is on track to meet the May deadline at new, higher manning targets, said Rear Adm. David Steindl, the head of Navy Personnel Command.

Having driven down open fleet billets by thousands, the Navy's detailers are focusing on fully manning ship crews earlier so they can train together through work-ups.

Navy Personnel Command is laboring to man deploying carrier strike groups and amphibious ready groups heading out for deployment, and meeting new deadlines for manning under what's known as the Optimized-Fleet Response Plan.

Under O-FRP, the level of manning and the time when the sailors must be on the ship has ratcheted up. The Eisenhower is the first carrier to enter the O-FRP system and will begin its initial workups in May.

The new goal is for carriers and escorts to be manned at the start of the pre-deployment cycle, so the crew can train together in work-ups.

"This is the most pressurized year in fleet manning we've ever experienced," he said.

And instead of having 90 percent of the billets filled with sailors with the right qualifications, known in personnel jargon as fit and fill, the new goal is 92 percent fit and 95 percent filled, Steindl said in a March 30 telephone interview.

"The challenge in moving the system to the left is we have typically manned carrier strike groups 60 days ahead of deployment," Steindl explained.

"We still have the regular strike groups, and the strike groups that are deploying further in the future, their manning dates are at the same time that we are trying to push another carrier out the door."

Despite the challenges of manning multiple CSGs simultaneously, Steindl said overall numbers in the fleet are excellent: 91.5 percent fit and 98 percent filled. That's the best fit number since the fleet began tracking in 2007, he said.

Three years ago, the NPC was struggling to put enough sailors on ships. It had 17,000 empty billets at sea. Steindl said an increase in accessions in 2013, combined with back-to-sea incentive programs for sailors with critical skills and increased coordination with the fleet has combined to wrangle the number down.

As of February, the number of empty billets was below 3,000, said Chris Servello, spokesman for the chief of naval personnel.

The carrier Theodore Roosevelt deployed in March with manning that exceeded the increased manning targets under O-FRP, which is 95 percent fill and 92 percent fit.

"TR deployed with 96 percent fill and 93.1 percent fit, so we exceeded the standard by quite a bit," Steindl said.

Still, Steindl acknowledged that the Navy hadn't solved every manning issue in the fleet.

"Even though [we have] magnificent numbers, if you go to the unit level you will find gapped billets, missing this or that," he said. "Those numbers are in the aggregate, and so it's still a work in progress to fix everybody's manning."

Back to sea

The manning problem forced the Navy to get sailors off shore duty and onto ships through a series of carrots and sticks.

The most extreme measure was a policy rolled out last March that gave the Navy the ability to cut short a sailor's shore duty.

This policy, known as Early Return to Sea, applies to sailors on their second enlistment or beyond who've spent at least 24 months ashore. If the fleet has a pressing need for their skills or qualifications, their shore duty can end abruptly after two years.

Among the carrots offered by the Navy was a program offered to some sailors with critical skills — up to \$1,000 a month to extend their sea duty, a hike in career sea pay for senior sailors and a special pay for sailors who deploy for more than 220 days.

Steindl credits these programs with helping the Navy close the gaps at sea, combined with increased communication between NPC, Fleet Forces Command and Pacific Fleet.

2.) Navy Pitching Congress on Expanding Sailor Career Intermissions Ahead of Wider Personnel Reforms/ 07 APRIL 15 [LINK](#)

USNI, Sam LaGrone

The Navy is asking Congress to expand a pilot service sabbatical program ahead of a broader slate of internal personnel reforms Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus is expected to announce next month.

The expansion of the Career Intermission Program from a pilot project that gives the opportunity for sailors to transition from active duty to the reserves for three years is designed to make the Navy a more attractive career option for the service's most talented, the Chief of Naval Personnel told USNI News in an interview last week.

"Frankly when you look at the pool of people that is available to recruit to do this work, it's shrinking and we're in competition with industry and corporate America others and we have to do a better job," CNP Vice Adm. Bill Moran said.

The first step would expand the pilot CIP from the current limit of 40 sailors per year.

Following expanding the numbers, "the second part is to lift the restrictions of the folks that are on the minimum service requirement (MSR) . So take an aviator that's on an eight-year MSR, they cannot even apply to this program until they are done with that eight year MSR — surface warriors five years, [a] submariner five years," Moran said.

"The third part of this is to remove the restriction of anyone that's under a critical skills retention bonus. We would allow those people to be also able to apply and we would freeze the bonus until they're complete with the program and pick it up back later so that we still get our money's worth for people in this program."

Service leaders beyond Moran have said allowing top performing sailors more flexibility to choose their path in the service outside of their year group is positive.

“We come in and we’re sort of in a conga line. What year group are you in? In whatever amount of years, you will make J.G., lieutenant or whatever. It doesn’t really matter how talented you are, for a while,” Chief of Naval Operations Jonathan Greenert said last month during the roll out of Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard revision of its cooperative maritime strategy.

“We’ve got to work our way out of the year group mentality, get some flexibility into that, allow them to blossom and take maybe some time to go off and do other things somewhere else in the career.”

The ultimate goal for the service would be to eliminate the year group concept following the first few years sailors are in — for enlisted its End of Active Obligated Service (EAOS) , for officers, the MSR.

“You can think of this in terms of people that go before promotion boards and how they come out of those promotion boards in terms of when we promote them based on the level of performance,” Moran said. “In other words, not all lumped together by their year groups. There are other ways to deal with the year-group challenge inside the current policy and authorities we have to work with.

He added, “we’ve given the secretary some thoughts trying to consider on how to ratchet up a commanding officers ability to recognize talent when they see it.”

Moran wouldn’t detail specifics of the effort ahead of their approval by Mabus.

However, USNI News has learned of some of the changes the service is considering, including:

- Changes in officer promotion boards that allow commanders to more easily identify talented officers for promotion below the zone and allow officers with commensurate talent an equal chance of promotion independent of time in service.
- Changes in enlisted advancement that would give commanders greater meritorious promotion options for sailors in the E-1 to E-6 paygrades.
- Allow type commanders (TYCOMs) and other commands more say into screening personnel records to identify top performers for early promotion.

The first set of internal changes could happen as part of the Navy’s Fiscal Year 2016 promotion board guidance, USNI News understands.

The internal Navy changes are happening in parallel with a wider push from the Pentagon to get and keep the best troops for the U.S. military.

Secretary of Defense Ash Carter outlined a similar set of initiatives at Abington Senior High School in Pennsylvania in a March 30 speech.

“As the so-called 9/11 generation begins to leave our ranks, the Defense Department must continue to bring in talented Americans, from your generation and others,” Carter said.

“We have to look at ways to promote people based not just on when they joined, and even more on their performance and talent.”

More sweeping personnel reform will require legislative changes.

For officers it would be changes to the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act of 1980. DOPMA (pronounced DOP-Mah) outlines a rigid structure of year groups from the ranks of ensign to captain (O-1 to O-6) and a so-called “up-or-out” structure that forces retirement on an officer passed over for promotion.

Moran said Carter’s remarks and the signals he’s seen from the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) are leaning toward broader legislative moves to reform DOMPA and changes to the Goldwater–Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986.

“[Carter’s] talked about — and I’ve even heard Sen. [John] McCain (R-Ariz.) talk about — this reevaluating the impacts and the future of Goldwater-Nichols, looking at DOPMA reform, looking at year group management,” Moran said.

“Those are things coming from leaders way above my paygrade and I’m encouraged by that dialogue.”

3.) Go officer: How to land a STA-21 spot, get commissioned/ 04 APRIL 15

NAVY TIMES, Mark D. Faram

Wiseman wants to command destroyers.

The problem is, that's not usually something an aviation boatswain's mate (aircraft handling) gets to do in the course of a career.

So with eight years in the Navy, she decided to swap her yellow flight-deck jersey for shipboard coveralls.

Her route to the wardroom started with an application to the Seaman to Admiral program two years ago. On Dec. 15, she'll graduate from Iowa State University and get her ensign's bars and a wardroom seat as one of the newest surface warfare officers.

"I'm really excited to get out to the fleet as a surface warfare officer," she said in an April 2 interview with Navy Times. "I knew once I joined the Navy that I would be a career sailor and decided to take advantage [of the] opportunity the Navy has to get a commission and see how far I could go."

With selectees collecting their full paycheck and money to pay for school, the Seaman to Admiral program is one of the Navy's best deals for those with some college experience already who are looking to make the Navy a career. And they're again soliciting applications for the next crop of future leaders.

This year's board will meet in September and initial applications must arrive or be postmarked by July 1 to be considered.

STA-21 (as in 21st century) is just one of several routes from the deck plates to the wardroom. Other routes include the chief warrant and limited duty officer programs, the Medical Service Corps in-service procurement corps, Reserve Officers' Training Corps, Officer Candidate School and, of course, the Naval Academy.

Each have their own requirements, and all commissioning programs are competitive, officials say. In each of the last three years, the service has only allowed 50 sailors into STA-21, down from a high of 226 picked up in fiscal year 2010.

"Yes, this is a highly competitive program," said Cathy Kempf, head of selection and placement for the Naval Service Training Command. "Not all applications actually make it to the board, as our staff scrubs each to ensure the sailor is eligible to be considered."

Getting a spot

Over the past three years, 1,565 STA-21 applications were submitted to NSTC and, after the initial scrub, 1,216 of those made it in front of the board. With only 150 quotas available, an average of 12.3 percent have been selected by the board during that time.

The biggest hurdle to get to the board is college test scores, Kempf said. Applicants for most designators must have a minimum SAT test scores of 500 in their math and 500 in critical reading. For the ACT test, that translates to a 21 in math and 20 in English. For those applying for the nuclear option, it's a combined SAT score of 1,140 or combined math and english ACT score of 50.

"The test scores aren't waiverable," Kempf said. "Sailors need to realize they can retest and shouldn't submit unless their scores meet the minimums as their packages won't be considered."

Baseline scores are required to make the board, but high scores alone are no guarantee of selection. The board also factors in a sailor's evaluations and previous college experience because the program requires they finish their degree and be commissioned within 36 months of entering. Fitness counts, too, as applicants can't have below an overall "good" score on their semi-annual fitness assessment over the past three cycles.

Wiseman, by her own admission, had only average college entrance test scores. She believes her record as a first class ABH and the fact she completed an associate's degree helped get her selected.

"I took some afloat college courses while on deployment on the [carrier] Enterprise," she said. "But the bulk of my associate's degree I finished by pushing hard while on shore duty — even with working full time, I was able to complete it in two and a half years."

Kempf says the board considers any college course completed with a grade of C or above to be transferable credit. "Any D's and F's won't count," she said.

Another sticking point is a sailor's age, Kempf said. Most programs have an age deadline by which a sailor must be commissioned, though for prior service sailors, some age requirements can be lifted with a waiver.

Sailors can apply for specific officer communities, but applying for only one limits their chances for selection, Kempf said.

"If just getting [a] commission is your goal and you are flexible as to what community you go into, you can elect our 'core' option," she said. "You are not assigned to a community up front, but you compete for unrestricted line designators of pilot, [naval flight officer], submarine or surface warfare as well as EOD and SEALs."

Along with the general core option, applications for the fiscal year '16 program are being accepted for surface warfare; information professional; nuclear power, Special Warfare; explosive ordnance disposal, naval flight officer; pilot; civil engineering corps; nurse corps; and oceanography.

Sailors also select which school they want to attend, provided it has a Naval ROTC affiliation. During the application process, they're required to pick three such schools, but officials say sailors usually get their first choice.

STA-21 sailors attend school year-round until they complete their degree. To pay for school, they get an annual \$10,000 a year voucher from the Navy for tuition and book costs. Militarily they're assigned to the NROTC unit, though they don't go on summer cruises like other midshipmen.

"Sailors, anyone with time on active-duty, are leaned on quite a bit by the midshipmen in the regular ROTC program," Kempf said. "It's a great chance to exercise your leadership and mentoring skills and pass along your knowledge and experience from the fleet to the Navy's future officers."

Sailors collect the pay and allowances at the pay grade they held when selected — and are eligible to continue to compete for enlisted advancement while in school.

More information is available at <http://www.sta-21.navy.mil>.

4.) Vouchers Enable Senior Enlisted to Pursue Advanced Education/ 07 APRIL 15 [\[LINK\]](#)

Naval Education and Training Command Public Affairs, Ensign Michael Torres

PENSACOLA, Fla. (NNS) -- A path to providing senior enlisted personnel with advanced education opportunities was announced April 6 via Naval Administrative Message (NAVADMIN) 079/15; the call for applications for the FY-15 Advanced Education Voucher (AEV) program.

The AEV program offers post-secondary, Navy-relevant education at the baccalaureate and master's level and provides financial assistance to chief, senior chief and master chief petty officers.

Master Chief Electronics Technician (EXW/FPJ) Richard Simpson, Enlisted Education Program coordinator for the Naval Education and Training Command (NETC), praised the benefits this program offers.

"For senior enlisted members interested in or pursuing advanced education in Navy-approved areas of study, the AEV program is an outstanding resource," said Simpson. "AEV offers the opportunity for accelerated degree completion as it pays for 100 percent of tuition, books and fees up to a specified limit. Sailors currently on or transferring to shore duty and those at sea whose duty assignment will allow for degree completion during off-duty time are encouraged to apply."

Examples of approved, Navy-relevant degrees include: strategic foreign languages, construction management, security management, emergency and disaster management, human resources, engineering, information technology, nursing, and business administration, among others. Degree programs other than those specifically listed by the NAVADMIN must be validated by the AEV program coordinator at NETC.

Financial assistance for baccalaureate degrees covers 100 percent of tuition, books, and related fees up to \$6,700 per year for a maximum of three years with the total program cost capped at \$20,000. For master's degrees, it provides 100 percent of tuition, books, and related fees up to \$20,000 per year for a maximum of two years with the total program cost capped at \$40,000.

Master Chief Information Systems Technician David Campbell (IDW/SW/AW) senior enlisted advisor for the Naval Network Warfare Command in Suffolk, Virginia, is using the AEV program to get a degree in business administration with a specialty in technology management.

"The more professional knowledge I can bring to the command, the more I can share that knowledge and empower my Sailors to be more professional and technically savvy," said Campbell. "Chiefs who qualify and are driven to better themselves and in turn give back to the Navy should apply. I often ask myself why I didn't apply for AEV sooner."

Eligible applicants include E-7's with no more than 17 years' time in service (TIS), E-8's with no more than 19

years TIS, and E-9's with no more than 23 years TIS. TIS is computed to Oct. 1, 2015.

At a minimum, baccalaureate program applicants must have an associate's degree from an accredited institution of higher learning or the equivalent amount of college credits already earned. Master's program applicants must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher learning.

AEV is available to personnel transferring to, or currently on shore duty with sufficient time ashore to complete the degree program. Prospective applicants on sea duty may still apply if they provide an education plan that shows their ability to complete the program as specified in the NAVADMIN. Selectees are expected to enroll in the fall 2015 term.

If an applicant is already invested in furthering their education through TA or other financial assistance programs, they may still apply for AEV. However, AEV and TA benefits may not be combined, nor may AEV be used to earn more than one degree at a time. Lower division or prerequisite courses may be authorized if they are part of the approved education plan.

A service obligation of three times the number of months of education completed or three years, whichever is less, is incurred upon completion of or withdraw from the AEV program. This obligation is discharged concurrently with any other service obligation the participant may have already incurred. Use of AEV does not obligate the Navy to retain a member on active duty.

Applications for AEV are currently being accepted by NETC (N523). The deadline for submission for the FY-15 program is May 22 and the selection board will convene in June 2015. An endorsement by both the applicant's commanding officer and command master chief must be included in the application.

Application details, format and more information can be found at the Navy College website:
https://www.navycollege.navy.mil/aev/aev_home.aspx.

For more information contact Master Chief Richard Simpson, NETC N523, at (850)-452-7268 (DSN 459) or email at Richard.I.simpson@navy.mil.

For more news from Naval Education and Training Command, visit <https://www.netc.navy.mil>.

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